



NO CHILD SHOULD LIVE
IN DEEP POVERTY





ABOUT MEET THE NEED



The Meet the Need Coalition is a group of current and former TANF participants and advocacy organizations. We are working to improve the TANF program and increase the TANF grant amount. The effort is spearheaded by Community Legal Services, Pennsylvania Health Access Network, Black Women's Policy Agenda, and Just Harvest.



This report shares survey responses, background on the TANF program, and suggestions for improvement so that TANF can truly meet the needs of Pennsylvanians living in poverty.



The coalition administered an online survey in December 2020 and January 2021 for past and present TANF recipients in Pennsylvania. We received responses from 133 people, with 82 Pennsylvania zip codes represented.



Throughout 2020, Just Harvest hosted 4 community-based discussions and conducted 2 surveys to better understand the experiences of current and former TANF participants. A survey conducted from Nov-Jan 2020 with partners in Allegheny County had 12 current and 25 former TANF participants. Another state-wide survey in July of 2020 was administered in partnership with Propel's Fresh EBT (a smart-phone app that SNAP recipients can use to monitor their SNAP EBT benefits) which got responses from 59 current and 127 former TANF respondents.

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SUMMARY

The Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program provides a modest cash benefit to families with children who have very low incomes. TANF is a critical program for families who are trying to escape poverty. Families spend TANF benefits in local communities and businesses on basic needs such as housing, clothing, transportation, and toiletries like toothpaste and soap. TANF recipients have to comply with work requirements, and also must file for child support against any absent parent.

The program currently serves fewer than 65,000 Pennsylvanians, reflecting a significant decline over time, even though child poverty rates have remained stagnant. Participation rates have continued to decline during the COVID-19 pandemic.

CASH BENEFIT LEVELS KEEP FAMILIES IN POVERTY: The amount provided to families has not changed since 1990, meaning that the value of cash benefits have eroded by more than 50% from inflation. This dollar amount sets the income limit for receiving benefits as well.

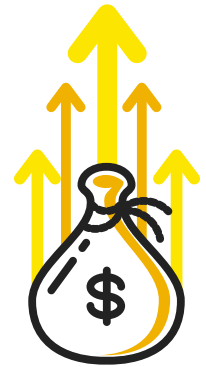
Accepting even low-wage part-time work can put families over the very low income limit for TANF, making them ineligible.

PAPERWORK REQUIREMENTS MAKE BENEFITS HARD TO KEEP: Families report that keeping benefits is very challenging. Complying with paperwork, child support requirements, and work programs creates hurdles for families.



TANF BENEFITS CAN BE IMPROVED TO MEET THE NEED OF PENNSYLVANIA'S CHILDREN

Increase the Cash Grant: Current TANF benefits keep recipients in deep poverty. Increasing the cash grant size is the only way to provide support to all families in deep poverty and allow TANF families the stability they need to focus on future success. Pennsylvania should work to raise the cash grant to 50% of the poverty level, so that no child in PA lives in deep poverty.



Improve Work and Training Programs: TANF participants reported that they needed more supports to be able to successfully participate in employment programs. Many felt the programs only led to low-wage work that would not support their families. TANF programs should focus less on rigid hours requirements and more on helping families stabilize and build skills, leading parents to family-sustaining jobs.

Allow More Exceptions from the Child Support Requirement: The child support requirement deters caregivers, such as grandparents, from getting the help they need to raise a child.

Create a Smooth Transition to Work: Although TANF benefits have a three month transition benefit period, many families report that benefits still end too quickly and abruptly when they begin to work.

Allow Families to Save: There is \$1,000 savings limit for TANF recipients, tied for the lowest savings limit in the United States. This discourages families from saving for purchases that would improve their stability such as more stable housing or a reliable car to get to work.



WHAT IS TANF?

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) is a federally-funded block grant that provides cash assistance to Pennsylvania families with the lowest incomes. Recipients of TANF are required to actively look for work or participate in a job training program.

TANF PROVIDES ASSISTANCE TO:

- Pregnant people
- Minor children and their parents who live with them
- Survivors of domestic violence who are escaping abuse
- Children and their relative caregivers, such as grandparents, aunts, and uncles.

TANF is intended to help families in poverty access stabilizing cash assistance to meet basic needs while accessing employment and training services. While most low-income families can get SNAP (food stamps) to help pay for food, they cannot use SNAP to pay for rent or heat. Few families receive housing subsidies; wait lists for public housing and Section 8 housing subsidies can be more than 10 years long or closed altogether. Utility assistance programs do not cover the full cost of utilities, and TANF families still have to make cash payments for each utility.

Moreover, low-income people cannot use SNAP to buy diapers, personal protective equipment, bus tokens, toiletries, cleaning supplies, or feminine hygiene supplies. Poor families need cash income, and TANF is currently the only program available in Pennsylvania that provides such cash assistance.

Why Cash Assistance Matters



Cash assistance helps families meet basic needs.

