



**Assessment of Reductions in Federally or
Locally Funded Temporary Assistance to
Needy Families (TANF) Benefits on Families
or their Children**

May 28, 2014

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A Report by the Office of the District of Columbia Auditor

The Honorable Jim Graham, Chairman
Committee on Human Services
Council of the District of Columbia
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Suite 504
Washington, D.C. 20004

Letter Report: Assessment of reductions in federally or locally funded Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefits on families or their children.

Dear Chairman Graham:

Pursuant to Section 455 of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, as amended, Public Law 93-198, D.C. Code, Section 1-204.55¹ and the “Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Support Act of 2013,”² the District of Columbia Auditor conducted an examination of information provided by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to determine the impact of reductions in federally or locally funded Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) on families and their children.

Objectives, Scope and Methodology

The objectives of this examination were to determine the:

1. Number of families affected;
2. Total amount of reductions;
3. Number of children affected in specific age categories;
4. Number of service providers providing educational and employment training programs;
and
5. Human impact of TANF benefits reductions.

In conducting this examination, the Auditor reviewed TANF reduction and educational and employment training program information provided by DHS. The Auditor interviewed key staff from DHS and conducted phone interviews with 100 TANF recipients. We did not conduct the

¹ See section 455 (b) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, approved December 24, 1973 (Pub. L. No. 93-198, 87 Stat. 803); D.C. Official Code §1-204.55 (b) (2001) which states: “The District of Columbia Auditor shall each year conduct a thorough audit of the accounts and operations of the government of the District in accordance with such principles and procedures and under such rules and regulations as he [she] may prescribe.” See also, section 455 (c) of the District of Columbia Home Rule Act, as amended, approved December 24, 1973, (87 Stat. 803, D.C. Official Code § 1-204.55 (c) (2001) which states: “The District of Columbia Auditor shall have access to all books, accounts, records, reports, findings and all other papers, things, or property belonging to or in use by any department, agency, or other instrumentality of the District government and necessary to facilitate the audit.”

² See the Fiscal Year 2014 Budget Support Act of 2013, codified at DC Code § 4-205.11c, which states, in relevant part that, “Within 120 days of October 1, 2013, the Auditor shall conduct an assessment of the impact of reductions in assistance pursuant to this chapter on families and their children and issue a human impact statement...”

examination as an audit as defined by the Government Accountability Office's Government Auditing Standards.³

³ See Government Auditing Standards, July 2007 Revision A3.02 and A3.03a, which states in part that Audit organizations in government entities frequently provide nonaudit services that differ from the professional services provided by an accounting or consulting firm to or for the audited entity. The types of nonaudit services are often performed in response to a statutory requirement, at the discretion of the authority of the audit organization, or for a legislative oversight body or an independent external organization and do not impair auditor independence. Examples of these types of services include providing information or data to a requesting party without auditor evaluation or verification of the information or data.

Background

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) provides cash assistance to needy families with dependent children when available resources do not fully address the family's needs. The TANF Employment Program (TEP) provides TANF recipients with work readiness training and job placement that prepare program participants for independence through work. Adults with dependent children applying for or receiving TANF must meet financial and technical eligibility requirements. Conditions of eligibility include cooperation with child support, participation in work activities and compliance with substance abuse provisions. Earned and unearned income cannot exceed the benefit level paid for the assistance unit size and assets are limited to \$2,000.⁴

In order to qualify for this benefit program, recipients must be a resident of the District of Columbia, either pregnant or responsible for a child under 19 years of age, a United States national, citizen, legal alien, or permanent resident, have low or very low income, and be either under-employed (working for very low wages), unemployed or about to become unemployed.⁵

There have been two reductions in benefits for recipients who have received benefits for more than 60 months. The first, which was effective April 1, 2011, was a reduction of 20 percent.⁶ The second, which was effective October 1, 2013, was a reduction of 25 percent of the previously reduced benefit amount.⁷ Table I presents the TANF payment levels based on family household size, prior to the reductions, and the TANF payments levels effective April 1, 2011 and October 1, 2013.

