



*The Administration For Children and Families*

# Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) – The Program Basics



**Administration for Children and Families**

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**ACF Website:**

**[www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)**

# A Brief History of the US Welfare Programs Part I

- In 1935, President Roosevelt signed legislation that created the nations first Federal welfare program, The Aid to Dependent Children (ADC) program.
- The intent was to provide for the children of widows or whose fathers were absent or incapacitated.
- The Program was voluntary and funding was open ended and based on cost sharing.
- The Program evolved through many legislative changes. For example, in 1950 the caretaker relative was included in the grant.

# A Brief History of the US Welfare Programs Part II

- Work requirements were introduced.
- By the latter part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the program had evolved into one that predominantly provided for unwed mothers who were having children at increasing rates to be supported by the government.
- Welfare reform arrives with The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996. It created the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program.
- Welfare Reform considered a success but problems noted in the 2000s.

# Mission Statement

- The Office of Family Assistance within ACF/HHS administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF provides assistance and work opportunities to needy families by granting States the Federal funds and wide flexibility to develop and implement their own welfare programs.

# Principles of Welfare Reform

- Move people from welfare to work.
- Transitional experience, not a way of life.
- States develop creative responses to their own problems.
- States should invest State dollars to help address the needs of low-income families.
- Child support program should become more effective.

# TANF Program

- Regulations – 45 CFR Part 260 – 265
- TANF is a block grant with limited funding and no entitlement to benefits for recipients.
  - \$16.5 billion to States, Territories and Tribes.
- Flexibility: TANF Grantees can design their welfare program to meet the needs of the families and children in their State.

# Basic Uses of Federal TANF Funds

- Subject to limited exceptions, states may spend TANF funds in any manner reasonably calculated to accomplish any of the four purposes of TANF and may also spend funds in the manner authorized by the prior AFDC program.
- Transfers to Child Care Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and/or Social Services Block Grant (SSBG). Limited to 30% (10% limit to SSBG).
- See Funding Guide for detailed information at [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resources/funding\\_guide.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resources/funding_guide.htm)

# Four Purposes of TANF:

1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
2. End the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work and marriage.
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.



# Five-Year Time Limit

TANF is a “once-in-a-lifetime” program and benefits are limited up to 60 months for “Assistance” if paid with Federal funds.

Exceptions:

- States may exempt up to 20% of recipients from the time limit due to hardship.
- States define hardship.

## Maintenance-of-Effort (Cost Sharing)

- Every FFY, each State must spend a fixed amount of its own money to provide benefits and services to eligible families
- The amount equals:
  - 80% of amount spent in FY ' 94, or
  - 75%, if met work participation rate in prior yr.

# Using MOE Funds

- Most benefits, services and activities that may be funded from Federal TANF funds may also be financed by state MOE funds.
- States may count toward MOE, expenditures for any program that provides cash assistance, administration, child care, education, and training and other activities to further a TANF purpose.

## Summary of TANF Requirements to Recipients of Assistance by Funding Source

TANF Req.	Federal TANF Funds	State funds in TANF	Sep State Programs
Work Part. Rate Req.	Yes	Yes	Yes (beg. FY 2007)
Time Limit	Yes	No	No
Prohibition for non-citizens 5 yr	Yes	No	No
Child Support to State	Yes	Yes	No

# Work Requirements

- Individuals who are required to work (Work Eligible Individual) must participate in core work activities and meet minimum weekly, average work hours, for the family to count in the State's participation rate.
- A WEI is an adult (or minor child HH) receiving assistance under TANF or SSP; or a non-recipient parent living with a child receiving assistance.

# Federal Work Requirements

- 30 hrs average per week for most single parents, 20 of the 30 hours must be in core activities.
- 20 hrs average per week for single parent with child under age 6.
- Two-parent families (individually or combined): 35 hrs per week (30 in core) or 55 hrs per week (50 in core) if receive Federal child care assistance.

# TANF Work Participation Standards

- “All Family” rate is 50% of households receiving assistance.
- “Two-parent” rate is 90% of two-parent families.
- These standards are reduced by a caseload reduction credit (1% point for each % decline in cash assistance caseload from FY 2005 levels).

## Other Work-Related Requirements that Apply to Recipients of Assistance

- **Assessment:** States must assess each adult recipient's skills, work experience and employability (within 90 days of eligibility)
- **Sanctions for Failure to Comply with Work Requirements:** States determine amount and whether they will reduce benefits or terminate benefits (full family sanction).
- **Work within 2 years:** States determine what constitutes "work".



