

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES REPORT 2014

The Department of Workforce Services (DWS) provides the following report on the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The intent language in HB002 item 75 of the 2014 Legislative General Session directed DWS to provide to the Office of the Legislative Fiscal Analyst no later than September 1, 2014 a report that includes:

- 1) detail of DWS efforts to serve families in need statewide including additional ways of serving families pursued in the prior six months,
- 2) analysis of relevant fiscal implications including implications on systems and staffing,
- 3) review of demographic data informing why individuals are currently not receiving services,
- 4) review of other options to implement additional services and programs,
- 5) inventory of other states currently availing themselves of options not currently in place in Utah, and
- 6) further options for Legislative consideration to use available TANF funding to better serve families in need statewide.

1. Detail of DWS efforts to serve families in need statewide including additional ways of serving families pursued in prior months.

DWS has been the administering agency for the TANF Block Grant since it transitioned from Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The Federal Agency overseeing TANF is the Administration for Children and Families (ACF) under the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS). Since its conception in the mid-1990s, TANF has been a flexible block grant allowing states discretion to define and implement policies around cash assistance programs including eligibility criteria, grant amounts, time and income limits. These details can be found in the Utah TANF State Plan.

In order for states to receive their TANF grant, they must spend a certain amount of Maintenance of Effort (MOE) or State funds on programs and services that align with the TANF purposes. Per federal regulations, all TANF dollars must be spent on programs or projects that meet one or more of the four purposes of TANF -

- 1. Provide assistance to needy families
- 2. End dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage
- 3. Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies
- 4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families

Purposes 1 and 2 pertain to needy families only. "Needy" is defined as meeting income eligibility criteria as set by each state. In Utah, the TANF income eligibility level for "Needy Families" is up to 300 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The words 'up to' allows some discretion in applying income limits lower than 300 percent of the FPL for different programs depending on the target population to be served and services being provided. Services that are considered "assistance," like cash assistance, are contingent upon recipients engaging in work participation requirements. Most TANF funded services that are not considered "assistance" have an income limit of 200% or lower depending on the service and population to be served.

The following summary illustrates the programs and initiatives DWS continuously implements to utilize TANF funding to assist needy families in Utah (the TANF purposes associated with each program is in parenthesis).

• Family Employment Program (FEP) (Purposes 1 & 2)

DWS provides financial assistance benefits to needy families via the Family Employment Program. FEP serves needy families by providing monthly cash grants to families with children under 18. In order to receive the monthly grant, parents are required to participate in work activities prescribed by the Office of Family Assistance (OFA) and DHHS. These work activities are reported to the DHHS annually and states are required to have 50 percent of their caseload meet work participation requirements. In SFY14, DWS spent \$20,369,612 on FEP payments. In addition, The Department spent \$2,675,129 on Diversion Payments. Diversion is a strategy used to divert families from getting on FEP cash assistance by providing them an upfront grant amount equal to three FEP months. This occurs if they can verify a forthcoming employment opportunity that will sustain their on-going needs.

Other program costs associated with FEP are Supportive Services (\$679,788) and Work Activities (\$21,444,357). Supportive services include assistance for transportation and other employment related expenses. Work Activities consists of staffing costs including FEP case managers and an internal group of Licensed Clinical Therapists who work directly with FEP clients on barriers related to mental health. Utah TANF spending on FEP has fluctuated over the years since the implementation of TANF in 1996. Most of the fluctuation can be correlated with the economic environment. When unemployment rates were high, there was a correlation found in higher FEP caseloads, thus higher TANF spending on the program. Today, the FEP program has relatively lower caseload numbers, which correlates with the current low unemployment rate.

• *TANF Non-FEP training* (Purpose 2)

TANF non-FEP training is a program that assists TANF-eligible parents who are not on FEP with tuition expenses. In SFY14, over \$600,000 was spent in this program.

• TANF Rapid Rehousing (Purposes 1 & 2)

In SFY 14, \$1,113,897 in TANF funds were spent on rapid rehousing. TANF Rapid Rehousing is a program designed to assist homeless families by paying up to four months of housing related expenses including rent, deposits, and rental applications. The program is contracted out to several different community agencies to administer. All families that receive TANF Rapid Rehousing are required to work with a Rapid Rehousing Employment Specialist in their local DWS employment center.

