

COFI PARENTS SUPPORT ELIMINATING TANF ASSET LIMIT TEST

April 11, 2013



This month in the Illinois legislature, [Community Organizing and Family Issues \(COFI\) POWER-PAC](#) parent leaders are supporting [House Bill 2262](#) (and partner [Senate Bill 2319](#)) to make it easier for low-income families to save money. COFI is a Chicago-based grassroots community organization composed of parents focused on the well-being of children, youth and families. COFI POWER-PAC partners in this effort to eliminate the TANF Asset Limit Test with the Illinois Asset Building Group (IABG) and as part of POWER-PAC's Stepping Out of Poverty campaign.

Currently in Illinois, persons applying for the public benefits program Temporary Aid to Needy Families (TANF) aren't allowed to have more than \$2,000 in savings. POWER-PAC parents are meeting with state legislators, asking them to support the elimination of asset limits so that families can save and still receive help in difficult financial times.

As POWER-PAC leader Lisa Russell from the North Lawndale community explained: "There are just too many hoops for parents to have to jump through to access needed benefits for the children and families. Eliminating the asset limit on TANF will help families be able to save and uplift themselves."

After meeting two weeks ago with Lisa and other POWER-PAC parent leaders, Representative Art Turner Jr. agreed to co-sponsor the bill!

In addition to changing policies that make it hard for low-income families to build assets, parents are also educating themselves about ways in which they can better manage their finances, get out of debt, and build their savings. POWER-PAC, the Dvorak, Nixon, and Penn Elementary School Parent Teams, Family Focus – Lawndale, Nuestra Familia, and The Resurrection Project have partnered to host financial literacy classes for low-income parents. The first round of trainings, in the Hermosa community, were held in March and had 36 parents participate. The trainings in North Lawndale start in April.

House Bill 2262 and Senate Bill 2319 are gaining momentum as more legislators, individuals, and organizations recognize the importance of this policy. Please [email Lucy Mullany](#), IABG Coordinator, if you are interested in signing on in support.