



# Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

## Department of Human Services

*Office of the Director*

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February 28, 2019



The Honorable Senator Lee Beyer, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Rob Nosse, Co-Chair  
Ways and Means Human Services Sub-committee  
900 Court Street NE  
H-178 State Capitol  
Salem, OR 97301-4048

RE: Self-Sufficiency questions from 2/19 and 2/20

Dear Co-Chairpersons:

During the SSP hearing there were several follow up questions.

### 2/19

There was a question about whether Oregon has affordable housing land use restrictions compared to Washington or California. DHS does not have expertise in this area. If the committee would like DHS to follow up further on this question, we will need to respond at later date. Also, if follow up is requested, DHS would like further clarification as to the scope of the question before moving forward any further as it would likely take out of state research to accomplish.

There was a question about how Oregon compares to surrounding states as far as Poverty, hunger and food insecurity and affordable housing. Below is a table comparing Oregon to Washington and California. The following link allows any state's data to be accessed for comparison.

<https://talkpoverty.org/state-year-report/oregon-2018-report/>

|                 |          | OR     |      | CA     |      | WA     |      |
|-----------------|----------|--------|------|--------|------|--------|------|
|                 |          | %      | Rank | %      | Rank | %      | Rank |
| Poverty         | children | 15.90% | 23   | 17.80% | 28   | 13.80% | 17   |
|                 | women    | 14.70% | 30   | 13.80% | 23   | 11.60% | 12   |
|                 | men      | 12.00% | 39   | 10.7   | 25   | 9.5    | 14   |
| Food insecurity |          | 12.90% | 31   | 11.20% | 18   | 10.80% | 14   |
| Housing*        |          | Units  | Rank | Units  | Rank | Units  | Rank |
|                 |          | 42     | 47   | 31     | 51   | 52     | 41   |

\*Number of apartments or other units that were affordable and available for every 100 renter households with very low incomes in 2016. Very low-income households are those with incomes at or below half of median income in the metropolitan or other area where they live.

2/20

There was a request to compare success of the REACH program with “regular” DHS programs. Attached you will find two documents that compare the REACH program to the Parents as Scholars (PAS) program.

Finally, there was a question around the continued extension of the suspension of HB 2469 (2007). Attached is a document that provides an overview HB 2032 and explains a bit of history for HB 2469. If not suspended there will be a fiscal impact to not passing HB 2032. There is currently a workgroup led by the Chair and Co-Chairs House Human Services and Housing Committee to examine HB 2032 and other related bills and concepts to make a consolidated recommendation about the direction for these SSP programs.

For additional information please contact Kim Fredlund, DHS Self-Sufficiency Director 503-932-7394.

Sincerely,



Eric Luther Moore  
DHS Chief Financial Officer

cc: Ken Rocco, Legislative Fiscal Office  
Laurie Byerly, Legislative Fiscal Office  
George Naughton, Department of Administrative Services  
Tamara Brickman, Department of Administrative Services  
Cathleen Connolly, Department of Administrative Services

The Oregon Department of Human Services, Self Sufficiency Program provides employment and educational services for individuals who are receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance. Two educational programs that have been implemented under the JOBS program are highlighted below to compare the services and opportunities each program offers.

## **Parents of Scholars**

The Parents of Scholars (PAS) program was developed and implemented to provide TANF individuals who were or would be undergraduates the opportunity to complete or begin their two – or four-year degrees while receiving cash assistance. The allowable educational institutes approved under the PAS program were two and four-year college or universities, junior or community colleges, and technical, professional or career schools. Availability of the PAS program, pursuant to ORS 412.017, was one percent of the total number of households receiving cash assistance on January 1<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year.

Applicants for the PAS program were able to determine their own educational path in the institution of their choice as long as the school met the definition set by policy. Course of learning and future employment plan were part of the application process as was obtaining the funds necessary to complete their educational goal.

PAS participants were eligible for support services, such as childcare while they in class and transportation to get to and from school. Additionally, PAS participants could access some support services for books or supplies if they were required for completion of coursework. These funds were capped at \$100 per academic term.

The PAS program was administered through Central Office (Salem). Each participant was required to apply for PAS and once enrolled, was required to provide transcripts/grades quarterly that provided satisfactory progress in their plan and continued enrollment. There was additional requirement of engagement during the summer months to maintain PAS eligibility. Case Manager's/Family Coach's provided support and maintained attendance records and progress. Upon completion or removal of PAS, participants were placed back into the JOBS programs if they remained on TANF. They would continue to receive services until they were able to obtain employment and/or TANF ended.

