

LD 1748 Helps Maine's social safety net provide more opportunities for parents to build a secure future

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, or TANF, **provides families with kids with critical income support** for things like rent, heat and electricity, diapers, warm clothes, and other necessities. TANF is also supposed to help families move toward long term economic security. But Maine's program is falling short of this goal. **In 2020, 82% of families leaving TANF were still living in poverty** because they had no earnings or because their earnings were so low.

Improving TANF service delivery

Education and training options for TANF participants, like the Parents as Scholars (PaS) program, can open doors to better jobs, better pay and hours, and economic stability for Maine families. The Maine legislature has **funded 2,000 slots in PaS for parents to pursue education or job training**. But even though many TANF participants are very interested in higher education, not enough of them are hearing about these opportunities or being helped to apply: in January 2022, only 26 were people enrolled in PaS.

LD 1748 would **help more parents who are interested in higher education enroll in an education or training program**. It would align PaS with a similar, successful program, HOPE, which graduated 101 parents from education and training programs in 2021 alone.

PaS participants would get **more funds for tuition, school debt, books & fees, and technology**. They would also have more options for balancing school and other commitments, and flexibility to go to school part-time if they need to. LD 1748 would also tell DHHS to **make sure services are trauma-informed and culturally and linguistically appropriate**, and give TANF participants—experts in how TANF could improve—a voice in shaping those services.

Our safety net can open doors for families and support our workforce

LD 1748 builds off of the experiences and leadership of our friends, family, and neighbors who have low income. It's an opportunity to work together to pass policies that **move more Mainers toward long term economic security**, strengthening communities across our state.



*"[TANF] has the power to lift families out of poverty, families like mine, but **I felt dread** each time I went to the mailbox to find **how they were trying to kick me off** each month.*

*My children were enrolled in quality childcare finally, and **I graduated with my Bachelors** in Justice studies. I made it, despite a lot of unnecessary and stressful barriers."*

-Bonnie, Whitefield