

Overview of TANF Policy: In 2020, Wyoming provided TANF cash support to just 7% of families with children living below the poverty level, far below the national average (21%).¹ The state provides varied monthly maximum benefits depending on whether a household receives other support, ranging from \$576 to \$838 for a family of three (27- 39% of the 2024 Federal Poverty Level, or FPL). According to a report from the Department of Health and Human Services, as of 2021 **the state held TANF funds in reserve of \$26,124,215; the state received \$18,428,651 in federal block grants the following year, 2022.**²

In setting benefit amounts, Wyoming **accounts for the higher costs experienced by families not receiving housing and utilities support.** The state also makes **annual increases to these amounts tied to a local cost-of-living index.** Eligibility limits on monthly net income range from \$1,176 to \$2,038 (55-95% FPL), depending on family structure and other support. Additionally, Wyoming has **increased its asset limit (excluding vehicles and other tangible assets) for households with children to \$5,000,** enabling families to retain savings for emergencies.

Wyoming also **maintains the federal 60-month lifetime limit** on TANF cash assistance, has **eliminated the eligibility ban for those convicted of drug-related felonies,** and **does not enforce a “family cap” on assistance for additional children born while a family already receives assistance.** To ease access to cash assistance, the state has **eliminated the requirement for parents to search for a job before their application is approved, providing much-needed support for families in periods of critical need.** Additionally, Wyoming **provides transitional assistance** to those parents who begin to earn enough to stop receiving cash assistance.

Like most states, Wyoming **provides cash assistance to families led by parents holding green cards with at least five years’ residence in the U.S.**

Assessment of TANF Policy: By **increasing maximum benefits and increasing income eligibility limits,** Wyoming could lift more parents and children above the poverty level during periods of financial setback or acute need. **Eliminating the asset test for eligibility** would also support the long-term economic mobility of low-income families.³

The state could also consider **eliminating TANF’s full-family sanctions** by reducing rather than terminating benefits for parents not fulfilling the program’s work requirements. Because sufficient economic support during pregnancy and very early childhood is essential to children’s healthy development, the state may further consider **providing cash assistance for pregnant people without children.**

In place of monthly TANF cash assistance for families who are not in *immediate* need, Wyoming could also consider providing a lump-sum benefit as a **one-time diversionary payment** while parents seek or continue employment; such payments can help with items such as car payments to facilitate parents’ continued employment and independence from monthly assistance.

Wyoming could also consider **using state funds to provide cash assistance to low-income parents holding green cards who have resided in the country less than five years.**

¹ For more on TANF-to-poverty ratios, see <https://www.cbpp.org/research/income-security/state-fact-sheets-trends-in-state-tanf-to-poverty-ratios>.

² Block grants and spending priorities for 2022 for all states are accessible here: <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/tanf-and-moe-spending-and-transfers-activity-fy-2022>.

³ For research detailing effects of some state-level TANF policies and administrative practices on children and families, see <https://www.nccp.org/ec-profiles-pes-policies-related-research-and-resources/#parenting>.

Wyoming's Cash Assistance (TANF) policy: Family Independence Temporary Assistance Program		
HOW MUCH CASH ASSISTANCE CAN A FAMILY OF THREE RECEIVE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Maximum benefit allowed</p> <p>What is the maximum monthly amount a family of three could receive in cash assistance?</p>	<p>\$576/month to \$838/month (27-39% FPL), depending on whether the family is “shelter-qualified.”</p>	<p>Increase the maximum benefit level to lift more families with children above the poverty line during challenging periods (e.g., California, Minnesota).</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has the state mandated increases to these amounts, as the cost of living rises?</p>	<p>Yes. Increases are tied to a state-specific cost-of-living index.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Deductions from countable income</p> <p>In what ways are Wyoming families able to increase the amount of assistance for which they qualify and keep some of the money they earn, thereby encouraging their workforce participation?</p>	<p>Wyoming enables TANF-eligible families who pay a portion of their housing and utility costs to deduct that portion and qualify for a higher benefit if they are “shelter-qualified” (i.e., not on SSI, a minor parent, or receiving a housing subsidy).</p>	<p>N/A</p>
WHO IS ELIGIBLE FOR CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Maximum income</p> <p>How much can a family of three earn and still be considered eligible to receive cash assistance?</p>	<p>A family's monthly income, minus deductions, differ depending on whether a family is shelter-qualified and whether it is a single- or two-parent household. Amounts for a family of three through June 2024 are:</p>	<p>Increase the maximum allowable income to enable families earning more to receive cash assistance.</p>

	<p>Shelter-qualified single parent household: \$1,438/month</p> <p>Shelter-qualified two-parent household: \$2,038/month</p> <p>Shelter-disqualified single parent household: \$1,176/month</p> <p>Shelter-disqualified two-parent household: \$1,776/month</p>	
<p>Asset limit</p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Wyoming has increased its asset limit to \$5,000.</p>	<p>Remove the asset limit entirely to promote family savings and economic mobility, as other states have done (e.g., Ohio).</p>
<p>Eligibility during pregnancy for parents without children</p> <p>Are pregnant people with no children in the household eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider providing eligibility to low-income pregnant people with no other children, as several other states have.</p> <p>Example: Ohio provides eligibility from the sixth month of pregnancy, and Washington in the first month.</p>
ADDITIONAL RULES AND RESTRICTIONS		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Provision of cash assistance to out-of-work parents before they search for a job</p> <p>Does the state provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Wyoming allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>The lifetime limit is 60 months.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Provision of federal TANF cash assistance to immigrant families who are lawful permanent residents (LPRs) *after* five years' residence in US</p> <p>Can parents who hold green cards access cash assistance in the state once they have been in the country <i>for five years or longer?</i></p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Use of state funds to provide cash assistance to immigrant families who are lawful permanent residents (LPRs) with less than five years' residence in US</p> <p>Can parents who hold green cards access cash assistance in the state if they have been in the country <i>for less than five years?</i></p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Provide families led by parents who are lawful permanent residents (LPRs) with less than five years' residence in US with cash assistance using state funding (e.g., Washington).</p>
<p>Transitional cash benefits for families when they stop receiving TANF</p> <p>Will parents who have just begun to earn enough to be ineligible for TANF cash assistance receive some additional support for a limited period?</p>	<p>Yes. Families in which a parent is working at least thirty hours each week may qualify for transitional benefits up to half of the previous amount for up to six additional months.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in need</p> <p>Does the state provide a formal diversion program to support families with specific short-term needs?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>To families not in imminent need, consider providing a lump-sum payment in order to help them with expenses that may enable continued employment and housing, as</p>

		other states have done (e.g., Colorado and South Dakota).
<p>Lifting full-family sanctions</p> <p>Are other family members able to continue receiving cash benefits if an adult does not meet work requirements?</p>	<p>No. If an adult is noncompliant with work requirements, the entire household benefit can be withheld for at least one month.</p>	<p>Eliminate full-family sanctions; if necessary, decrease the benefit amount if parents do not meet work requirements (e.g., Illinois).</p> <p>Alternatively, impose initial sanctions through benefit reductions, providing most of the benefit for several months (e.g., Colorado, North Dakota, South Dakota).</p>
<p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Lifting the family cap for a new birth</p> <p>Can families receive additional cash assistance if they have another child while receiving assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>