

Pennsylvania’s Cash Assistance (TANF) policy: Pennsylvania Temporary Assistance for Needy Families		
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>Between \$365/month and \$421/month, depending on the county. These payments range from 17% to almost 20% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in 2024.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level.</p> <p>Examples: Illinois provides maximum benefits of \$725/month (34% FPL). North Dakota’s maximum payment is \$872/month (41% FPL).</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has the state mandated increases to these amounts in future, as the cost of living rises?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Make recurring increases to the state’s benefit amounts, tied to a cost-of-living or poverty measurement.</p> <p>Example: Ohio requires scheduled cost-of-living updates to TANF benefit amounts each year on January 1st.</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>The gross income limit for a family of three is between \$984/month and \$1,136/month, and varies by county.</p>	<p>Increase limits, disregards, and/or deductions in order to enable families earning more to receive cash assistance.</p> <p>Example: A family of three in South Carolina remains eligible while earning up to \$1,035/month (48% FPL) after disregarding 50% of the monthly gross countable earned income.</p>
<p>Asset limit</p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Families may retain up to \$1,000 in cash and savings.</p>	<p>Consider eliminating the asset limit to enable families to maintain savings (e.g., Ohio, Massachusetts).</p>

		Alternatively, some states increase the asset limit. Michigan allows eligible households to retain up to \$15,000 in savings, cash, investment and retirement accounts.
<p>Eligibility during pregnancy for parents without children</p> <p>Are pregnant people with no children in the household eligible for cash assistance?</p>	Yes, Pennsylvania provides cash assistance from the first month of pregnancy to those without other children in the household.	N/A
ADDITIONAL RULES AND RESTRICTIONS		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Pennsylvania allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	The state maintains the lifetime limit of 60 months.	N/A
<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>	If a sanction for noncompliance with work requirements occurs during the first 24 months of cash assistance receipt, the sanction applies only to the individual adult; if it occurs after the first 24 months, the entire household loses assistance.	Reduce the benefit amount in place of full-family sanctions for all cases if parents do not meet work requirements, so that children retain support (e.g., Illinois).
<p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	No. The state conditions eligibility on adults' compliance with court obligations, participation in or completion of court-ordered drug treatment, and submission to regular drug testing (10 years for TANF). The state also disqualifies those who have been convicted of two or more drug trafficking felonies from receiving TANF for up to 10	<p>Consider modifying the ban. Example: In Indiana, adults with prior convictions may be eligible if they are compliant with drug treatment program requirements.</p> <p>Alternatively, consider eliminating the drug felony ban entirely (e.g., Illinois, Iowa).</p>

	<p>years.</p> <p>Note: This policy represents a reversal, following a period during which Pennsylvania had eliminated the ban.</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. Pennsylvania never implemented a family cap policy.</p>	<p>N/A</p>