Every family has basic needs that can only be met with cash. Examples include diapers, personal hygiene products, and winter clothing.



Cash assistance can stabilize families facing a crisis.

Cash assistance can meet a family's basic needs when they have lost a job, are fleeing domestic violence, or are in other destabilizing situations.



Cash assistance can promote racial equity.

An antiracist cash assistance program can help reduce economic disparities that disproportionately harm Black and other children of color.



Cash assistance can help children succeed.

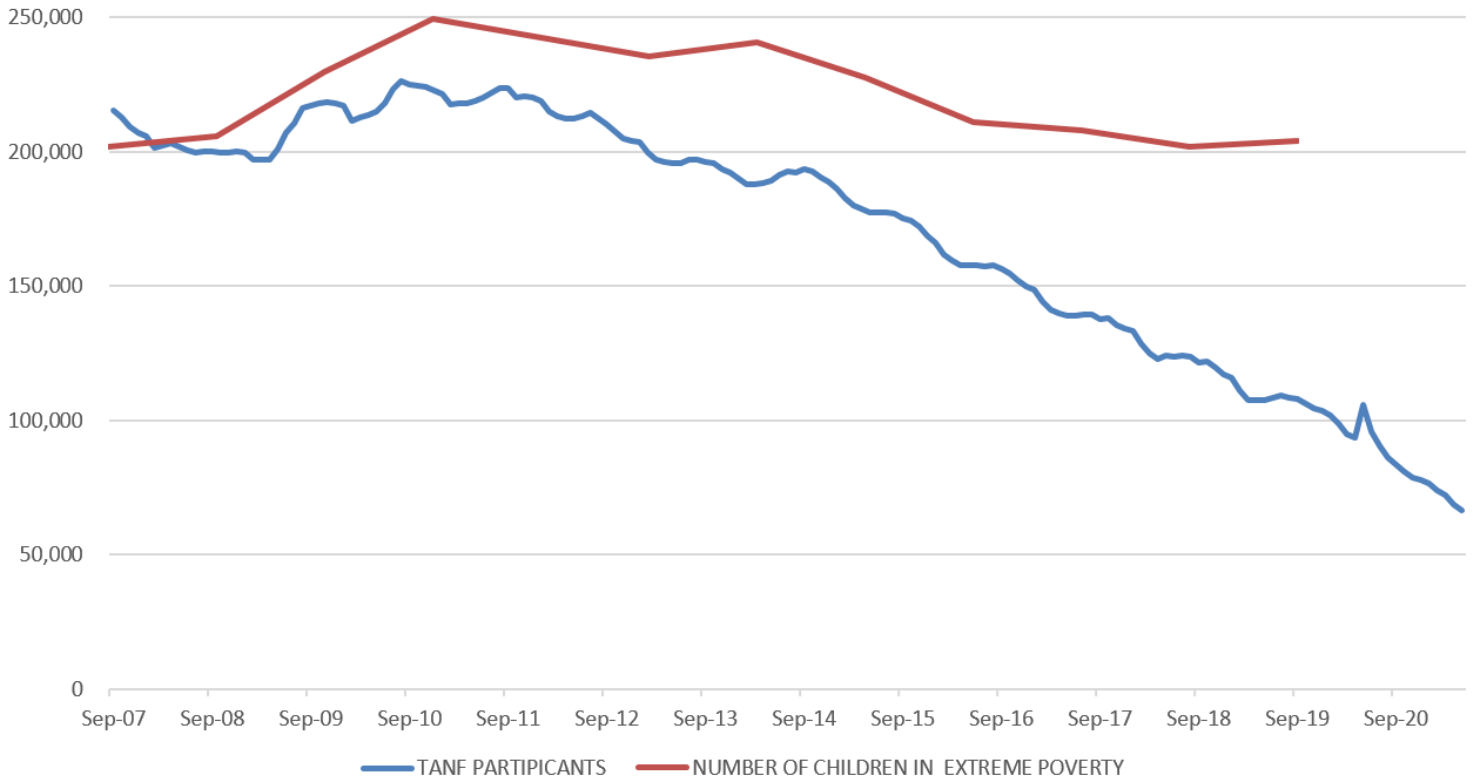
Research shows that income poverty harms children and that cash assistance can improve low-income children's health as well as their future educational attainment and earnings.

Source: Ife Floyd et al., "TANF Policies Reflect Racist Legacy of Cash Assistance," August 4, 2021; National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine, "A Roadmap to Reducing Child Poverty," 2019



TANF PARTICIPATION HAS DECLINED OVER TIME

The number of Pennsylvanian's receiving TANF has declined dramatically over time, despite the number of children in extreme poverty* being relatively stagnant.



*"Extreme" or "Deep" poverty is defined as the number of children living in households with incomes lower than half of the poverty level.

Data sources: [Pa. Dept of Human Services](#), [U.S. Census Bureau ACS data](#) and [KidsCount](#)

65K

As of June 2021, only 64,976 individuals (adults and children) received TANF benefits.



