



STATE OF WASHINGTON  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL AND HEALTH SERVICES  
Post Office Box 45010, Olympia WA 98504-5010

August 7, 2012

The Honorable Christine O. Gregoire  
Governor of Washington  
Post Office Box 40002  
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Dear Governor Gregoire:

In late June 2012, the federal Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, sent you a letter regarding its determination that Washington's child poverty rate increased by at least 5 percent between 2008 and 2009. Washington State will also be asked to complete an assessment of the impact of our TANF program on this increase in child poverty. The Department has initiated a comprehensive assessment of the state's TANF program and recent economic impacts as a result of the Great Recession. Below are some initial key data points.

1. During the Great Recession Washington's unemployment rate and number of children living in poverty increased:
  - Our state experienced an unprecedented increase in our unemployment rate from 4.6% in January 2008 to 10.2% in December 2009.
  - The number of children living in poverty increased by 13.5% from 2008 to 2009.
2. Washington's TANF program and other safety net programs experienced changes:
  - While the number of children living in poverty increased by 13.5%, the number of children receiving TANF assistance also increased by 18.7% in response to the demand.
  - In 2008, 40.2% of children living in poverty received TANF. This increased to 41.3% in 2009.
  - The TANF All-Family caseload increased by 28.8% from January 2008 to December 2009.
  - TANF assistance spending increased by 23% from 2008 to 2009. TANF payment standards were increased by 3% in 2008.
  - The average number of Washington children receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits increased by over 36% from 2008 to 2009.

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- Based upon increased enrollments in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and the increasing unemployment rate, Washington qualified as a “needy state” under the Contingency Fund rules for all of 2008 and 2009.

Once we have received further guidance from the Department of Health and Human Services, we will complete our analysis and provide a briefing for you.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 360.902.7800.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Robin Arnold-Williams".

Robin Arnold-Williams  
Secretary