

## **A Look at the TANF Temporary Suspension Population and Possible Impacts on Re-engagement**

Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5921 allows TANF parents who are caring for one child under age two, or two or more children under age six, to choose whether or not to participate in WorkFirst (WF) activities from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012. Beginning July 1, 2012, the law requires the Department to begin re-engaging adults who have chosen the temporary suspension. All clients in suspension must be re-engaged by June 30, 2013.

This analysis focuses on the 10,129 TANF adults who were in WorkFirst suspension in February 2012 and possible impacts on the re-engagement work.

### **Summary**

In February 2012, there were 10,129 eligible adults in WorkFirst suspension. Of these adults:

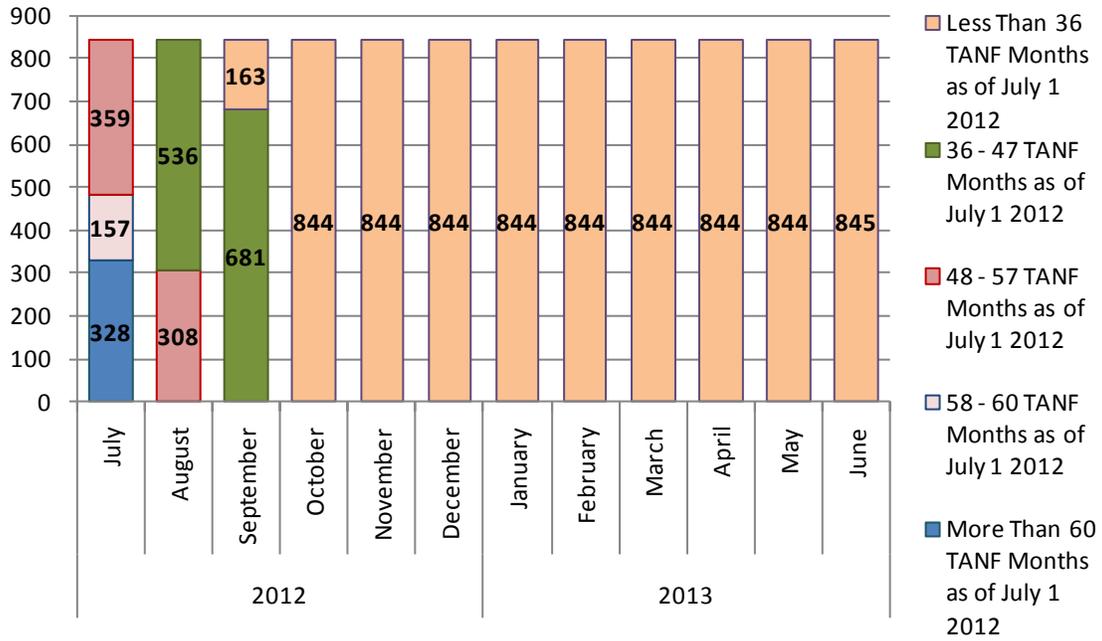
- 3,261 adults will have a child under age one during the re-engagement period;
- 470 adults had previous participation in Vocational Education (Voc Ed);
- 1,095 adults had previous participation in Community Jobs (CJ); and
- 2,655 adults did not have a high school diploma or GED (as of February 2012).

ESSB 5921 requires that the Department re-engage clients taking the temporary suspension in a priority order – starting with those closest to reaching their 60-month TANF time limit.

If we phase in an equal number of adults over the 12-month re-engagement period, about 844 would need to be contacted each month for re-engagement. The following chart shows the estimated number of adults to be re-engaged each month, by TANF length of stay.

