

NEW DATA REVEALS TANF CASELOAD DECLINES IN TWENTY TWO STATES OVER THE FIRST SIXTEEN MONTHS OF THE RECESSION

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) this week updated the TANF caseload data reported on its web site to include the first quarter of calendar year 2009. Table One shows TANF caseload figures for March 2009 and for December 2007, the month in which the recession began.¹ The caseload figures are the total number of persons, both adults and children, receiving TANF. Based on these HHS figures, TANF caseloads were lower in twenty two states in March 2009 than in December 2007.²

The total national TANF caseload did increase 4.7% during the first sixteen months of the recession, rising from 4,014,111 recipients in December 2007 to 4,202,957 recipients in March 2009. However, this 4.7% increase was far less than the increase in the real need for assistance implied by the increase over this same sixteen month period of 20.2% in the number of Food Stamp recipients (from 26.56 million to 33.15 million) and of 70% in the unemployment rate (from 5.0% to 8.5%).³ Moreover, the TANF caseload increase in California accounted for almost three quarters of the national TANF increase. There was only a 1.8% aggregate increase in the number of TANF recipients in the fifty states (including D.C.) other than California.

The newly released caseload figures underscore the urgent need for federal action to make TANF more accessible and responsive. Earlier this week Legal Momentum joined with the Center for Community Change, Jobs with Justice, and the Institute for Policy Studies in issuing a report, *Battered by the Storm: How the Safety Net is Failing Americans and How to Fix It*⁴, offering a comprehensive relief plan of job creation, state and local fiscal relief, and safety net improvement. With respect to TANF, the report calls upon Congress to act immediately to allocate an additional \$16.5 billion a year in federal funds, with no requirement for additional state spending, to be used for the limited purposes of cash assistance, creating subsidized jobs, sustaining current TANF-funded child care, or emergency payments.

(December 9, 2009 [rev.] Contact Timothy Casey, tcasey@legalmomentum.org, for further information.)

¹ The March 2009 figures were taken from the table titled "COMBINED TANF AND SSP-MOE - Oct. 08-Mar. 09 Preliminary Data Total Number of Recipients", available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/caseload/2009/2009_recipient_tanssp.htm; the December 2007 figures were taken from the table titled "COMBINED TANF AND SSP-MOE - Fiscal and Calendar Year 2008 Total Number of Recipients", available at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/caseload/2008/2008_recipient_tanssp.htm

² It is possible that some state TANF caseload declines reflected in whole or in part the state's reclassification of some of its assistance as a type of non-TANF assistance that would not be included in the figures reported to HHS.

³ Food Stamp receipt figures taken from USDA table titled "SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM", available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/34SNAPmonthly.htm>.

⁴ *Battered by the Storm* is available at http://www.ips-dc.org/reports/Battered_by_the_Storm.pdf

TABLE ONE				
TOTAL NUMBER OF TANF RECIPIENTS (Children & Adults)				
	Dec. 2007	March 2009	Increase or Decrease	% change
National	4,014,111	4,202,957	188,846	4.7%
<i>Alabama</i>	43,740	41,658	-2,082	-4.8%
Alaska	7,815	8,743	928	11.9%
Arizona	80,152	82,883	2,731	3.4%
<i>Arkansas</i>	19,998	18,976	-1,022	-5.1%
California	1,175,334	1,312,472	137,138	11.7%
<i>Colorado</i>	22,303	22,000	-303	-1.4%
<i>Connecticut</i>	39,986	32,603	-7,383	-18.5%
Delaware	11,392	12,489	1,097	9.6%
<i>Dist. of Col.</i>	11,655	11,351	-304	-2.6%
Florida	78,783	96,294	17,511	22.2%
<i>Georgia</i>	41,187	37,251	-3,936	-9.6%
Hawaii	16,918	17,616	698	4.1%
Idaho	2,311	2,401	90	3.9%
<i>Illinois</i>	58,882	51,835	-7,047	-12.0%
Indiana	78,230	105,064	26,834	34.3%
<i>Iowa</i>	50,222	50,046	-176	-0.4%
<i>Kansas</i>	32,624	32,256	-368	-1.1%
Kentucky	59,035	59,258	223	0.4%
<i>Louisiana</i>	24,600	21,274	-3,326	-13.5%
Maine	30,969	35,705	4,736	15.3%
Maryland	47,568	51,365	3,797	8.0%
Massachusetts	112,947	143,301	30,354	26.9%
<i>Michigan</i>	180,662	153,189	-27,473	-15.2%
<i>Minnesota</i>	62,317	47,054	-15,263	-24.5%
<i>Mississippi</i>	23,889	22,241	-1,648	-6.9%
<i>Missouri</i>	94,343	91,219	-3,124	-3.3%
Montana	8,042	8,447	405	5.0%
Nebraska	18,488	19,938	1,450	7.8%
Nevada	18,883	20,586	1,703	9.0%
New Hamp.	9,322	12,046	2,724	29.2%
<i>New Jersey</i>	81,089	77,163	-3,926	-4.8%
New Mexico	32,593	41,221	8,628	26.5%
<i>New York</i>	386,765	376,200	-10,565	-2.7%
North Carolina	46,103	48,416	2,313	5.0%
North Dakota	5,206	5,446	240	4.6%
Ohio	174,147	197,299	23,152	13.3%
<i>Oklahoma</i>	19,377	18,024	-1,353	-7.0%
Oregon	43,678	59,436	15,758	36.1%
<i>Pennsylvania</i>	132,702	105,584	-27,118	-20.4%
<i>Rhode Island</i>	19,739	18,059	-1,680	-8.5%
South Carolina	32,080	37,787	5,707	17.8%
<i>South Dakota</i>	6,007	5,756	-251	-4.2%
Tennessee	142,174	149,053	6,879	4.8%
<i>Texas</i>	128,331	103,746	-24,585	-19.2%
Utah	12,586	14,996	2,410	19.1%
<i>Vermont</i>	10,214	6,391	-3,823	-37.4%
Virginia	68,819	75,208	6,389	9.3%
Washington	118,590	145,276	26,686	22.5%
West Virginia	19,483	19,824	341	1.8%
Wisconsin	38,540	39,659	1,119	2.9%
Wyoming	488	534	46	9.4%