Changes to rapid rehousing will be implemented in April 2015. Currently, The Road Home receives the bulk of the rapid rehousing funds. Prior to Housing and Community Development (HCD) becoming part of DWS, TANF money was given to HCD to subcontract with providers in the community to administer rapid rehousing in different parts of the state. In an effort to produce better employment and sustainability outcomes for families after they receive TANF rapid rehousing, DWS will release an RFG in November for community providers to apply for the opportunity to provide this service.

• Refugee Services (Purposes 1 & 2)

In SFY14, \$2,883,919 in TANF funds were spent on refugee services including the following –

- Case Management TANF funds the first two years of case management for all new refugees entering the country. Case management is contracted though refugee resettlement agencies. Case managers assess the needs of refugee families to connect them to resources based on their needs. They collaborate with DWS, DOH, the school districts, as well as other community providers.
- English as a Second Language (ESL) /Pre-Literate Refugee Employment Skills Training (PREST) program DWS partners with Granite Peaks to provide an intensive ESL/training program to prepare new refugees for employment. Refugees in the PREST program engage in ESL for 10 hours a week as well as 10 to 20 hours a week of workplace experience training. Workplace experience training includes instruction on work habits, effective communication skills in the workplace, basic computer skills, and problem solving.
- Training/Employment –DWS has an internal refugee employment counseling team
 that works with refugee families on the FEP program. Job developers are funded and
 work through the Asian Association of Utah (AAU) to provide targeted job search
 assistance to refugee families up to the first five years in the country.
- Subsidized Employment (Refugee Humanitarian Center Project) DWS partners with the LDS Humanitarian Center and AAU to provide subsidized employment to TANF eligible refugee families. The LDS Humanitarian Center pays 20 hours of wages for on the job training and DWS pays for 20 hours of classroom ESL instruction designed to enhance the job training and employment experience. Housing FEP Housing/Rapid Rehousing The refugee FEP housing program is called Temporary Rental Assistance or TRA. The purpose of TRA is to provide temporary rental assistance on a month-to-month basis for up to 18 months to eligible refugee customers enrolled in the Family Employment Program (FEP) until they become self-sufficient (employed, receiving Supplemental Social Security benefits (SSI)) or transition to other subsidized housing programs.

• *Child Care – After School Programs* (Purpose 3)

In SFY 14, \$3,205,651 was spent on elementary and junior high after school programs throughout the state. These after school programs are contracted through the Office of Child Care, another division within DWS. The after school programs have a requirement to include strategies around preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies which is Purpose 3 under TANF. Studies show that teens who are engaged in extra-curricular activities including after school programs are less likely to engage in at-risk behaviors.

An addition to after school programs, this year had a Request for Grants for after school programs with a Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) focus. \$5,000,000 in TANF funding was used for this initiative and 13 new programs were awarded statewide.

• Fatherhood and Two-Parent Family Formation and Maintenance Programs (Purpose 4) DWS currently has a three year contract with Utah State University to provide parenting and relationship classes in DWS employment centers and in local communities. This contract started July 1, 2014 and will end June 30, 2017. From Aug 2013 to May 2014, DWS partnered with Utah State University (USU) to provide parenting/relationships classes and treated this period as a pilot. USU conducted pre/post-test evaluations on participants. The evaluations showed positive outcomes related to attitudes and perceptions before and after taking the classes. DWS spent close to \$200,000 in TANF funding on this project and USU offered the classes in at least one employment center in each Economic Service Area. Based on the success of the pilot period, DWS extended the partnership resulting in the three year contact described above.

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• Social Work Services/LCT Program (Purposes 1 & 2)

The Licensed Clinical Therapist (LCT) Program provides clinical services to TANF customers and offers crisis intervention/resource referrals as needed. The LCTs provide clinical interventions, evaluations, monitoring, case management, brief therapy, consultations, and collaboration/brokerage for customers who have experienced substance abuse, domestic violence, and mental health issues. The LCTs promote problem-solving strategies using a strength-based approach. Through the clinical case management and evaluation, the LCTs are able to identify how mental health has been a barrier to work.