1 in 3 Black and Brown children live in poverty

17%

of Pennsylvania's children live in poverty. That is more than 2 million children.

WHO (STILL) RECEIVES TANF?



40% OF TANF HOUSEHOLDS ARE "CHILD ONLY"

These are households where children receive TANF assistance and adults do not. This includes children who are being taken care of by other family members or parents with disabilities.

COUNTIES WITH THE HIGHEST PROPORTIONAL TANF PARTICIPATION

Only 0.51% of Pennsylvanians receive TANF. These 11 counties have higher than the state average participation rates in TANF.

COUNTY	PERCENTAGE OF POPULATION RECEIVING TANF
Delaware	0.52%
Greene	0.54%
Blair	0.59%
Allegheny	0.61%
Lycoming	0.61%
Erie	0.66%
Lawrence	0.68%
Dauphin	0.68%
McKean	0.81%
Cambria	0.88%
Philadelphia	1.84%

See Appendix B for more details.

TANF'S HISTORY AND RACIAL INEQUITY

Since the beginning of American social safety net programs, the government has purposely and systematically designed them to shut out Black Americans. The problems with TANF and the hurdles to getting and keeping this vital income support are not accidental. They are a product of systemic racism that has affected TANF from its start. Below is a brief timeline of the program including developments that affected Black families disproportionately:¹

1935 SOCIAL SECURITY ACT

Franklin D. Roosevelt first introduced the safety net program during the Great Depression. Part of that safety net included means-tested cash assistance, originally named Aid to Dependent Children (ADC).

"SEPARATE BUT EQUAL"

ADC was an extension of state widow's pension funds which mostly benefited white mothers. When ADC started, states actively practiced segregation, leading to systemic exclusion of black mothers from cash assistance rolls. Some states had subjective and uneven policies that were applied to disqualify Black women:

- "Ability to work" - Black mothers could not get ADC if they were deemed able to work, or needed to work in the fields, including in the cotton fields. White women applicants were not judged under the employable mother standard, as staying at home with children was deemed socially valuable for White women.
- "Suitable Home tests" - if a child was born outside of marriage, the family was ineligible for assistance. This test was used arbitrarily and with discretion and prejudice against Black mothers.
- "Man in the house" - Midnight raids on households policed participants' relationships, even disqualifying many Black women from assistance for having male boarders.

1950s & 1960s

To reduce Black assistance, states implemented new policies. Residency requirements stopped Black families from moving to the north to seek more friendly state programs.

The program was renamed AFDC during the Kennedy Administration in 1962. The "Welfare Rights" movement successfully worked to make AFDC more equally available to women of color; more Black families were able to receive assistance.

1980s -1996

Popular backlash against AFDC grew, and elected officials used racially coded language to raise questions about the program, saying, "this program is serving people who it was not intended to serve."

The caricature of the "Welfare Queen" is popularized by Ronald Reagan, reinforcing racist stereotypes about Black women, tropes that go back to justifications for slavery, which relied on the idea that Black people would only work if forced to do so. Conservatives promoted a philosophy that poverty was an individual choice.

This led to a rollback of public benefits programs and punitive reforms that punished poverty at both the state and federal levels throughout the 1990s.

1996 - "Welfare Reform"

In 1996, Congress passed "welfare reform" creating TANF and its work requirements and administering it as a block grant.

The 1996 law added restricted eligibility for people with certain criminal histories and to immigrants. Because of racialized systemic inequality in policing and the criminal justice system, TANF policies restricting access based on certain criminal histories disproportionately affect Black and Hispanic people. And restrictions based on immigration status are rooted in xenophobia and not need.

TANF enrollment nationally declines. Benefit amounts decline in value. Poverty rates remain persistent.

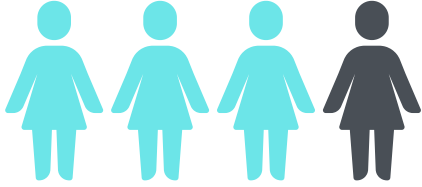
2021 - We Can Improve TANF to address racial inequity

While 17% of Pennsylvania children live in poverty, Black and Brown children are disproportionately impacted; more than 1 in 3 Black and Hispanic children are living in poverty, partly due to systemic inequity. Poverty during childhood has lasting consequences for health, developmental and educational outcomes.

Specifically, because of systemic racism and historic disinvestment in Black communities, TANF serves a disproportionately high percentage of Black families: 53 percent of TANF recipients in Pennsylvania are Black. More than half of PA TANF participants are Black, while only 12% of the state population identifies as Black.

Making changes to make TANF accessible and impactful will improve the well-being for all of Pennsylvania's children, but especially the well-being of Black and Brown children.

TANF AND COVID-19



72% OF CLS SURVEY RESPONDENTS SAID THAT THE PANDEMIC HAS INCREASED THEIR NEED FOR CASH SUPPORTS.

