



INCREASE STATE REVENUE TO RAISE PUBLIC BENEFIT LEVELS AND SUPPORTS

NEVADA ECONOMIC JUSTICE WORKGROUP

PUBLIC BENEFITS AND REVENUE AS VIOLENCE PREVENTION

Public benefits directly impact individuals and their family's economic stability, which can be key to escaping and preventing power-based violence. Public supports such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), subsidized childcare, SNAP for Women, Children, and Infants (WIC), and unemployment insurance provide communities and victim-survivors marginal economic stability for what might be the first time.

Victim-survivors frequently report that they cannot leave an abusive relationship because of lack of money.

When their basic needs are not met, victim-survivors are understandably fearful that their children may be taken from them, or they may be forced into further unsafe situations. "Some 85 percent of advocates surveyed viewed access to TANF as very critical for survivors. In particular, a higher number of advocates whose clients were primarily people of color, LGBTQ people, immigrants, people with disabilities, or Native American reported that their clients relied on TANF to help meet basic needs." [1]

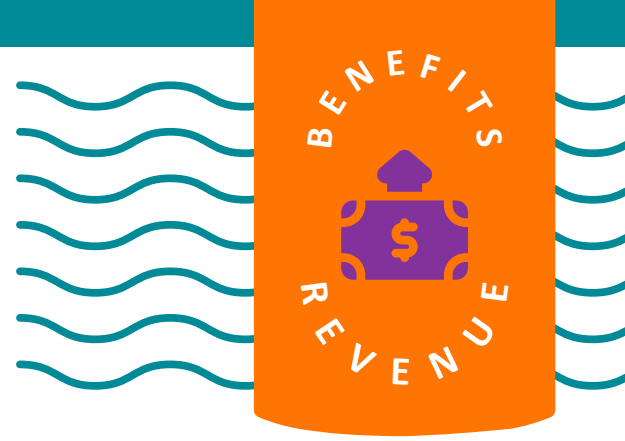


Social services are not just safety nets for our communities.

They also serve as launching pads for better lives. Because of the positive impacts that public benefits offer, Nevada must prioritize adequately funding our social service programs and reaching every individual in need.



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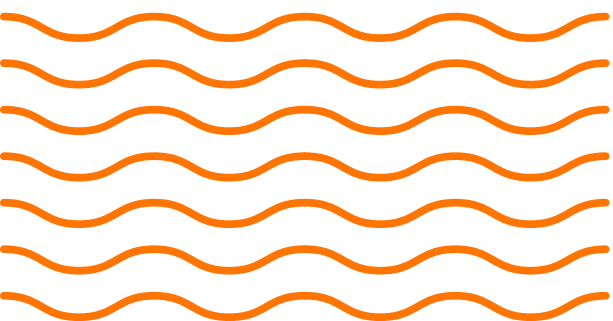


Public Benefits and Revenue in Nevada

Nevada's fiscal system and revenue are primarily dependent on our tourism and entertainment industries. While recent changes to diversify Nevada's revenue are helping, such as the recent mining tax, Nevada faces major gaps in our revenue and general fund. Our state budget is so small, Nevada is one of the few states without domestic and sexual violence programming written into the state budget. Until we adequately fund our violence intervention and prevention programming, we must at least prioritize economic opportunities to decrease power-based violence risk factors.

Public benefits have robust impacts for victim-survivors. However, because we have limited revenue, our current public benefit programs have unintentional consequences. "Eligibility for work support programs such as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), and Child Care Development Fund (CCDF) are based on income. Generally, eligibility for these programs is below 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines, with benefits phasing out as earnings increase. The unintended consequences in this design mean that an increase in a family's income can significantly set back a family's goal towards economic self sufficiency." [2]

Individuals who are struggling financially and close to the poverty line and the 200% benefits cliff, may accept a lower paying job or turn down a raise or promotion to keep their benefits for the safety of themselves and their families. This is a vicious cycle that can trap individuals in or near poverty, while having only their basic needs met. Increasing our state's revenue and our general budget for social service supports, will allow these programs to increase their eligibility requirements. Doing so will enable more high risk individuals to leverage these programs to truly serve as their launching pad, taking them from surviving to thriving.



[1] Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. TANF and Domestic Violence: Cash Assistance to Survivors Matters. Retrieved from: <https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/tanf-and-domestic-violence-cash-assistance-matters-to-survivors>

[2] Indiana Institute for Working Families. 2012. The Cliff Effect: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back. Retrieved from: <http://incap.org/documents/iwvf/2012/Cliff%20Effect.pdf>