

STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY**House Committee On Rules****Fiscal:** Fiscal impact issued**Revenue:** No Revenue Impact**Action Date:** 05/08/15**Action:** Do Pass As Amended, Be Printed Engrossed, And Bill Be Referred To Ways And Means.**Meeting Dates:** 05/08**Vote:**

Yeas: 6 - Barnhart, Hoyle, Nosse, Rayfield, Smith Warner, Wilson

Exc: 3 - Gilliam, Kennemer, McLane

Prepared By: Erin Seiler, Committee Administrator

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Modifies Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. Declares emergency, effective on passage.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Provisions of measure and amendment

EFFECT OF COMMITTEE AMENDMENT:

Clarifies legislative findings for connecting to employment, training and education and providing path out of poverty. Clarifies eligibility and amount of aid to be determined by agency rule. Amends earnings requirement for needy caretaker relative to receive aid for more than 60 months if unable to maintain or obtain employment for specific reasons. Changes operative date of amendments to ORS 412.124 to April 1, 2016.

BACKGROUND:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, or TANF, is a cash assistance program administered by the Department of Human Services (DHS) for families with children living in deep poverty. To qualify for TANF, families must be at or below 37 percent of the federal poverty level and must have very few assets. TANF provides parents the tools to be job ready and supports stability for children. Parents/caregivers receive a small cash grant for living expenses, transportation and child care to enhance their job search efforts, plus job readiness training. The program is designed to provide interventions for families both "Pre-TANF" and "Post-TANF" to ensure they are prepared to meet program requirements in advance, and have the supports they need to transition into employment when they exit the program. The current maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is \$506. Public assistance caseloads in Oregon are slowly and steadily declining, but are not projected to reach pre-recession levels for several years due to the uneven economic recovery.

House Bill 3535-B directs DHS to use savings from caseload reductions to "reinvest" in improvements to Oregon's TANF program by making changes at all stages, such as: raising the income maximum for families exiting the program; providing small grants to families as they exit; reducing child care subsidies for three months as parents transition to employment; clarifying eligibility; expanding contracts with community-based organizations to prevent entry into the program in the first instance; improving the program's ability to be customized; providing outcome-focused case management; and aligning state time limits with federal time limits.