FAMILIES NEED TANF EVEN MORE DESPERATELY DURING THE PANDEMIC. HERE ARE SOME OF THE REASONS:

Without working we have gotten so behind on bills and have been fighting to still get PUA [Pandemic Unemployment Assistance] since April [2020].

I have to purchase masks, cleaning supplies [and] pay extra for internet and phone services.

I have no money coming in and I can't pay my bills because of this virus.

My kids are home from school being closed down, and I'm finding that we are going through things faster such as laundry detergent, dish soap, shampoo, toilet paper, garbage bags, etc. With COVID pandemic the prices have increased...

PROBLEMS WITH TANF

TANF GRANT AMOUNTS ARE TOO LOW TO SUPPORT FAMILIES

HOUSEHOLD SIZE	MONTHLY CASH GRANT AMOUNT
1	\$205
2	\$316
3	\$403
4	\$497
5	\$589
6	\$670

Not all counties have the same benefit amount. See Appendix A for detail.

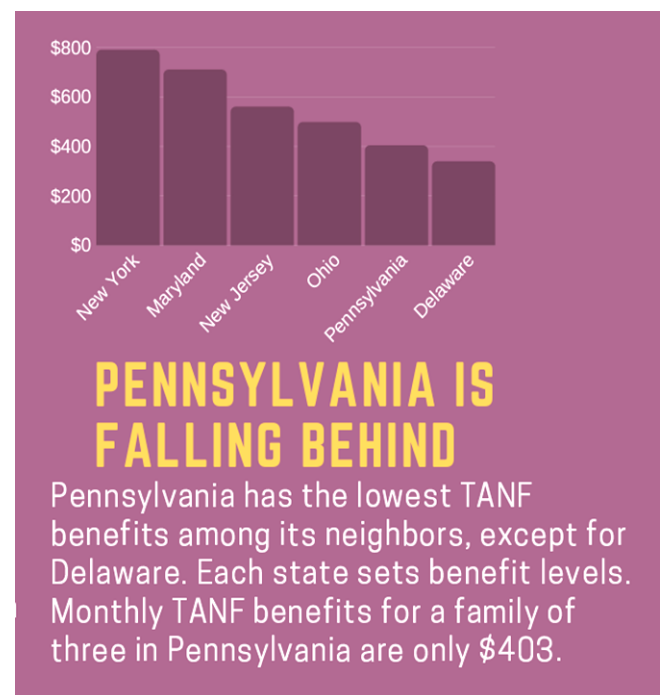
TANF KEEPS FAMILIES IN DEEP POVERTY

Families relying on TANF have incomes of less than one quarter of the income that the federal government defines as a poverty-level income. The monthly benefit amounts for TANF put families at 22% of the federal poverty level.

The federal poverty level (FPL) is a calculation based on household size, which defines who is classified as poor.*

A family of three at 100% of the federal poverty level in 2021 survives on \$21,960 per year. "Deep poverty" is defined as living at or below 50% the federal poverty level, which is \$10,980 per year for a family of three. A family of three whose only source of income is TANF receives only \$4,836 per year. TANF recipients, therefore, are all in deep poverty.

The way the program operates means that Pennsylvania's state government accepts that children who receive TANF will grow up in deep poverty, living on just a fraction of what we know is needed to get by.



*Of course, the FPL is not a true measure of the income families need to survive or to flourish in the US. It's a flawed calculation, and many programs for low-income people, such as Head Start and the National School Lunch Programs, use eligibility thresholds above the FPL.

THE VALUE OF TANF BENEFITS HAS DECLINED OVER TIME

The amount families receive for TANF has not changed since 1990. It has lost over half of its value in that time. If TANF benefits had been adjusted for inflation, a family of three would receive \$832 per month, rather than \$403.



What about child support? Although TANF recipients are required to file for child support, only \$100 per month for the first child, or up to \$200 per month total of any collected child support, can be "passed through" to the TANF household. The rest of any child support paid goes back into the state's TANF fund.

WE ASKED TANF RECIPIENTS "WHEN DID TANF NOT WORK WELL FOR YOU?" RESPONDENTS CITED THEIR INABILITY TO PAY BILLS:

During this virus [it] is helpful but not enough -- can't take care of my family the way I should be. [We] have shut off notices I'm sure coming any day now for all utilities.

It's never been enough to adequately cover monthly expenses

Any amount is helpful, but the help is very limited

It helps me now because it goes directly towards my rent and bills every month, even though it's not nearly enough.

DOES NOT EVEN COVER 10% OF EXPENSES

Going back to work after maternity leave but still had bills to catch up on

TANF does not help with housing security which is huge when dealing in safety of children. TANF is not helpful for adequate clothing and school supplies. Children need hair cuts and transportation money as well.

THE CASH GRANT SIZE IS ALSO THE INCOME LIMIT.

Even with current policies that do not count the first \$400 in earnings and 50% of earned income on top of that, families who transition from TANF to work are still cut off too soon, as they reach the income limit well before they have reached family sustaining wages.

