

HELPING FAMILIES ACCESS FEDERAL INCOME SUPPORTS

SB 20-029

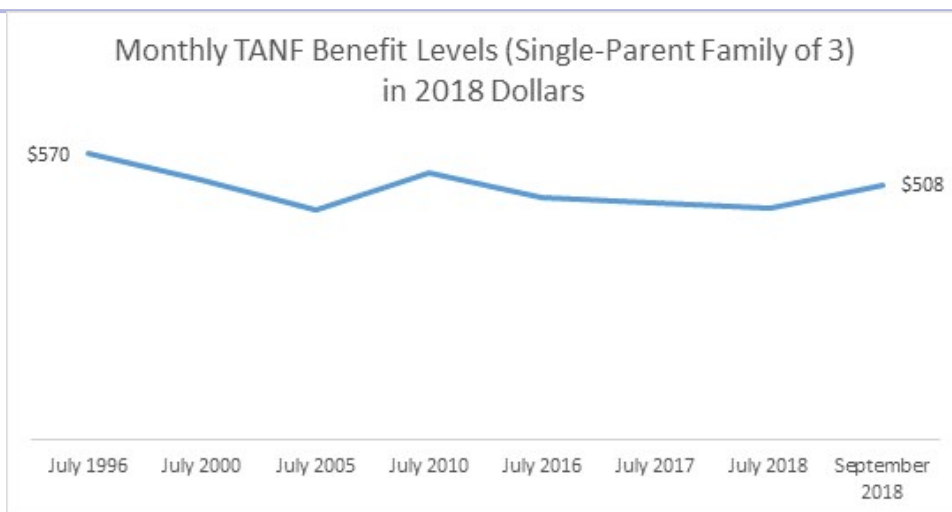
Senators Fields & Moreno/Representatives Duran & Coleman

All Colorado parents want to provide for the basic needs of their children. For families with incomes significantly below the poverty line, Basic Cash Assistance helps decrease the stress of making ends meet. Diapers, bus passes, school supplies, and housing costs are among the costs families face—and the costs of those necessities increase each year.

Basic Cash Assistance, a core purpose of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program, is not adjusted for inflation and it definitely doesn't keep up with the cost of living in Colorado. BCA is the most targeted approach Colorado can take to reducing extreme childhood poverty, which has a lifelong impact on child well-being. The General Assembly has the power to ensure this support continues to have the most impact possible.

SB20-029 would increase Basic Cash Assistance to make up for the lack of adjustment for inflation and implement an annual cost of living adjustment (COLA) so that the value of BCA does not erode in the future.

- Colorado should increase Basic Cash Assistance to make up for the lack of adjustment for inflation since the program was created in 1996.
- Colorado should implement an annual Cost of Living Adjustment equal to 1.5 percent to preserve the value of BCA moving forward.



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Helping kids & families facing the greatest barriers to success

Families receiving Basic Cash Assistance are experiencing extreme poverty, living below half of the federal poverty line, or about **\$12,875 a year for a family of four.**

In 2018, about **65,000 kids** in Colorado were experiencing extreme poverty.

All families participating in TANF, known as the Colorado Works program in Colorado, **are raising children or expecting a child.**

Nationally, about **three out of four TANF participants** are children.

Opportunity to improve the lives of children in poverty

Experiencing poverty can inhibit early brain development and negatively impact children's ability to succeed in school and develop social-emotional skills.

- Children experiencing poverty between birth and age 5 completed 2 fewer years of school and were nearly 3 times more likely to be in poor health as adults.

A \$3,000 difference in annual income in the first 5 years of a child's life is associated with:

- The equivalent of 20 SAT points later in life.
- A 17% increase in the child's future earnings.
- 135 additional work hours per year as adults.

Poverty drives housing insecurity

- As housing costs have continued to increase in Colorado, Basic Cash Assistance (BCA) has not kept up and is far below the cost of rent for a family.
- In every county in Colorado, the average rent for a two-bedroom apartment exceeds the monthly amount of BCA for a family with one adult and two children
- 12.5% of families in Colorado receiving BCA are experiencing homelessness.

Poverty impacts health

- Child poverty is linked to higher rates of asthma and obesity, poor language development, low birthweight, increased infant mortality, and an increased risk of injuries.
- In Colorado, 23.8 percent of people living at or below 138% of the federal poverty line report being in fair or poor health.

Policies and systems create inequities in opportunity

- Colorado families of all backgrounds work hard to provide a better life for their children.
- However, poverty rates among kids in Colorado vary by race and ethnicity, as a result of policies and practices that have created and maintained inequitable opportunities in areas such as housing and employment.
- Children of color in Colorado are significantly more likely to experience poverty than their white peers.

Supporters of SB 20-029

9to5 Colorado
All Families Deserve a Chance Coalition
Aurora Health Alliance
Bayaud Enterprises
The Bell Policy Center
Center for Health Progress
Center for Work Education and Employment
Children's Hospital Colorado
Colorado Center on Law and Policy
Colorado Children's Campaign
Colorado Coalition for the Homeless
Colorado Cross-Disability Coalition
Colorado Fiscal Institute
Colorado Foundation for Universal Health Care
Colorado Social Legislation Committee
Colorado Springs Food Rescue
CommunityWorks
The Consortium
The Denver Foundation

Early Childhood Partnership of Adams County
Emergency Family Assistance Association
Energy Outreach Colorado
Florence Crittendon Services
The Gathering Place
Human Services Network
Illuminate Colorado
Interfaith Alliance of Colorado
LiveWell Colorado
Lutheran Advocacy Ministry—Colorado
National Association of Social Workers—Colorado
Parent Possible
People's Advocacy Council
Refugee Action Coalition of Colorado
Raise Colorado
Rodfei Tzedek
St. Francis Center
Together Colorado
The Women's Foundation of Colorado
The Women's Lobby of Colorado

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