



# News Release

Timothy Jeffries, Director

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## ***People First, People Always!***

*DES Continues to Advocate for Families Affected by TANF Lifetime Benefit Limit*

**PHOENIX** – Immediately after the passage by the Legislature of the TANF lifetime benefit limit last year, the Department of Economic Security (DES) launched efforts to reach out to those affected by the change. Initial numbers indicated 1,600 families would lose benefits on July 1, 2016. However, through a variety of strategies, the Department has reduced that number by 40 percent to 955.

“We are tracking each dear person who will be affected by this change,” said Director Tim Jeffries. “By equipping people with job skills, we are helping to move them that much closer to sustainability so that they can provide for themselves and their families. With more than 40 different programs and services for the poor, disabled, disadvantaged and downtrodden, DES will provide support for those in critical need of assistance.”

Of the estimated 955 families at risk of losing benefits come July 1, more than 780, or roughly 80 percent reside in urban areas such as Maricopa, Pima and Pinal Counties. Clients are engaged in a number of activities to improve their self-sufficiency and decrease future dependency on benefits. More than 670 of the families have identified career goals ranging from transportation related fields such as truck drivers, to medical related fields such as nursing assistants, phlebotomists, or medical records technicians. In addition, 371 are currently engaged in volunteer work placements to further their skills to obtain employment. Nearly 250 of the 955 families are engaged in training-related activities to assist in obtaining employment.

Arizona’s 12-month benefit limit applies to any head-of-household or their spouse, except for “child only” households in which the child is in the legal custody of the Department of Child Safety and placed in foster care with an unlicensed nonparent relative or unrelated adult who is not receiving Cash Assistance. A household that reaches the twelve-month limit may be eligible to receive benefits up to the federal 60-month time limit if there is a verified hardship that prevents or limits the adult(s) from financially supporting the children in the home.

*Hardship situations must be documented and include:*

- Disability of the adult;
- Full-time caretaker of a disabled household member;
- Lack of child care;
- The head-of-household is a non-parent relative age 60 or older;
- Homeless;
- Victim of domestic violence or other crime;
- Lack of transportation;
- Completing an education or job training program for a job skill directly related to obtaining self-supporting employment; or
- Documented hardship due to a reason not listed above.

Clients began receiving a series of notices from the Department last year informing them of the 12-month limit, but there were some that did not take immediate action. There has been a dramatic increase in lobby traffic over the last thirty days as clients realize the change will take effect and they are seeking help.

“Our Great DES is committed to assisting all who are in need of assistance to work toward a better future,” said Jeffries. “We will continue to work with all individuals and our community partners to find solutions for fellow Arizonans in need long after their benefit period ends. We are committed to assisting them in obtaining employment and other critical needs.”

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***The Arizona Department of Economic Security makes Arizona stronger by helping Arizonans reach their potential through temporary assistance for those in need, and care for the vulnerable.***

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