

HOUSE FINANCE COMMITTEE
February 19, 2016
1:38 p.m.

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CALL TO ORDER

Co-Chair Neuman called the House Finance Committee meeting to order at 1:38 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Mark Neuman, Co-Chair
Representative Steve Thompson, Co-Chair
Representative Dan Saddler, Vice-Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Les Gara
Representative Lynn Gattis
Representative David Guttenberg
Representative Cathy Munoz
Representative Lance Pruitt
Representative Tammie Wilson

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Scott Kawasaki

ALSO PRESENT

Sana Efird, Assistant Commissioner, Department of Health and Social Services; Shawnda O'Brien, Administrative Operations Manager, Division of Public Assistance, Department of Health and Social Services; Monica Mitchell, Policy & Planning Chief, Division of Public Assistance, Department of Health and Social Services.

SUMMARY

OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES;
MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT AND FORMULA PROGRAMS.

Co-Chair Neuman reviewed the agenda for the day.

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^OVERVIEW OF DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES;
MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT AND FORMULA PROGRAMS

SANA EFIRD, ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, introduced the PowerPoint Presentation: "Maintenance of Effort Presentation" dated February 19, 2016 (copy on file).

Ms. Efird began with slide 2: "Definitions":

- Maintenance of Effort (MOE): A requirement by the federal government that the state continue funding certain programs at a specified level.
- Match: State general funds expended for the state to receive federal receipts.
- The greatest state obligation for MOE in the department is in the Division of Public Assistance budget.
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
 - Adult Public Assistance

Ms. Efird indicated that the difference between MOE and match money was that a match required the state to spend a dollar to receive a dollar.

SHAWNDA O'BRIEN, ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATIONS MANAGER, DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES, turned to slide 3: "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families":

- The program was created under the name Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) by the Social Security Act of 1935
- Passed by the 3rd State Legislature in Alaska in 1964
- Became Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in 1997

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Ms. O'Brien advanced to slide 4: "Temporary Assistance for Needy Families":

- Each state receives a fixed annual amount of federal TANF, technically known as the State Family Assistance Grant (SFAG) but generally referred to as the TANF block grant.

- The amount allocated to each state is in accordance with the 1996 welfare law, based on the amount of funding each state was receiving in AFDC and related programs before 1996.

Ms. O'Brien explained that the TANF funding was shared with the Native Family assistance programs. In addition, seven tribal organizations also received federal funding separate from the state and managed the programs themselves.

Ms. O'Brien pointed to the chart on slide 5: "Caseload Summary for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families." She related that the chart contained caseload history. In 1994, 13,209 families received TANF and the number dropped significantly to 3,170 in 2015; about 10 thousand caseloads.

Ms. O'Brien scrolled to slide 6: "Alaska's FFY2016 TANF Award \$63,609.1." She noted that the pie chart represented a visual interpretation of how the award was distributed:

- FFY2015 State of Alaska TANF Award \$44,607.4
- FFY15 Federal TANF Award to Tribes \$19,001.7
29.8%

Awards to Tribes beginning in FFY 1999

- Tanana Chief's Council
- Association of Village Council Presidents
- Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- Bristol Bay Native Association
- Kodiak Area Native Association
- Maniilaq
- Central Council Tlingit Haida Indian Tribes

Ms. O'Brien discussed slide 7: "State of Alaska FFY2016 TANF Award \$44,607.4." She highlighted the figures on the pie chart:

- Child Care Block Grant \$8,921.5
- Social Service Block Grant \$4,460.7
- Balance for Program \$31,225.2
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Ms. O'Brien turned to slide 8: "How Alaska Uses the TANF Funds":

- Basic Assistance Payment: 46% of total funding
 - Benefits to meet a family's ongoing basic needs for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, etc.
- Work Efforts 14.5% of total funding
 - Subsidized employment, education and training, work experience and community services, job search and job readiness, transportation supports, etc.
- Child Care 28.7% of total funding
 - Child care for families that need child care to work or participate in work activities.
- Other Supports
 - Domestic violence services, health, mental health, substance abuse and disability services, housing counseling services, and other family supports.
- Administrative Cap 15% Cap

Ms. O'Brien relayed that the spending cap included MOE spend as well as spending on federal dollars. Alaska historically, spent below the 15 percent cap. The state spent more than other states on work efforts funding.