For a family of three, earning \$1,206 in a month would put them out reach from receiving assistance from TANF. A full time job paying \$7.50 an hour would disqualify a family of 3 from assistance, even though their income would be well below the poverty level.

It immediately got cut beyond [sic] started working. Left a transportation gap between my first paycheck and the last TANF payment.

I GOT A JOB IN MAY - 2 DOLLARS OVER AND HE CUT ME OFF.

I finally was able to get a home and a steady job - just instantly cutting the TANF off.

Soon as I obtain employment I got cut off before I could break even, which set me behind.

TRANSITIONING TO WORK FROM TANF IS CHALLENGING



of current TANF participants felt that "Making it so I don't lose benefits as I earn money so quickly" was a much needed improvement.



of former TANF participants felt that "Making it so I don't lose benefits as I earn money so quickly" was a much needed improvement to TANF.

TANF BENEFITS ARE HARD TO KEEP

TANF requirements have led to a steady decrease in the number of individuals participating in the program. The number of families on TANF has declined significantly in Pennsylvania since the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reform Act (so-called “welfare reform”) passed, from 487,000 adults and children in 1996 to 66,272 in May of 2021.

This might be good news if it meant more families were moving out of poverty. To the contrary, though – TANF caseloads have been falling but childhood poverty rates have not declined. More families need TANF and fewer are getting it.

“Deep poverty rose among children between 1995 and 2005 mainly due to the loss of cash assistance for millions of families under TANF policies that take cash assistance away from those who don’t meet a work requirement, impose strict time limits, and impose barriers that prevent families from accessing the program.”²

Moreover, the pandemic put into stark relief how much TANF has failed to respond to increased childhood poverty. The data shows that 24.4% fewer Pennsylvania families were receiving TANF in November 2020 than were receiving it in November 2019, despite the obvious effect of the global pandemic devastating the state economy and plunging more families into poverty.

MANY SURVEY PARTICIPANTS DESCRIBED TANF REQUIREMENTS AS BARRIERS.

Once I was trying to work and maintain going to the EARN center. But I got discouraged going to the program, because they told me that I was over qualified and they didn’t know how to help me because I had a degree. And the jobs they were offering weren’t enough for me to make it work and some of the hours weren’t enough for me to even keep childcare.

THEY STOP PAYING BECAUSE OF PAPER WORK

The county office made it hard for me to get when I really needed it

I mistakenly did not comply within a certain time and benefits were terminated or I was denied altogether and just gave up on seeking help.

It gets cut off and I have to reapply

WAYS TO IMPROVE TANF

INCREASE THE CASH GRANT

The General Assembly should increase the grant amount incrementally until it reaches 50% of the federal poverty level, and ensure that benefit levels increase with inflation.

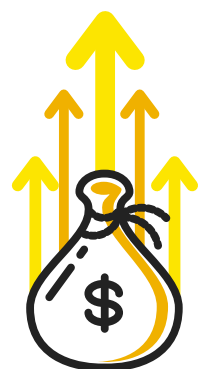
At the current enrollment levels, the General Assembly could increase the grant to 30% of the poverty level immediately without having to budget any additional dollars to the cash grant line item in the 2021-22 state budget.

Just in the past year, thirteen states plus the District of Columbia have increased TANF benefit amounts: California, Illinois, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Hampshire, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, Virginia and Wyoming. Since 2013, 24 states have made increases in their TANF cash benefits.³ **It is time for our state to join in this momentum.**

Pennsylvania must offer families and communities the opportunity to thrive during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond.

Economic security programs like TANF are powerful and proven anti-poverty tools that give families flexible income support in moments of need. Families receiving TANF spend their benefits at local businesses, helping to keep money flowing through our economy.

Children in families benefiting from programs like TANF do better in school and have increased earning power in adulthood. Moreover, adequate benefits allow parents to spend more of their time focusing on getting sustainable jobs.



HERE ARE SOME OF THE WAYS SURVEY RESPONDENTS SAID THEY WOULD USE AN INCREASED GRANT AMOUNT:



Nearly 85% of MTN survey participants said the most meaningful change to TANF would be receiving more money every month



of current TANF participants in the MTN survey said that the monthly cash amount received was barely effective in meeting their needs



of current TANF participants in the Just Harvest survey said that they did not have enough money to buy all the healthy food they would choose to eat.

I WOULD BE ABLE TO AFFORD TO DO MORE FOR MY CHILDREN

Put it toward bills and rent

I wouldn't need to ask agencies for help with things like clothing, toiletries, hygiene products, things like that so often. I wouldn't have to choose between school pictures or paying the light bill. I wouldn't have to be wearing the same worn out pair of shoes for the past 7 years bc [because] \$60 for a pair of new shoes for me is too much when I have 4 kids to think about first.

It would help me provide for my niece without having to live in poverty just to keep her out of foster care.

