

Wisconsin’s Cash Assistance (TANF) policy: Wisconsin Works (W2) 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>Parents in the W-2 program receive varying payments, not according to family size, but according to whether they have a job, their hours worked, and so on. Payments to one working parent range from \$218 for those working up to 10 hours/week to \$653/month for those working full-time, or from 10-30% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of three. Families with two working parents may receive twice that amount.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level in adjustment to family size.</p> <p>Example: Minnesota’s maximum benefit for a family of three is \$1,370/month, or 62% FPL.</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has the state mandated increases to these amounts, as the cost of living rises?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Make recurring increases to state 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>\$2,474/month, or 115% FPL.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

<p>Asset limit</p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Families can retain assets up to \$2,500.</p>	<p>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit in order to promote economic stability by enabling families to retain savings.</p> <p>Examples: Indiana has increased the asset limit for cash assistance to \$10,000, and Ohio has eliminated the asset limit.</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>Yes, individuals can be eligible from the sixth month of pregnancy if they are otherwise eligible.</p> <p>Those parents with an at-risk pregnancy can be eligible during the third trimester.</p>	<p>Consider providing eligibility to low-income pregnant people with no other children from the first month of pregnancy, in order to support maternal health and children’s early development (e.g., Washington).</p>
<p>ADDITIONAL RULES AND RESTRICTIONS</p>		
<p>Flexibility</p>	<p>Current policy</p>	<p>Potential improvement</p>
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does the state allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>Wisconsin limits cash assistance to no more than 24 months “per work placement,” with a lifetime limit of 48 months.</p>	<p>Consider maintaining the lifetime limit of 60 months to support families during reversals such as job loss, as many states do (e.g., North Dakota, South Dakota, Iowa).</p>
<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>Initial failure to complete work requirements can result in reduced hourly payments and reductions in monthly benefits. Repeated noncompliance over time can</p>	<p>Consider only <i>reducing</i> the benefit, so that children may continue receiving cash assistance in all cases (e.g., Alabama, Maryland).</p>

	lead to termination of benefits and closure of case.	
<p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Individuals convicted of drug felonies within five years of their application for cash assistance must submit to drug testing; positive test results can result in decreases to benefit amounts for at least one year.</p>	<p>Eliminate the ban or modify it to extend eligibility to those that have completed treatment or other programs related to their sentence.</p> <p>Examples: Michigan and North Dakota have fully eliminated the drug felony ban for cash assistance.</p> <p>Indiana grants eligibility to parents convicted of a drug-related felony if they are compliant with drug treatment program requirements.</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. Wisconsin never enacted a family cap for cash assistance.</p>	<p>N/A</p>