

# Parents As Scholars

## State Fiscal Year 2020

### 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 12-month 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 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 and 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 2020 Outcomes:

- **21** individuals benefited from the PAS program in SFY 2020
  - **18 Single parents**
  - **3 Two-parent**
  - **Average number of children 2**
- **5** individuals are continuing in the program
- **11** individuals completed their education goal with TANF Cash support
  - Certificate: Cosmetology (2)
  - Associate: Nursing (3), General Studies (2)
  - Bachelor: Criminal Justice/Psychology (1), Social Work (1), Psychology (1), Business/Native American Studies (1)
- **5** individuals did not complete their education goal
  - **2** closed to income (gained employment)
  - **3** closed to:
    - sanction/failure to comply (1)
    - moved (1)
    - client's request (1)

#### Parents As Scholars Success Stories:

##### ***Avital graduated from MSU-Bozeman with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychology in May 2020.***

A few years ago, I found myself a single mother in her 30's, working in food service. As my daughter's father had left the state and I had no relatives to help with childcare I quickly understood that my situation was unfeasible in the long run. My job was demanding I work weekends and early mornings when childcare was simply unavailable and there was no hope of progressing into a more fulfilling position. Going back to school completely transformed my life. First, the schedule was much more conducive to the demands of parenting. Furthermore, something clicked and I found myself excelling in all my classes and I was accepted into a highly competitive Ph.D. program in the sciences. Besides being truly excited about the work I will be doing, my graduate stipend pays more than I have ever made in my life. Not only that, but the program will open a world of opportunities that I had never even dreamed of. This all would not have been possible without the support of programs like TANF, SNAP, and Parents As Scholars. These essential programs ensured that I was able to keep a roof over my daughter's head and food in her belly while I worked to create a better future for our little family. I look forward to the day when I can afford to contribute to these programs so that others can have the same opportunities that I have received.

***Angelique graduated from MSU-Northern with a Bachelor of Science degree in Criminal Justice with a minor in Psychology in May 2020.***

Nearly 6 years ago, I walked into my doctor's office and was told if I had no intention of cleaning up, I should probably go home and plan a funeral because I most likely wouldn't be alive come another year.

My name is Angelique and I am an alcoholic/addict. I live by the principles of a 12-Step recovery program and my life is completely different today.

When I first began to get clean, I had no clue what to do, drinking and drugging was all I had come to know. I am a single mother of four beautiful daughters. My family had become pretty steady figures in our lives so the girls were taken care of. However, I knew that I had to find my foundation so I applied for TANF benefits. I will forever be grateful for the assistance and all the encouragement that I have received through this program and the people I have had the pleasure of dealing with. With the help of this program, I have managed to take care of my children and myself. I was also able to go back to college and graduate with a Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and a Minor in Psychology. I do not think this would have been possible without the help of the Pathways program. Again, I am forever grateful for the help that I have received through this program. It helped change my life forever.

***Kaitlin graduated from MSU-Northern with an Associate of Science degree in Nursing in May 2020.***

Parents and Scholars allowed me to continue my education towards becoming a nurse and receiving my associate's degree in science-nursing. Through Parents and Scholars, I was able to focus on school without having to worry about how I would be able to afford to live or feed my children. Being a full-time student and single mother of two boys aged four and three, it was very difficult to find any time to work outside of school hours, not to mention find the help with childcare in order for me to be able to even think about working. Parents and Scholars took so much pressure and stress off my shoulders and allowed me to get through nursing school. Being able to get through nursing school means that I will now be able to support my kids on my own and provide for them all by myself, for the rest of their lives. Without Parents and Scholars, it is hard to say if I would have made it through! I am now a graduated nurse that graduated with honors and will begin working next month and am just waiting to take my N-CLEX! Thank you, Parents and Scholars, for assisting me in pursuing my dreams to become a nurse and allowing me to take care of my family! I very unlikely could have done it without you! Thank-you.

***Danielle graduated from MSU-Northern with an Associate of Science degree in Nursing in May 2020.***

My name is Danielle, and I am a single mother of two. I am currently employed part time for an assisted living facility in Havre, Montana. I am also a recent participant in the Parents As Scholars program. Because of this program, I was able to focus my little bit of free time on my studies in the nursing program at MSU-Northern in Havre. I have recently graduated with my associates degree with honors. I am extremely grateful for this program because without being able to count these hours towards my Pathways program obligations, there is little doubt in my mind that I wouldn't have been able to successfully complete the nursing program. I have been a walking example of Murphy's Law for the last couple semesters, with several unplanned health issues and vehicle repairs that have needed to be done. If I would have had to work around these issues, take care of my children, as well as maintain the amount of hours needed for employment or volunteer work, I would not have had the time necessary to dedicate to this extremely demanding educational program. Thank you for choosing me as an eligible participant in the Parents As Scholars program!

