

OVERVIEW

Utah Family Employment Program (FEP) (TANF)	Utah	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount	\$75,355,939	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	20.6%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	10%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	1,883	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	53.10%	39.3%
"Unobligated balance" (or stockpiled amounts, which must be used for cash assistance or admin)		
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$98,213,611	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	130.3%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	+ \$1,605,062	+ \$241,306,628

UTAH'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>\$662/month, or 29% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)</p>	<p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level to support families with children during challenging periods.</p> <p>Example: In California, families can receive as much as \$1,175.</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has Utah mandated increases to these amounts, as the costs of living increase?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider making recurring increases, tied to a cost-of-living or poverty measurement.</p> <p>Examples: Nebraska, Wyoming, and Texas mandate recurring 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>Yes. Parents may deduct \$100 from the earnings of each adult and then deduct an additional 50% of remaining income.</p>	<p>Consider expanding deductions to provide more support for families and incentives for working.</p> <p>Example: In Colorado, families may disregard 100% of all income for the first 6 months, then disregard 67% of earned income on an ongoing basis.</p>
HOW ELSE DOES UTAH DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Utah allow families to receive cash assistance up to the federal limit of 60 months?</p>	<p>The state limits assistance to 36 months, although families can apply for an extension.</p>	<p>Consider maintaining the lifetime limit of 60 months without restrictions.</p> <p>Examples: Colorado and California 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. Working parents may receive up to three months of transitional cash assistance within a 12-month period.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does Utah 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 imposes only a three-month period of ineligibility.</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 along with TANF cash assistance.</p>
<p>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</p> <p>Does Utah 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.</p> <p>Examples: Hawaii and Washington provide assistance with diapers for families.</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>Parents may earn up to \$1,050 per month.</p>	<p>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide potential eligibility to more families.</p> <p>Examples: In Nevada, families can earn up to \$2,888/month to be considered for eligibility. Florida maintains a gross income limit of \$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 may deduct \$100 from the earnings of each adult during eligibility assessment.</p>	<p>Consider providing a higher deduction to provide greater support to employed parents.</p> <p>Example: In Arizona, parents can deduct \$90 and then 30% of the remaining income and some child care expenses during 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>Families can retain up to \$2,000 in cash and savings.</p>	<p>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families' ability to save.</p> <p>Examples: In Nevada, families can retain up to \$10,000 in cash or savings. Colorado has eliminated the asset test.</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, in the third trimester.</p>	<p>Providing cash assistance during pregnancy is critical for early development outcomes and in reducing parental stress.</p> <p>Examples: Oklahoma and Colorado provide assistance throughout all trimesters.</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 Utah 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 Utah if they have been in the country for <i>less than five years</i>?</p>	<p>Yes, through the Family Employment Program.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>HOW DOES UTAH TREAT CHILD SUPPORT OWED TO A FAMILY APPLYING FOR AND RECEIVING CASH ASSISTANCE?</p>		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Child support pass-through</p> <p>Does Utah “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.</p> <p>Example: Colorado passes through a portion of child support to the household.</p>
<p>WHAT ARE UTAH’S WORK REQUIREMENTS FOR CASH ASSISTANCE?</p>		
Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Provision of cash assistance to out-of-work parents before they search for a job</p> <p>Does Utah provide eligibility without a search for employment?</p>	<p>Yes, there is no job search required.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Counting educational activities as “core” work requirements</p> <p>Does Utah 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: Ohio and Pennsylvania count postsecondary education as work activities.</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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. There are no exemptions for parents of children of any age.</p>	<p>Consider providing an exemption from work requirements 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 under twelve months.</p>
<p>Other exemptions from work requirements</p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?</p>	<p>There are no exemptions from work requirements.</p>	<p>Consider providing exceptions 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
WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS UTAH 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.</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>

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>Yes, if they have completed or are enrolled in drug treatment.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</p> <p>Does Utah refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying 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>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 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>