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# Briefly...

## Policy Brief: Helping Families with Pregnancy Planning and Prevention is Integral to Achieving the Purposes of TANF

### TANF Overview

#### Overall

In 1996, Congress enacted the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (federal welfare reform law), which authorized the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. After a series of temporary extensions, TANF was reauthorized for the first time in the Deficit Reduction Act for the period of 2005 through September 30, 2010. President Obama proposed and Congress approved a one-year extension through FY 2011.

TANF was established as a block grant to states and territories with strict requirements for moving recipients from time-limited cash assistance into employment. Tribes can elect to run their own TANF programs similar to state programs. TANF emphasized work as a way to lift families out of poverty and towards self-sufficiency. In addition to the emphasis on work, this legislation addressed a number of “family formation” issues linked to poverty and child well-being. Recognizing that personal responsibility for achieving self-sufficiency involves more than finding employment, the law draws the connection between the circumstances under which childbearing occurs and the likelihood that parents—or the children themselves—would find themselves in or remain in poverty. Three of the four purposes of TANF address family formation issues and are related to teen and unplanned pregnancy:

1. To provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives;
2. To end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
3. To prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and

4. To encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The TANF block grant provides states, territories, and tribes with more than \$16 billion annually that may be used for any activities reasonably expected to accomplish the program’s purposes. In addition to the broad purposes noted above, the law contains numerous provisions specifically dealing with family formation such as grants to states and communities for abstinence education, healthy marriage education, and responsible fatherhood programs.

States, tribes, and territories have broad flexibility in designing and operating their TANF programs, and can provide a range of benefits and services to families to achieve these four purposes. In addition to the federal block grant funds used to support these activities, states are required to spend a certain amount of “maintenance of effort” (MOE) funds on TANF programs—state dollars used to meet a requirement that states spend 75 or 80 percent annually of what they spent on federal welfare programs before the 1996 law passed. The largest share of TANF funds, federal and MOE expenditures, goes toward providing basic cash assistance to eligible families—about 28 percent of overall expenditures in 2009.

#### *Preventing Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is Directly Related to the Purposes of TANF*

A growing body of research suggests that reducing teen and unplanned pregnancy is integral to achieving the purposes of TANF. Both teen and unplanned pregnancy are closely linked to a host of critical social issues that TANF aims to address, such as poverty, high levels of relationship conflict and family turmoil, father absence, single parenthood, and various negative social, health, and economic outcomes for children born as a result of such pregnancies. For example:

- Too-early pregnancy and parenthood can often mean a “fast track” to poverty for young parents as well as their children: a

child's chance of growing up in poverty is nine times greater if (1) the mother gave birth as a teen, (2) the parents were unmarried when the child was born, and (3) the mother did not receive a high school diploma or GED, than if none of these circumstances exist.

- Children born to teen parents and as the result of an unplanned pregnancy face cognitive and other challenges that make it harder to succeed in school, which is critical to escaping poverty.
- Parenthood is a leading cause of school drop-out among teen girls, and teen mothers are less likely to go on to college than those who wait even a few years to start a family.
- Women who have an unplanned birth are more likely to be outside a committed relationship at conception and are less likely to move to a more formal union after the birth. Most single mothers who have an unplanned birth remain single, and those who are cohabiting either continue cohabiting or break up with their partners.
- Roughly one-quarter of teen mothers end up on welfare within three years of the child's birth.
- Virtually all of the increase in child poverty between 1980 and 1996 was related to the increase in non-marital child-bearing.

The third purpose of the program, in particular, makes TANF an important funding source for states, tribes, and territories in their efforts to address teen and unplanned pregnancy, which are closely connected to out-of-wedlock pregnancies. Most non-marital pregnancies are unplanned (as reported by the mothers themselves), and most unplanned pregnancies occur to unmarried women. Specifically, 72 percent of pregnancies to unmarried women are unplanned and 69 percent of unplanned pregnancies are to unmarried women. At the same time, while most unplanned and non-marital pregnancies occur to adult women rather than teens, nearly half (48 percent) of all first non-marital births occur to teens and four-fifths of teen births are non-marital.