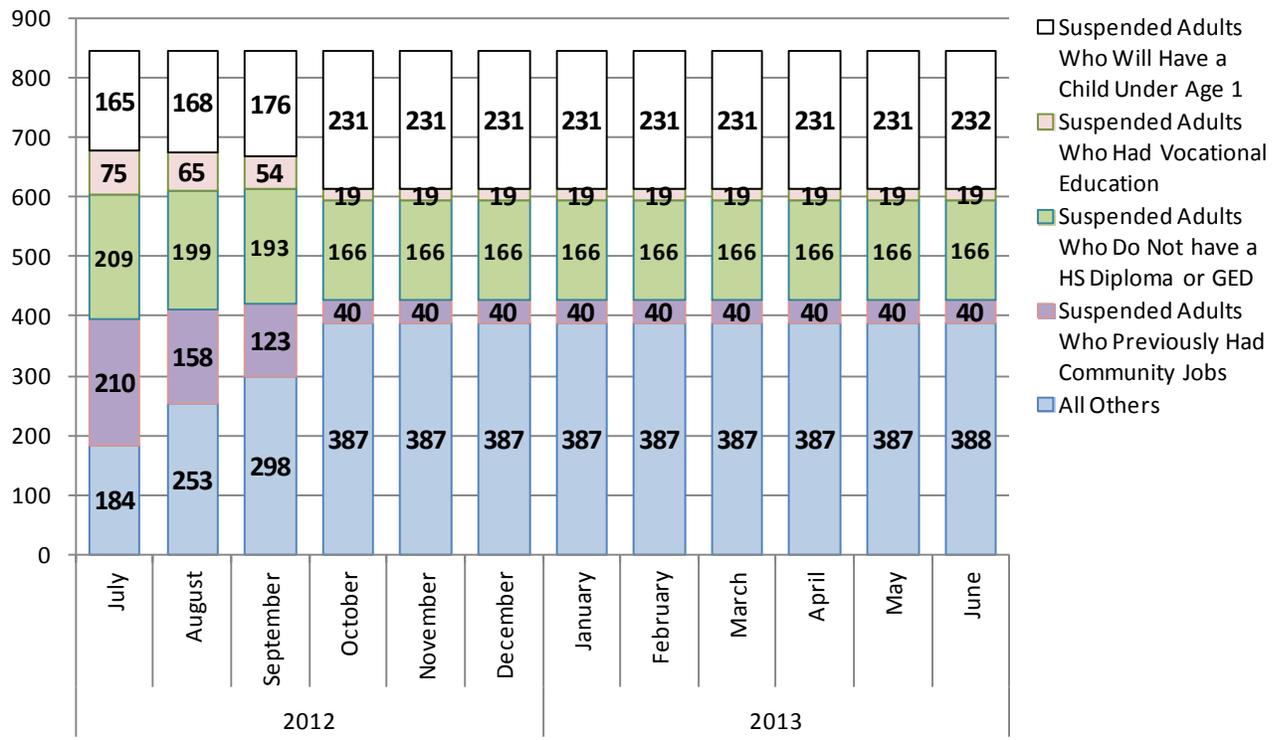
**Note: This analysis provides ‘maximum’ estimates, as it assumes that all of the 10,129 adults in suspension in February 2012 will remain on TANF and in suspension until they reach their re-engagement month. Some adults may exit TANF or choose to engage earlier. Some adults may also choose not to participate as required and they would be sanctioned. Prior to ESSB 5921, about 17% of the parents with a child under age two (but no infants) or two or more children under age six were in sanction.**

**Monthly Phase-Out By Length of Stay  
 (All Suspended Adults)**



If we phase in an equal number (844) of adults each month for re-engagement over the 12-month period, the breakdown by activity is demonstrated by the following chart:

**Suspended Adults By Selected Activities**



**Note:** Monthly phase-out is estimated based on a length-of-stay priority order. After the first three months of re-engagement, it is estimated that the Department will have contacted all the adults who have been on TANF for 36 months or longer. For the remaining nine months of the re-engagement period, the Department will contact an equal number of adults who have been on TANF for less than 36 months.

**Length of Stay (LOS) and Time Limit Impacts**

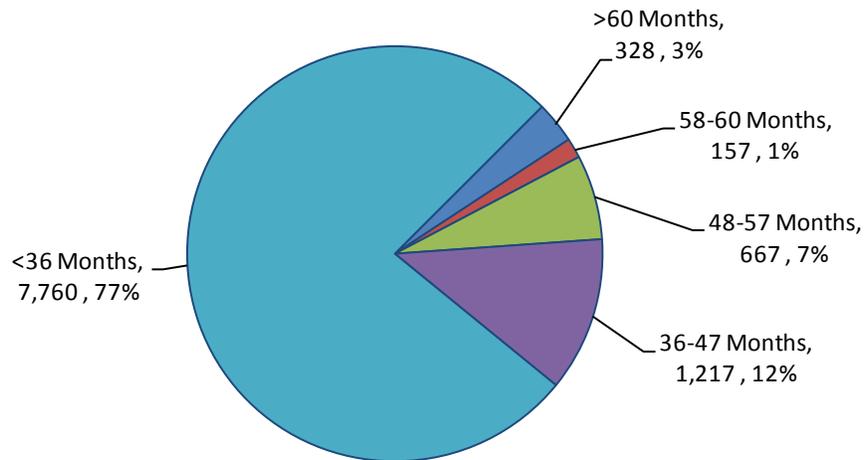
Of the 10,129 suspended adults in February 2012:

