



**CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS
WITH DISABILITIES**

Ad Hoc TANF Task Force Annual Report for 2011

2011 Activities

The main priority of the Ad Hoc TANF Task Force is to prepare for the reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant program and promote legislative strategies to improve services to families on TANF that include a parent or a child with a disability. In 2011, the Ad Hoc Task Force monitored legislative initiatives, policy proposals, and new research on TANF. Task Force members participated in discussions with leading TANF advocates and HHS officials to inform the development of policy proposals that will better serve families with the most significant barriers to economic self-sufficiency. Congress continues to provide short-term extensions to the TANF program, postponing full reauthorization. Reauthorization is widely expected to be delayed until after the 2012 elections and will be tackled in the next Administration and session of Congress. However, there has been some limited activity in the House of Representatives to prepare for reauthorization, specifically:

- Legislation was introduced in December 2011 by Rep. Moore (H.R. 3573) to reauthorize TANF that incorporates long-held priorities of the CCD TANF Task Force. Specifically, the bill would allow states to develop modified employability plans for families that include a person with a disability. Currently states are required to engage 50 percent of the caseload in narrowly defined work activities for a minimum of 20 hours per week. CCD TANF Task Force members and other TANF advocates believe the narrow interpretation of what can be counted toward the state's work participation rate has resulted in fewer people with disabilities receiving supports that can help them transition to employment and greater economic self-sufficiency.
- The Subcommittee on Human Resources of the Committee on Ways and Means held a hearing on TANF in September 2011 entitled *Improving Work and Other Welfare Reform Goals*. Witnesses discussed the impact of work requirements on program participants. The Center on Budget and Policy Priorities provided testimony which argued that TANF's ability to provide a safety net for families has eroded significantly over time and that there is often a mismatch between what the legislation allows and what families require to achieve greater economic self-sufficiency. Other

witnesses argued that the expectation that recipients of federal assistance meet work requirements should be extended to other federal programs, including unemployment compensation, housing assistance and SSI.

In 2011, Congress also failed to extend the TANF Supplemental Grants when extending the TANF block grant program. The Supplemental Grants provide additional TANF funds to 17 states with historically poor spending on state welfare programs. The loss of the funds has resulted in cuts to financial assistance and social programs for low income families, including families that include a person with a disability.

Future Activities

While Congress is not expected to reauthorize the TANF program in 2013, there is a need to educate Members of Congress and the Administration about how the program functions and how it can be improved to serve people with disabilities. Leading TANF advocates are investigating how TANF program services and expected outcomes should be modified for families with the most significant barriers to economic self-sufficiency, including families that include a person with a disability. CCD Task Force members must be a part of these discussions. Improving the TANF program requires the involvement of diverse CCD members.

Chair in 2010

Sharon McDonald, National Alliance to End Homelessness