



# TANF Coalition

## Improving Colorado Works for Families

### Support HB22-1XXX

Reps. Duran & Jodeh

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. Even before the pandemic, families enrolled in TANF were facing the greatest barriers to financial security and well-being.

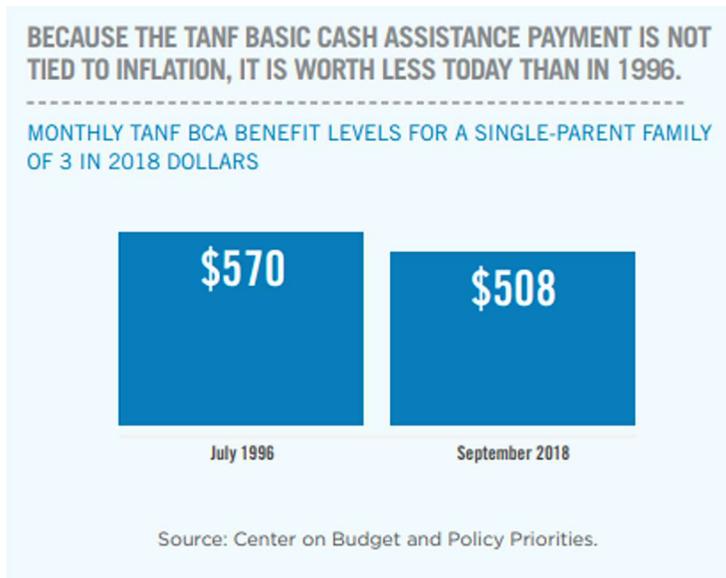
### For a family of three, living in extreme poverty means getting by on only \$10 per person per day

For a family of three to get out of extreme poverty (above 50% of the Federal Poverty Level) they would need to make more than \$10,980 per year. To 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 states have BCA payments higher than Colorado measured as a percentage of the poverty level.
- **Colorado should increase BCA payments for families to the equivalent of 50% of the poverty level**, or \$915 a month for a family of three, and ensure that payments keep up with the rising cost of living in Colorado in future years.



## **Make improvements to how TANF serves families**

- Reduce punitive sanctions to minimize barriers for families seeking economic security
- Improve access to child care and child care assistance for families enrolled in TANF
- Update work requirements to be more responsive to the needs of families
- Fully lift the drug felony ban from participation in the TANF program

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

- Improve income disregards as parents find employment and move toward economic security
- Improve time limit extensions for participation in TANF to be more responsive to families’ needs
- Extend the recertification period to 12 months to align with other programs

## **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:**

Colorado Center on Law & Policy  
Colorado Children’s Campaign  
Clayton Early Learning