WOULDN'T HAVE TO ROB PETER TO PAY PAUL

I could buy her [my child] what she needs cause now I barely have enough for food"

It would make things better for me because I would be able to pay my bills on time and don't worry about receiving any shut-off notices. It also helps me catch up a little bit so I can be a little bit more self-sufficient and be able to provide for my family.

It would make it easier to save and budget and not worry about spending too much on diapers and then not having any more when the time comes

I COULD AFFORD MY BILLS MORE EASILY WHILE TRYING TO FIND EMPLOYMENT

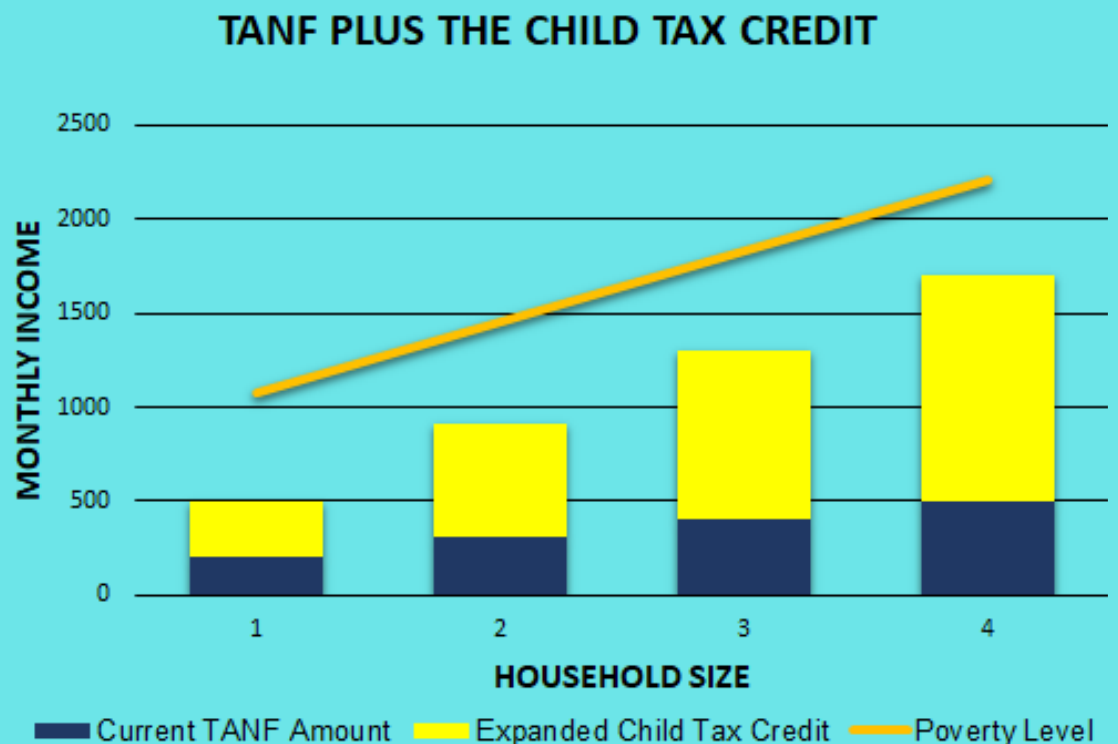
TANF + CHILD TAX CREDITS

In 2021, parents will get advance Child Tax Credits (CTCs) of \$250 or \$300 per child every month, starting in July. **Why do we still need to increase the TANF cash grant?**

- The monthly CTCs are only for 2021. We hope they will be made permanent, but they may not be.
- No family should be expected to have the Child Tax Credit be their only source of monetary support.
- TANF provides benefits to parents and pregnant people, which the CTC does not.
- TANF is an entryway to job skills training and helps families access child care.
- Some children cannot get Child Tax Credits but can get TANF, including:
 - Children who live with different adults across the course of the year
 - Children whose CTC has been issued to the wrong caregiver
 - Some children of immigrants.

Even the newly expanded Child Tax Credits and TANF combined will not pull a family with no other income out of poverty.

This chart shows the combined value of current TANF levels and increase Child Tax Credit of \$300 per child per month. Children over the age of five will only receive \$250 per month.



WAYS TO IMPROVE TANF

Improve Employment and Training Programs

DHS has laudably been redesigning its work programs to make them more human-centered. More needs to be done to help parents remove barriers to employment, and enable them to get the education or training that will enable them to get good jobs.

In all surveys, improving job training and education programs was rated as a high priority for TANF participants:

- In the Meet the Need survey, 34.3% of current TANF participants, and 46.8% of former TANF participants, said that improving job training and education programs would be their #1 priority.
- TANF recipients also reported that providing better supports for those in training programs is needed. In a survey of Allegheny County TANF recipients, 35% of current TANF participants cited a need for improved access to child care, and more than 46% of TANF recipients said they needed more transportation assistance.
- Focus group participants reported that they were studying at community college, but never referred to KEYS. Others reported having difficulty being referred to EARN programs when they needed help accessing child care.
- Others felt that the programs only led them to low-wage work that they could not support their families with.