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Ms. O'Brien continued to slide 9: "Work Effort Requirements for TANF":

- The TANF program requires a family member to participate in work activities in order to remain eligible.
- Work Participation rates:
 - Requires states to engage 50% of all families and 90% of two-parent families in work activities.
 - Alaska has met the "all-families" participation rate for all years since 2002 except 2012.

Ms. O'Brien explained that the state struggled with meeting the 90 percent participation rate requirement.

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Ms. O'Brien discussed slide 10: "Maintenance of Effort for TANF":

Defined as: "a requirement that a State spend at least a specified amount of State funds for Federal assistance program purposes."

45 CFR 263.8

A penalty is imposed on State's for failing to satisfy the Maintenance of Effort requirements. The penalty is equal to the amount of MOE that is not met and a reduction to the award in the following fiscal year.

Ms. O'Brien indicated that as caseloads declined the division was attempting to find ways to satisfy the MOE requirements outside of GF and that the effort was challenging.

Ms. O'Brien advanced to slide 11: "Federal Citation for calculations of Maintenance of Effort":

- By federal regulation the minimum basic Maintenance of Effort for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is 80% of the State's historic State expenditures.
 - Award to the State is reduced by the amount awarded to the tribes.

Ms. O'Brien discussed Slide 12: "Federal Formula for Determining Maintenance of Effort."

Alaska's Maintenance of Effort is currently at \$36,610.2 as per the following formula using 80% of historic state spending as previously defined and reduced by the percentage that is awarded to the Tribes:

\$52,205.2 -1994 Historic State Spending
-\$15,595.0 - (29.8276% of \$52,205.2)
\$36,610.2 Alaska's MOE Requirement for TANF

Ms. O'Brien scrolled to slide 13: "Maintenance of Effort for Medicaid":

- In order to receive federal Medicaid funds, Alaska must maintain Adult Public Assistance

(APA) expenditures consistent with 20 CFR 416.2099 section (c).

- The state may use one of two methods.

Ms. O'Brien explained that expenditures were historically declined as caseloads lessened. The state was obligated to continue to spend the Adult Public Assistance (APA) general funds in order to maintain the state's entire Medicaid program.

Ms. O'Brien continued to slide 14: "Medicaid Maintenance of Effort Options":

- Method 1: Maintain prior year Adult Public Assistance spending levels of \$60,178.4.
- Method 2: Maintain payment levels at or above 1983 levels.
- Currently Alaska is using method 1 because it is the most cost effective for the state.

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Ms. O'Brien discussed the pie chart on slide 15: "Public Assistance UGF \$145,352.5."

GF Not used for Matching or MOE \$28,822.1 20%
GF Used for TANF MOE \$31,974.0 22%
GF used for APA MOE \$59,436.5 41%
GF used for Matching \$25,119.9 17%

GF by Component used for Maintenance of Effort:
Alaska Temporary Assistance Program -\$13,901.0 UGF
Child Care Benefits -\$3,544.8 UGF
Tribal Assistance Programs -\$14,278.5 UGF
Work Services -\$249.7 UGF
Third Party Contributions for TANF MOE \$4,218.1
(Non State)
Adult Public Assistance -\$59,436.5

Ms. O'Brien informed the committee that the division was able to work with non-profit organizations to find third party contributions to help meet the MOE requirement under the TANF program.