⁴ <http://dhs.dc.gov/service/temporary-cash-assistance-needy-families-tanf>

⁵ Ibid

⁶ See the Fiscal Year 2011 Supplemental Budget Support Act of 2010 (codified at DC Code § 4-205.52(c-2)). Although the legislation called for the reduction to occur on February 1, 2011, actual reductions to benefits were not made until April 1, 2011.

⁷ See the Fiscal Year 2013 Budget Support Act of 2012 (codified at DC Code § 4-205.52(c-3))

Table I**TANF Payment Levels Effective March 1, 2011, April 1, 2011 and October 1, 2013**

Family Size	Payment levels March 1, 2011	Payment Levels After April 1, 2011 Reduction	Payment Levels After October 1, 2013 Reduction
1	\$270	\$216	\$162
2	\$336	\$269	\$202
3	\$428	\$342	\$257
4	\$523	\$418	\$314
5	\$602	\$482	\$362
6	\$708	\$566	\$425
7	\$812	\$650	\$488
8	\$897	\$718	\$539
9	\$987	\$790	\$593
10	\$1,072	\$858	\$644
11	\$1,131	\$905	\$679
12	\$1,216	\$973	\$730
13	\$1,271	\$1,017	\$763
14	\$1,340	\$1,072	\$804
15	\$1,391	\$1,113	\$835
16	\$1,461	\$1,169	\$877
17	\$1,602	\$1,282	\$962
18	\$1,639	\$1,311	\$983
19	\$1,673	\$1,338	\$1,004

Source: DHS

Results of the Auditor’s Examination

As of April 2014, DHS documentation indicates there were 6,296 households subject to the second benefit reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2013. The total amount of the reductions was \$450,569 per month.⁸ The total number of children in specific age categories affected by the second benefit reduction is presented in Table II.

Table II

Total Number of Children in Specific Age Categories Affected by the Second Benefit Reduction

Children Age 0-3	Children Age 4-9	Children Age 10-13	Children Age 14-18	Children Age 19 or older	Total
2,215	5,681	3,005	2,571	57	13,529

Source: DHS

DHS indicates that as part of its fiscal year (FY) 2014 TANF Employment Program (TEP), DHS contracted with five vendors to serve as job placement providers for TANF recipients and six vendors to serve as work readiness providers. It should be noted that each contract allows DHS to exceed the number of participants contracted to serve by 10 percent. Table III presents information on the FY 2014 TANF Employment Program vendors, including the total customer capacity numbers and participants assigned.

⁸ This figure was determined by calculating the difference between the September 2013 and April 2014 monthly benefit amount paid.

Table III**FY 2014 TANF Employment Program (TEP)**

Job Placement Providers (Focus on Employment Placement and Retention)				
	Vendor Name	Number of Participants Contracted to Serve	Number of Participants Assigned (as of 05/06/14)	Internal Services/Training
1	America Works of Washington, DC	150	141	Culinary Arts; Life Skills; Case Management; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Job Search & placement Services; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews; workshops on Public Policy & TANF; TABE Testing; Food Handlers License; Reentry Services; Labor Market Analysis; Business/Office Vocational Training; Call Center/Telemarketing Training; Retail/Sales Vocational Training; Technology Vocational Training
2	Arbor Educational & Training	300	352	Food Handlers License; National retail Federation Customer Service Training; Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Case Management; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews
3	KRA Corporation	300	352	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Case Management; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews; CPR Certification; Food Handlers Certification; Microsoft Digital Literacy; Customer Service training; Rejuvenating Individuals Seeking Employment (RISE) Curriculum; Building Employability Skills Training/Workshop; Computer Learning and Understanding the Basics (CLUB).
4	Maximus, Inc.	300	288	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Microsoft Basic & Office Suite; Call Center Training; Customer Service; Retail & Sales, Food Handlers; Financial Budgeting Training; Case Management; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Onsite Mock Interviews
5	Career TEAM, LLC	300	327	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Financial Literacy; Financial Literacy; CPR; Entrepreneurship; Parenting Skills; Computer Skills Enhancement; Child Care Assistance; Case Management; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews; Social Media & Job Search Navigation

