



## **Briefing Paper: ECONOMIC JUSTICE Catholic Advocacy Day 2017**

*Welfare policy should reduce poverty and dependency, strengthen family life, and help families leave poverty through work, training, and assistance with child care, health care, housing, and transportation. Given the link between family stability and economic success, welfare policy should address both the economic and cultural factors that contribute to family breakdown. It should also provide a safety net for those who cannot work.*

- Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship, USCCB 2015

### **TANF Resource Limits**

Eligibility for public assistance is determined by a combination of factors, including the resources or assets of an applicant, such as a personal car. **SHB 1831** would authorize the state to exempt one motor vehicle per applicant for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) from being counted as a personal asset if that vehicle is used for transportation. The current vehicle limit is \$5,000. **SHB 1831** would also exempt some other resources. Without this legislation, some people who would otherwise qualify for TANF would be denied because the value of their car pushed them over the resource limit.

**ACTION:** Please ask your Senator to support **SHB 1831** so people receiving TANF will not be cut off from public assistance for having a vehicle and some other resources necessary for daily living.

### **WorkFirst**

Often poor families with children have no financial resources and depend on the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. It is a federal program that provides assistance to needy families for a limited time. The goal of TANF is to provide job preparation and work so that families will become self-sustaining. TANF recipients must participate in activities designed to lead them to work.

In Washington State, the TANF program is called WorkFirst, which provides to eligible adults various forms of assistance to find work. Under current law, a WorkFirst participant may receive vocational educational training that is not to exceed 12 months. **SHB 1566** would increase the amount of vocational training from 12 to 24 months, subject to the amount appropriated. Extending the time limit to 24 months would afford many students, for example nursing students, to complete their program and be eligible for living wage jobs. The bill has passed the House and is in the Senate.

**ACTION:** Please ask your Senator to support **SHB 1566** to increase vocational training for WorkFirst recipients from 12 to 24 months, so they can secure living-wage jobs.