### **State Spending on Pregnancy Prevention**

States are using the flexibility in existing laws to invest significant amounts of TANF funds in pregnancy prevention strategies for teens and young adults. In 2009, the most recent year for which expenditure data are available, 34 states and the District of Columbia reported spending some combination of federal funds and state MOE funds on pregnancy prevention. Although overall TANF spending on pregnancy prevention increased slightly from 2008 to

2009, the percentage spent decreased from 7.1 percent in 2008 to 6.7 percent in 2009. In total, states spent \$2.2 billion on pregnancy prevention in 2009.<sup>1</sup> The amount that states dedicate to these services and programs varies greatly. For example, the ten states that spent the most federal funds for pregnancy prevention accounted for more than 90 percent of total spending (CA, CT, GA, IA, LA, MA, MI, NY, OH, and PA), while the remaining 25 states accounted for 10 percent of the total. For a state by state breakdown of combined federal and state spending, visit [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/data/2009/tanf\\_2009.html](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofs/data/2009/tanf_2009.html).

Federal reporting requirements do not define pregnancy prevention activities. They can include programs for teens or adults and, based on the information from state plans and other sources, include a variety of activities such as teen pregnancy prevention programs, community education and media campaigns, family planning services, home visits to pregnant and post-partum women, after-school education and enrichment programs, "second chance" homes for pregnant and parenting teens and their children, efforts to engage men as well as women in avoiding unplanned pregnancy, and specialized case management for young mothers.

Though many initiatives require funding, some states have undertaken program changes that have not required significant funding. These include such activities as co-locating family planning clinics and welfare offices, providing staff training related to state and local family planning resources, and distributing information and brochures about programs and services for which clients might be eligible in benefits offices.

### **State TANF Activities Related to Pregnancy Prevention**

States are using TANF funds in a number of innovative ways to address both teen and unplanned pregnancy consistent with the purposes of TANF. While this is not an exhaustive list of state activities, below are some examples based on information that The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy and the American Public Human Services Association (APHSA) gathered in 2008. Specifically, The National Campaign identified states that were reporting significant expenditures on pregnancy prevention, reviewed states' TANF plans available on administering agencies' websites, and contacted state TANF administrators and other staff to discuss their pregnancy prevention efforts. In addition, APHSA conducted an online survey in early 2008 of state public human services agency employees, including members of the National Association of State TANF Administrators, to learn more about how states are addressing teen and unplanned pregnancy.<sup>a</sup> Some examples reflect more recent information gathered by The National

Campaign; however, we recognize that other examples may reflect activities that have changed since the information was originally collected.

### California

The California Department of Public Health administers the state's Community Challenge Grants. For fiscal years 2011 through 2015, grants totaling approximately \$18 million will be awarded annually to organizations across the state to reduce teen pregnancy and promote responsible fatherhood. Communities receiving these grants are required to raise 10 to 20 percent of the grant in matching funds from non-government sources. Grantees are also encouraged to make a special effort to reach teens in certain priority populations—Latino youth, youth in foster care, and young men—who experience higher rates of teen pregnancy or could otherwise benefit from targeted services.

### Colorado

Some Colorado counties fund programs through TANF to encourage youth to prevent or postpone parenthood until they are prepared emotionally and financially to have children. Preventing too-early pregnancy and parenthood ultimately decreases dependence on Colorado Works and other public services. Programs in these counties often contract with outside organizations to provide classroom-based education or technical assistance to reach the broader community, and these programs have a strong focus on abstinence from sexual activity.

### Alaska

The Maternal and Child Health agency within the Division of Public Health uses TANF funds to provide pregnancy prevention services to the three villages in Alaska with the highest rates of teen pregnancies. The three primary objectives of this program are to 1) reduce teen pregnancy by 25 percent in these villages, 2) reduce the proportion of single mothers by 10 percent, and 3) to reduce subsequent pregnancies by five percent state wide.

To achieve these goals, the Division of Public Health has undertaken several efforts including creating an informational video and purchasing other educational tools for reaching teens; providing training to health care providers, leaders in the juvenile justice system, community health aids, nurse practitioners, and teachers on how to talk to teens about preventing pregnancy and maintaining healthy relationships; and providing contraceptive services.

