



Selected TANF Research, 2010–2018

Provided by Washington State's Department of Social and Health Services' Research and Data Analysis Division
in Collaboration with DSHS Economic Services Administration
<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/research-and-data-analysis>



Home Visiting Services for TANF Families with Young Children

First Year Outcomes

JULY 2018 • Patton, Liu, Lucenko, Felver

Examines outcomes for families who enrolled in the TANF Home Visiting program between May 2015, when the program began, and October 2016. Outcomes for participating families during the 12 months following enrollment are compared to outcomes for similar families receiving TANF who did not enroll in home visiting. Parents enrolled in TANF Home Visiting were more likely than comparison TANF families to engage in WorkFirst activities that prepared them for work, including education and training. Parents enrolled in TANF Home Visiting were also more likely to use Working Connections Child Care subsidies. Future follow up studies will be necessary to understand long-term impacts of this program.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Home Visiting Services for TANF Families with Young Children

Baseline Characteristics and Early Experiences

MARCH 2017 • Patton, Liu, Lucenko, Felver

Describes demographics and baseline information about parents who enrolled in TANF Home Visiting and describes the early experiences of parents while enrolled in the program. TANF Home Visiting enrolled parents of young children who faced barriers to employment, including homelessness and behavioral health issues. During their first three months in the program, participating families experienced low rates of out-of-home placement for their children and high rates of engagement in WorkFirst activities. Further study will be needed to determine the long-term impacts of the program on WorkFirst progression, positive exits from TANF, and child welfare involvement.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Educational Experiences and Employment Outcomes for TANF Parents Attending Community and Technical Colleges

APRIL 2016 • Patton, Ford Shah, Liu, Mancuso, Felver

Describes WorkFirst client experiences at state community and technical colleges and analyzes self-sufficiency outcomes for WorkFirst clients who successfully reach the Tipping Point (achieve 45 college credits and a credential). We found that the most common reason for WorkFirst parents to enroll at community college was for basic skills education, though about one-third sought vocational education leading to a degree. We also found that WorkFirst parents who reached the Tipping Point were more likely to be employed and had higher annual earnings than a statistically matched group of WorkFirst parents. However, very few enrollees in vocational education (16 percent) reached the Tipping Point.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Outcomes for WorkFirst Clients Taking Part in Unpaid Job Experience Programs

Community Works and Career Development

MARCH 2016 • Patton, Ford Shah, Liu, Felver, Mancuso

This report evaluates the impact of participating in the Department of Commerce's two unpaid work preparation programs—Community Works and Career Development—using a statistically matched comparison design. We find that, when compared to similar WorkFirst clients in other work preparation activities, unpaid job participants in both programs were more likely to be employed at the end of the follow up period though their earnings were not significantly higher. Unpaid jobs participants also spent more time on TANF during the follow-up period, but were less likely to be sanctioned.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



TANF Caseload Decline

The Well-Being of Parents and Children Leaving WorkFirst in Washington State

APRIL 2015 • Patton, Ford Shah, Felver, Beall

This report describes key outcomes for parents and children who left TANF before and after recent program changes, including changes to the criteria for time limit extensions. WorkFirst cases make up a decreasing share of the TANF caseload relative to child-only cases, as a greater proportion of WorkFirst families leave and do not return. Relative to other groups of WorkFirst leavers, those who left due to time limits had high rates of baseline health risk but were less likely to transition to disability-related medical coverage. Time limited leavers and those who took longer to leave the caseload also faced greater barriers to work but remained connected to supports and services.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Predicting Homelessness among Low-Income Families on TANF

AUGUST 2015 • Ford Shah, Liu, Mancuso, Felver

This report identifies key risk and protective factors associated with the start of a new homeless spell among parents receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Three key findings emerged: 1) recent homelessness puts families at increased risk while receipt of public housing serves as a strong protective factor, 2) criminal justice, behavioral health, and family violence issues increase the risk of future homelessness, and 3) income from work earnings or public assistance can buffer parents from homelessness, while being sanctioned for non-compliance with TANF requirements can place them at increased risk. The study was conducted for the Vulnerable Families Partnership under contract with the Washington State Department of Commerce.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Impact of Housing Assistance on Outcomes for Homeless Families

An Evaluation of the Ending Family Homelessness Pilot

AUGUST 2015 • Ford Shah, Liu, Patton, Felver

The Ending Family Homelessness (EFH) pilot program began in April 2013 and provides rapid re-housing and other services to homeless families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). We examined outcomes over a 12-month follow-up period for EFH participants relative to three separate matched comparison groups: those in non-EFH rapid re-housing, those in transitional housing, and those who remained homeless. Compared to TANF parents who remain homeless, EFH participants are significantly more likely to remain on TANF, progress along the WorkFirst continuum from barrier removal to employment, be employed, and have higher average annual earnings. They are significantly less likely to be sanctioned while on TANF, experience a return to homelessness, or be arrested.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Education Measures for Children on TANF

