

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | April 14, 2021

**Human Services awarded technical assistance to complete comprehensive review of its Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program to better support family stability and well-being**

BISMARCK, N.D. – This spring, the North Dakota Department of Human Services' Economic Assistance Division is partnering with the Office of Family Assistance Peer Technical Assistance (OFA Peer TA) Network to conduct a comprehensive review of the state's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

TANF provides temporary financial assistance, averaging \$297 a month, and work readiness, training and job placement services and support to about 950 qualifying low-income families per month in North Dakota. Qualifying families include children who are deprived of support or care by at least one parent.

Eight out of 10 TANF recipients are children. The TANF program was created during welfare reform in the late 1990s and includes a 60-month lifetime limit on participation.

"We are extremely grateful for this opportunity to take a closer look at TANF services to best support stability for North Dakota children and families," said Jessica Thomasson, the department's executive policy director for family stability.

The technical assistance will examine the current service delivery system, policy and administration of TANF services. The department will engage with key stakeholder groups including human service zones, tribal entities, various state agencies, contractors, community partners and individuals receiving services to gather program data and feedback. The information learned through this process will be shared later this fall and used for planning and future decision making.

"Training and technical assistance will assist us with creating a strategy," said Michele Gee, the department's economic assistance division director. "Our goal is to learn how we can implement innovative ways to improve the well-being of children and families we serve."

OFA Peer TA is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, the Administration of Children and Families and the Office of Family Assistance. Technical assistance is awarded to states looking to achieve an innovative approach to operating its TANF programs. Some technical assistance methods that will be used include peer-to-peer roundtables, site visits, workshops, moderated teleconferences, environmental scans, annotated bibliographies and literature reviews.

Individuals with questions or who would like to learn more can call 701-328-2332, toll-free 800-755-2716, 711 (TTY) or email [dhseap@nd.gov](mailto:dhseap@nd.gov). Information about North Dakota's TANF program is online at [www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/tanfjobs.html](http://www.nd.gov/dhs/services/financialhelp/tanfjobs.html).

The Department of Human Services' Economic Assistance Division provides leadership for the planning, development and oversight of North Dakota's economic safety net programs. It partners with stakeholders to improve access to services, assists North Dakotans through poverty and hardship, and develops policies that support quality and timely service delivery.

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