Work Readiness (Focus on Educational Enhancement and Employment Readiness)				
	Vendor Name	Number of Participants Contracted to Serve	Number of Participants Assigned (as of 05/06/14)	Internal Services/Training
1	America Works of Washington, DC	300	287	Culinary Arts; Life Skills; Case Management; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Job Search & placement Services; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews; workshops on Public Policy & TANF; TABE Testing; Food Handlers License; Reentry Services; Labor Market Analysis; Business/Office Vocational Training; Call Center/Telemarketing Training; Retail/Sales Vocational Training; Technology Vocational Training
2	KRA Corporation	450	555	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Case Management; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews; CPR Certification; Food Handlers Certification; Microsoft Digital Literacy; Customer Service training; Rejuvenating Individuals Seeking Employment (RISE) Curriculum; Building Employability Skills Training/Workshop; Computer Learning and Understanding the Basics (CLUB).
3	Maximus, Inc.	450	421	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Financial Literacy; Child Care Assistance; Microsoft Basic & Office Suite; Call Center Training; Customer Service; Retail & Sales, Food Handlers; Financial Budgeting Training; Case Management; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Onsite Mock Interviews
4	Career TEAM, LLC	450	508	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Financial Literacy Financial Literacy; CPR; Entrepreneurship; Parenting Skills; Computer Skills Enhancement; Child Care Assistance; Case Management; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Mock Interviews; Social Media & Job Search Navigation
5	Grant Associates	600	565	Basic Job Prep; CPR; Life Skills; Financial Literacy; Career Directions Curriculum; Application Assistance; Child Care Voucher Assistance; DC Government Application Assistance; Industry Expert Presentations; (Online) Job Search/Placement Assistance; Microsoft Suite Training; Kenexa Proveit! Occupational Testing; Social Media Assistance
6	OIC/DC	150	187	Basic Job Prep; Life Skills; Financial Literacy; Literacy Enhancement; Home Health Aid; Computer Skills: A+ Certification, IC3; Reentry Assistance; Family Mentoring; Entrepreneurship; Customer Service Licensing; Child Care Voucher Assistance; Case Management; Job Search & Placement Assistance; Career Coaching; Transportation Assistance; Onsite Mock Interviewing

Source: DHS

Human Impact

The Auditor conducted a telephone survey with 100 of the households whose TANF benefits were reduced in October 2013. Specifically, the Auditor surveyed the respondents on the effect of TANF reductions, including a consideration of children in the household regarding:

- Changes in school performance;
- Changes in after-school performance;
- Changes in health status;
- New interactions with the Child and Family Services Agency;
- New interactions with the Department of Human Services;
- New interactions with the Court Social Services; and
- New interactions with Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services.

Of the 100 recipients surveyed: 11 recipients stated that their children’s school performance had changed; 23 stated that their children’s after-school performance had changed; 13 stated that their children’s health had changed; 14 stated that their child had a new interaction with the Child and Family Services Agency; 8 stated that their child had a new interaction with the Department of Human Services; 7 stated that their child had a new interaction with the Court Social Services; and 6 stated that their child had a new interaction with the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services. Table IV shows the summary results of the survey of 100 TANF recipients regarding family impact from benefits reduction. Appendix One provides the full survey results for the 100 respondents.