Ms. O'Brien turned to slide 16: "Public Assistance UGF not used for MOE or Matching \$28,822.1:"

- Senior Benefits Program \$20,029.3
- Administrative Support to State Funded Programs \$5,056.1
- Women Infant and Children \$391.8
- Child Care Benefits \$2,139.5
- General Relief \$1,205.4

Ms. O'Brien pointed out that the division's numbers changed slightly since the budget overview due to adjustments to the governor's amended budget.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked whether there were only two programs that were required to meet MOE. Ms. O'Brien responded in the negative. She elucidated that she spoke to the two programs that were residing in the division.

Ms. Efird explained that there were only a few other programs in the Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS) that required a small amount of MOE. She elaborated that a small amount was required in Senior Disabilities Services, and a piece in the Division of Behavioral Health for the Behavioral Health Division for a federal grant for Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. She explained that the reason the department focused on the public assistance division because the programs were close to not meeting the TANF MOE. She reiterated that the total MOE was over \$36.6 million and the department identified roughly \$31.2 million of GF that the state spent on MOE. The department searched for funding outside of state spending that was allowed under federal guidelines as meeting MOE requirements. The amount totaled approximately \$4.2 million. The effort continued and DHSS was attempting to identify GF funding used by other state agencies that could qualify as MOE funding.

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Vice-Chair Saddler asked whether it was difficult to track maintenance of effort spending. Ms. Efird replied that DHSS was able to track the funding via codes in the accounting system. Ms. O'Brien explained that the department tracked expenditures on a quarterly basis. The data identified actual expenditures versus projected caseloads and projected expenditures based on caseloads specifically for the TANF program. The division reported to the federal government on a quarterly basis. The division had fairly

good data that was provided by the research and analysis unit that helped monitor the amount of expenditure that should be spent at a given time.

Co-Chair Neuman cited the department's efforts to identify funds from third parties. He mentioned that the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC) had a homeless assistance program. He wondered whether the department had inquired with AHFC to determine whether it's funding qualified as MOE funding. Ms. Efird responded affirmatively and noted that it appeared positive. She noted that DHSS must prove and meet the qualification that the funding was used for TANF families or recipients. The department was currently working on verifying that the criterion was met. Co-Chair Neuman asked Ms. Efird to further explain the AHFC program. Ms. Efird explained that DHSS would engage in follow-up meetings along with the division's research unit to ensure AHFC data matched federal government guidelines on reporting MOE funding. She was extremely certain that the AHFC program was serving the same population but emphasized that confirmation was necessary.

Representative Wilson referred to slide 6 regarding TANF awards to tribes. She asked whether the tribal recipients were also eligible for TANF through the department. Ms. O'Brien responded that the tribal organization maintained its own TANF programs. The program was similar except for slight differences in its work activity requirements. Representative Wilson asked whether the native awards were exclusively comprised of federal funding. Ms. O'Brien responded in the affirmative. Representative Wilson referred to slide 8 and the work efforts. She wondered what the results were regarding gaining employment. Ms. O'Brien did not have the exact figures but reported that the program was successful in "getting people back to work." Representative Wilson requested an accounting of the expenditure for training and the number of people that found work and left the TANF program. She also inquired what the dollar amount of the 15 percent cap was. Ms. O'Brien needed to provide the information after the meeting.

[2:05:48 PM](#)

Representative Wilson asked what the actual qualification criteria for the TANF program was. Ms. O'Brien relayed that she was not the expert on eligibility. She mentioned that

the program handout contained the details. Representative Wilson noted that the application had dollar amounts rather than percentages. She was looking for a percentage and whether or not the percentage was over federal requirements.

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MONICA MITCHELL, POLICY & PLANNING CHIEF, DIVISION OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE, offered to provide the information to the committee after the meeting.

Representative Wilson asked about a provision that required the TANF funding [for recipients] to end after five years that provided for many exceptions. She wondered whether the division had data regarding the number of recipients that received state TANF funds over 5 years. Ms. O'Brien answered that approximately 148 cases were receiving TANF funding over 60 months. She would provide the committee the dollar figures subsequent to the meeting.

