

**SINCE THE RECESSION BEGAN IN DECEMBER 2007
CASELOADS HAVE INCREASED 48% IN FOOD STAMPS BUT JUST 12% IN TANF**

HHS recently updated the TANF caseload data reported on its web site to include the first quarter of calendar year 2010. The number of families receiving TANF has increased just 12% since December 2007, rising from 1,703,656 in December 2007 to 1,913,210 in March 2010.¹ By contrast, the number of households receiving Food Stamp benefits increased 48% from 12,313,466 in December 2007 to 18,273,141 in February 2010.²

Even before the recession began, TANF was reaching only a minority of eligible families and an even smaller minority of poor families.³ It is likely that participation rates have declined even further during the recession. The new caseload figures underscore the urgent need for federal action to make TANF more accessible and responsive. Last December, Legal Momentum joined with the Center for Community Change, Jobs with Justice, and the Institute for Policy Studies in issuing a report, *Battered by the Storm: How the Safety Net is Failing Americans and How to Fix It*⁴, offering a comprehensive relief plan of job creation, state and local fiscal relief, and safety net improvement. With respect to TANF, the report calls upon Congress to act immediately to allocate an additional \$16.5 billion a year in federal funds, with no requirement for additional state spending, to be used for the limited purposes of cash assistance, creating subsidized jobs, sustaining current TANF-funded child care, or emergency payments.

(May 2010.) Contact Timothy Casey, tcasey@legalmomentum.org, for further information.)

¹ The TANF figures were derived from the HHS tables at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/data-reports/caseload/caseload_current.htm. The figures include recipients in separate state programs funded with maintenance of effort dollars.

² Food Stamp receipt figures are from USDA table titled "SUPPLEMENTAL NUTRITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM", available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/pd/34SNAPmonthly.htm>.

³ See Legal Momentum, *The Bitter Fruit Of Welfare Reform: A Sharp Drop In The Percentage Of Eligible Women And Children Receiving Welfare*, (2009), available at <http://www.legalmomentum.org/assets/pdfs/lm-tanf-bitter-fruit.pdf>.

⁴ *Battered by the Storm* is available at http://www.ips-dc.org/reports/Battered_by_the_Storm.pdf