Table IV

Summary Results of Survey of 100 TANF Recipients Regarding Family Impact from Benefits Reduction

Children’s School Performance Had Changed	Children’s After-School Performance Had Changed	Children’s Health Status Had Changed	Children Had New Interactions with Child and Family Services Agency	Children Had New Interactions with Department of Human Services	Children Had New Interactions with Court Social Services	Children Had New Interactions with the Department of Youth Rehabilitation Services
11%	23%	13%	14%	8%	7%	6%

At the conclusion of each survey, we also asked respondents if they had any additional comments about the benefit reductions. Some respondents provided information about the challenges they face supporting their families and how improved services could better advance the program’s goal of moving families towards self-sufficiency. For example, 22 respondents stated that the reductions made it more difficult to provide for children’s basic needs, such as

clothing, school uniforms and over-the-counter medicines; 11 pointed to a need to improve job training and job placement services; and 9 stated that more high-quality out-of-school programs are needed for children. See Appendix One for the survey results of the 100 respondents, complete with additional comments.

Conclusion

Based on information provided by DHS, there were 6,296 households subject to the second Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) benefit reduction that went into effect on October 1, 2013. Within these households, 13,529 children were affected by the second TANF benefit reduction. In addition to managing the TANF program, DHS also oversees the TANF Employment Program (TEP). In FY 2014, DHS also contracted with five job placement vendors and six work readiness vendors. From our sample of 100 households subject to the second benefit reduction, we found that children's after-school performance was the most impacted by the reduction. Respondents also provided additional insights and recommendations about the benefit reductions, which may assist with the Committee's oversight efforts.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lawrence I. Perry", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Lawrence I. Perry
Acting District of Columbia Auditor

Appendices

Appendix I

100 Survey Respondents' Complete Responses and Comments

Survey respondent number	Since the reductions went into effect, have there been any changes in the school performance of your children? (0=None; 1=Yes)	Have there been any changes in the After-School performance of your children?	Have there been any changes in the Health Status of your children?	Have your children had any new interactions with Child and Family Services Agency?	Have your children had any new interactions with the Dept. of Human Services	Have your children had any new interactions with Court Social Services?	Have your children had any new interactions with Dept. of Youth Rehabilitation Services?	Addit. comments about the reductions
1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
3	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
4	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
5	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
6	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
7	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
8	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	TANF benefits should not be reduced for any reason.
9	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
10	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
11	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
12	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
13	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	None
14	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
15	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
16	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
17	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
18	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
19	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	None

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20	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
21	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
22	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
23	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
24	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
25	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
26	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	Improvements in school/after school performance mainly due to child's maturity; has taken computer classes; after rent has \$40; food stamps help; used to get almost \$400 now gets \$200
27	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Has had financial impact but doesn't want to go through the process again; sanctioned if mate is not in the household; a lot to go through to avoid sanctions; sanctions are often not lifted after the proper paperwork has been submitted; Likes Maximus benefit, they are very courteous and willing to work with the clients
28	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Needs more programs to get off system and do work studies, would like more programs for people who are actually trying do better; using TANF until they get a job; was on TANF years ago but got off, and recently got back on TANF; internships didn't pay but required 40 hour weeks

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29	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
30	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	Changes in grades and health of children but not due to the reduction of TANF benefits
31	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	Need more activities for the children
32	1	0	0	1	1	1	0	Late food stamps, change of information was not properly processed; delays in receivership, non responsive and long waits; after school programs aren't helping children, more of a playground atmosphere but not much learning going on, 16 year old child won't go to school, oldest child having trouble getting insurance, need more recreational activities for the kids, need more positive reinforcement in the urban areas
33	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
34	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	More difficult to manage with less money, training isn't paid and takes up a lot of time, TANF helps but the reduction has made it more difficult, reduction made them have to move so the constant moving has taking effect on the children.
35	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
36	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
37	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
38	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None

