



## **CONSORTIUM FOR CITIZENS WITH DISABILITIES**

### **Consortium for Citizens with Disabilities (CCD) Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) Task Force**

**December 2010**

The President's budget for FY 2011 included two important proposals for the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. The budget proposed:

- providing \$500 million for a Fatherhood, Marriage and Family Innovation Fund; and
- extending the TANF Emergency Contingency Fund (ECF) through FY 2011 with an additional \$2.5 billion in federal funding.

The Fatherhood, Marriage and Family Innovation would have committed \$250 million for competitive grants to states to serve families in extreme poverty that experience the most difficulty accessing or maintaining employment and meeting the needs of their children. The Task Force viewed the Innovation Fund as providing an important opportunity to advance new strategies to engage families that include parents or children with disabilities. Unfortunately, the Fatherhood, Marriage and Family Innovation Fund was not seriously considered in Congress in 2010 and the Task Force focused primarily on supporting efforts to extend the TANF ECF.

#### **CCD TANF Task Force Activities:**

The Task Force's activities primarily involved providing support to the larger TANF advocacy community to extend the TANF ECF. The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) provided \$5 billion for the TANF ECF that allowed states to draw down additional federal resources through FY 2010 to reimburse states for the increased costs of serving families impacted by the recession. The funds were used to provide subsidized employment to households with children, short-term benefits to families (e.g. through provision of emergency assistance to prevent an eviction), and to offset costs to states of the increased numbers of families enrolling in the cash assistance program.

The Task Force mobilized local partners before votes in the House and Senate and educated Members of Congress directly about the impact the ECF was having in their states and districts. A provision to extend the TANF ECF passed the U.S. House of Representatives. While Senate leaders made multiple attempts, a proposal to extend the TANF ECF never passed the Senate.

The Task Force also provided input to Rep. Moore (D-WI) who introduced the "Promoting Fair Work Opportunities for Persons with Disabilities Act." The proposed legislation was based on "Pathways to Independence," a bill championed by the CCD TANF Task Force that had been introduced by Sen. Gordon Smith (R-WA) in two prior Congressional sessions.

## **Upcoming Activities**

While TANF reauthorization was due in FY 2010 and the continuing resolution to sustain the program will expire in FY 2011, most are skeptical that the incoming Congress will reauthorize the program in the upcoming year. There may be opportunities to introduce legislation that will help inform the debate on the role of TANF, particularly during times of economic uncertainty. The TANF ECF also supported the development of new approaches to help low-income workers access employment. The lessons learned from these new approaches, particularly those that focused on helping families that included persons with disabilities, need to be captured and translated for Members of Congress to inform future legislative efforts.

It is proposed that the TANF Task Force continue in 2011 as an Ad hoc group.