Helping build resilience through trauma-informed care

The Building Health and Wealth Network began at Drexel University and uses a trauma-informed framework to help caregivers who receive TANF build a brighter future for themselves and their children through three core components: coaching/peer support, financial literacy and empowerment, and matched savings.

The findings of the program highlighted the need for comprehensive approaches to trauma and adversity, financial empowerment, and asset-building for families who have experienced past and present hardships. This has led to better career readiness and increased workforce participation. ⁸

WAYS TO IMPROVE TANF

Emphasize Success and Effectiveness Over Regimented Hours

Rigid work hours requirements often take precedence over quality of programs. The National Skills Coalition notes:

Work requirements have not been effective at connecting people to family-supporting jobs or lifting them out of poverty. They can actually be counterproductive, since they encourage workers to take low-wage jobs rather than building skills and credentials that can help them compete in today's economy. There's also no evidence that work requirements help meet employers' need for skilled workers. And they can create red tape for community colleges and training organizations that need flexibility to train people for jobs in our rapidly changing economy.⁴

The American Medical Association also passed a resolution opposing strict work requirements, noting that:

The barriers have the potential to especially restrict coverage for anyone with chronic medical conditions, including mental illness and substance-use disorders. This is especially critical in light of the pandemic-related job losses in the millions.⁵

Evaluations of programs show that successful work readiness programs typically combine education, training, and support services. Programs that only offer skills instruction or job search programs fail to produce long-term improvements in participants' earnings.⁶

Because of the dramatic drop in TANF caseloads, Pennsylvania has significant wiggle room in meeting federal Work Participation Rate requirements. In other words, the state could allow for more flexibility for TANF participants and job training programs.⁷ Pennsylvania should use this flexibility to allow providers to focus more on quality and effectiveness, rather than compliance tracking.

WAYS TO IMPROVE TANF

Allow More Exceptions from the Child Support Requirement:

In order to be eligible for cash assistance the individual must pursue a child support case, even though TANF recipients can only receive, at most, \$200 per month of any child support collected. For several focus group participants, this was one of the worst policies related to TANF.

Forcing custodial parents to sue for child support endangers amicable co-parenting relationships, especially when the non-custodial parent is also financially vulnerable. Some mothers who needed financial help felt conflicted, knowing that they were putting their child's father into potential future legal trouble if they were unable to pay. This often caused their once-functioning co-parenting relationship to deteriorate.

For relatives who are caring for a child that is not their own, they did not want to sue for child support, knowing the parent was in no place to pay for support. Many feared that doing so would jeopardize their ability to keep custody of the child, or would harm their relationship with the parents. Grandparents especially did not want to sue their own children for financial support.

Pennsylvania can allow more caregivers to access assistance by allowing for more "good cause" exceptions to the child support requirement when doing so is in the best interest of the child and for relative caregivers.^{9, 10}



"Grandparents are raising grandkids due to opioid epidemic and prison and are not willing to apply for benefits - do not want to sue for child support... and cause turmoil in relationship"

- Focus Group Participant

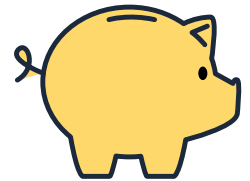
WAYS TO IMPROVE TANF

Allow Families to Save

Pennsylvania is one of only four states - along with Georgia, Texas, and Oklahoma - with a \$1,000 asset limit for TANF eligibility.

The asset limits traps families in poverty by cutting off their TANF if they manage to save over \$1,000 -- discouraging families from saving for large purchases that would improve their stability such as more stable housing or reliable transportation.

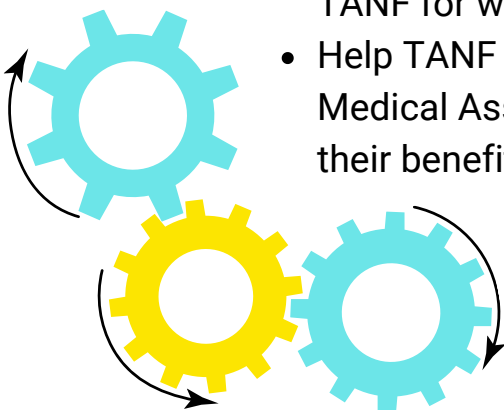
The Pew Charitable Trusts recently reviewed the role of TANF asset limits in seven states that eliminated such limits since 2004. It concluded that states that raised or removed their asset thresholds saw no increase in caseload, no change in the number of applications, and no statistically significant difference in acceptance rates. By contrast, such states did see a decline in administrative costs.¹¹



Smooth Transition to Work

Because of the way the cash grant amount relates to when families are removed from TANF, increasing the cash grant will allow families to earn more before losing all of their TANF benefits. Other ways to help TANF families transition more smoothly into family sustaining wages include:

- Increase the transition benefit period from 3 months to 6 months. During the transition benefits, former TANF families who are working receive \$100 in cash benefits.
- Ensure that families who are not enrolled in EARN centers who leave TANF for work receive transitional assistance.
- Help TANF families understand their benefits - including SNAP and Medical Assistance - so that they know how earnings can change their benefit amounts and can plan for benefit changes.



