

REVIEW OF VIRGINIA'S TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES PROGRAM—WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND CHILDCARE

STUDY PLAN

Study Mandate

- During the 2016 General Assembly Session, Senator Barbara Favola introduced Senate Joint Resolution 95. SJR 95 directed the Commission on Youth to:
 - Evaluate the Department of Social Services' administration of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and identify the amount of and reasoning for unused TANF funds
 - Determine whether TANF funds are being used for the intended purposes of the TANF Program or whether such funds are being diverted to other programs or non-TANF purposes
 - Determine whether and how TANF funds can be better used to stabilize families economically, help provide educational opportunities, and provide parenting classes and identify other support services that could be made available through TANF funding to strengthen families
 - Consult with all relevant stakeholders
- The Commission on Youth developed and executed a study plan to review these issues. They conducted extensive research and held meetings with relevant stakeholders. The Commission adopted six recommendations in October of 2016 to improve the TANF program in Virginia.
- In the 2018 study year, the Commission on Youth will further investigate workforce development and childcare for TANF recipients. The Commission on Youth will:
 - Explore funding for workforce development and childcare programs
 - Review current programs in place
 - Make recommendations to improve workforce development and childcare programs that support self-sufficiency

Identified Issues

- TANF was born out of the welfare reforms of the mid-nineties. The goal of the program is to support recipients in becoming self-sufficient by providing supportive services and a benefit that meets the subsistence needs of the family while providing training and job skills programs.
- TANF program expenditures must meet one of four federal requirements:
 1. Provide assistance to needy families so children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives
 2. End dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage
 3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies
 4. Encourage the formation of two-parent families

- In Virginia, TANF is funded through an annual \$158.2 million federal block grant. To receive the grant, the Commonwealth is required to spend \$128 million dollars annually from general funds. By using federal and state funds, Virginia has the flexibility to design programs that fit its specific needs.
- Direct assistance under TANF provides eligible families with a monthly cash payment to meet their basic needs. In FY 2016, Virginia had 23,000 cases per month, with monthly payments averaging \$260 and a total expenditure of approximately \$73.3 million dollars for that year.
- In FY 2016, 7,790 adults were enrolled in VIEW, a program that provides job readiness, job search, and job development/placement services to able-bodied recipients of TANF. The work activity rate of those enrolled was 81 percent.
- TANF funds are used for direct services to families, for program administration, and for a variety of programs referred to as “expanded funding.” States may also transfer up to 30 percent of the block grant to programs under the Child Care and Development Block Grant and Social Services Block Grant. Virginia transferred \$33.6 million in 2014.
- In FY 2016, Virginia spent \$45 million on Work Activities, \$7 million on Work Supports and Services, and \$34 million on Child Care.

Study Activities

- Review recent budget amendments and legislative bill proposals regarding TANF funds appropriated toward workforce development and childcare
- Meet and interview impacted stakeholders
 - Virginia Department of Social Services
 - Local Departments of Social Services
 - Virginia Department of Health
 - House Appropriations Committee Staff
 - Senate Finance Committee Staff
 - Virginia League of Social Services Executives
 - TANF Committee
 - Childcare Committee
 - Child Welfare Committee
 - Virginia Community College System
 - Local Community Colleges and Community College Workforce Centers
 - Advocacy Organizations
- Research other states’ TANF policies, procedures, and programs within the realms of workforce development and childcare
- Synthesize findings of literature review and interviews of stakeholders
- Develop findings and recommendations
- Present findings and recommendations to the Commission on Youth
- Receive public comment
- Prepare final report