In response to a question by Representative Wilson, Ms. Mitchell responded that the division performed research since a prior meeting with the representative and discovered that no cases over 60 months existed in exempt villages. Representative Wilson inquired whether the reason was the recipients were under the TANF tribal awards. Ms. Mitchell did not know due to lack of access to tribal data.

Co-Chair Neuman asked if she could provide any more information regarding levels of qualifications. Ms. Mitchell did not remember the dollar amounts from memory.

Vice-Chair Saddler referenced the 148 cases exceeding the 60 month limit and wondered whether "the cases were exclusive of exemptions in villages that are specifically because of their economically disadvantaged villages." Ms. Mitchell replied in the affirmative. Vice-Chair Saddler asked her to help members understand the exempt village concept from the 60 month cap and how many people qualified for the exemption. Ms. Mitchell explained there were several exempt villages but she did not have the census information. She recounted that the villages had to meet a certain level of unemployment and were located a certain distance from other areas with a specific low unemployment rate to qualify for the exemption.

2:10:53 PM

Vice-Chair Saddler asked what the justification was for exempting recipients from the lifetime cap. Ms. Mitchell responded that the unemployment rate was so high it was extremely difficult for residents to find jobs and that the rate was determined by the federal government. Vice-Chair Saddler asked whether there were villages that exceeded the cap by over two years. Ms. Mitchell answered in the affirmative and elucidated that the TANF manual contained the names of the villages and the length of the exemption.

Ms. Efird added that the information was sent to the committee.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked whether the department could find other third-parties to assist in meeting the MOE requirement. He asked how additional assistance would benefit the program. Ms. Efird replied that the department was engaged in an effort to identify other third-party contributions and had retained a contractor to help. She shared that she had been with the department for more than three years and each year maintaining MOE efforts increased in difficulty. She furthered that additional MOE assistance in GF from other agencies would also enable the department to access more of the federal TANF grant money. The department's GF MOE dollars were required before federal TANF funds could be accessed, therefore employing other agencies GF for MOE would free up the departments GF funds for other items.

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Vice-Chair Saddler asked her to repeat the answer. Ms. Efird explained that the state of Alaska had a \$36 million spend that it had to prove in order to access the states \$ 44 million in TNAF federal funds. Historically, the department accomplished the MOE spending requirements through the expenditures in the public assistance funding. She detailed that if the department could find other agency state spending that could qualify for the MOE expenditures DHSS could reduce its MOE UGF spending and utilized federal funds to fill the GF that the department did not have to utilize for MOE. She exemplified that if \$10 million of AHFC GF spending qualified for MOE then the department would count AHFC funding to meet MOE, reduce the public assistance UGF funding and backfill it with federal funds.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked whether the result would mean more federal dollars or would it mean more flexible in the use of existing federal funding. Ms. Efird reiterated her explanation of how meeting the MOE requirement worked. She restated that if the department could meet some of the MOE requirements outside of the departments GF money, the department could access more of the TANF federal funding dollars.

Co-Chair Neuman wondered what kind of match the MOE required. Ms. Efird specified that it was not a match but rather than designated MOE requirement of \$36.6 million in state or other allowable funds in order to utilize the total pot of federal TANF funds that was awarded. Co-Chair Neuman asked whether the state had ever not used the total pot of money available. Ms. Efird responded affirmatively because caseloads were lessening. Co-Chair Neuman commented that people considered federal funds the public's money as well and perhaps DHSS should be satisfied with the amount that was necessary. Ms. Efird clarified that the state was at risk of losing the federal funding and would be required to pay a penalty.

