

## **EDUCATION: HOW THE REPUBLICAN BILL SUPPORTS EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- *Maintains work or work in combination with education focus of the 1996 law:* The Republican bill maintains the successful “work first” approach that resulted in record numbers of families leaving welfare and supporting themselves through work instead of welfare. Nationally, child poverty has declined by nearly 3 million since 1996. Poverty rates for children in households headed by single mothers – those most likely to go on and stay on welfare – are at all-time lows. Research has proven that work first is the most effective path out of poverty for most welfare recipients.
- *Maintains record TANF funds to promote work and education and training and raises targets so States will have more families involved.* The Republican bill maintains record Federal TANF funds for States despite unprecedented caseload declines since 1996. At the same time, it raises the bar to expect and support more families in going to work and getting the education, training, and other services they need to become independent of welfare for the long term. The Republican bill maintains but updates the current credit for net caseload reduction and adds a new credit for “Superachiever” States that reduces the work rate requirement for remaining recipients when States help other families stay off or leave welfare. These credits will allow States additional flexibility to count education and training activities for those appropriately suited as they will have an easier time meeting Federal work definitions and targets.
- *Allows unlimited education and training to “count” as work during initial three to five months on welfare.* Under the Republican bill, States have complete flexibility in determining the first three months of activities (plus the State has an option not to count the first month of assistance toward the State work rates, so a total of four months), allowing States to address any need of a recipient, including any type of education and training, and count participation in that activity as “work” towards the State work rate requirements. States also may allow participants to be counted for an additional month (for a total of up to four or five months) if they are in an education or training program that will help prepare them for a known job in their area.
- *Allows more education and training to “count” as work over the long term.* Beyond the initial three to five months, the Republican bill provides still more opportunities for education and training to be counted as “work” than under current law: (1) current law allows only 30% of a State’s work rate requirement to be satisfied by individuals participating in education or training (including teen parents completing high school); the Republican bill eliminates the cap on the number of individuals who can pursue education and training and be counted as in “work”; and (2) individuals can pursue education and training part-time every week during their five years of lifetime welfare receipt (or beyond five years if the state exempts them from the time limit), as long as they combine that education with work – something many Americans do while they are in school.