### Connecticut

The Department of Social Services (DSS) in Connecticut has contracted with a program evaluator to assess the effectiveness of the 12 teen pregnancy prevention programs it funds. These programs are run through schools, community detention centers, treatment programs, and family resource centers, and grantees are required to work more intensively with at-risk teens. The department has also contracted with the University of Connecticut Health Center to act as coordinator of the various teenage pregnancy prevention efforts across the state. In this capacity, the health center provides technical assistance and information and works with state agencies to minimize duplicated efforts and to secure current data.

DSS works closely the Department of Public Health to include the collection of marital status information on birth certificates, in order to obtain more accurate data collection on out-of-wedlock pregnancies. DSS has set numerical reduction goals for reducing teen pregnancies in the state.

### Delaware

In Delaware, eligibility workers are required to give all TANF applicants a brochure on the availability of family planning services, where in the community to access these services, and general information about pregnancy planning. Through a family assessment process, family planning is discussed at the time of application, is included in the client's Contract of Mutual Responsibilities, and counseling continues during the period of time the individual is an active TANF recipient.

### New Hampshire

The Division of Family Assistance in New Hampshire is working with the Division of Public Health Services' Family Planning Program to reduce unplanned pregnancy through the state's Family Planning Collaborative Project. Through this program, TANF funds are distributed to 11 agencies that provide family planning services at 32 sites across the state, including 13 Teen Centers that focus specifically on the needs of adolescents. These agencies also provide evidence-based teen pregnancy prevention programs in community-based programs, school settings, and Youth Detention Centers, and agencies participate in other outreach activities to raise awareness about available services throughout the state.

In addition, TANF funds support Home Visiting New Hampshire, an initiative for pregnant and parenting women that provides education and support to low-income women and their families through in-home visits from nurses and parent educators through the first year of their child's life. Similar models have shown to help women delay subsequent pregnancies.

## North Carolina

North Carolina's Teen Pregnancy Prevention Initiatives (TPPI), administered by the state Division of Public Health, invests in communities across North Carolina by making grants to local agencies. TPPI consists of two programs—the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program and the Adolescent Parenting Program.

Through the Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Program, 27 sites around the state are using evidence-based and promising approaches to reach teens with a prevention message. Grantees' education programs are required to discuss both abstinence and contraception as ways to prevent teen pregnancy. Some of the curricula grantees are using include the *Teen Outreach Program*, *Teen Prevention Education Program*, *Making Proud Choices*, *Plain Talk*, and *Wise Guys*. Evaluations have shown that young people decrease sexual activity after participating in the program.

The Adolescent Parenting Program is an intensive case-management project, and 29 sites around the state receive funding for a full-time coordinator who works with pregnant and parenting teens age 12-20. The coordinator takes the youth to medical appointments, gives referrals for and counsels teens on family planning services, and provides participants with job training, vocational skills, and the necessary tools to complete and continue their education. The program's evaluations have shown that pregnant and parenting youth participating in the Adolescent Parenting Program have higher graduation rates than teen parents outside of the program.

## Virginia

The Virginia Department of Health's Partners in Prevention program focuses on unplanned pregnancy prevention among 20-29 year-olds. This builds on an ongoing effort to reduce non-marital births through the department's "Two Words" campaign. Through the efforts of ten local grantees, the target population is reached through community colleges and vocational schools, parole and probation offices, subsidized housing, and family planning clinics. In FY 2007, 50 percent of the grantees' clients were male. Communities are conducting outreach through basketball leagues and computer training courses which require the men to participate in a one hour family planning educational course. The Department of Health has also produced three new public service announcements—two for radio and one for television—which each contain positive messages about planning pregnancies.

## Washington

Washington State offers family planning services to clients of the Department of Social and Health Services' (DSHS) Community

Services Offices (CSOs), which determine eligibility for financial and other support services such as Medicaid and TANF. In fact, Washington mandates that family planning information and assistance be made available to all women and men enrolled in the state's welfare program, WorkFirst, which has a goal of zero additional births for clients. CSOs have trained staff on-site who provide education about preventing unplanned pregnancies and referrals for medical family planning services. Additionally, family planning nurses offer medical services on-site at some CSOs and at local family planning agencies, which partner with DSHS in this program.

