

OVERVIEW

WV Works (TANF)	West Virginia	U.S. Average or Total
Annual (federal-only) block grant amount	\$109,812,728	\$16,488,600,000 (total)
% of TANF block grants spent on cash assistance, 2024	25.2%	21.8%
% families who participated in TANF per 100 families with children living in poverty, 2022-23	16.0%	20%
Total # families receiving TANF in 2025	4,425	848,631 (total)
% of cases designated "Child-Only" in 2025	74.8%	39.3%
"Unobligated balance" (or stockpiled amounts, which must be used for cash assistance or admin)		
TANF Funds "unobligated balance," as of 2024	\$122,108,810	\$7,986,470,560 (total)
"Unobligated balance" as share of total block grant amount	111.2%	49.5%
Change (+ or -) in "unobligated balance" from 2023	-\$19,649,699	+\$241,306,628

WEST 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>	\$542/month, or 25% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL)	<p>Consider increasing the maximum benefit level to provide more support to families.</p> <p>Example: Ohio provides \$623/month, and Maryland provides \$865/month.</p>
<p>Recurring benefit increases</p> <p>Has West Virginia mandated increases to these amounts, as costs of living increase?</p>	No.	<p>Consider making recurring increases, tied to a cost-of-living or poverty measurement.</p> <p>Examples: Nebraska, Wyoming, and Texas mandate routine 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 can 40% from any earned income.</p>	<p>Consider increasing deductions to better support families and incentivize work participation.</p> <p>Example: Arkansas allows a 20% “work-related” deduction and a 60% “work incentive” deduction.</p>

HOW ELSE DOES WEST VIRGINIA DETERMINE THE GENEROSITY OF CASH ASSISTANCE?

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<p>Time limit</p> <p>Does West 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, the Earned Income Assistance Program (EAP) provides assistance for up to six months as long as gross family income is less than 150% FPL.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Providing one-time cash payments to families in with specific financial needs</p> <p>Does West Virginia provide a formal diversion program to support families with specific 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 diversionary payments apply for monthly assistance within six months afterward?</p>	<p>Yes. The state imposes three-month period of ineligibility.</p>	<p>N/A</p>

Flexibility	Current policy	Potential improvement
<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 along with TANF cash assistance.</p>
<p>Providing assistance with diaper purchases</p> <p>Does West Virginia 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 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>	\$991/month	<p>Consider increasing the gross income limit to provide eligibility to more families, including those experiencing sudden job loss.</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>No.</p>	<p>Consider providing a higher deduction in order to increase support for employed parents.</p> <p>Example: In Arkansas, parents may deduct 20% of gross income during eligibility assessment for cash assistance.</p>
<p>Asset limit</p> <p>How much can a family maintain in savings while still being eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>\$2,000</p>	<p>Consider increasing or eliminating the asset limit to support families' retention of savings.</p> <p>Examples: Arkansas' limit on resources is \$3,000. Alabama has eliminated the consideration of cash assets or resource tests for eligibility.</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: Louisiana and Tennessee provide cash assistance to pregnant people starting in the sixth month of pregnancy, and Oklahoma provides it from the start of pregnancy.</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 West Virginia once they have been in the country <i>for five years or longer</i>?</p>	Yes.	N/A
<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 West 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 to some caregivers before five years' residence, using state funds.</p>
HOW DOES WEST 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 West Virginia “pass through” a portion of the payments received by the state in child support for the family?</p>	Yes.	N/A

WHAT ARE WEST 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 West Virginia 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 West Virginia 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 Kentucky allow postsecondary education as exemptions.</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>Yes, exemptions apply to one parent in household for up to 13 months, as long as that parent is receiving payments at the time of the child's birth.</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Other exemptions from work requirements</p> <p>What are other conditions for exemptions from work requirements?</p>	<p>Other exemptions include 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 or temporary medical inability to work • Domestic violence

WHICH RESTRICTIONS ON CASH ASSISTANCE HAS WEST 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 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 reduces the benefit.</p>
<p>Lifting drug felony bans</p> <p>Are persons convicted of drug-related felonies eligible for cash assistance?</p>	<p>No.</p>	<p>Consider eliminating the ban 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 West Virginia 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. The state 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>