• *Mental Health Services* (Purpose 1)

DWS contracts with over 35 mental health providers in the community to help reduce identified mental health issues so that FEP customers can successfully obtain employment or some other means of self-sufficiency. It is particular to the FEP program and only FEP recipients may receive these services. Contracted clinical services are not intended to supplant the established Medicaid provider, but rather enhance the service delivery capacity available to FEP customers.

• Social Research Institute Studies and Evaluations (Purposes 1-4)

Since 2000, DWS has contracted with the University of Utah's Social Research Institute (SRI) to conduct evaluations exploring the general FEP population to better understand their composition, needs, and attitudes. Every year, SRI interviews a cohort of FEP customers to assess their experience with the FEP program, the relationship with their employment counselor, and barriers to employment. Recently, SRI incorporated an assessment based on the Adverse Childhood Experience Study (ACES). SRI also provides training and consultation on various projects and programs when needed including the Next Generation Kids (NGK) and the financial literacy pilot projects.

New DWS/TANF Initiatives Within the Last Six Months

In the past six months, DWS actively sought new innovative ways to use TANF funds to benefit the citizens of Utah. On June 9, 2014, DWS released an RFG to the public to allow community programs and providers to apply for TANF funding to provide services that meet one or more of the four purposes of TANF. Several bidders' conferences were held throughout the state where the RFG was presented and potential bidders could ask questions and get clarification on the process.

Applicants were required to submit a letter of intent indicating the services they intended to apply for. They were required to submit a separate application for each service. If a letter of intent was not submitted, an entity could not apply for the grant. This allowed the TANF contracts team to get a sense for how many proposals would be received and prepared the review committee to evaluate such a large number of proposals. Close to 780 letters of intent were received from potential applicants statewide. The deadline for proposals was Aug. 1, 2014. A total of 249 proposals were received. Seven of those proposals were either incomplete or were turned in after the deadline and had to be discarded. The proposals are currently being reviewed and evaluated by 84 review committee members. Each proposal is read and scored independently by four different readers. Scoring and evaluation meetings will take place the last week of August and awards will be announced mid-September.

The RFG was structured so that applicants could apply for services under Purposes 1 and 2 or services under Purposes 3 and 4. Services under Purposes 1 and 2, require that TANF eligibility is determined for all families receiving services. The services under Purposes 3 and 4 do not require eligibility determination. A priority point is awarded for proposals providing services in

rural areas. The following table lists the services under each group and how many proposals were received.

TANF Services Under Purposes 1 and 2	Apps	TANF Services Under Purposes 3 and 4	Apps
Addiction Intervention Support	2	Financial Responsibility/Education	24
	5		
Adult Mentoring/Peer Support	2	Out-of-Wedlock Pregnancy Prevention	5
	1		
Basic Technology Skills	9	Parenting/Relationship Skills	38
Domestic Violence Prevention	13	Youth Mentoring	47
Employment Retention/Job Training	11		
Expungement Assistance	3		
Fatherhood Initiatives	5		
Family Preservation	20		
Pre-K/School Readiness	11		
Rural Transportation	2		
Skills Training -	8		
Transitioning/Incarceration			
		Total Apps	242

In addition to finding new grantees throughout the state, DWS sought ways to use TANF to further support employment. With the aid of longitudinal studies conducted by SRI, the department was able to identify common barriers to employment and risk factors that perpetuate the poverty cycle in families. Some of these barriers include criminal backgrounds, substance abuse, mental health, domestic violence, single parenthood and teen pregnancy. DWS is now using TANF for the following projects and programs that address these barriers and risk factors related to employment.

• *Intergenerational Poverty Project* (Purposes 1 & 2)

DWS is currently in the process of implementing a pilot program to reduce Intergenerational Welfare Dependency. The pilot will be a sub-program of FEP. The target population is families currently on FEP or who were on FEP in the last 24 months. The purpose of this program is to reduce the risk of children, raised in welfare dependent households, from being dependent on public assistance as adults. In light of the research conducted in this area indicating that a two-generation approach has been the most effective, Next Generation Kids (NGK) will involve a whole-family service provision. Individualized services will be offered to parents and children to eliminate barriers to work, health, and overall self-sufficiency. DWS financial assistance program has focused on the parent; we know that in order to affect intergenerational poverty, it is critical to begin focusing on children. The goal of NGK is to make a difference in the lives of children.

