

Parents As Scholars

State Fiscal Year 2016

Legislative Report

History:

During the 2011 Legislative session, Senate Bill 385 created the *Parents As Scholars* Program (PAS). This bill allows select cash recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to attend an approved vocational/educational program for a period of time that is longer than the allowable limit under Federal Regulation (45 CFR 261.33). This bill supports TANF cash recipients in the full-time pursuit of education, with attendance in High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) certificates, associate's degree, or baccalaureate degree programs. PAS participation is limited, with 25 statewide slots available. Slots are awarded through a regional lottery with five regions established based on proportionate TANF caseloads. As participants complete their education or lose eligibility for TANF, openings occur. The participants attend a variety of schools in a variety of programs. Some students are studying for their Hi-Set diploma, while others are attending trade schools, tribal colleges or a component of the Montana University System.

SFY 2016 Outcomes:

- **47** individuals benefited from the PAS program in SFY 2016
- **11** individuals are continuing in the program
- **14** individuals completed their education goal through TANF
 - **11** found employment and closed to income
- **22** individuals did not complete their education goal through TANF
 - **14** found employment or closed to income
 - **8** did not find employment and closed to:
 - 3 – voluntary case closure
 - 4 – sanction
 - 1 – withdrew from PAS (child's medical reasons)

Overview SFY 2012-2016:

SFY 2012		SFY 2013		SFY 2014		SFY 2015		SFY 2016	
Enrolled	42	Enrolled	35	Enrolled	36	Enrolled	41	Enrolled	47
Single Parent	40	Single Parent	33	Single Parent	32	Single Parent	37	Single Parent	41
Two Parent	2	Two Parent	2	Two Parent	4	Two Parent	4	Two Parent	6
Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2
Closed due to Employment	3	Closed due to Employment	8	Closed due to Employment	5	Closed due to Employment	10	Closed due to Employment	25
Graduated	13	Graduated	6	Graduated	6	Graduated	16	Graduated	14
Certificates: Cosmetology 3 Dental Assistant 1		Certificates: Cosmetology 3 Associates: Medical Office Specialist 1		Diploma: GED 1 Certificate: Cosmetology 1		Diploma: HiSET 3 Certificate: Cosmetology 8		Diploma: HiSET 4 Certificate: Cosmetology 6	
Associates: Paralegal 1 Nursing 2 Business 2 Medical Assisting 2 Mental Health Direct Care 1		Bachelors: Community Health 1 Electrical Engineering 1		Associates: Dental Hygiene 1 Dental Assistant 1 Business 1		Associates: Mental Health Direct Care 1 Information Technology 1		Associates: Nursing 1 Bachelors: Accounting 1 Biology 1 Management Info Systems 1	
Bachelors: Photography 1				Bachelors: Nursing 1		Bachelors: Mechanics 1 Nursing 1 Psychology 1			

Success Stories:

Michelle

Michelle, single mother of two, Oliver 10 and Isabella 8, utilized the Parents as Scholars program to attend the University of Montana to pursue a degree in microbiology. Michelle completed the maximum number of federally allowable educational months (limited to 12) and entered PAS in May 2014.

Even though Michelle was able to access child care through the TANF grant for after school and summer care programs, Michelle depended on trading child care time on evenings and weekends to get through school as she had no local family support. Michelle was granted work study for fall 2014 and began work as a research assistant as well as an assistant to the biological sciences advisor. She was also able to pick up hours as a biology tutor and was asked to sit on a committee that evaluated professors and classes in the biology department.

Michelle's journey was not easy. As she juggled child care difficulties, classes, work study, side employment, and tutoring, she also suffered an ankle injury and mourned the passing of a close friend. During her ankle injury, Michelle was unable to attend upstairs classes due to the building not being handicapped accessible and resorted to working with Disability Services to complete her exams. Even though she failed the class and had to re-take it, Michelle was accepted into an undergraduate research position.

Michelle successfully graduated in May 2016 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology. Her overall GPA was 3.59. She is three classes away from a double major and if she returns to school next year, she could add a Bachelor of Science in Microbiology. She has made significant strides toward self-sufficiency, and without the help of the PAS program, Michelle would have been unable to enroll in as many classes and finish as quickly as she did.

Holly
Holly first enrolled with TANF in 2013 as a single mother. While participating in employment and training services, her mother was in a severe accident. As a result, Holly cared for her little brother until her mother was well enough to care for him again. None the less, Holly utilized the Parents As Scholars program and earned her HiSET. She gained employment and has gone on to further her education at the Little Big Horn College with studies in Early Childhood.

Nathan
Nathan first enrolled with TANF in 2014 as a young single father. With the help of the Parents as Scholars program, he earned his HiSET in 2016. Nathan has since gained employment at Charter Communications working full-time, with overtime hours. He now participates in the Post-Employment program while continuing to receive case management and supportive services as he transitions off of TANF and becomes self-supporting.

Brenda
Brenda first enrolled with TANF in 2013 as a single mother of 2 children as well as having guardianship of her niece and nephew. The Parents as Scholars program offered Brenda the opportunity to graduate from Bold Beauty Academy in 2015 with a cosmetology licensure. Brenda's training allowed her to gain full-time employment which now supports her family.