***Amanda graduated from Salish-Kootenai College with an Associate of Science degree in Nursing in May 2020.***

I am writing this letter to share how the Parents as Scholars (PAS) financial assistance program has enabled me to successfully achieve my goal of completing nursing school. The monthly stipend that I have been receiving throughout my final year of nursing school has been my saving grace in allowing me to provide for my children as I put all my effort towards graduating.

In July of 2015 I was admitted to Recovery in Motion Treatment Center in Tucson, Arizona for an addiction to heroin and methamphetamines. After graduating the program and returning to Montana, I got my children back and by God's grace my life took on a completely new course. I started nursing school in 2017.

Starting school as a single parent was very intimidating when it came to finances. I had no idea how it was all going to work out, but I knew that God was calling me to be a nurse. I stepped out in faith trusting that He would provide for me and my children. I have been able to go to school full time and sufficiently provide for my children and pay the bills since I started school in 2017.

Nursing school is a rigorous program. I have spent countless late nights up studying, I have missed out on many events with family and friends and have traveled many miles back and forth from clinical sites. I have maintained a G.P.A. of 3.8 and

higher throughout my time in school. The funding from the PAS program has enabled me to have time to commit to my studies. I did not have to work while going to school. Because of this I have been able to be a successful student, and an involved parent. It has not been an easy journey, but thanks to the PAS financial assistance program, it has been possible. I will graduate in June of 2020. I am considering continuing my education and receiving my Bachelor of Science in Nursing. The support that has been provided to me by the PAS program was a contribution towards making the world a better place. We are living in perilous times. We need people who are willing to step up and sacrificially give their all for humanity. I am driven and dedicated to make an impact in this world. Because of the financial support I have been given, my dreams have become a reality. My children have a mother they can look up to, and I will be a nurse. Soon, I will be out on the front lines doing what I am most passionate about: helping people.

My history of drug addiction has taught me that it is easy to get stuck in a place that you don't want to be. There are so many adults around this country who have the potential to be something great. However, many of these individuals were products of an unfortunate childhood: poverty, physical abuse, substance abuse, etc. Sadly, in many cases these individuals have children of their own, and they perpetuate the cycle of dysfunction. Any dreams of a better life fade away as the weight of parenthood and lack of finances and resources encompasses their reality. Every parent wants to build a healthy and secure life for their children, but sometimes...it can seem impossible.

To all that have made this program possible for parents aspiring to make a better life for themselves and their children, words cannot express my gratitude towards you. This program does more than enable parents to achieve their academic goals. The funding of PAS will impact generations to come. As children watch their parents persevere and strive to make a better life, I believe it changes the children's perception. Children like my daughters, who have witnessed their parents set goals and achieve them, will see that through hard work and determination anything is possible.

**Parents of Scholars Overview SFY 2014-2019:**

SYF 2014		SFY 2015		SFY 2016	
<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>47</b>
Single Parent	32	Single Parent	37	Single Parent	41
Two Parent	4	Two Parent	4	Two Parent	6
Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2
<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Graduated</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>14</b>
Diploma: GED	1	Diploma: HI SET	3	Diploma: HI SET	4
Certificate: Cosmetology	1	Certificate: Cosmetology	8	Certificate: Cosmetology	6
Associates: Dental Hygiene	1	Associates: Mental Health Direct Care	1	Associates: Nursing	1
Dental Assistant	1	Information Technology	1	Bachelors: Accounting	1
Business	1	Bachelors: Mechanics	1	Biology	1
Bachelors: Nursing	1	Nursing	1	Management Info Systems	1
		Psychology	1		

SFY 2017		SYF 2018		SYF 2019	
<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>32</b>
Single Parent	34	Single Parent	31	Single Parent	31
Two Parent	8	Two Parent	4	Two Parent	1
Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2
<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Graduated</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>17</b>
Diploma:		Certificate:		Certificates:	
HI SET	3	Cosmetology		Cosmetology	4
Certificate:		Associates:		Licensed Practical Nurse	1
Cosmetology	1	Business Management	1	Associates:	
Diesel Technology	1	Bachelors:		Accounting	1
Bachelors:		Education	3	General Studies	2
Education	1			Nursing & Pre-Nursing	2
Nursing	1			Social Work	1
Psychology	1			Bachelors:	
English	1			Crop Science	1
				Electrical Engineering	1
				Human Services	1
				Elementary & early childhood education	2

SYF 2020	
<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>21</b>
Single Parent	18
Two Parent	3
Average # Children	2
<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Graduated</b>	<b>11</b>
Certificates:	
Cosmetology	2
Associates:	
General Studies	2
Nursing (R.N.)	3
Bachelors:	
Criminal Justice/Psychology	1
Social Work	1
Psychology	1
Business/Native American Studies	1