## Washoe Tribe of Nevada and California

Tribal TANF offices in 14 counties in California and two counties in Nevada are providing clients with services to help them finish their education, obtain professional certifications, find employment, and much more. In addition to preparing clients for work, The Washoe Native TANF program helps clients create a Family Success Plan to identify and achieve their short- and long-term goals, and provides a range of support from helping individuals with substance abuse issues to maintaining two-parent families and preventing out-of-wedlock births. In Nevada City, Native values and customs are incorporated into teen pregnancy prevention programs, with an emphasis on building self esteem and personal wellness.

## Federal Policy Opportunities

The TANF block grant was set to expire on September 30, 2010. In his FY 2011 budget request, President Obama proposed a one-year extension of TANF. In addition, the President proposed a new one-year Fatherhood, Marriage, and Families Innovation Fund (FMFIF) which designates two new funding streams to support competitive grants to states to develop: "(1) comprehensive responsible fatherhood activities, including those with a marriage component; and (2) comprehensive family self-sufficiency demonstrations to improve child and family outcomes by addressing the employment and self-sufficiency needs of custodial parents who face serious barriers to self-sufficiency." A portion of the funds for this program come from the \$150 million currently supporting Healthy Marriage and Responsible Fatherhood Programs. Congress extended the TANF block grant through September 30, 2011, thus deferring a more in-depth discussion of TANF reauthorization and the proposed FMFIF until 2011 under a new Congress.

If Congress enacts the proposed FMFIF or some variation of it, this should include opportunities to help young women and men break the cycle of early parenthood and delay becoming parents until they are ready (primary prevention) and help those who are already parents think about when or if to have additional children

(timing/spacing of subsequent pregnancies). In pursuing both of these objectives, it will be important to strengthen the links among public systems such as TANF, Child Support Enforcement, Medicaid, and Title X.

When Congress decides to take up full reauthorization of TANF, there are several ways TANF could help bolster the work that states are doing to prevent teen and unplanned pregnancy with efforts such as pregnancy planning and spacing for those who are already parents. In the meantime, there are a number of steps the Administration could take to work with states to address pregnancy planning and prevention by encouraging states to use the existing flexibility within TANF and in strengthening linkages between TANF and other government programs, such as Medicaid, Title X, and Child Support Enforcement.

We encourage you to see the recommendations for reauthorization that have already been developed by APHSA's TANF affiliate, the National Association of State TANF Administrators.<sup>b</sup> In addition to these recommendations there are some other possibilities as well.

### **Healthy Marriage/Responsible Fatherhood Funds**

Along with the TANF block grant extension, Congress extended the Healthy Marriage/Responsible Fatherhood Grants until September 30, 2011. However, Congress split the \$150 million equally, providing \$75 million for marriage grants and \$75 million for fatherhood grants. There is no specific statutory authority prohibiting discussion of pregnancy planning and prevention in these programs. However, past interpretations from HHS discouraged discussions of these issues. There is more HHS could do to encourage programs to fully embrace the notion that part of responsible fatherhood is delaying having additional children until men are able to honor their responsibilities to the children they already have.

The Administration might provide additional clarification on how states may discuss pregnancy planning and prevention with clients, including discussions of how delaying or spacing subsequent pregnancies can increase child well-being and reduce stress on relationships, and emphasize that these activities represent an allowable and important use of funds.

### **Strengthening Linkages between TANF and Other Public Systems**

As the primary source of federally-funded family planning programs, Title X and Medicaid are important programs that provide family planning services to women and men. Strengthening links to Title X and Medicaid will help with both primary prevention and help those who are already parents plan and space subsequent

pregnancies, which in turn will support the purposes of TANF, including reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancies, improving self-sufficiency, and strengthening two-parent families.

In addition, there is potential through the Child Support Enforcement program to reach teen boys and men about preventing unplanned pregnancy through what could be called child support prevention. That is, helping young men understand the consequences of early and non-marital fatherhood and avoiding becoming a father until they are ready to assume the financial, emotional, and other responsibilities that come with being a parent, whether for the first or for a subsequent time.