# Work Participation Rate (WPR)

- **Numerator:** This represents the number of families that meet the work requirements and are counted as participating.
- **Denominator:** All families included in the denominator except:
  - Families with no WEI (work eligible individual)
  - Disregarded - family of single custodial parent of child under 1 yr. old
  - Disregarded - a family not participating & subject to a penalty for that month and has not been subject to a penalty for more than 3 mo. in previous 12 months
  - Disregarded – participation in a Tribal Work Program
  - Cases listed in error

# TANF Statutory Work Activities

## Core Activities (count toward first 20hrs)

- Unsubsidized employment
- Subsidized private employment
- Subsidized public employment
- Work experience
- On-the-job training
- Job Search/job readiness assistance (6 weeks per year/12 weeks for needy state)
- Community service
- Vocational educational training (12 months lifetime)
- Providing child care for an individual in community service

## Non-core Activities (do not count toward first 20hrs)

- Job skills training directly related to employment
- Education directly related to employment
- Attendance at secondary school/GED program

# Definitions of TANF Work Activities

- Unsubsidized employment - Full- or part-time employment in the public or private sector that is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program.
- Subsidized private sector employment – employment in private sector where employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all wages/costs of employing individual.

# Definitions of TANF Work Activities

- Subsidized public sector employment – same as previous except employment is in the public sector instead of the private sector.
- Work experience – a work activity performed in return for welfare that provides an individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, knowledge and work habits necessary to obtain employment.

# Definitions of TANF Work Activities

- Community Service Programs – structured programs and embedded activities performed for the direct benefit of the community under the auspices of public or nonprofit organizations.
- Vocational educational training – organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations (12 mo. lifetime limit)

# Definitions of TANF Work Activities

- On-the-Job Training – training in the public or private sector that is given to a paid employee while he is engaged in productive work and that provides knowledge and skills essential to the full performance of the job.
- Job search/readiness – act of seeking employment, preparation to seek employment, including life skills training, substance abuse and mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities (6 wks/12 wks per year)

# Definitions of TANF Work Activities

- Providing Child Care Services to an Individual who is participating in Community Service Program – providing child care to enable another TANF or SSP recipient to participate in a community service program.
- Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment – training for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment, advance or adapt to changing demands of workplace.

# Definitions of TANF Work Activities

- Education Directly Related to Employment – Limited to those with no HS Diploma or Equivalent – Education related to a specific occupation or job.
- Satisfactory Attendance at Secondary School - Limited to those with no HS Diploma or Equivalent – Regular attendance at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalency.



# State Plan

- A written document that outlines how the State intends to structure its TANF Program and meet TANF requirements.
  - The role of OFA in reviewing State plans is to “find completeness” not to approve or disapprove policies. Every required element in section 402 of the Social Security Act must be addressed, all necessary certifications must be included and all optional State plan provisions should be clarified.
  - Periodic submission. Each fiscal year has a 27-month period of eligibility. For FY 12, the 27-month period of eligibility is 10/1/09 through 12/31/11.

## State Plan – cont' d

- A 45-day public comment period is required for renewal plan.
- Requires certifications from Governor.
- The effective date of the plan does not change if amended. Effective date changes only upon submission of a renewal plan.

## State Plan – cont' d

- New requirement to address the policies concerning EBT usage at liquor stores, casinos and adult entertainment clubs. More guidance will be issued soon.
- Renewal plan – submitted to Director, OFA, Washington, DC with an electronic copy to Regional Office

# Amended State Plan

- What triggers the need for an amendment:
  - New or revised Federal statutes/regulations
  - Reactions to applicable Federal/State court decisions
  - Substantive changes in State law, organization, policy or operations
  - Correction of a mistake
  - Clarifications

# Amended State Plan

- Within 30 days after a State amends a plan, the State shall “notify the Secretary” of the amendment. [Section 402(b) of the Act]
- Must make summary of amendment available to public (by any means State chooses)

# Work Verification Plan

- States are required to have procedures to verify recipients' work participation; identify who is subject to or excluded from work standards; how a recipient's activities represent countable TANF work activities; and how to count and verify reported hours of work.
- Details on requirements are listed in 45 CFR 261.62

# Work Verification Plan

- The work verification plan remains in effect until the State makes a substantive change to the programs or policies as described in the plan.
- Section 261.63(c) requires a state to amend its WVP by the end of the quarter in which it modifies its verification procedures for work activities or its internal controls for ensuring a consistent measure of the work participation rate.

# Submission Procedure for Amended WVP

- The effective date of the plan should be the date that the policies were implemented.
- A hard copy should be submitted to the Director, Office of Family Assistance.
- An electronic copy with changes highlighted should be sent to the Regional Office.
- The plan will be reviewed by Regional and Washington staff.



# ACF Websites

- ACF: [www.acf.hhs.gov](http://www.acf.hhs.gov)
- TANF: [www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa)
- New website:  
<http://transition.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa>