



Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Is a Lifeline for Families Living in Deep Poverty

TANF Serves Low-Income Families Living Below 30% of the Poverty Level

TANF provides temporary assistance to low-income families who are struggling to meet their basic survival needs. In order to qualify for TANF, a household must have a dependent child under the age 18, no more than \$1000 in personal assets (a vehicle up to \$5000 in value is excluded from this limit), and an income below 30% of the Federal Poverty Level (50% of earned income is disregarded for families who are working; they are eligible for a diminishing level of benefits). During 2012, TANF served an average of 54,425 families per month, which included 87,690 children.

TANF Helps Families Meet Their Basic Needs

TANF provides a monthly cash grant to help families pay for their basic survival needs, including rent, utilities, food, clothing, health and hygiene items. A family of three is eligible for a maximum of \$482 per month in cash assistance. Parents and children also receive health coverage through Medicaid and food stamps through the Basic Food.

TANF Helps Ensure Children Arrive to School with the Ability to Learn

TANF helps ensure children living in deep poverty have a basic level of stability at home so they are able to arrive to school with the ability to learn, reach their full academic potential in the classroom, and access future opportunities.

Employment Services Provide a Pathway Out of Poverty for TANF Families

Low-income parents who are enrolled in TANF are eligible to receive employment services through the WorkFirst program and child care assistance through the Working Connections Child Care program. WorkFirst provides employment barrier removal services (such as transportation assistance, mental health treatment, etc.), vocational education and job skills training, on-the-job experience, and job search assistance. These services are critical in helping parents secure employment and move out of poverty to economic security.

Deep Budget Cuts During Great Recession Have Weakened TANF

Although TANF remains a critical lifeline for low-income families, deep budget cuts made since 2009 have eliminated assistance for thousands of families and have weakened TANF. **In 2011, the TANF cash grant was reduced by 15%, which resulted in thousands of families no longer being eligible for TANF.** A 60-month time limit of TANF receipt was also implemented in 2011. **This policy has caused 28,340 people, including 18,899 children, to be moved off of TANF into stagnant local economies that have recession-level unemployment rates.** As the economy begins to stabilize, TANF should be restored and strengthened in order to accelerate low-income families' economic recovery.

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