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Representative Gara thought it sounded like the state was leaving a level of federal money on the table but also achieving an amount of MOE and was not receiving a penalty. Ms. Efird responded in the negative. She clarified that with the caseload dropping the funding expended for TANF was reducing and DHSS was experiencing difficulty in meeting the MOE required amount of GF dollars. The department was seeking other outside expenditures to qualify for MOE GF. The result would allow DHSS to expend more federal TANF dollars and less in UGF. Representative Gara wondered whether more federal funds would be available or whether the state would use them differently. Ms. O'Brien explained that the amount of money the state spent on the program in total had decreased. The goal was to use more federal dollars as opposed to state GF. The required MOE amount did not change so the state wanted to enlist GF dollars that were already being spent on programs in other agencies that met the TANF requirements for MOE funding.

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Representative Gara suggested that the state would not achieve additional federal dollars but could use the money for other programs. Ms. Efird agreed with the first part of his statement. Representative Gara reiterated his question. Ms. Efird responded that the number of caseloads dropped but the MOE requirement remained the same. She clarified that the department was spending more GF money to meet the MOE requirement that was historically set in federal regulation. She related that the agency was trying to identify other state agency GF expenditures that were already being spent that would meet the MOE requirements and be counted for DHSS which would allow access to more of the federal TANF money.

Representative Gara asked about the qualifications for adult public assistance. Ms. Mitchell replied that the resource limit for adult public assistance was \$2000 and the individual must be determined as disabled by social security, blindness, or 65 years of age. The income limit was about 98 percent of the federal poverty level.

Co-Chair Neuman clarified that the state had to provide the MOE of \$36 million but could be reduced if the state found other third-party funds or outside funds, but the department had to use the \$36 million in state funds first before federal funds could be accessed. He voiced that DHSS currently used approximately \$10 million out of the \$44 million in federal funding. Ms. Efird responded in the affirmative. She made an additional clarification that money identified from another agency to help meet the MOE requirement could not meet another type of MOE required of the other agency. She stated that double counting was not permitted.

Representative Wilson asked about the 98 percent poverty level for adult public assistance and wondered whether it was a federal guideline. Ms. Mitchell answered that APA was a state program although an MOE agreement existed with Social Security. The agreement required the state to spend the same amount of money as in the previous year or the state lost all of its Medicaid funding.

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Representative Wilson asked whether other state exemptions existed beside the 5 year TANF limit in state statute. Ms. Mitchell asked whether she was referring to other

exemptions for the 60 month limit. Representative Wilson replied in the affirmative. Ms. Mitchell indicated that the villages were exempt purely based on the unemployment rate. Recipients not residing in the exempt villages were exempted via a disable child, or a medical condition that prevented full time work. She furthered that a doctor's note was required for the medical exemption. Representative Wilson asked about the "hold harmless" funds amounting to \$15 million that were not counted as income for the Permanent Fund Dividend. She wondered whether the funds were "tied to the TANF funds." Ms. Mitchell responded that hold harmless funds were mainly tied to the SNAP (Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program) food stamp program. A waiver through the Food Nutrition Service with the state allowed up to a four month suspension of a case if a recipient was over income. The state paid a hold harmless instead of the federal food stamp money. The hold harmless payments met a state statute that prohibited a public assistance recipient to be adversely affected by receiving the Permanent Fund Dividend. Representative Wilson wondered why the state would have to pay the \$15 million in hold harmless money. Ms. Mitchell indicated the requirement was state statute. The family would be adversely affected by the suspension of food stamp money. Representative Wilson understood the recipient received more than just food stamp hold harmless funding. Ms. Mitchell explained that there was another provision that replaced a month suspension in social security low income insurance money due to the dividend. Representative Wilson requested that the legislature should look more closely at hold harmless provisions.

[2:32:45 PM](#)

Vice-Chair Saddler asked if the state could draw more money from the \$44 million in federal funds if it was successful in finding more third-party or other money for the MOE. He wondered whether the state was leaving money on the table. Ms. Efird responded in the affirmative. She added that the state retained the money but was not able to spend it. Vice-Chair Saddler wondered how the federal dollars could be spent. Ms. Efird responded the funds could be spent under TANF guidelines. Vice-Chair Saddler deduced that the department's UGF funding freed up by outside MOE money could be used for other purposes. Ms. Efird responded in the affirmative.

