



OBC POVERTY TASKFORCE STATEMENT ON TANF REDESIGN

The Oregon Business Council's Poverty Taskforce has been charged with identifying actions that would support the business community's goal of reducing the poverty rate to below 10 percent by 2020. Poverty reduction of that magnitude requires a range of initiatives that stretch across education, work force development, job creation, and safety net reform.

The redesign of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program is high on the taskforce priority list. TANF provides parents the tools to be job ready and supports stable learning environments for children.

Oregon's TANF program was more responsive to the recent economic downturn than almost all other states' programs. Cash assistance caseloads rose—appropriately—during recent periods of high unemployment. Now, as the economy recovers, forecasts suggest those caseloads will decline. Associated fiscal savings provide an opportunity to correct some of the program's design flaws.

The taskforce strongly supports a \$30 million reinvestment in TANF as a down payment on making the program work and making work pay. Opportunities for redesign include:

- Increasing the outdated TANF income limit to smooth the transition to work
- Developing work programs and requirements that serve the diversity of labor market conditions across the state
- Evaluating the adequacy of the maximum TANF-SNAP