• System of Care Collaboration (Purposes 1 - 4)

DWS is currently in partnership with the Department of Human Services (DHS) and other state agencies to implement a System of Care approach to case management and service delivery



practices across agencies. To support these efforts, DWS will put forth \$2,000,000 over the next three years starting SFY15.

• Refugee Services Expansion (Purposes 1 & 2)

- Community supports and capacity building The Refugee Services Office (RSO)
 hired six new community resource specialists to work with refugee communities.
 They are tasked with assessing refugee community needs and identifying and
 implementing new methods for capacity building within individual communities. They
 will also evaluate current volunteer efforts and create new ways of engaging and
 utilizing volunteers.
- 2. Women's mental health/domestic violence services RSO hired a women's services coordinator. She is tasked with coordinating Victim Advocate volunteers to assist with critical refugee cases dealing with domestic violence and sexual assault.

• Tribal TANF (Purposes 1 & 2)

DWS is currently in negotiations with the Northeastern Nevada Tribal TANF Consortium (NNTTC). The consortium will be based in Ely, Nevada, but serve Native Americans in Juab and Tooele counties in Utah. Negotiations are nearly complete and a signing ceremony has been scheduled for 9/29/2014 in Ely, Nevada. Once Tribal TANF programs have been approved by ACF the tribes work with ACF to implement their programs. Beginning FFY15, \$101,349 will be transferred to the NNTTC. ACF transfers the Tribal TANF funding to the tribe before we receive our allotted TANF amount. The only other Tribal TANF program in Utah is the Navajo Nation program. Navajo Nation has administered its own TANF program since 2000 and they receive a transfer of a little over \$1,300,000.

• Youth Summer Employment Program (Purpose 3)

DHHS together with the Department of Labor (DOL) released a statement encouraging states to use TANF and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funds to provide summer youth employment opportunities for low-income youth. With very little time to coordinate a whole summer program, DWS partnered with Salt Lake County Youth Services to provide summer jobs for 10 refugee youth in various locations in Salt Lake County including landscaping, work in the county library, and office work. Preliminary assessments show successful completion of all but one youth with overall employer satisfaction. Salt Lake County has agreed to partner with DWS again next year to provide summer jobs for more youth.

• Financial Literacy (Purpose 4)

From August 2013 to the present, DWS partnered with AAA Fair Credit Foundation to provide budgeting and credit management classes in the South County DWS Employment Center. The project was a pilot and involved pre/post-test evaluations conducted by SRI on the attitudes and behaviors of participants related to budgeting and credit management before and after the classes. Corporation for Enterprise Development (CFED) and ICF International assisted in follow up surveys and interpreting of data. Through this project, we were able to identify areas of need such as many of our FEP customers indicated that they do not have a checking or savings account or that they use check cashing businesses or payday lenders. Through the pre/post evaluations, customers shared that they learned how to budget or use better budgeting practices and others reported that they now understand their credit report and how to reconcile discrepancies on their report.

DWS recognizes the opportunity to provide financial education using TANF funding. One of the proposed services in the RFG is financial literacy. Through the grants process, DWS hopes to

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find programs to partner with and provide classes like the ones described above in employment centers as well as community based locations across the state.

• Subsidized Employment (Purpose 2)

Currently, the only TANF funded subsidized employment program is the Refugee Humanitarian Center Project previously described. DWS is working on other subsidized employment programs to provide job training and potential long-term employment opportunities for participants of TANF.

• *Career Pathways Initiatives* (Purpose 2)

DWS is in the research phases of developing a Career Pathways program. Career Pathways is a nationally recognized model for assisting low-income parents with education and job training opportunities by coordinating with local colleges and training schools. Ideally, the participants will enroll in a program as a cohort and receive case management and supportive services until they complete their training program and are placed with an employer in their field of training. DWS hopes to implement a Career Pathways program for FEP parents in the next few years.

2. Analysis of Relevant Fiscal Implications Including Systems and Staffing

The total projected annual costs including salaries and benefits for new staff and indirect costs is \$3,000,000. In April 2014, TANF management duties were divided among three managers instead of one. Currently, there is a manager to oversee the TANF umbrella, including federal reports, contracts, funding, TANF budget, and communication with ACF. Another manager is assigned to oversee FEP, including policy, procedures, mental health services (Social Work Services), and FEP case management processes. The third manager is assigned to oversee the Next Generation Kids (NGK) Pilot that was described above under New DWS/TANF Initiatives.