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Representative Guttenberg wondered if the state would be able to maintain its efforts in the short-term. Ms. Efird explained that the state was working to identify outside funding to maintain the TANF federal program at the same amount. The historic grant of \$44 million was predicated on the state's ability to maintain the \$36 million MOE. Representative Guttenberg recounted that the program was projected to be status quo. Ms. Efird relayed that he was correct. She stressed that the outside assistance for MOE had to meet the federal requirements.

Representative Gara clarified that DHSS only spent \$10 million of the \$44 million in federal TANF funds. Ms. Efird responded in the affirmative. Representative Gara asked whether \$34 million was the remainder of the funding. Ms. O'Brien referred to slide 7 and pointed to the amount of \$31 million [\$31,225.2.] identified as the amount spent on program benefits. The \$10 million currently spent was deducted from the \$31 million. She detailed that the department transferred \$8.9 million to Child Care Block Grants [\$8,921.5] and roughly \$4 million to Social Service Block Grant [\$4,460.7]. Representative Gara asked whether the amount of TANF funds DHSS was not able to utilize was \$31 million. Ms. O'Brien answered that approximately \$20 million in federal TANF funds was carried forward each year and the balance continued to either grow or maintain at a certain level due to caseload decline.

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Representative Gara asked how much of the \$44 million in federal TANAF funding was spent each year. Ms. O'Brien responded the state spent roughly \$20 million. Representative Gara asked for the balance of rolled over funding. Ms. O'Brien replied that the balance was approximately \$63 million.

Co-Chair Neuman asked whether the excess federal funds were due to decreased caseloads and opined that the decrease was "a good thing." Ms. O'Brien replied in the affirmative.

Representative Gara asked whether the TANF funds could be spent on other items. Ms. Efird responded that the money had to meet the federal TANF guidelines.

Co-Chair Neuman asked whether inmates recently released were able to receive assistance. Ms. Mitchell responded that there were some prohibitions depending on the crimes committed. She delineated that drug felonies committed after 1996 were ineligible for SNAP benefits and for TANF benefits as well. Co-Chair Neuman asked whether the department worked with the Department of Corrections (DOC) to help ex-convicts that were eligible for assistance to attain it. Ms. Mitchell responded that DHSS recently began to renew its efforts.

Co-Chair Neuman asked Ms. Efird for monthly updates on the progress of the efforts. He reported that the legislature was working on the issue for the last three years and wanted better results than 68 percent of the 6000 thousand inmates that qualified for assistance and did not receive it. Ms. Efird agreed to supply the information.

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Co-Chair Neuman referred to slide 10. He wondered whether the penalty for failing to meet the MOE requirements lasted for one year. Ms. O'Brien replied in the affirmative. Co-Chair Neuman asked whether the MOE would be adjusted down. Ms. O'Brien responded in the negative and added that the amount would remain the same. She elaborated that the MOE amount would remain unchanged but the award would be reduced. Co-Chair Neuman asked whether the state ever failed to meet the MOE requirement. Ms. O'Brien responded in the negative.

Representative Wilson asked if both single men and woman qualified for the programs under discussion. Ms. Mitchell answered in the affirmative for APA. Representative Wilson inquired whether the individuals fell under the 60 month limit. Ms. Mitchell replied that the 60 month rule was not applicable to APA. Representative Wilson asked what specific programs a single man or woman ex-convict would qualify for. Ms. Mitchell responded that they qualified for food stamps or Medicaid.

Co-Chair Neuman interjected that the individuals qualified for food stamps unless they were convicted of a drug offense. Ms. Mitchell concurred with the statement.