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39	1	1	1	1	0	1	1	Went to get child support but courts won't force father to pay and TANF won't help getting a job; keep getting reductions, forcing people to go to programs interferences with job situations, just wants more consideration in these types of situations; workforce development programs doesn't work; different agency requirements interfere; paperwork runaround is tiresome; worst customer services comes from these agencies
40	1	1	1	0	1	0	0	None
41	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	Less money makes it harder to pay bills
42	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Harder to pay bills, nothing left to provide for the children's needs
43	1	0	0	0	1	1	0	It's ok because it does force people to get jobs but it makes it hard to pay bills; has badly affected how she pays bills; has neighbors who are on TANF whose kids can't eat
44	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	One daughter works with summer youth program
45	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
46	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
47	0	1	1	1	0	0	0	None
48	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Affected the kids because can't get the uniforms for the children

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49	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Not enough money to pay bills, harder to get children to school because has to pay for transportation; vendor programs are not that good.
50	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
51	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
52	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Young ladies should try to get education and get off of welfare.
53	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
54	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
55	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	None
56	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	It is a strain to take care of a household.
57	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	It is not benefitting, it is making it harder to manage your household. Electric bills are hard to meet, as well as providing clothing.
58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	She wants to get off TANF and find work. Food stamps and medicaid come in real handy. Felt like the warning on reductions was sufficient.
59	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
60	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Cannot pay bills on time based on current benefits.
61	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
62	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Has been waiting for a job training vendor since last year.

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63	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	None
64	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Does not think the reductions are a bad thing.
65	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
66	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
67	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Reductions sometimes impact those who are looking hard for jobs, then forces people to re-arrange their lives.
68	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
69	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	None
70	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Reductions should have been more targeted; evaluate families based on kids with special needs and 1 year old child.
71	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	There is no way to pay for utilities and clothing with the benefit. Has been off/on TANF, and has found own work. DHS has not been helpful about answering questions; they have been rude and disrespectful.
72	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	It is hard to keep up with diapers, clothes, shoes.
73	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	None
74	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Could improve on job training and connecting to actual jobs. Better motivational activities. The job training teachers were too rigid.
75	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None

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76	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Still has not found a job. It has been tight to provide for some of children's needs for price increases.
77	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	Still is not working. Seeking child support from the father, who his not willing to provide.
78	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	Food stamp is not enough. Gas price is very high. Didn't get sufficient training for work, nor helpful service to find a job.
79	0	1	1	1	1	0	1	Is not working. Training program trainers are not well trained.
80	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	No job training program was offered by DC government. The food is very expensive.
81	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	Has asthmatic children. It is hard to cover out of pocket medicine and nutritions needs. She is not working. There was no service provided to help find a job. DC vendor is helping her to find a way to pay electric bill.
82	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Other than football, children cannot afford to participate in any activity. They just stay at home. Is not working and the program didn't assist to find any job at all. Getting help from DC government to pay the electric bill.
83	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Barely enough for their needs.
84	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	Not enough to provide for clothing and paying electric bills. Child support not consistent.

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85	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	Is working part time; Not able to provide even for kids' school needs; Notices tremendous effect with children's performance and life habits.
86	0	1	0	0	1	0	1	Food stamp not enough, the grocery store raised prices around the time the food stamps come out.
87	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Not able to provide for kids' sports or activity.
88	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	The reduction changed their life tremendously, can't afford to pay for electric bills, clothing, shoes, after school activities.
89	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
90	0	1	1	0	0	0	0	Daughter spent weeks in hospital and it was very difficult to come up with extra medical cost from own pocket. It has been hard to pay for after school sports activity.
91	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	She is currently working. She is not able to provide for any after school activity. It is very hard to provide for food.
92	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	Not working, though goes to training. Not able to provide for after school activity.
93	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	She is not working
94	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	The children need more public after school activities. Doesn't have enough money to provide for clothes and shoes.
95	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	Problem with child support.

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96	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	In job training program. The benefit hardly satisfied their needs.
97	0	0	1	1	0	1	1	Currently working. Children with physical and learning disabilities. Over the counter medication is expensive.
98	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Currently working and able to provide for children's clothes. The Food stamp is not enough for their needs.
99	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	None
100	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	Problem to provide for clothing and over the counter medication.
TOTAL	11	23	13	14	8	7	6	