

## OVERVIEW

Georgia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Georgia	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount	\$329,650,291	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	1.8%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	3.0%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	3,694	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	95.7%	39.3%
<b>"Unobligated balance" (or stockpiled amounts, which must be used for cash assistance or admin)</b>		
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$112,042,607	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	34.0%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	-\$92,703,488	+\$241,306,628

## GEORGIA'S CASH ASSISTANCE (TANF) POLICY

HOW MUCH CASH ASSISTANCE CAN A FAMILY OF THREE RECEIVE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Maximum benefit allowed</b></p> <p>What is the maximum monthly amount a family of three could receive in cash assistance?</p>	<p>\$280/month, or 13% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL). The state has not increased this amount since 1996 when TANF originated.</p>	<p><b>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level to support families with children during challenging periods.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Louisiana provides \$484/month, and Maryland provides a maximum benefit of \$753/month.</p>
<p><b>Recurring benefit increases</b></p> <p>Has Georgia mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p><b>Consider making recurring increases, tied to a cost-of-living or poverty measurement.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Nebraska mandates routine increases to benefit amounts.</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Deductions for calculation of benefit amount</b></p> <p>Can parents deduct some earnings or expenses from their income when calculating the benefit amount?</p>	<p>Each employed member of the family can deduct \$250, and monthly care deductions for children (\$200 for each child under 2 and \$175 each child over 2).</p>	<p><b>Consider increasing earned income deductions to better support families and incentivize work participation.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Arkansas allows a 20% “work-related” deduction at eligibility, followed by a 60% work incentive deduction.</p>

## HOW ELSE DOES GEORGIA DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Time limit</b></p> <p>Does Georgia allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>No. The state limits cash assistance to 48 months in a lifetime.</p>	<p><b>Consider maintaining the lifetime limit of 60 months, as many states do, so that families can easily return to the program after setbacks like job loss.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Alabama and Kentucky maintain the 60-month limit without restrictions.</p>
<p><b>Transitional cash benefits for families who become ineligible after receiving cash assistance</b></p> <p>Will parents and caregivers who are newly ineligible for cash assistance receive additional cash support for a limited period?</p>	<p>Yes. A supplement may be available to families transitioning off of TANF assistance through Georgia's Work Support Program.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</b></p> <p>Does Georgia provide a formal diversion program to support families with specific short-term needs?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Eligibility for monthly assistance less than six months after a diversion payment</b></p> <p>Can families who receive diversionary payments apply for monthly assistance within six months afterward?</p>	<p>No. The state imposes a 12-month period of ineligibility after releasing a diversion payment.</p>	<p><b>Consider shortening the period of ineligibility.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Florida and Arizona provide diversion payments to families who are then ineligible for monthly assistance for just three months. Arkansas also maintains a shorter (100-day) period of ineligibility.</p>
<p><b>Providing assistance with housing</b></p> <p>Does the state provide housing vouchers with TANF funds?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p><b>Providing housing vouchers alongside cash assistance can ease high costs for eligible families.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Hawaii and Maine provide housing vouchers worth several hundred dollars along with TANF cash assistance.</p>
<p><b>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</b></p> <p>Does Georgia provide assistance to families with diaper expenses using TANF funds?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p><b>Providing assistance with diaper costs provides significant support for families with young children.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> 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><b>Maximum income</b></p> <p>How much can a family of three earn and still be considered for cash assistance eligibility?</p>	<p>\$784/month</p>	<p><b>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide eligibility to more families, including those experiencing sudden job loss.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Florida maintains a gross income limit of 185% FPL, or \$4,109/month.</p>
<p><b>Deductions for assessment of benefit eligibility</b></p> <p>Can families deduct a portion of earnings or some expenses from their income to meet income eligibility requirements?</p>	<p>There is a standard deduction of \$250 of earned income for each employed individual in the assistance unit, and monthly care deductions for children (\$200 for each child under 2 and \$175 those over 2).</p>	<p><b>Consider providing a higher deduction in order to increase support for employed parents.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Alabama permits families to deduct 30% of their earned income.</p>
<p><b>Asset limit</b></p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>\$1,000</p>	<p><b>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families' retention of savings.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Arkansas' limit on resources is \$3,000. Alabama has eliminated the consideration of cash assets or resource tests for eligibility.</p>
<p><b>Eligibility during pregnancy for parents without children</b></p> <p>Are pregnant people with no children in the household eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes, beginning in the first month.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Provision of federal TANF cash assistance to immigrant families who are lawful permanent residents (LPRs) *after* five years' residence in US</b></p> <p>Can parents who hold green cards access cash assistance in Georgia once they have been in the country <i>for five years or longer</i>?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<p><b>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</b></p> <p>Can parents who hold green cards access cash assistance in Georgia if they have been in the country <i>for less than five years</i>?</p>	No.	<p><b>Consider using state funds to provide cash assistance to these parents.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Maryland provides cash assistance before five years' residence, using state funds.</p>
<b>HOW DOES GEORGIA TREAT CHILD SUPPORT OWED TO A FAMILY APPLYING FOR AND RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE?</b>		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Child support pass-through</b></p> <p>Does Georgia “pass through” a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p>	No.	<p><b>Consider “passing through” at least a portion of child support payments collected by the state for this family, to contribute to the household’s economic stability.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Mississippi provides up to \$100 of any child support to the household.</p>

WHAT ARE GEORGIA'S WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Provision of cash assistance to out-of-work parents before they search for a job</b></p> <p>Does Georgia provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	<p>No. Parents who are determined "job ready" must contact at least 24 employers within no more than six weeks of application review, or their application may be denied.</p>	<p><b>Consider providing cash assistance to families before or during the search for employment.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Arkansas, Tennessee, and Texas require no job search before processing applications.</p>
<p><b>Counting educational activities as "core" work activities</b></p> <p>Does Georgia provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as "core" work activities for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes, for up to one year of attendance.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Exemption for caregivers of infants</b></p> <p>Are parents who care for a child under twelve months of age exempt from work requirements?</p>	<p>Yes, exemptions apply for single parents of children under twelve months.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Other exemptions from work requirements</b></p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?</p>	<p>Another condition for exemption is providing care for a disabled family member living in the home.</p>	<p><b>Consider adding other exemptions, including:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Care of an ill or incapacitated family member</li> <li>• Inability to find childcare for a child under six years.</li> <li>• Circumstances involving domestic violence</li> </ul>

<b>WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS GEORGIA EASED?</b>		
<b>Flexibility</b>	<b>Current policy</b>	<b>Potential improvement</b>
<p><b>Lifting full-family sanctions</b></p> <p>Are other family members able to continue receiving cash benefits if an adult does not meet work requirements?</p>	<p>No, the state will enact full-family sanctions although not immediately.</p>	<p><b>In cases of non-compliance with work requirements, consider only reducing the benefit amount instead and eliminating full-family sanctions.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Arkansas merely reduces the benefit.</p>
<p><b>Lifting drug felony bans</b></p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p><b>Consider modifying or eliminating the ban on assistance for those with drug-related felony convictions to provide support for families in challenging times.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi consider those with felony convictions eligible as long as they meet other requirements.</p>
<b>Flexibility</b>	<b>Current policy</b>	<b>Potential improvement</b>
<p><b>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</b></p> <p>Does Georgia refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying for cash assistance?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p><b>Consider making treatment available to all parents and refrain from any drug testing, since it does not effectively support low-income parents or children.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Florida and Alabama refrain from drug testing applicants and recipients.</p>
<p><b>Lifting the family cap for a new birth</b></p> <p>Can families receive additional cash assistance if they have another child while receiving assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

**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>