Vice-Chair Saddler referred to slide 8. He thought that about 12 percent of TANF block grants were used for other

supports such as substance abuse and disability services. He relayed that many other social needs existed. He wondered about restrictions on the use of TANF funding for use on programs for substance abuse and disability services. Ms. O'Brien responded that as long as the services were covered under the purposes of TANF and under the state plan other support programs could be expanded. Vice-Chair Saddler asked whether some of the funding for work efforts could be shifted to substance abuse and whether the division had any metrics showing better results if the money was shifted. Ms. O'Brien thought that the work effort funding was needed to achieve the participation rate that was federally required. Vice-Chair Saddler stated that it was not possible to easily shift between the block grants due to requirements. Ms. O'Brien responded in the positive. She reiterated that the participation rate was 50 percent for all families and 90 percent for two parent families and indicated the funding was needed for compliance.

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Vice-Chair Saddler deduced that "a more delicate balance in the commitment of resources" existed when spending "welfare money" than he was previously aware of. He referenced slide 7. He clarified that the state was spending \$10 million out of the \$31 million balance. Ms. O'Brien replied in the affirmative.

Representative Guttenberg cited slide 8 and mentioned that the state was leaving money on the table. He noted that other programs around the state had waiting lists for its services. He asked whether the state could expand a service and the funding would count towards the MOE. He inquired whether "the support for filling those needs, let's say a University program, count towards those funds [MOE]." Ms. O'Brien understood that Representative Guttenberg wondered whether the state could leverage federal funds under the TANF program to benefit other programs in the state. She answered that it was possible if the funds were serving recipients of the TANF population. Representative Guttenberg wondered whether currently there was a "concerted" effort with other agencies to figure out if other programs qualified for TANF funding. He thought a coordinated effort should be in place to ensure people had services. Ms. Efird replied that there was currently "a concerted effort between agencies to look for many ways to

coordinate and collaborate on programs." She revealed that the effort in the TANF program over the last two years was to identify funding that would qualify for the MOE requirements. She emphasized that in other areas "an absolute concerted effort" among all agencies was in progress attempting to identify shared services possibilities.

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Representative Guttenberg observed that on "the native side of the equation" a number of services were available that were not under TANF because double counting was prohibited. He suggested using some of the funds he mentioned as part of the MOE.

Vice-Chair Saddler asked a general question about whether there were other standards or criteria besides the MOE that created a similar situation. Ms. Efird guaranteed that similar circumstances in other areas of federal grant awards probably existed. She remarked that she was not the expert on each grant and reported that the department received 220 federal grants. Vice-Chair Saddler inquired whether the TANF was the largest federal grant. Ms. Efird replied in the affirmative.

Representative Gara asked whether a father or a mother with a dependent child qualified for TANF. Ms. Mitchell answered in the negative. Representative Gara asked whether an individual with a child in foster care or someone leaving prison with children count as people with dependent children under TANF qualifications. Ms. Mitchell did not believe so. Representative Gara provided a hypothetical scenario in which a prisoner was released from jail but parental rights were not terminated. He asked whether the person qualified. Ms. Mitchell responded that if the parent was not living with the child the person did not qualify. Representative Gara asked that once reunited and living with the child the person would qualify. Ms. Mitchell answered in the affirmative.

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Representative Wilson interjected that if a child was removed from the home by the Office of Children's Services (OCS) all of the parent's services were revoked for the length of time the child was living under OCS placement.

Ms. Mitchell answered that for the programs that required a dependent child in the home she affirmed that the benefits were revoked. She could not speak for other programs such as housing. Representative Wilson relayed that parents that have their children removed from the home under OCS lost all benefits including medical and housing benefits. She understood concerns about prisoners, but was more concerned with families that lose benefits under the circumstances and can only get the children returned if they have medical and housing benefits.

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Co-Chair Thompson reviewed the schedule for the following meeting.

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ADJOURNMENT

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The meeting was adjourned at 3:03 p.m.