- The majority of the suspended adults (77% or 7,760) have two or more years left in their 60-month time limit. This means there is still some time available to engage them in activities that may be slightly longer in duration, such as Community Jobs or 12-month Vocational Education programs, to prepare them for movement along a pathway to self sufficiency.
- 157 (1.6%) adults will have only two months left of their 60-month time limit as of July 1, 2012. By September 2012, they will either be closed or given a hardship extension (should they meet the criteria for one). This means these cases will be the first to be contacted for re-engagement in July, and will not be likely candidates for longer term activities since there is not sufficient time for them to complete them. If

education is appropriate for these individuals, we may need to look at connecting them with Basic Food Employment and Training (BFET) in order to support post-TANF education.

- 667 (6.6%) adults will have one year or less to be engaged. Participation for this population will likely require more focused and short term engagement.

**Suspended Adults in February 2012 by Length of Stay**

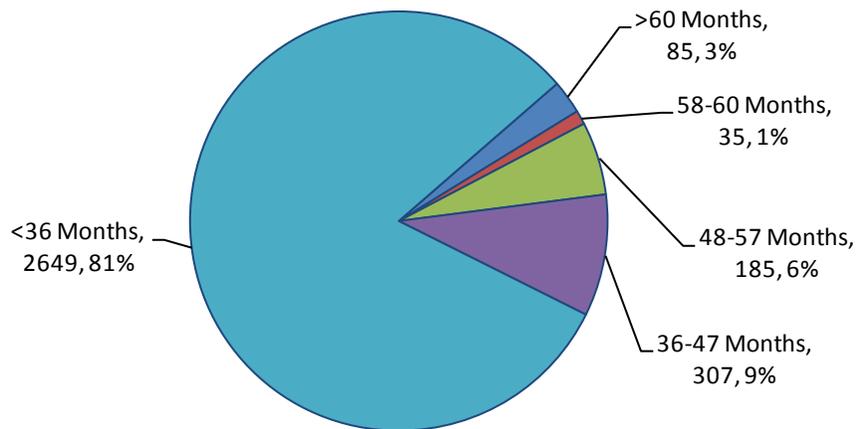


### **Infant Exemption and Possible Impacts**

Of the 10,129 suspended parents, 3,261 (32.2%) will have a child under age one between July 1 and June 30. These parents are likely to move from the participation suspension to an infant exemption. Should all of them choose the infant exemption, it will mean that of the 844 parents contacted for re-engagement each month, 253 will not be engaged in work activities, and 591 would be potentially engaged in work activities.

- 35 (1.1%) of those with a child under age one have only two months left of their 60-month time limit as of July. If they choose to engage, activities will need to be targeted and of short duration.
- 185 (5.7%) will have three to 12 months left of their 60-month time limit. These adults may choose to engage since they will time off during the possible exemption period. However, the activities they select may need to be quite targeted and of shorter duration. We will likely need to connect them with BFET (if eligible and available to them) should they choose to pursue vocational education.

### Length of Stay for Suspended Adults Who Will Have a Child Under Age 1 in SFY 2013



### Prior Program Participation and Possible Impacts

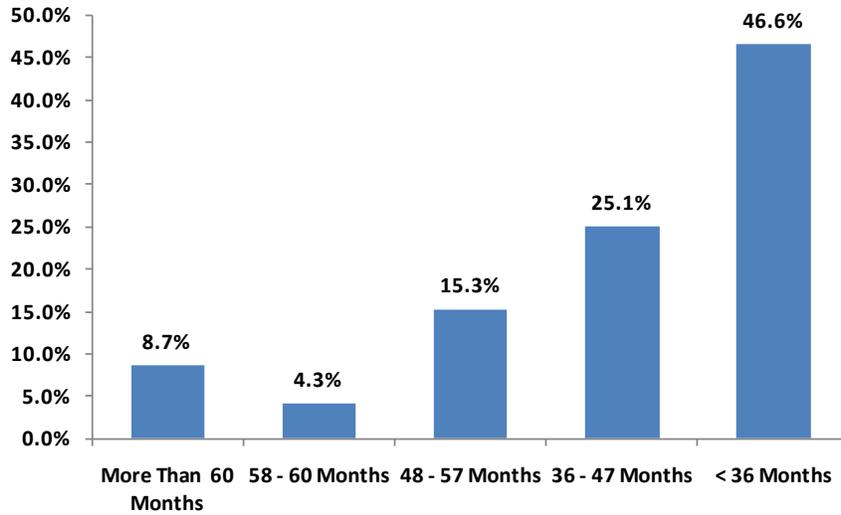
#### Education and Training

Of the suspended adults (6,868) who will not be eligible for infant exemption during the engagement period:

- 470 (6.8%) have had some vocational education (Voc Ed) prior to taking the suspension, and 41 (8.7%) have exhausted their 12 months of available vocational education. The majority of these adults will be able to select Voc Ed that could count toward federal participation.
- Of the 470 adults who had some Voc Ed previously:
  - ✓ 20 (4.3%) will reach their 60-month time limit by September 2012.
  - ✓ 72 (15.3%) will reach their 60 months by July 2013.