A few states are doing innovative work in this area with high school students, notably Texas, West Virginia, and New York, but more could be done on a national level. West Virginia is also a model for collaboration between its child support and family planning programs, providing information about family planning in its periodic child support mailings and distributing information about family planning resources at child support offices. In addition, outreach to parents to establish paternity at a child's birth presents an opportunity to discuss a couple's plans in terms of additional children and to educate parents about spacing additional births. Title X has also been useful as a means of engaging more men in family planning.

Through clearer guidance, technical assistance, and the dissemination of best practices, the Administration can better support greater collaboration among public systems including TANF, Child Support Enforcement, Medicaid, and Title X to help individuals and couples improve pregnancy planning and prevention. This could include spotlighting innovative examples and best practices and investing in demonstration projects that provide additional flexibility and support to promote collaboration.

### **TANF Child-Only Cases**

TANF child-only cases are typically defined as those cases in which no adult recipient is included in the TANF cash grant. The cases are classified as either parental or non-parental. Parental child-only cases are those cases in which a parent is present in the household but is ineligible for TANF assistance due to a sanction, exhausted time limit, or alien status. Non-parental cases are those in which no parent is present or the children are residing with a relative or other adult with legal guardianship or custody. Child-only cases now make up a substantial part of the TANF caseload. In 2008, the most recent year for which data are available, there were 771,792 child-only cases or 47 percent of the total TANF caseload.<sup>2</sup>

Some of these young people are similar to those in foster care, and youth who have been in foster care are at high risk for early

sexual activity, as well as for teen and non-marital births. As Congress and the Administration focus on this particularly vulnerable group of young people, it will be important to explore every opportunity to help teens in child-only cases delay early pregnancy and childbearing and equip caregivers with tools to discuss these topics and help young people get the information and services they need.

## Conclusion

One of the most strategic and powerful ways to help break the cycle of poverty and strengthen families is by helping teens and young adults wait to have children until they are prepared for the lifelong responsibilities of raising a child. For those who are already parents, it is important to help them think about when and if to have additional children and how such decisions will affect their relationships, goals, and outcomes for the children they already have. There is considerable flexibility within TANF to focus on preventing teen and unplanned pregnancy and many states have made good use of this flexibility to invest TANF funds in a variety of strategies to reduce teen and unplanned or non-marital pregnancy. However, with challenging work participation rate requirements and other demands on TANF funds, it is important to ensure that there is adequate funding, flexibility, and clarity so that states can explore all possible options for addressing poverty, including addressing the serious dilemma of unintended pregnancies.

## Acknowledgement

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## About APHSA

The American Public Human Services Association, founded in 1930, is a nonprofit, bipartisan organization of state and local human service agencies and individuals who work in or are interested in public human service programs. In service of our vision of better,

healthier lives for children, adults, families, and communities, APHSA's mission is to pursue excellence in health and human services by supporting state and local agencies, informing policymakers, and working with our partners to drive innovative, integrated, and efficient solutions in policy and practice. Our specific goals are to be the voice and credible broker for the health and human services fields; to provide a high level of support to our members establish and maintain high standards for our field and help agencies improve their performance; and to achieve operational excellence as an association in our own right. To learn more, please visit <http://www.aphsa.org>.

## About The National Campaign

The National Campaign to Prevent Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization whose mission is to improve the lives and future prospects of children and families and, in particular, to help ensure that children are born into stable, two-parent families who are committed to and ready for the demanding task of raising the next generation. Our specific strategy is to prevent teen pregnancy and unplanned pregnancy among single, young adults. We support a combination of responsible values and behavior by both men and women and responsible policies in both the public and private sectors. For more information, please visit <http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org>.

## Notes:

- a. The survey culminated in a joint report from The National Campaign and APHSA titled "Teen and Unplanned Pregnancy: Challenges to Systems and Families are Met by State Best Practices in Prevention" available online at [http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org/sla/pdf/APHSA\\_NC.pdf](http://www.TheNationalCampaign.org/sla/pdf/APHSA_NC.pdf).
- b. To view the recommendations, go to [http://www.aphsa.org/Policy/Doc/NASTA\\_APHSA-TANF-ES.pdf](http://www.aphsa.org/Policy/Doc/NASTA_APHSA-TANF-ES.pdf).

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