



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Reinvestment Proposal 2015-17 Biennium

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is an essential part of the safety net for vulnerable Oregon families. TANF stabilizes families and prepares parents for employment that sets them firmly on a pathway out of poverty, and into economic stability and self-reliance.

TANF provides:

- Supports to keep children safe, healthy and thriving within their own families
- Financial assistance to stabilize households
- Training and job search services to help parents find and retain employment

What is the TANF Reinvestment Proposal?

A combination of policy changes and a targeted reinvestment strategy that directs \$30 million in savings from a projected decline in the TANF caseload into strategies and policy changes that will improve outcomes for children and families.

Reinvestment Proposals	Policy Proposals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduce the number of participants affected by the “benefits cliff” when they become employed • Simplify eligibility requirements to strengthen family connections and stability for children • Expand family stability services • Increase flexibility in support services to prevent families from entering TANF • Improve program capacity to provide strength-based, customized and outcome-focused case management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enable the implementation of the reinvestment proposals • Refocus the program direction • Simplify eligibility requirements for families • Add flexibility to target local needs and opportunities • Update statutes • Extend the current suspensions of HB 2469

How was the proposal developed?

National experts on TANF, Oregon experts on poverty and safety net programs, advocates, and representatives from state-level systems that touch TANF participants - such as workforce, housing and early learning - were involved, as were local partners and DHS staff.

Why is now the right time to reinvest in TANF?

Public assistance caseloads in Oregon are slowly and steadily declining, but are projected to remain at pre-recession levels for several years due to the uneven economic recovery. Many TANF parents struggle to make ends meet due to low wages, insufficient benefits and few prospects for career advancement. Others face steep barriers to employment because of low literacy, criminal history, mental health issues, or a lack of work experience or education.

With its dual purpose of protecting children and helping parents join the workforce, TANF presents a unique opportunity to leverage Oregon’s promising education and employment-focused policy initiatives. Economic factors and caseload funding trends allow for a unique, cost-neutral opportunity to strengthen the program’s impact and, in partnership with other systems and local non-profits, to achieve the goals of safety, stability, and prosperity for Oregon families.

DHS TANF Reinvestment Recommendations

Reducing the number of participants affected by the “benefits cliff” when they become employed		Implementation Date	2015-17 Investment
1	Raise the income limits for exiting TANF to create a pathway off of the program for working parents that reduces the “benefits cliff” effect	April 2016	\$3.2M
2	Provide a reduced Employment Related Day Care program co-pay for three months for families exiting TANF due to employment	April 2016	\$1.5M
3	Provide transition payments for three months to families who are exiting TANF due to employment to provide a longer stabilization opportunity, simplify eligibility for staff, and count more months of participation. Transition payments would total \$225 over the three-month period to align with the SNAP Transitional Benefit Alternative (TBA).	April 2016	\$3.1M
		Category Total	\$7.8M

Simplifying eligibility requirements to strengthen family connections and stability for children		Implementation Date	2015-17 Investment
4	Eliminate deprivation as an eligibility requirement. Deprivation requires a child to be deprived of parental support based on the parent’s absence, incapacity, or under/unemployment. For example, if a parent who does not live with a child visits the child, it could cause ineligibility for the child depending on the number of hours the parent visits. Eliminating this policy supports parent involvement and allows more children to qualify for TANF.	April 2016	\$2.6M
5	Expand caretaker relative definition to allow additional relatives to care for children in the absence of a parent, such as great-grandparents, enabling the children to continue receiving TANF.	April 2016	\$0.4M
		Category Total	\$3M

Expanding family stability services		Implementation Date	2015-17 Investment
6	Expand contracts with community-based organizations with a focus on family stabilization, preventing entry into TANF and promoting job retention	January 2016	\$4.7M
		Category Total	\$4.7M

Increasing flexibility in support services to prevent families from entering TANF		Implementation Date	2015-17 Investment
7	Increase flexibility in issuing support services to prevent TANF entry and allow payments for housing or transportation to prevent job loss	July 2016	\$2.9M
		Category Total	\$2.9M

Improving program capacity to provide strength-based, customized and outcome-focused case management		Implementation Date	2015-17 Investment
8	Training required to implement changes and evaluation strategies to measure reinvestment impacts on clients	October 2015 through October 2016	\$1.6M
9	Invest in the workload model and expand intensive client services, prioritizing clients nearing the time limit and special populations with the most barriers to employment	July 2015	\$10M
		Category Total	\$11.6M

Reinvestment Proposal Total Investment: \$30M