

North Dakota

TANF State Profile Summary 2025/2026

OVERVIEW

North Dakota Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	North Dakota	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount (for 2024)	\$26,312,690	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	16.1%	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	726	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	39.3%	39.3%
"Unobligated balance" (or stockpiled amounts, which must be used for cash assistance or admin)		
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$28,062,514	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	106.7%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	+\$8,648,237	+\$241,306,628

NORTH DAKOTA'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>\$916/month, or 40% 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>Example: Minnesota provides \$1,430/month.</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has North Dakota mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider ensuring that benefit increases are administered annually.</p> <p>Example: Maine and New Hampshire have regular mandated increases.</p>

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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>Earned income disregards for the first year of TANF benefits include: 50% of remaining income for the first six months; then 35% for the next three months, and 25% for the next three months.</p>	<p>Consider extending earned income deductions throughout the period of assistance to further incentivize work participation.</p> <p>Example: Arkansas provides a 20% “work-related” deduction as well as a 60% “work incentive” deduction.</p>
HOW ELSE DOES NORTH DAKOTA DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does North Dakota allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</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. If families become ineligible because of increases in earned income, they may receive \$200/month for up to six months.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does North Dakota provide a formal diversion program to support short-term needs?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Eligibility for monthly assistance less than six months after a diversion payment</p> <p>Can families who receive diversion payments apply for monthly assistance within six months?</p>	<p>Yes. The state imposes no ineligibility period.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

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<p>Providing assistance with housing</p> <p>Does the state provide housing vouchers with TANF funds?</p>	<p>Yes. The state provides less than \$50/month in housing assistance.</p>	<p>Consider increasing housing assistance to families receiving cash assistance to support their economic stability.</p> <p>Examples: Hawaii and Maine provide housing vouchers worth several hundred dollars.</p>
<p>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</p> <p>Does North Dakota 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.</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>Either \$2510/month for a single-parent family with two children or \$2690/month for a two-parent family with one child.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide potential eligibility to more families.</p> <p>Example: Minnesota provides gross income eligibility for families with income up to \$3,211/month.</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>Initially, parents can deduct either 27% of earned income or \$180 of monthly earnings, whichever is greater.</p>	<p>Consider increasing disregards in order to provide support for more families.</p> <p>Example: Minnesota allows deductions of \$65 for each working adult, and then 50% of all remaining earned income for the household.</p>

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<p>Asset limit</p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>\$6,025 for a three-person household</p>	<p>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families' retention of savings.</p> <p>Examples: Michigan has increased the asset limit to \$15,000. Ohio has eliminated it.</p>
<p>Eligibility during pregnancy for parents without children</p> <p>Are pregnant North Dakotans with no children in the household eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes, in any trimester.</p>	<p>N/A</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 North Dakota 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 North Dakota 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 to these parents.</p> <p>Example: Maryland provides cash assistance to some caregivers before five years' residence, using state funds.</p>

HOW DOES NORTH DAKOTA 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 North Dakota “pass through” a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p>	<p>Yes, although the state passes through only any amount of support that exceeds cash assistance families have received.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
WHAT ARE NORTH DAKOTA’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 North Dakota provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	<p>Yes. No job search is required.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Counting educational activities as “core” work requirements</p> <p>Does North Dakota provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as “core” work activities for cash assistance?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider allowing postsecondary attendance and vocational education to count as “core” work participation.</p> <p>Examples: Several states allow specific types of postsecondary education for different periods to exempt parents from other work activities, 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>	<p>No. Exemptions apply only for parents of children under two months.</p>	<p>Consider providing an exemption from work requirements for the first year of each infant’s life, to support their early development and reduce parental stress.</p> <p>Example: Ohio and Pennsylvania provide exemptions up to twelve months.</p>

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<p>Other exemptions from work requirements</p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?</p>	<p>Another condition for exemption is caring for a disabled family member in the home</p>	<p>Consider adding other exemptions, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pregnancy • Caregiver’s disability • Domestic violence • Caring for a child under age 6 and unable to obtain childcare
WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS NORTH DAKOTA 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>	<p>No, the state will enact full-family sanctions although not immediately.</p>	<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 and Illinois will merely reduce the benefit.</p>
<p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</p> <p>Does North Dakota refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</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. The state repealed the cap in 2024.</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>