

# Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

## A Lifeline for Children

TANF provides minimal cash assistance to children and their families. The grant in Washington is \$478 for a family of three and is used to help pay for basic survival needs including: rent, utilities, food, clothing, and hygiene items.

Restore the 15% TANF cut from 2011. This will increase the grant for a family of 3 from \$478 to \$562, providing critical resources to our poorest families.

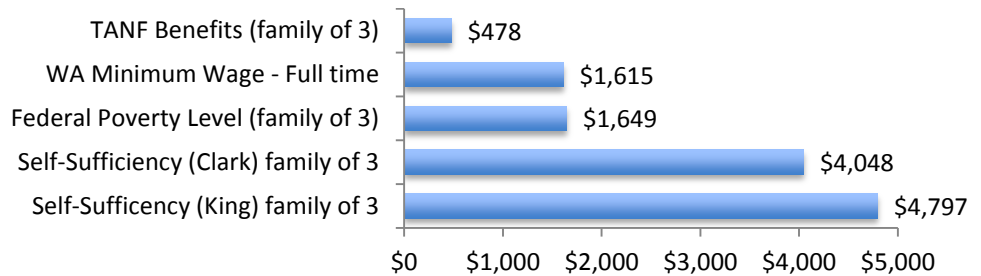
**TANF is the # 1 source of support for children in poverty.**

Jenny  
Walla Walla

In June of 2014 TANF served 62,579 children a month (39,354 families). There are now more than 288,000 kids living in poverty in Washington state, a net increase of 37,170 since 2009.

*TANF helped Jenny and her husband keep their children clothed, fed, warm, clean and able to focus in school. It also helped pay for transportation and appropriate clothing to get a job. Jenny did find a job, but they still struggle every day to make ends meet.*

**Since 2009, Washington has cut \$610 million from TANF, hurting kids in poverty the most.**



Angela  
Vancouver

*Angela and her 3 children saw their TANF cash grant amount lowered to \$562 per month when the 2011 TANF cuts went into effect. With a rent payment of \$550, Angela and her family live on \$12 per month.*

5,654 families are currently both on TANF and homeless.

**All kids deserve the opportunity to succeed in school.**

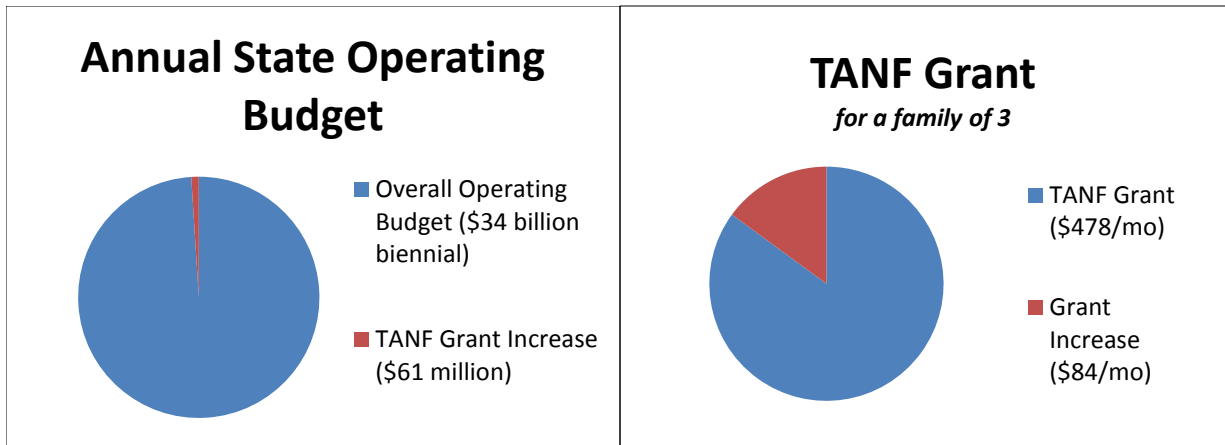
Jamal  
Seattle

In 2012-13 only 52.6 percent of homeless kids graduated high school. Funding education alone will not improve outcomes for homeless kids. Helping children and their families in deep poverty achieve economic stability is a critical step in improving educational outcomes. Restoring the TANF grant is a key ingredient in keeping families from becoming homeless.

*Jamal was homeless for most of his elementary school years. By the 4<sup>th</sup> grade he was living in a truck with his father and doing poorly in school. He was behind in reading and math and displayed behavior issues in class. That year they were able to secure subsidized housing. With an appropriate place to sleep and stable routine he was able to come to school prepared and ready to learn. Within 6 months he was on the honor roll and received an award for being a "standout student."*

A child who experiences homelessness is 87% more likely to drop out of school.

If the TANF grant was restored back to pre-recession levels, approximately 40,000 families on TANF would have approximately \$84 more a month. We surveyed current TANF recipients and asked them, “What would an additional \$84 per month buy for you and your family?” The columns below contain their answers.



\$61 million to the state

vs

\$61 million to Families

- A fraction of the state budget: .0017% of the biennial budget for the state

- Space heaters for nights where the temperature dips below 30 degrees, or
- 2 weeks of wood, oil or gas to heat home, or
- 1 month supply of diapers for one child, or
- Toilet Paper, toothpaste and tampons, or
- Deferred maintenance on car or home (specific examples were: two oil changes on a car or a new battery for their car or one new tire for their car), or
- Co-Pays to child care for one child, or
- 1.5 tanks of gas to get to work, or
- Shoes, or
- Participation fees for field trips, athletics, school supplies, lab fees, or even afterschool programs, or
- Household essentials not covered by Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) (specific examples were exempted grocery items, laundry and dish soap and cleaning products).

As states have recovered from the recession, **eight states** have prioritized assisting low income families by increasing their TANF cash grant or providing for an annual COLA:

Connecticut  
 Maryland  
 Ohio  
 Texas  
 Wyoming  
 Montana  
 New York  
 California