



OVERVIEW

Ohio Works First (OWF) (TANF)	Ohio	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount	\$725,565,965	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	17.3%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	25%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	36,743	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	84.5%	39.3%
"Unobligated balance" (or stockpiled amounts, which must be used for cash assistance or admin)		
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$629,928,179	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	86.80%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	+ \$629,928,178	+\$241,306,628

OHIO'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>	\$623/month, or 29% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	<p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level to provide more support to families with children during challenging periods.</p> <p>Examples: New Hampshire provides 60% FPL, with updates each year. Wyoming provides a maximum benefit of \$902/month (42% FPL).</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has Ohio mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p>	Yes. State law requires annual increases based on costs of living published by SSA.	N/A



Ohio

TANF State Profile Summary 2025/26

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>Ohio allows deductions of \$250 plus 50% of the remaining earned income.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the earned income deduction, and creating a separate deduction for childcare and other work expenses.</p> <p>Example: Arkansas provides a 20% “work-related” deduction as well as a 60% “work incentive” deduction.</p>

HOW ELSE DOES OHIO DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Ohio allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>Families are limited to 36 months although they can apply for an extension.</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, 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>No.</p>	<p>Consider providing a portion of the benefit to avoid benefit cliffs and support economic stability.</p> <p>Example: Wyoming provides 50% of families’ former assistance amounts for up to six consecutive months.</p>



Ohio

TANF State Profile Summary 2025/26

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does Ohio provide a formal diversion program to support families with specific short-term needs?</p>	No.	<p>Consider providing a generous “diversion” payment to help families with critical expenses (such as car repairs) that can enable caregivers to remain employed.</p> <p>Example: Pennsylvania, Kansas, and Kentucky provide diversion payments.</p>
<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>	N/A	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.</p>
<p>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</p> <p>Does Ohio 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: 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>Families with gross income up to \$1,110/month (assuming no dependent care costs) may be considered for cash assistance.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide potential eligibility to more families, including those experiencing sudden job loss.</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>No. For eligibility assessment, Ohio does not allow disregards.</p>	<p>Consider allowing disregards in order to provide support for more families.</p> <p>Example: Arkansas provides a 20% work related deduction 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>There is no asset test for cash assistance in Ohio.</p>	<p>N/A</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>Yes, and this rule was recently updated to support any pregnant person in any trimester.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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 Ohio once they have been in the country for five years or longer?</p>	<p>Not uniformly. LPRs are ineligible unless they have worked and earned social security for at least 40 quarters (or are covered by a spouse's work participation).</p>	<p>Consider providing access to otherwise eligible applicants who are legally-protected residents after five years' US residence, as 43 states and the District of Columbia do.</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 Ohio if they have been in the country for <i>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 before five years' residence, using state funds.</p>

HOW DOES OHIO 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 Ohio "pass through" a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>Example: Mississippi provides up to \$100 of any child support to the household. Michigan passes through all child support collected by the state.</p>



WHAT ARE OHIO'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 Ohio provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<p>Counting educational activities as "core" work requirements</p> <p>Does Ohio provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as "core" work activities for cash assistance?</p>	Yes. Full-time post-secondary education leading to a vocation is counted as an eligible work activity.	N/A
<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 may apply for single parents of children under twelve months.	N/A
<p>Other exemptions from work requirements</p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?</p>	The only other exceptions from work requirements are for adults connected to "child-only" cases, where the benefit does not include adults.	<p>Consider providing exemptions from work requirements for other conditions, such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Care of an ill or disabled child • Doctor's statement of inability to work • Domestic violence • Drug or alcohol treatment • Lack of childcare for children under six <p>Example: Alabama offers each of the exceptions listed above.</p>



WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS OHIO 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 withdraws the benefit for the entire household, 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 merely withdraws a portion of the benefit, never enacting a full-family sanction.</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 Ohio 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. Ohio never implemented 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>