

OVERVIEW

| Temporary Assistance (TA) (TANF) | Missouri | U.S. Average or Total |
|---|---------------|-----------------------------|
| Annual (federal-only) block grant amount (for 2024) | \$216,335,469 | \$16,488,600,000 (total) |
| % of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024 | 3.5% | 21.8% |
| % families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23 | 6% | 20% |
| Total # families receiving TANF in 2025 | 4,719 | 848,631 (total) |
| % of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025 | 40.7% | 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 |

MISSOURI'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>\$292/month, or 13% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) in 2026.</p> | <p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level to provide more support to families with children during challenging periods.</p> <p>Examples: Ohio provides a \$623/month. Kansas provides \$584/month.</p> |
| <p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has Missouri mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p> | <p>No.</p> | <p>Consider making recurring increases, tied to costs of living or poverty measurement.</p> <p>Examples: Nebraska and North Dakota schedule regular increases.</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>Parents can deduct \$90/month and then 2/3 of remaining earned income for twelve consecutive months.</p> | <p>Consider allowing a greater work-related deduction to provide more support for families with working parents.</p> <p>Example: In Nebraska, parents may deduct 50% of their gross earned income when calculating benefit amounts.</p> |

HOW ELSE DOES MISSOURI DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?

| Flexibility | Current policy | Potential improvement |
|---|---|--|
| <p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Missouri allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p> | <p>No. Families are eligible for assistance for no more than 45 months.</p> | <p>Consider maintaining the lifetime limit of 60 months, as many states do, so that families can return to the support when setbacks like job loss occur.</p> <p>Examples: Alabama, Iowa, and Kentucky 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>Yes. Families may receive \$50 for up to six consecutive months.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does Missouri 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>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> | <p>Yes. The state prevents assistance for no more than three months.</p> | <p>N/A</p> |
| <p>Providing assistance with housing</p> <p>Does the state provide housing vouchers with TANF funds?</p> | <p>No.</p> | <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.</p> |
| <p>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</p> <p>Does Missouri provide assistance to families with diaper expenses using TANF funds?</p> | <p>No.</p> | <p>Providing assistance with diaper costs provides significant support for families with young children.</p> <p>Examples: 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>Maximum income</p> <p>How much can a family of three earn and still be considered for cash assistance eligibility?</p> | <p>\$1,565/month</p> | <p>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide potential eligibility to more families.</p> <p>Example: Florida maintains a gross income limit of 185% FPL, or \$4,109/month.</p> |

| Flexibility | Current policy | Potential improvement |
|--|---|--|
| <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>Parents can deduct \$90/month.</p> | <p>Consider allowing a greater work-related deduction to provide access to more families with working parents.</p> <p>Example: In Arkansas, parents may deduct 20% of earned income for eligibility assessment.</p> |
| <p>Asset limit</p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p> | <p>Applicant parents can maintain up to \$1,000. Families receiving cash assistance who enter a “self-sufficiency pact” may maintain up to \$5,000.</p> | <p>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families’ ability to save.</p> <p>Example: Kentucky families can retain \$10,000 in savings. Alabama and Ohio have eliminated asset limits.</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>No.</p> | <p>Providing cash assistance during pregnancy is critical for early development outcomes and in reducing parental stress.</p> <p>Example: Louisiana and Tennessee provide cash assistance to pregnant people starting in the sixth month of pregnancy, and Oklahoma provides it through 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 Missouri 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>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 Missouri if they have been in the country for <i>less than five years</i>?</p> | No. | <p>Consider using state funds to provide cash assistance to these parents.</p> <p>Examples: Utah and Wisconsin provide cash assistance to some caregivers before five years' residence, using state funds.</p> |

HOW DOES MISSOURI 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 Missouri “pass through” a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p> | No. | <p>Consider “passing through” at least a portion of child support payments collected by the state to support economic stability.</p> <p>Example: Mississippi provides up to \$100 of any child support to the household.</p> |

WHAT ARE MISSOURI’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 Missouri provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p> | Yes. However, parents must register on state job search website or their application is denied. | N/A |

| Flexibility | Current policy | Potential improvement |
|---|---|---|
| <p>Counting educational activities as “core” work requirements</p> <p>Does Missouri provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as “core” work activities for cash assistance?</p> | No. | <p>Consider allowing postsecondary attendance to count as “core” work participation.</p> <p>Examples: Ohio and Kentucky allow specific types of postsecondary education.</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> | No. Exemptions apply only for single parents of children under three months. | <p>Consider providing an exemption for the first year of each infant’s life, to support parents’ mental health and children’s development.</p> <p>Example: Georgia and Mississippi provide exemptions for parents with children up to twelve months of age.</p> |
| 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 exemptions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Care for a disabled family member living in the home | <p>Consider offering these exemptions in addition:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pregnancy in the third trimester Circumstances involving domestic violence |
| WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS MISSOURI 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 will enact full-family sanctions although not immediately. | <p>In cases of non-compliance with work requirements, consider only reducing the benefit amount instead and eliminating full-family sanctions.</p> <p>Examples: Arkansas merely reduces the benefit.</p> |

| Flexibility | Current policy | Potential improvement |
|--|--|--|
| <p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p> | <p>No.</p> | <p>Consider modifying or eliminating the ban on assistance for those with drug-related felony convictions to provide support for families in challenging times.</p> <p>Examples: Alabama, Arkansas, and Mississippi consider those with felony convictions eligible as long as they meet other requirements.</p> |
| <p>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</p> <p>Does Missouri refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying for cash assistance?</p> | <p>No.</p> | <p>Consider making treatment available to all parents and refrain from any drug testing, since it does not effectively support low-income parents or children.</p> <p>Examples: Florida and Alabama refrain from drug testing applicants and recipients.</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, Missouri 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>