PAS was included in HB 2469, however, the program suspended accepting new applicants effective July 1, 2011. Those who were in the PAS program prior to this date were grandfathered in and allowed to complete their educational plan.

### **PAS Outcomes:**

- Between 2008 – 2011, a total of 983 slots were created.
- Of the 2,884 PAS applications submitted, 593 were accepted.
- 407 individuals were on the PAS waitlist at the time the program was suspended.
- 59 PAS participants graduated from a two or four-year degree program.

The main reasons for exiting the program (in order of ending closures):

1. Withdrew or stopped attending school
2. Other – no reason provided by participant
3. TANF closure due to other reasons other than income
4. TANF closure due to income

Parents of Scholar Program continues to reside in HB 2469, however, this bill is currently in suspension.

## **The REACH Program:**

The Rogue Educational Achievement Program, known as the REACH Program, is a vocational training/education model that started in 2015-2017 as a pilot sponsored by Senator Bates. It was targeted to high wage/high demand jobs available within the Community Colleges Career Pathways Training Opportunities. This program was accessible to TANF recipients and gave them the opportunity to enroll in educational programs and receive employment support that align with their individual aptitude and interests. Main areas of educational training have been: health care, human services, business management and the trades.

The initial pilot was started in the Grants Pass/Medford area. REACH partnerships included the local workforce board, the educational community and connected to the Health Professions Opportunity Grant (HPOG). Partners work together to leverage services and braid funds to provide the support needed for each student to be successful.

Local DHS staff refer individuals who have expressed an interest in educational trainings and are prepared to move forward in their plan. Each individual is re-assessed by REACH staff and are asked to complete an Interest Inventory. If excepted into the program, the participant, in partnership with REACH, will create an educational plan and identify their goals that will lead them to become self-sufficient. Participants regularly meet with staff while enrolled in REACH. The program provides some wrap around services that support the participant while they are engaged in their training/certification program.

Prior to graduation, Participant will have support in preparing to enter the working world. Upon graduation, the participant will receive ongoing support until they have obtained employment in their educational field.

Participants are supported through this program with tuition and grants that allow for the individual to obtain their training without having high student loan debt when completed. While engaged, Participants have access to additional supports such as additional transportation for those in rural areas, laptops for distance learning and other areas that present barriers to success that are beyond what a JOBS Family Coach could provide.

## **REACH Outcomes:**

- Since 2015, 184 participants were enrolled in a training program
- Of the 184 individuals, 110 successfully completed their training with 31 still enrolled
- 76% of those who completed their training have found employment.
- 80% of the individuals who found employment are working in a field related to their educational training.
- Of the total number of individuals who were unable to complete training, 50% of them did gain employment, with some of those jobs in their field of study.
- The Oregon income capita for Rogue Valley is \$11.54 an hour. REACH individuals are earning, on average, \$14,42 an hour.

Attachment 1

REACH continues to work in the Medford/Grants Pass area of the state. Although REACH has not yet expanded beyond Medford/Grants Pass, there are many areas across Oregon who are interested in the model as it has shown success through the ongoing coordination of services, braiding of funds, regular communication among partners, engagement of participants, and overall support from DHS and the community.

## Parents of Scholars Quick Comparison Chart to the REACH Program

| Parents of Scholars   |                                     | REACH Program   |
|---|-------------------------------------|---|
| July 2008   | Program Implementation              | January 2015  |
| Statewide Access  | Program Location                    | Medford/Grants Pass – D8  |
| Four Year Universities or Colleges<br>Junior or Community Colleges<br>Technical, Professional or Career Schools | Educational Institutions            | Rogue Community College<br>Southern Oregon University<br>International Institute of transportation Resource - IITR<br>Abdill College<br>Pacific Health Career Training<br>SOHOPE  |
| Dependent on the certificate or degree the participant is working towards.                                      | Activity                            | Vocational Training<br>Short Term Training<br>High Wage/High Demand Jobs  |
| TANF- JOBS Funds<br>JOBS Support Services   | Fiscal Supports/Funding             | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scholarships/Stipends to augment Pell Grants</li> <li>• HPOG Grant</li> <li>• TANF – JOBS funds</li> <li>• Support Services – supports that were more flexible than JOBS</li> <li>• JOBS Support Services for tuition, books and supplies</li> <li>• Leveraged funds from REACH partners.</li> </ul> |
| Case Management from DHS<br>Program Eligibility support from Central Office                                     | Non-Financial Supports for Families | Case Management with DHS and Reach<br>Navigator Support<br>Cohort meetings/networking<br>Peer to Peer relationships and study partners  |
| As of August 2013, 593 participants were enrolled   | Participation                       | As of April 2018, 184 participants have enrolled  |
| 59 Participants graduated with a two or four-year degree  | Certificate/Degree Completion       | 110 participants completed a training program   |
| PAS suspended enrollment in July 2011. PAS program resides in HB 2469 which is currently suspended.             | Status as of February 2019          | The REACH program continues to provide services in the Medford and Grants Pass areas. Expansion to other parts of Oregon are being considered   |



## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Understanding HB 2032

For more than a decade, the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) has been evolving. Guided by participant feedback, best practices and some national trends, the program has moved from one focused on short term outcomes and inflexible program requirements to one that supports each family in meeting their unique goals. TANF now focuses on long-term family stability and meaningful engagement which ultimately aligns with larger Self Sufficiency Program goals of moving families out of poverty.

The current TANF program encourages and assists recipients in identifying their goals, partnering with their Family Coach to develop a plan to reach those goals, and engaging in services through the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program that help them to achieve those goals.

Oregon House Bill 2032, introduced by the Governor on behalf of DHS in the 2019 session, provides the opportunity to once again work closely with program advocates and stakeholders to implement the best program possible within existing resources, for Oregon families living in poverty. The bill proposes changes to the program requirements to align with a person-entered approach.

To better understand the current program and the proposed changes, this document highlights the current bill, the historical shift, and the program components that are impacted by either current or past language.

### KEY COMPONENTS OF HB 2032 (2019 Session)

Calls for the continued suspensions enacted in 2008, 2011, 2013, 2015 and 2017 sessions. These programmatic suspensions include:

- Services that can be provided after TANF benefits close (referred to as Post-TANF program benefits);
- Language that allows for TANF benefits to be paid to eligible participants while they pursue higher education (often referred to as the Parents as Scholars (PAS) program);
- Support for individuals who are applying for Social Security Insurance or Social Security Disability Insurance (known as the State Family Pre-SSI/SSDI (SFPSS) program)
- *Although the bill as written calls for this program to be both suspended and reinstated, there is an amendment requested that would change the sunset date and continue the suspension for this program through June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021.)*

Removes prescriptive statutory language around assessment and case planning requirements and specifies that the language around assessment is now in rule. Previous work with stakeholders and the Oregon Legislature has helped the program shift philosophy and practice to integrate flexible and responsive policies necessary to



be successful while working with families. As part of this process, the department agreed to provide more guidance in rule and remove prescriptive language and program requirements from statute. This allows for services to be responsive to economic shifts, and to address identified barriers to employment and family stability as they arise. DHS has completed rule making and now hopes the passage of the bill to remove the statutory language will complete that process.

## **BACKGROUND AND HISTORY**

### **HB 2469 – 2007 Session**

In 2007, the TANF program worked with advocates to design and implement Oregon House Bill 2469. Some features of this law included:

- The creation of the State Family Pre-SSI/SSDI (SFPSS) program, including an enhanced cash grant structure for participants;
- Language that allowed the department to collect a portion of the initial SSI/SSDI award to repay the cash benefits paid to the family during their time on the SFPSS program;
- The creation of a program that allows participants to pursue a higher education (called the Parents as Scholars (PAS) program in OAR);
- An increase in the number of hours an absent parent could be involved in a child's parenting without penalty or consideration of their finances;
- An expansion of the available JOBS activities and components;
- Inclusion of required screenings, assessments and case planning;
- Extended JOBS exemption for 6 months following birth of child;
- Changes to the Oregon TANF time limits and allowable exemptions;
- Changes to the way in which child support is passed through to families and disregarded in financial eligibility determinations;
- Implementation of a program which provided a small cash grant for up to twelve months for families who left the TANF program due to employment (referred to as the Post-TANF program in statute)

### **2008 Budget reductions**

During the recession, the program suffered \$2.4 million of General Fund (GF) reductions to the CAF 2007-2009 budget as part of balancing the statewide budget that were tied to proposed program service reductions. The program specifics impacted by the reduction, which are not included in Oregon statute but rather detailed in rule, include:

- An income limit for non-needy caretaker relative applicants of 185% FPL (there was previously no income limit for relatives applying for TANF on behalf of children in their care);
- A 60-day employment separation penalty;
- Reductions to the pre-TANF program.

