

# Parents As Scholars

## State Fiscal Year 2017

### 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 2017 Outcomes:

- **42** individuals benefited from the PAS program in SFY 2017
- **12** individuals are continuing in the program
- **11** individuals completed their education goal through TANF
  - **7** found employment and closed to income
- **19** individuals did not complete their education goal through TANF
  - **4** found employment or closed to income
  - **15** did not find employment and closed to:
    - 2 – voluntary case closure
    - 4 – sanction
    - 4 – Closure for non-coop with CSED
    - 1 – Not eligible for State TANF
    - 2 – Not eligible due to timeclock
    - 2 – Closed TANF and moved to Education Pays

#### Overview SFY 2012-2017:

SFY 2012		SFY 2013		SFY 2014	
<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>36</b>
Single Parent	40	Single Parent	33	Single Parent	32
Two Parent	2	Two Parent	2	Two Parent	4
Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2
<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Graduated</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>6</b>
Certificates:		Certificates:		Diploma:	
Cosmetology	3	Cosmetology	3	GED	1
Dental Assistant	1	Associates:		Certificate:	
Associates:		Medical Office Specialist	1	Cosmetology	1
Paralegal	1	Bachelors:		Associates:	
Nursing	2	Community Health	1	Dental Hygiene	1
Business	2	Electrical Engineering	1	Dental Assistant	1
Medical Assistant	2			Business	1
Mental Health DirectCare	1			Bachelors:	
Bachelors:				Nursing	1
Photography	1				
SFY 2015		SFY 2016		SFY 2017	
<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>Enrolled</b>	<b>42</b>
Single Parent	37	Single Parent	41	Single Parent	34
Two Parent	4	Two Parent	6	Two Parent	8
Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2	Average # Children	2
<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>Closed due to Employment</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Graduated</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>Graduated</b>	<b>11</b>
Diploma:		Diploma:		Diploma:	
HiSET	3	HiSET	4	HiSET	3
Certificate:		Certificate:		Certificates:	
Cosmetology	8	Cosmetology	6	Diesel Technology	1
Associates:		Associates:		Cosmetology	1
Mental Health DirectCare	1	Nursing	1	Bachelors:	
Information Technology	1	Bachelors:		Education	1
Bachelors:		Accounting	1	Nursing	1
Mechanics	1	Biology	1	Psychology	1
Nursing	1	Management Info Systems	1	English	1
Psychology	1				

## Success Stories:

### *Kimberly*

To whom it may concern:

My name is Kimberly DeVries. I was recently in the Parents as Scholars program for my last year of nursing school with Montana State University at their satellite campus in Kalispell, Montana. I graduated in May 2017 with honors with my Bachelors of Science in Nursing.

I am eternally grateful for the Parents as Scholars program. Since Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) only provides assistance for 12 months of education, I'm not sure I would've been able to complete my degree without the Parents as Scholars program. I am a single mom to a four-year-old daughter. Due to the demands of nursing school, being a single parent, and two knee surgeries over my winter breaks that each required me to be on crutches for six weeks post-operatively, I was not able to work during the school year. My daughter's father rarely pays child support, so I rely or have relied on public assistance, PELL grants, student loans, and working full-time as a waitress in the summers to cover my cost of living.

My case manager at Community Action Partnership of Northwest Montana, Brooke Bertelsen, has been a huge supporter with my journey to get my degree. Receiving public assistance can be confusing and frustrating at times so I feel fortunate that I have a case manager that is so helpful and truly cares. I cannot say enough kind words about her. When I was in need of additional assistance, Brooke referred me to Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) at Job Service in Kalispell. I was able to receive additional assistance facilitated through Amy Gault at Job Service.

I recently accepted a job at Kalispell Reginal Medical Center and am excited to begin this new chapter in my life as a nurse. Thank you for the support!

Sincerely,

Kimberly Devries  
Kalispell MT



### **Taylor**

TANF Program,

I just wanted to write to show my appreciation for the TANF Program, and let you know how much it helped me in the past few years.

All kids need the fundamentals like, food, shelter and clothes on their backs. One thing they also need is time. Being a parent you are a financial provider, teacher, cook, maid, coach and many other things. Doing it alone as a single parent makes it harder to cover as much ground.

I am a single mother to one wonderful girl. She is my whole world. The driving force behind my daily choices is to build a life for my daughter that she deserves. TANF has helped me do that.

Before moving to Missoula I was a full-time employee along with being a full-time student. This took so much of my waking day. Yes, I knew that my hard work was going to pay off eventually, but I felt that "eventually" was going to come after I had missed half her childhood. After applying to the program I was able to focus on my studies and finish my bachelor's degree, while spending more time with my daughter. I was able to be there for gymnastics practice cheering her on, during homework assignments helping her solve problems and there at bedtime to tuck her in. I was able to not just tell her, but show her more that she is my #1.

I am now graduated with my BA in Accounting. I am financially independent. My daughter is a 1st grade science geek, with a love for gymnastics. We are happy, and I am so proud of us. TANF played a hand in helping us become who we are today, and I want to say thank you for that.

Taylor

### **Sierrah**

Sierrah is a single parent of one son diagnosed with autism. Pathways helped Sierrah connect with community resources for herself and her child. She lacked a high school diploma and enrolled at the Adult Learning Center to work towards her HiSET. In January 2017 Sierrah obtained her high school equivalency certificate. Upon receiving her HiSET, she enrolled in an accredited online course for alternative medicine. Sierrah also obtained part-time employment.

### **Shayla**

Shayla is a single mother of one child. She was awarded the Parents as Scholars slot in 5/2016 and met her education goal in 12/2016 when she earned her baccalaureate degree in English from Montana State University Billings. She noted that her education was very important to her, and that after her vocational months ran out, she was not sure she could be successful with (formerly) WoRC's requirements in addition to her studies. Shayla gained employment within weeks of earning her degree with a local business in Billings.

### **Sarah**

Sarah is a single mother of one child. She was offered the Parents as Scholars activity so that she could utilize her time spent in Pathways to obtain her Hi-SET. During the latter part of her Parents as Scholars involvement, she was able to maintain employment while finally earning her Hi-SET in 05/2017. She was very grateful for the opportunity that the Parents as Scholars activity afforded her, noting that her Hi-SET would greatly enhance her employability.

### **Melissa**

Melissa utilized the Parents as Scholars Program to obtain her degree in Elementary Education from the University of Montana. Melissa used the TANF Pathways program to work towards a better life for herself and her three daughters. She left a domestic violence relationship in another state and moved to Missoula several years ago when she first applied for TANF. At that time Melissa worked on employment and training and gained full time employment at a law firm. When the law firm closed, Melissa was able to take the leap towards following her dream of becoming a teacher by enrolling at the University with the help of the, at that time, WoRC program for financial support. Melissa used Vocational Education Training for twelve months prior to applying for and receiving a Parents as Scholars slot. PAS allowed her to focus on her degree through her remaining classes and student teaching. She graduated with a degree in Elementary Education in May 2017. Melissa has since gotten married and moved to Minnesota. The immediate plan for employment is substitute teaching until she can gain a full-time teaching job.