The Role of Housing and Behavioral Health Risk Factors

JUNE 2014 • Ford Shah, Liu, Felver, Lucenko

Washington's TANF program, WorkFirst, underwent a redesign in 2010 that included the development of three new program performance measures related to children's education: 1) enrollment in K-12 public education, 2) grade progression, and 3) on-time high school graduation. This report leverages the INVEST database, developed in partnership with the Education Research and Data Center, to investigate how key risk factors may influence these education measures. We find that although rates of enrollment, grade progression, and on-time graduation among WorkFirst children either improved or remained relatively stable. The challenges students faced with housing and behavioral health issues are reflected in the data.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



The Ending Family Homelessness Pilot: Rapid Re-Housing for TANF Families

A profile of DSHS clients served by the Seattle, King County and Tacoma Housing Authorities, CY 2011

JANUARY 2014 • Ford-Shah, Black, Felver, Albrecht, Krull

In April 2013, the Ending Family Homelessness (EFH) pilot program began providing rapid re-housing and other services to homeless families receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). This report examines baseline risk information on TANF parents and children participating in EFH compared to other TANF clients in the balance of the state. Almost all participants entered the program from emergency shelters or places not meant for housing, such as cars or the street. EFH parents were more likely than other parents on TANF to face barriers to housing and employment such as family violence, substance use, mental illness, and involvement with the criminal justice system.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



The Circumstances of Families after Time Limits

Adults and Children Terminated from TANF in February 2011

OCTOBER 2012 • Mancuso, Estee, Yakup, Xu, Krull, Du, Shoji

Federal law prohibits states from using TANF block grant funds to provide assistance to most families in which an adult is included in the TANF cash grant for longer than 60 months. States can adopt a shorter time limit, exempt certain categories of recipients from the time limit, or grant extensions of benefits to certain families that reach the time limit. Due to fiscal constraints, DSHS narrowed qualifications for TANF time limit extensions in February 2011, resulting in fewer families who were eligible for continued TANF cash benefits after 60 months. This report looks at the circumstances of these families and children through June 2012 (16 months after they left TANF due to time limits), plus child welfare involvement.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



A Look at Adults and Children Terminated from TANF Due to Time Limits in February 2011

JANUARY 2012 • Shoji, Du, Ford Shah

The Department of Social and Health Services narrowed the qualifications for TANF time limit extensions in February 2011. With this change, fewer families were eligible for continued TANF cash benefits after 60 months. This analysis summarizes the possible impacts of this policy change on Basic Food receipt, enrollment in medical assistance, self-reported homelessness and subsidized housing receipt, and receipt of emergency housing assistance. The analysis focuses on 8,996 children and 4,742 adults who were terminated from TANF due to time limits in February 2011 and did not return to TANF through November 2011. Outcomes were observed between February and October 2011.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Impact of Housing Assistance on Short-Term Homelessness Among TANF, Disability Lifeline, and Basic Food Recipients with Recently Recorded Spells of Homelessness

SEPTEMBER 2011 • Ford Shah, Estee, Mancuso, Yakup, Black, Felver

This report examines whether receiving housing assistance from local housing providers reduced the likelihood of homelessness later. Two groups of DSHS cash and food assistance clients with recent spells of recorded homelessness were used: 1) those receiving assistance in one of four housing programs recorded in Commerce's Homeless Management Information System, and 2) matched comparisons of clients not receiving housing assistance. We found housing assistance recipients in all four programs were significantly less likely than matched peers to experience homelessness at 7-9 months follow-up.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Behavioral Health Risk among TANF Parents

Links to Homelessness, Child Abuse and Arrests

DECEMBER 2010 • Ford Shah, Mancuso, He, Estee, Felver, Beall, Fiedler

This report examines behavioral health risk factors and adverse outcomes for adults receiving Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). Behavioral health problems—especially substance abuse—were found to be key drivers of homelessness, child abuse, and arrests. Yet the chemical dependency treatment penetration rate for TANF adults declined in recent years. This report suggests that expanding behavioral health treatment to TANF adults has the potential to reduce adverse outcomes, prevent behavioral health problems among children, and achieve cost savings through both the avoidance of adverse outcomes and the prevention of disability.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Children on TANF in Washington State

The Well-Being of Children and Caregivers

SEPTEMBER 2010 • Mancuso, Ford Shah, He, Estee, Felver, Beall, Yette

We analyzed risks and outcomes over a 5-year period for children on TANF, as well as birth parents and caregivers. Medical and behavioral health risk, social service utilization, employment, earnings, incarcerations, homelessness, and CPS involvement are identified. Children were more likely living with non-parental caregivers if birth parents had substance abuse problems, had been homeless or incarcerated, or if the child had a CPS investigation.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>



Adults on TANF in Washington State

Risks and Outcomes for Leavers, Cyclers, and Stayers

AUGUST 2010 • Mancuso, Ford Shah, He, Estee, Felver, Beall, Yette

We analyzed risks and outcomes over a 5-year period for adults on TANF in 2007. Quick leavers—those who left TANF fairly quickly and remained off—were more likely to be from two-parent households, to have a high school degree or equivalent, to have no child younger than 13 years of age, and to experience steady wage growth. Stayers, slow leavers, and high intensity cyclers were more likely to have chronic illness, substance abuse, and mental illness.

<https://www.dshs.wa.gov/sesa/rda/research-reports>

RDA CONTACT: Alice Huber, PhD, 360.902.0707