### **HB 2049 – 2011 Session**

Continued program reductions were implemented based on the economic recession and the increasing TANF caseload. Some of the programmatic changes included:

- Added assessment, orientation, and a JOBS overview to the eligibility requirements;

- Use of the assessment and employability screening to develop a plan;
- Required single parents to participate if they have a child under the age of two;
- Closed the PAS program to new applicants;
- Added employment separation penalties to statute and expands the penalty period to 120-days from 60-days;
- Specified and formalized the income limit for non-needy relative cases;
- Specified that self-employed individuals were not eligible for the Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) program;
- Expanded the re-engagement and disqualification process by allowing for two months of ineligibility after four months of disqualification;
- Formally suspends the enhanced SFPSS grant.

#### **HB 2055 – 2013 Session**

- Extended the sunset date of the suspensions passed during the 2011 session; and
- Allowed the program to limit the number of participants, the activities, or the level of participation in the JOBS program based on the results of the assessment or employability screenings.

#### **HB 3535 – 2015 Session**

This package, known as the TANF Re-investment, in conjunction with Policy Option Package 101 and 113, authorized the Department of Human Services to reinvest nearly \$30 million in program savings generated by a decline in the TANF program caseload. The package was a combination of policy changes and targeted strategies to improve outcomes for children and families living in extreme poverty. Some components of this legislation included:

- Elimination of deprivation requirements;
- Expansion of the definition of caretaker relative;
- Development of the benefit cliff package;
  - Raised exit limit;
  - Employment payments;
  - Reduced ERDC copayments;
- Allowance of support service pilots for those who have left TANF and are at risk of returning to the program;
- An increase in staffing to allow for a more relationship-centered program;
- Changes to the re-engagement and disqualification process;
- Time limit alignment and the elimination of the exemption policies;
- Statute flexibility for working with participants in determining appropriate plans.

#### **HB 3470 – 2017 Session** (originally introduced as HB 2347 but amended into HB 3470)

- Extended the sunset date of the suspensions passed during the 2011 session.

## PROGRAM COMPONENT CHANGES

| Program / Policy Element                             | Previous Program / Practice   | Current Program / Practice   |
|--|---|--|
| Supports for Individuals Transitioning to Employment | <p>Post-TANF Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provided a small monthly payment to families for up to twelve months following TANF closure</li> </ul> <p><i>Implemented in 2007 with the passage of 2469; suspended in 2011 with the passage of 2049.</i></p>                                | <p>Benefit Cliff Package</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased Exit Limit – Although the TANF eligibility limit remains the same, the increased exit allows working families to remain on the program and earn twice the standard income limit before closing TANF benefits completely</li> <li>• Employment Payments – Reducing monthly cash payment for the first three months following TANF closure</li> <li>• Reduced Childcare Co-pay</li> <li>• Ongoing family coaching</li> </ul> <p><i>Implemented in 2015 with the passage of HB 3535, known as the TANF Re-Investment Package.</i></p>   |
| Educational Programs & Student Supports              | <p>Parents as Scholars (PAS) Program</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A limited program which allowed approved JOBS participants to pursue a bachelor or higher education degree</li> </ul> <p><i>Implemented in 2007 with the passage of 2469; suspended in 2011 with the passage of 2049.</i></p> | <p>JOBS Program Vocational Training (VT) and Self-Initiated Training (SI) Components</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• VT - Allows interested JOBS participants to work towards and complete a vocational training program while receiving credit for their engagement as well as support service payments for costs such as school fees, childcare, and transportation</li> <li>• SI – Allows interested JOBS participants to work towards and complete either a short-term training program, such as a food handler's card or first aid certificate, or higher education, including an associates, bachelor's or master's degree</li> </ul> <p><i>Documented in OAR 461-001-0025 and included in field guidance and system tracking programs.</i></p> |

| Program / Policy Element | Previous Program / Practice  | Current Program / Practice  |
|--------------------------|--|---|
| Assessment & Screening   | <p>Used to determine plan and JOBS program activity</p> <p><i>Implemented in 2013 with the passage of HB 2055.</i></p>                   | <p>Used, in partnership with the family, to identify goals, potential barriers, and needed resources.</p> <p>Identified more than employment history and employability; includes questions about family stability, health, safety, child issues, housing, and legal issues.</p> <p><i>Implemented in 2015 with the passage of HB 3535; reflected in field guidance, training materials, and system tracking programs.</i></p> |
| JOBS Program Access      | <p>Limited to those assessed by the program to be the most employable</p> <p><i>Implemented in 2013 with the passage of HB 2055.</i></p> | <p>Available to all individuals other than those who are federally excluded (non-work authorized non-citizens, non-needy caretaker relatives, and SSI recipients)</p> <p><i>Implemented in 2015 with the passage of HB 3535; reflected in field guidance and all federal reporting.</i></p>   |

## TANF PROGRAM TERMINOLOGY

*Below is a list of terminology used throughout this document. The definitions provided are specific to the TANF program and are not intended to be applicable to other situations or circumstances.*

### Assessment

- The ongoing process, completed in partnership between a TANF participant and a family coach, by which barriers, strengths and goals are identified. This assessment is then used to aid in the development of a self-sufficiency plan and to track participant success and progress towards meeting their goals.

