

NEWS from the North Dakota Department of Human Services

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 23, 2009

Contacts: Carol Cartledge, Public Assistance Program Director, 701-328-4008, or Heather Steffl, Public Information Officer, 701-328-4933

ND Among States that Met Required Federal Work Participation Rate

BISMARCK, N.D. – According to a recent federal Administration for Children and Families report, North Dakota was among 39 states and territories that met federal work participation requirements for its welfare program.

Parents participating in the N.D. Department of Human Services' Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program achieved an overall work participation rate of 58.7 percent in the recent report on federal fiscal year 2007 outcomes. This is an increase of 13.4 percent from the 2006 rate, and means that over half of the 1,525 work-eligible parents in the program were working or participating in approved work activities for at least 20 hours per week.

Twelve states and three territories failed to meet work participation rates and could be subject to a potential penalty.

The TANF program provides temporary financial help to qualifying low-income families with children who are deprived of the support of at least one parent. This may be due to a parent's absence from the home or a disability. Childless adults do not qualify for the TANF program.

Federal welfare reform in 1998 created the TANF program. It requires many adult TANF clients to work; and placed a 60-month lifetime limit on benefits. The North Dakota Department of Human Services contracts with Career Options, Job Service North Dakota, and Tribal Employment and Training in Belcourt, N.D., to provide the services that help TANF clients overcome barriers to employment, and find and keep jobs.

In July 2009, a total of 5,461 North Dakotans received TANF public assistance; 4,225 of them were children. Qualifying households tend to have household incomes of about 29 percent of the federal poverty level.

The average monthly TANF payment per family was \$313 in July 2009. Participating families may qualify for other economic assistance programs.

The report is online at:

www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/policy/im-ofa/2009/200901/IM200901.htm

###