



TANF Coalition

Improving Colorado Works for Families

Support HB22-1259

Reps. Duran & Jodeh | Sen. Moreno

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), known here as Colorado Works, provides financial support to families far below the federal poverty level. A parent with two children must make **less than \$421 a month** to qualify for TANF basic cash assistance. Families in extreme poverty were struggling to make ends meet before the pandemic and are likely still the furthest from economic recovery.

For a family of three, living in extreme poverty means getting by on only \$10 per person per day

To help lift families out of extreme poverty, Colorado should:

- ◆ Increase TANF basic cash assistance and ensure that it keeps up with the rising cost of living
- ◆ Make improvements to how TANF serves families
- ◆ Reduce the “cliff effect” and create a smoother off-ramp to economic security
- ◆ Improve engagement and outreach with families

Increase cash assistance and ensure that it keeps up with the rising cost of living

- Basic Cash Assistance (BCA) is the most targeted approach Colorado can take to reducing extreme childhood poverty, which has a lifelong impact on child well-being.
- BCA in Colorado is only \$508 a month for a family of three, leaving that family living at about 28% of the poverty level. Twenty-four states have BCA payments higher than Colorado.
- As amended, HB1259 will raise the monthly BCA by 20% and ensure an annual cost-of-living-adjustment so that payments keep up with the rising cost of living in Colorado in future years.
 - For the average family of three, this means an extra \$100 per month—the most meaningful increase that families enrolled in the program have seen in 25 years.

BECAUSE THE TANF BASIC CASH ASSISTANCE PAYMENT IS NOT TIED TO INFLATION, IT IS WORTH LESS TODAY THAN IN 1996.

MONTHLY TANF BCA BENEFIT LEVELS FOR A SINGLE-PARENT FAMILY OF 3 IN 2018 DOLLARS



Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities.

Make improvements to how TANF serves families

- Reduce punitive sanctions to minimize barriers for families seeking economic security
- Improve work requirements to be more responsive to the needs of families in circumstances of hardship
- Ease the drug felony restrictions from participation in the TANF program

Reduce the “cliff effect” and allow a smoother off-ramp to economic security

- Improve income calculations and disregards as parents find employment and move toward economic security
- Improve time limit extensions for participation in TANF to be more responsive to the needs of families
- Align eligibility and redetermination timelines with other programs to ease burdens on families and counties

Improve engagement and outreach with families

- Elevate family voices in the spaces where decisions about TANF policies are made and implemented
- Make investments to improve outreach and communication about TANF to eligible families, including immigrant families
- Require consistent communication with enrolled families about program options and services, including child care, work and education, and other supports

Supporters:

ACCESS Housing of Adams County Inc.
All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition
Almost Home, Inc.
Anne Litwinski-Advocate
Ayla Bussel-Advocate
Bayaud Enterprises, Inc.
Brace Gibson, J.D.
Center for Work Education and Employment (CWEE)
Children’s Hospital Colorado
Clayton Early Learning
Colorado Center on Law & Policy
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Children’s Campaign
Colorado Fiscal Institute
Colorado Latino Leadership Advocacy and Research Organization (CLLARO)
Colorado Poverty Law Project
Colorado School Medicaid Consortium
Colorado Social Legislation Committee (CSLC)
CommunityWorks Inc.
Denver’s Early Childhood Council
Ealasha Vaughner-Advocate
Early Childhood Council of Larimer County
The Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County
ECHO & Family Center Early Childhood Council
Elephant Circle
Emergency Family Assistance Association
Florence Crittenton Services
Focus Points Family Resource Center

FrontLine Farming
The Gathering Place
Healthy Child Care Colorado
Healthy Together
Heather Hageman-Advocate
Human Services Network of Colorado
Hunger Free Colorado
Illuminate Colorado
Jennifer Jepsen-Advocate
Kaylie Weese-Advocate
Laurie Harvey-Advocate
Lisa Saenz-Advocate
Little Giants Learning Center
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry Colorado
Maria Droste Counseling Services
Metro Caring
National Association of Social Workers, Colorado Chapter
Parent Possible
Raise Colorado
Rocky Mountain Children’s Discovery Center
Rocky Mountain Partnership
Rose Community Foundation
Skills2Compete – Colorado
Spring Institute for Intercultural Learning
Ty Johnson-Family Advocate
WeeCycle
Westminster Public Schools McKinney Vento
The Women’s Foundation of Colorado