Three new contract staff were hired to take on TANF funded contracts including the RFG and all contracts that will result from the process. Two new FEP program specialists were hired to work on the program. Two new case managers were hired for the NGK Pilot with four vacancies for additional case managers as the pilot grows.

DWS spends a significant amount of TANF money on refugee services as described in question 1 above including case management through the refugee resettlement agencies. In an effort to improve the current case management processes and ensure better outcomes, a refugee research consultant was hired on a time-limited basis of two years to help evaluate, coordinate, and strengthen TANF funded case management.

During the 2014 Legislative session, the legislature appropriated \$1,500,000 in TANF funds to refugee services through RSO. To utilize that appropriation, RSO hired six community resource specialists including a supervisor and one women's services coordinator. Descriptions of their job duties are given in question 1 under *refugee services expansion*.

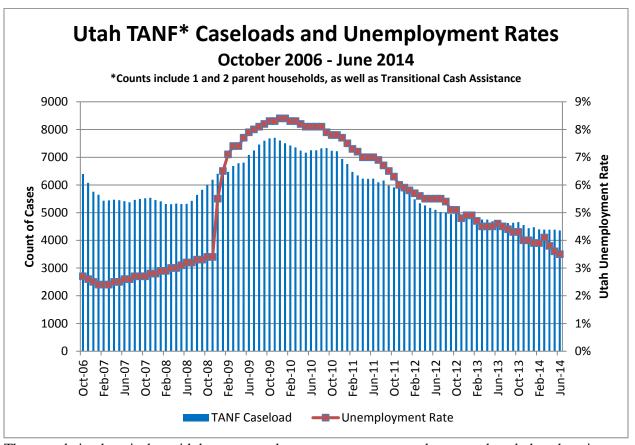
As DWS takes on more TANF projects, we recognize the need to ensure that programs and projects are evaluated for effectiveness. In light of this, the amount contracted with the Social Research Institute to evaluate new and existing projects has been increased.

There are no known system implications at this time.

3. Review of Demographic Data Informing Why Individuals are Currently Not Receiving Services

We do not have real data to show why individuals are not currently receiving TANF services. Indeed, there is no way to track this type of data. Based on our expertise in dealing with TANF customers, however, we can speculate as to possible barriers that may prevent individuals from seeking TANF assistance or services. As described in question one under "Family Employment Program," the work participation requirements can be difficult for parents to complete and sometimes the amount of time and effort is not always worth the monthly grant amount. So there is the issue of self- determination and ultimately some families opt not to receive cash assistance services.

Another contributing factor may be the correlation that exists between low FEP caseloads and low unemployment rates. The following graph illustrates this correlation from 10/2006 through 6/2014.



The speculation here is that with lower unemployment rates, more people are employed, thus there is less need for FEP services.

4. Review of Other Options to Implement Additional Services and Programs

TANF policies and regulations can be difficult and sometimes tricky to understand. A good resource to use is a TANF guide titled "Helping Families Achieve Self-Sufficiency – A Guide on Funding Services for Children and Families through the TANF Program" and can be found on the ACF website. This guide provides an overview, outlines the program purposes, what is allowable, and eligibility criteria for certain uses of TANF. It also defines "assistance" versus other benefits and explains federal versus state funds and what activities are allowable under each. The TANF block grant is flexible in the sense that states can determine what programs and services to fund based on

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population and demographic needs. What is implemented in Chicago or San Francisco, for example, may not be what is needed or appropriate for Salt Lake City and other parts of Utah.

When developing the RFG, the contracts team researched TANF policy, the program guide, reporting requirements, and the SRI studies of FEP families to determine the needs and appropriate services to fund. DWS provides case management and other services, but collaborating with community partners and funding promising programs with TANF allows another level of resources to be provided by experts in those areas of service delivery. (See question 1 under TANF RFG for more details.)

