



# Maine

TANF State Profile Summary 2025/2026

## OVERVIEW

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Maine	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount (for 2024)	\$77,863,090	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	29.4%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	30%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	4,032	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	25.1%	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	\$23,536,704	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	30.2%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	-\$20,381,107	+\$241,306,628

## MAINE'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>	\$917/month, or 43% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	<p><b>Consider increasing the maximum benefit to support families with children during challenging periods.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> New Hampshire provides a maximum benefit that at 60% FPL (\$1,333 for 2025).</p>
<p><b>Recurring benefit increases</b></p> <p>Has Maine mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p>	Yes.	N/A

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>For the first three months of assistance, parents may disregard 100% of earned income; in the subsequent three months, they may deduct 50% of earned income.</p>	<p>Higher deductions increase support for families. The state could consider disregard a significant amount of income for longer.</p> <p><b>Example:</b> Connecticut allows parents to disregard all income under 100% FPL without a time limit.</p>

**HOW ELSE DOES MAINE DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?**

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Time limit</b></p> <p>Does Maine allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</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>No.</p>	<p><b>Consider providing a portion of the benefit once parents increase earnings, to avoid benefit cliffs and support economic stability.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Vermont families can receive transitional assistance for six months after traditional benefits stop.</p>
<p><b>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</b></p> <p>Does Maine 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>Yes. The state imposes no ineligibility period.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Providing assistance with housing</b></p> <p>Does the state provide housing vouchers with TANF funds?</p>	<p>Yes, TANF families can receive a housing supplement of up to \$300 per month if they have housing costs that exceed 50% of their countable income added to their current TANF benefit and any child support payments.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</b></p> <p>Does Maine 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> Hawaii 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>\$2,320/month</p>	<p><b>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide potential eligibility to more families.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Rhode Island’s gross income limit is \$4,997/month, or 225% FPL in 2025.</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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>Families can deduct \$108 for each employed member of the family, and then 50% of remaining earned income.</p>	<p>N/A</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>\$10,000</p>	<p><b>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families' retention of savings.</b></p> <p><b>Example:</b> Massachusetts has eliminated an asset limit for cash assistance.</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, starting in the sixth month of pregnancy.</p>	<p><b>Consider providing cash assistance earlier in pregnancy to support development and reduce parental stress.</b></p> <p><b>Examples:</b> Connecticut and Massachusetts provide cash assistance in any trimester of pregnancy.</p>
<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 Maine once they have been in the country <i>for five years or longer</i>?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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 Maine if they have been in the country for <i>less than five years</i>?</p>	Yes, if they meet particular circumstances.	N/A

**HOW DOES MAINE TREAT CHILD SUPPORT OWED TO A FAMILY APPLYING FOR AND RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE?**

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Child support pass-through</b></p> <p>Does Maine “pass through” a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p>	Yes.	N/A

**WHAT ARE MAINE’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 Maine provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	Yes, there is no job search required.	N/A
<p><b>Counting educational activities as “core” work requirements</b></p> <p>Does Maine provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as “core” work activities for cash assistance?</p>	Yes, Maine enables parents/caregivers to receive TANF while participating in special programs (e.g., "Parents as Scholars") that count as core activities.	N/A

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p><b>Exemption for caregivers of infants</b></p> <p>Are parents or caregivers caring for a child under twelve months of age exempt from work requirements?</p>	<p><b>Yes, exemptions apply for parents of children under twelve months.</b></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>Other conditions for exemptions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>VISTA volunteers under the federal Domestic Volunteer Service Act of 1973</li> </ul>	<p><b>Consider exempting single custodial parents who are unable to access child care for a child under 5.</b></p>

**WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS MAINE EASED?**

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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>Yes, the state will only reduce the benefit.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Lifting drug felony bans</b></p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p><b>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</b></p> <p>Does Maine refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>



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Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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. The state never enacted a family cap.</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>