For these 92 adults, engagement in longer-term (12 months) programs may not be feasible within the time available before time limit termination.

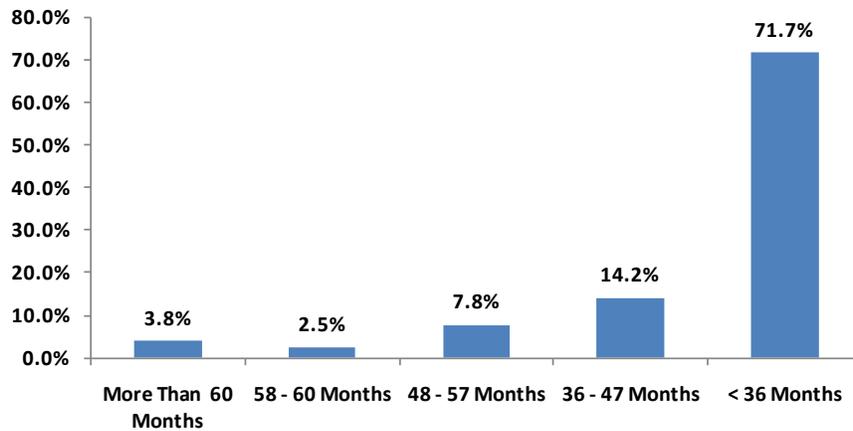
**Prior Vocational Education Participation by TANF Length of Stay**



- ACES self-reported education data shows that 2,655 adults (38.7%) did not have a high school diploma or GED as of February 2012. This means they may be selecting such activities once re-engaged.
  - ✓ 66 will reach the 60 month time limit by September 2012.
  - ✓ 207 will reach the time limit by July 2013.

For these 273 adults, engagement in longer-term (12 months) programs may not be feasible within the time available before time limit termination.

**Suspended Adults who Do Not Have a HS/GED**



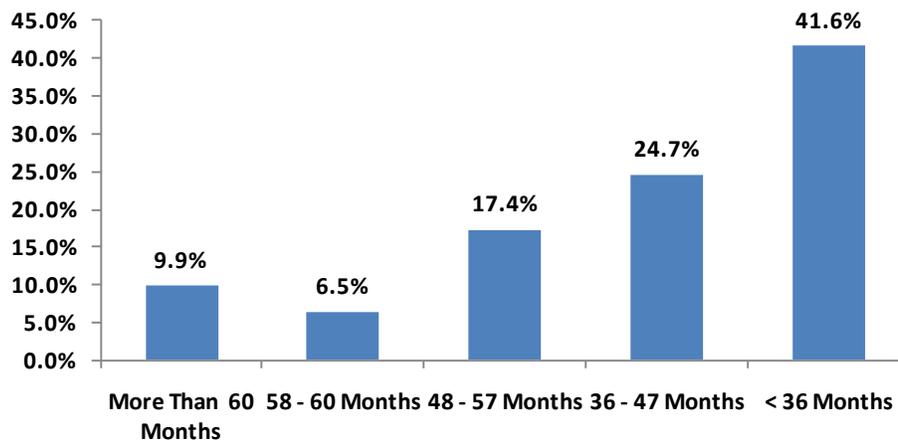
**Note: The magnitude of HS/GED participation may be lower as some of the adults may have already been in the program prior to the suspension and may choose not to engage in such activities post suspension.**

Community Jobs (CJ)

- 1,095 (15.9%) of the suspended adults have had previous CJ engagement. For these individuals, CJ may be an approved activity only if an exception is authorized. Of these 1,095 adults:
  - ✓ 71 will reach the time limit by September 2012.
  - ✓ 190 will reach the time limit by July, 2013.

For these 261 adults, engagement in longer-term (12 months) programs may not be feasible within the time available before time limit termination.

**Prior Community Jobs Participation by TANF Length of Stay**



Job Search

- Since these 261 individuals have been in a period of suspension during the year, any Job Search in which they are engaged will likely be countable toward federal participation.