When reviewing additional options, DWS is mindful of the reporting requirements associated with TANF. Each quarter, we are required to report to ACF on TANF spending. In December 2012, the Government Accountability Office (GAO) published a study titled "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: More Accountability Needed to Reflect Breadth of Block Grant Services." Based on the recommendations of that study, ACF implemented new reporting requirements effective after the first quarter of FFY15. The new requirements include new categories of line items to show where and what TANF is being spent on. In the past, the categories of the report were vague enough that it was easy to categorize expenditures incorrectly. The new requirements allow ACF to see what types of services are being funded and under which TANF purposes. A study conducted by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP) in August 2012 titled "How States Have Spent Federal and State Funds under the TANF Block Grant" illustrates how states have spent federal and state (MOE) funds. There were three key findings:

- Spending on basic assistance accounts for a relatively small share of TANF and MOE expenditures.
- States initially shifted some resources from cash assistance to activities designed to promote or support work, but those investments leveled off nearly a decade ago.
- States are using a significant and growing share of TANF and MOE funds to support other state services, including child welfare; states also have diverted substantial funds formerly used to assist poor families to other purposes.

The CBPP report also talks about states using TANF funds to supplant funding for state funded programs. Fortunately, DWS has been cautious with TANF spending to ensure that the bulk of the funding went to cash assistance to serve low-income families. With fewer families on cash assistance, we now have an opportunity through the TANF reserve to fund programs and services in the community focused on resources for low-income families as described in previous sections of this report. To avoid an imbalance of TANF spending on activities that do not serve low-income families, most of the proposed services in the TANF RFG were under purposes 1 and 2 with an income eligibility requirement of 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Limit or below.

Link to the referenced TANF guide - $\frac{\text{http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/ofa/funding guide.pdf}}{\text{Link to the referenced GAO report - }\frac{\text{http://www.gao.gov/assets/660/650635.pdf}}{\text{Link to the referenced CBPP report - }\frac{\text{http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3808}}{\text{http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3808}}$

5. Inventory of Other States Currently Availing Themselves of Options Not Currently in Place in Utah

It is difficult to provide a clean inventory of what other states are doing relative to what Utah is currently spending TANF on since states determine their own policies and the current method of capturing expenditures is very vague. Utah has been known as a progressive state when it comes to implementing innovative and forward-thinking strategies. A few examples are the unique integration

of TANF and refugee services, the focus on financial literacy, and the "Work Success" program which is a job club model designed to teach job search strategies while simultaneously fostering an environment of peer support and networking.

TANF-Individual Development Account

According to the Center for Social Development out of Washington University in St. Louis, there are 17 states including Arkansas, Illinois, Louisiana, and Michigan that have implemented Individual Development Account (IDA) programs with TANF match. An IDA is a special bank account that helps customers save for their education, the purchase of a first home or to start a business. The customer contributes money from their earnings from work into the account and that contribution is then matched with TANF. There is potential for Utah to have an IDA match program, however, one has not yet been created.

State -Earned Income Tax Credit

A State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) program is in addition to the federal EITC program. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP), a State EITC program builds on the well-documented success of the federal EITC program by keeping working parents on the job and families and children out of poverty. The federal EITC program provides a needed income boost for low-income workers that help them meet basic needs. In addition, it encourages families to keep working, it has been shown to be the single most effective tool the nation has for reducing poverty among working families and children. Furthermore, the program has a lasting effect since children in low-income families that get additional income from the EITC do better and go farther in school and ultimately work more and earn more as adults. A State EITC program builds on the success of the federal EITC program.

Michigan and Wisconsin are two states that use TANF funds on State Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) programs. According to a CBPP report from October 2011, both of these states have had to significantly reduce the amount of TANF funds spent on EITC in the last few years.

Link to referenced IDA study - http://csd.wustl.edu/Publications/Documents/PR05-02.pdf
Link to Basic info on state EITC - http://www.cbpp.org/cms/index.cfm?fa=view&id=4084
Link to referenced EITC study - http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=3498

6. Further Options for Legislative Consideration to Use Available TANF Funding to Better Families in Need Statewide

As stated in greater detail above, DWS is taking great efforts to find new innovative ways to use TANF funding to benefit the citizens of Utah through the RFG process. We have also looked for further ways to use TANF funds to support employment and have implemented a few new programs that serve this purpose. Other options to use TANF can be determined by reviewing the TANF purposes for appropriateness and following TANF guidelines as outlined in the TANF guide link provided above. We look forward to hearing about new opportunities throughout the state that the Legislature thinks may benefit from the use of TANF funds.

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