

Personal Stories

An important part of advocating for asset limit reform in your state is finding individuals who have been negatively affected by these rules. Highlighting these stories will help politicians and the media put a face with what you are doing. This human face is essential if you are working to change the current levels using legislative advocacy. Below are three examples of testimony from individuals who were negatively affected by the TANF asset test in the State of Colorado.

“A Jefferson County participant in the STRIDE self-sufficiency program got half of her husband’s 401k of \$5,000 in the divorce final settlement. That \$2,500 was enough to get her kicked off of TANF.”

“A Denver woman who left an abusive spouse applied for TANF to care for her 2 kids and make a new start. When her divorce was finalized, she received a portion of her former husband’s 401k (<\$4,000), which she was going to use to get her car running so she could get and keep a job. Instead, she was kicked off TANF and had to pay a penalty to use the 401k money to pay bills.”

“Stephanie needed help from TANF but had to spend down her small savings account to be eligible for assistance. While on TANF, she was discouraged from saving her income tax refund because it could make her ineligible for TANF. She says, “I have still been able to put away \$5 each month toward savings, even though I usually end up using it for gas every few months. Even though I am not fortunate enough to have held onto my savings, it is important to know that the option is available to save and work towards self-sufficiency and create a small safety net of my own.”