### Benefit Cliff

- The concept used to describe what happens to families when the TANF program ends, most often due to employment. The closure of the cash grant, the increase in the child care copay, and the elimination of the TANF support service dollars often puts the family in a situation where they are unable to meet their needs, particularly with entry level employment. Passage of HB 3535 in 2015 provided an opportunity for the TANF program to address the benefit cliff through a policy

package aimed at easing the transition from TANF to employment; includes employment payments, exit limit increase, and reduced co-pay.

#### Deprivation

- Previous policy related to the level of involvement of absent parents. Prior to April 2016, deprivation was an eligibility requirement, meaning that to be eligible, the absent parent was limited on how much time they were able to spend with the child or children.

#### Disqualification

- The process by which the TANF cash grant is reduced due to non-cooperation or non-engagement with the JOBS program.

#### Employment Payments

- Component of the Benefit Cliff Package that offers a gradually reducing cash grant for the first three months following TANF closure due to employment.

#### Employment Separation

- A policy consideration that looks at any terminated employment held by a TANF applicant or participant in the past 120-days. If the loss of employment is determined to be participant caused, a period of ineligibility may be applied to the family.

#### Exit Limit Increase

- A policy concept that allows families receiving TANF to secure an increase in earned income, either through additional hours or new employment, and remain TANF eligible. The increased exit limit is double the initial program eligibility income limit.

#### Family Coach

- The Self-Sufficiency Programs employee that primarily works with the TANF families; previously referred to as a Case Manager.

#### Family Engagement

- The philosophical concept of working with families to address their current situation and identify program components that will help to meet their needs rather than offering program components and asking participants to fit into those programs. This model emphasizes that all individuals can be engaged in a meaningful plan and supported as they work to reach individual, person-centered goals.

#### Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS)

- The services within the TANF program that provide family stability, life skills, education and employment opportunities for participants.

#### Non-Needy Caretaker Relative

- A non-parental family member caring for a TANF eligible child, who applies on the child's behalf, but does not receive TANF benefits for themselves.

#### Parents as Scholars (PAS)

- A program implemented following the passage of HB 2469 in 2007, that allows and supports JOBS participants to pursue a higher education degree while receiving TANF benefits. Interested applicants could apply for the program, and if approved, would receive the cash grant and support services while they completed a degree program. The program was suspended through HB 2049 in 2011. Participants who are interested in pursuing a degree through the JOBS program are currently supported through other, more flexible components.

#### Post-TANF

- A prior policy package that proved a reduced cash grant to individuals who obtained income that placed the family over the TANF income limit. The policy was originally suspended with HB 2049 in 2011 and has since been replaced by the Benefit Cliff Package.

#### Pre-TANF

- A program used to support families who are presumed to be eligible for the TANF program but for whom additional information is needed. Although the program is still in place, it is not currently utilized. When originally implemented, the pre-TANF program allowed for payments up to twice the monthly cash grant, but with the passage of SB 5552 in 2009, this amount was reduced to be equal to the TANF cash grant. Because of this change and the supports available to families who are approved for the program, guidance has been to open the TANF benefits as soon as eligibility is determined.

#### Reduced Co-Pay

- A programmatic element (part of the Benefit Cliff package) that allows families who are transitioning off of TANF due to employment to have a reduced childcare copay of \$27 for the first three months of Employment Related Day Care (ERDC) eligibility.

#### Re-Engagement

- The process by which an individual is invited to engage in the JOBS program or complete and assessment and develop a self-sufficiency JOBS plan. Re-engagement is explicitly detailed in ORS 412.009 and in OAR 461-190-0231 and is a requirement prior to the imposition of a disqualification.

#### State Family Pre-SSI/SSDI (SFPSS)

- A JOBS program component that provides supports to individuals applying for Social Security or Social Security Disability Insurance.

#### Time Limits

- A set of policies that sets forth a 60-month lifetime limit on the receipt of TANF benefits. The 60-month limit is a federal requirement; however, Oregon does

### Attachment 3

continue to support individuals who have reached the 60-month limit and qualify for a hardship through separately state funded programs. Hardships include, but are not limited to, active substance use or mental health treatment, caring for a child with a disability, survivor of domestic violence, and currently working with a medical professional to address physical health issues.