

OVERVIEW

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)	Virginia	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount	\$157,762,831	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	28.6%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	22%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	11,941	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	48.8%	39.3%
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$32,177,214	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	20.4%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	-4,501,234	+\$241,306,628

VIRGINIA'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>Depending on where a family lives, the maximum benefit is either \$459/ month or \$559/month, or 20% or 25% 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: Maryland provides \$753/month as a maximum benefit.</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has Virginia mandated increases to these amounts, as the costs of living increase?</p>	<p>Yes.</p>	<p>N/A</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 can deduct \$198 from earned income, and then 20% of remaining gross earned income.</p>	<p>The state could consider a larger deduction for a period after family member becomes employed.</p> <p>Examples: South Carolina allows a 50% deduction from income for four months. Maryland permits a 40% deduction from earned gross income (or 50% for those who are self-employed), on an on-going basis.</p>

HOW ELSE DOES VIRGINIA DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does Virginia 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, transitional payments are available for up to twelve months, in amounts of either \$50 or \$100 depending on how many parents are employed in the family.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does Virginia 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 up to 180 days 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 Virginia 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>Depending on where the family lives, either \$920/month or \$1,119/month.</p>	<p>Consider increasing gross the income limit to support more families.</p> <p>Examples: Florida maintains a gross income limit of 185% FPL, or \$4,109/month. South Carolina’s maximum income threshold is \$2,053/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>Yes, they can deduct \$198 from earned income, and then 20% of remaining income.</p>	<p>Consider providing a higher deduction in order to provide support to more families.</p> <p>Example: Several states permit families to disregard 50% of their income 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>There is no asset limit.</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>No.</p>	<p>Providing cash assistance during pregnancy is critical for early development outcomes and in reducing parental stress.</p> <p>Examples: Maryland and Ohio provide cash assistance to pregnant people in any trimester.</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 Virginia 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 Virginia 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>Example: Maryland provides cash assistance before five years' residence, using state funds.</p>

HOW DOES VIRGINIA 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 Virginia “pass through” a portion of child support payments for the family?</p>	Yes.	N/A

WHAT ARE VIRGINIA’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 Virginia provide eligibility to parents without a search for employment?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<p>Counting educational activities as “core” work requirements</p> <p>Does Virginia provide credit for all educational activities, including college, as “core” work activities for cash assistance?</p>	No.	<p>Consider counting postsecondary attendance to count as “core” work activity.</p> <p>Examples: Ohio, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania allow postsecondary education for different periods as exemptions.</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>Yes, an exemption applies to those caring for children under twelve months.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Other exemptions from work requirements</p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?" instead of "Who else is exempt from work requirements?"</p>	<p>Other conditions for exemptions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A temporary medical conditions "preventing employment or training" • Care of a disabled family member living in the home • Pregnancy in the third trimester 	<p>N/A</p>
WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS VIRGINIA 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>Example: Maryland 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>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Refraining from drug testing applicants or recipients</p> <p>Does Virginia refrain from enforcing drug testing of caregivers who are either receiving or applying for cash assistance?</p>	<p>Yes.</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 family cap was repealed in 2020.</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>