



The Other Block Grant

Kansas' block grant for school funding had a high profile this legislative season as questions around equity and adequacy were raised. The recent moves to have this funding vehicle meet the equity test impacts another block grant with as controversial a history - TANF.

The proportion of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds used to support families has declined in recent years. This past week, \$4.1 million in TANF funds were swapped out with money from the Children's Initiative Fund (CIF), money which was then used to supplement the \$38 million needed to fix the school finance equity and address the Kansas Supreme Court's ruling. This means that there are now fewer TANF dollars to support the safety net for families with children in Kansas.

TANF's effectiveness at supporting poor children and their families in Johnson County is already very limited:

- Currently only 1 in every 20 children below the federal poverty level is enrolled in TANF (*KS Dept. for Children and Families, 2015*)
- The number of Johnson County children living in families below the federal poverty level is 12,000 (*U.S. Census Bureau, 2014*).
- Only the poorest now qualify for TANF (about 30% of poverty or no more than \$500 a month for a family of three) with the average cash assistance dropping to \$114 a month (*UCS calculation of Annual County Packet Reports, SRS/DCF, 2013*)
- In 2015, lifetime eligibility for TANF in Kansas was cut from 48 months to 36 months total. As of July 1, 2016, lifetime eligibility was further cut to 24 month.

Kansas welfare caseloads may be smaller, but that doesn't mean fewer children are poor. What it does mean is fewer children receive help from TANF cash assistance.

1 in 6 benefited in 2010



1 in 20 benefited in 2015



(For more information: [Kansas Could Do More for Poor Families with Children, 2013](#), [UCS.Repairing the Kansas Safety Net: Ensuring Families Can Make Ends Meet, 2016](#), [Kansas Action for Children](#))

TANF: Temporary Assistance to Needy Families
Source: KS DCF, Detailed Caseload Reports, Nov. 2010 and Nov. 2015

The 2016 KIDS COUNT [Data Book](#) from the Annie E. Casey Foundation is now available and shows the emerging impact of state policy decisions on Kansas' five-year child [well-being](#) trends. The overall well-being of Kansas children has stagnated or declined significantly. County level data will be available this fall.

"We're only now beginning to see the many ways in which the policy choices of the last six years are eroding the well-being of children and families in Kansas-especially compared to other states that made different choices," said Kansas Action for Children President and CEO Annie McKay. Read the press release from KAC [here](#).

UCS Employment Planning Project

As part of the overall strategy to address poverty in Johnson County, UCS has launched the [Employment Planning Project](#), an effort to expand household-sustaining job opportunities to low-income Johnson County residents. Led by a 15-member work team of community members, the project will assess the complex factors related to increasing access to training, education, and employment opportunities for residents who work but do not make enough money to regularly meet basic needs. The Employment Planning Project will lead to the development of an implementation plan and recommended actions.

Our mission: Provide data analysis, lead collaborative planning and mobilize resources to enhance the availability and delivery of health and human services.

Contact us at 913-438-4764 or www.ucsjoco.org

STAY CONNECTED

