

OVERVIEW

Delaware Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Delaware	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount (for 2024)	\$32,184,421	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	6.8%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	31%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	2,368	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	76.9%	39.3%
"Unobligated balance" (or stockpiled amounts, which must be used for cash assistance or admin)		
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$0	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	0%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	\$0	+\$241,306,628

DELAWARE'S CASH ASSISTANCE (TANF) POLICY

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>\$338/month, or 16% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).</p>	<p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level to support families with children during challenging periods.</p> <p>Examples: Minnesota provides \$1,430/month as a maximum benefit. Maryland provides \$753/month.</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has Delaware mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider making recurring increases, tied to cost-of-living or poverty measurement.</p> <p>Examples: Connecticut annually adjusts its maximum benefit amounts to 55% of the FPL.</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Deductions for calculation of benefit amount</p> <p>Can parents deduct some earnings or expenses from their income when calculating the benefit amount?</p>	<p>Yes, parents can deduct \$90 in work expenses, an additional \$30, and 33% of all remaining income for the first four months of receipt.</p>	<p>The state could consider a larger deduction for a period after family member becomes employed.</p> <p>Example: Rhode Island permits a deduction of 100% of earned income when an adult first gains employment while in the state’s works program for up to six months.</p>
HOW ELSE DOES DELAWARE DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Delaware allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>The state limits assistance to 36 months, while granting some extensions.</p>	<p>Consider maintaining the lifetime limit of 60 months so that families can easily return to the program after setbacks like job loss.</p> <p>Examples: Pennsylvania and Maryland maintain the 60-month limit without restrictions.</p>
<p>Transitional cash benefits for families who become ineligible after receiving cash assistance</p> <p>Will parents and caregivers who are newly ineligible for cash assistance receive additional cash support for a limited period?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider providing a portion of the benefit once parents increase earnings, to avoid benefit cliffs and support economic stability.</p> <p>Example: Maryland provides a transitional benefit for two months.</p>

Delaware

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Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does Delaware provide a formal diversion program to support families with specific short-term needs?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<p>Eligibility for monthly assistance less than six months after a diversion payment</p> <p>Can families who receive diversionary payments apply for monthly assistance within six months afterward?</p>	Yes. The state prevents assistance for no more than three months after a diversion payment.	N/A
<p>Providing assistance with housing</p> <p>Does the state provide housing vouchers with TANF funds?</p>	No.	<p>Providing housing vouchers alongside cash assistance can ease high costs for eligible families.</p> <p>Examples: Hawaii and Maine provide housing vouchers worth several hundred dollars along with TANF cash assistance.</p>
<p>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</p> <p>Does Delaware provide assistance to families with diaper expenses using TANF funds?</p>	No.	<p>Providing assistance with diaper costs provides significant support for families with young children.</p> <p>Examples: Indiana and Washington provide assistance with diapers for families with very young children receiving TANF cash assistance.</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 for cash assistance eligibility?</p>	<p>Gross income cannot exceed \$3,081/month.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide potential eligibility to more families, including those experiencing sudden job loss.</p> <p>Example: Rhode Island provides gross income eligibility for families with income up to \$4,997/month, or 225% FPL in 2025.</p>
<p>Deductions for assessment of benefit eligibility</p> <p>Can families deduct a portion of earnings or some expenses from their income to meet income eligibility requirements?</p>	<p>Yes, families can deduct \$90 for work related expenses, up to \$200 for child care, and the first \$50 of child support received.</p>	<p>Consider providing greater deductions in order to support more families.</p> <p>Example: Families in Rhode Island can deduct \$525 and then 50% of remaining 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>\$10,000</p>	<p>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families' retention of savings.</p> <p>Examples: Maryland and Massachusetts have eliminated an asset limit.</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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, beginning in the ninth month of pregnancy.</p>	<p>Consider providing cash assistance from the first month of pregnancy to support early development and reduce parental stress.</p> <p>Examples: Massachusetts and Connecticut provide cash assistance to pregnant people throughout the full term of pregnancy.</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 Delaware 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 Delaware if they have been in the country <i>for less than five years</i>?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider using state funds to provide cash assistance.</p> <p>Example: Connecticut and Maine provide cash assistance to some caregivers before five years' residence, using state funds.</p>

HOW DOES DELAWARE TREAT CHILD SUPPORT OWED TO A FAMILY APPLYING FOR AND RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Child support pass-through</p> <p>Does Delaware “pass through” a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p>	Yes.	N/A
WHAT ARE DELAWARE’S WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Provision of cash assistance to out-of-work parents before they search for a job</p> <p>Does Delaware provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	Yes, there is no job search required.	N/A
<p>Counting educational activities as “core” work requirements</p> <p>Does Delaware provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as “core” work activities for cash assistance?</p>	No.	<p>Consider allowing postsecondary attendance and vocational education to count as “core” work participation.</p> <p>Examples: Several states count specific types of postsecondary education for different periods as exemptions, including Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania.</p>
<p>Exemption for caregivers of infants</p> <p>Are parents or caregivers caring for a child under twelve months of age exempt from work requirements?</p>	Yes, exemptions apply for parents of children under twelve months.	N/A

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Other exemptions from work requirements</p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?</p>	<p>Other conditions for exemptions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care of a family member with a disability Being “unemployable due to health reasons” Circumstances involving domestic violence 	N/A
WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS DELAWARE EASED?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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>	No, the state withdraws the benefit for the entire household.	<p>In cases of non-compliance with work requirements, consider only reducing the benefit amount instead and eliminating full-family sanctions.</p> <p>Examples: Connecticut merely reduces the benefit amount.</p>
<p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<p>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</p> <p>Does Delaware refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying for cash assistance?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<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>	Yes.	N/A

NOTES ON SOURCES:

TANF state profiles were compiled by extensive review of administrative guidelines including those published in state TANF manuals. Additionally, NCCP researchers referred to enacted state legislative resources.

NCCP gratefully acknowledges the of states' TANF-to-poverty ratios as developed and provided by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities:

Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. (2025, April 11). *AFDC and TANF caseload and poverty data*. <https://www.cbpp.org/research/income-security/afdc-and-tanf-caseload-and-poverty-data>

We have drawn on the publication of federal data on states' TANF block grant spending, including financial data, spending allocations, and caseload information:

Office of Family Assistance. (2026, February 10). *TANF and MOE spending and transfers by activity, FY 2024*. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://acf.gov/ofa/data/tanf-and-moe-spending-and-transfers-activity-fy-2024>

Office of Family Assistance. (2025). *TANF caseload data 2025*. Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. <https://acf.gov/ofa/data/tanf-caseload-data-2025>