CONCLUSION

Although TANF has flaws, it is the only direct income assistance available to Pennsylvania families. Decades of disinvestment have weakened the program, but it has the potential to meet the need of the poorest Pennsylvanians without imposing so many barriers to participation.

TANF plays a crucial role in filling gaps left by other subsidy programs, providing the flexibility of a cash benefit, and providing for the families most in need of financial support. An improved TANF program – especially one that provides a higher cash grant amount – can be a means to address child poverty and to reduce the gaps in income between Black and Hispanic children and their white peers.

Understanding TANF's racist history and listening to the calls for change from current and former TANF recipients is an essential first step toward fulfilling the program's potential. No child should live in deep poverty.



APPENDIX A: CASH BENEFIT BY COUNTY

FAMILY SIZE ALLOWANCE (EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1990)

County	Number of Persons in Budget Group					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
Adams County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Allegheny County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Armstrong County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Beaver County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Bedford County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Berks County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Blair County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Bradford County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Bucks County	\$215	\$330	\$421	\$514	\$607	\$687
Butler County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Cambria County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Cameron County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Carbon County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Centre County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Chester County	\$215	\$330	\$421	\$514	\$607	\$687
Clarion County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Clearfield County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Clinton County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Columbia County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Crawford County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Cumberland County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Dauphin County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Delaware County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Elk County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Erie County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Fayette County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Forest County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Franklin County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Fulton County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Greene County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Huntingdon County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Indiana County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Jefferson County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Juniata County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Lackawanna County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Lancaster County	\$215	\$330	\$421	\$514	\$607	\$687
Lawrence County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Lebanon County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Lehigh County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Luzerne County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Lycoming County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670

APPENDIX A: CASH BENEFIT BY COUNTY

FAMILY SIZE ALLOWANCE (EFFECTIVE JANUARY 1, 1990)

County	Number of Persons in Budget Group					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
McKean County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Mercer County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Mifflin County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Monroe County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Montgomery County	\$215	\$330	\$421	\$514	\$607	\$687
Montour County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Northampton County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Northumberland County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Perry County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Philadelphia County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Pike County	\$215	\$330	\$421	\$514	\$607	\$687
Potter County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Schuylkill County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Snyder County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Somerset County	\$174	\$279	\$365	\$454	\$543	\$614
Sullivan County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Susquehanna County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Tioga County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Union County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Venango County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Warren County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Washington County	\$195	\$305	\$393	\$479	\$569	\$647
Wayne County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Westmoreland County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
Wyoming County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670
York County	\$205	\$316	\$403	\$497	\$589	\$670

Each Additional Person: \$83

APPENDIX B: TANF PARTICIPATION BY COUNTY

June 2021 TANF Participation by County

County	TANF Participation: Adults and Children	Total Population	% of Population Participating in TANF	% of Population Age 0-17 in Poverty
STATE TOTAL	64,976	12,801,989	0.51%	16.80%
Adams	154	103,009	0.15%	8.50%
Allegheny	7,415	1,216,045	0.61%	15.20%
Armstrong	180	64,735	0.28%	4.10%
Beaver	561	163,929	0.34%	17.20%
Bedford	66	47,888	0.14%	14.10%
Berks	1,321	421,164	0.31%	17.70%
Blair	721	121,829	0.59%	19.30%
Bradford	173	60,323	0.29%	19.10%
Bucks	628	628,270	0.10%	6.40%
Butler	225	187,853	0.12%	9.30%
Cambria	1,149	130,192	0.88%	25.60%
Cameron	22	4,447	0.49%	23.70%
Carbon	146	64,182	0.23%	22.40%
Centre	97	162,385	0.06%	10.70%
Chester	706	524,989	0.13%	9.50%
Clarion	69	38,438	0.18%	21.00%
Clearfield	117	79,255	0.15%	26.70%
Clinton	195	38,632	0.50%	14.60%
Columbia	149	64,964	0.23%	10.50%
Crawford	312	84,629	0.37%	15.70%
Cumberland	218	253,370	0.09%	7.90%
Dauphin	1,898	278,299	0.68%	21.40%
Delaware	2,947	566,747	0.52%	10.40%
Elk	100	29,910	0.33%	23.70%
Erie	1,781	269,728	0.66%	21.10%
Fayette	585	129,274	0.45%	16.70%
Forest	**	7,247	**	21.00%
Franklin	260	155,027	0.17%	23.70%
Fulton	30	14,530	0.21%	14.10%
Greene	195	36,233	0.54%	19.00%
Huntingdon	79	45,144	0.17%	20.10%
Indiana	184	84,073	0.22%	17.00%
Jefferson	118	43,425	0.27%	21.00%
Juniata	12	24,763	0.05%	16.60%
Lackawanna	696	209,674	0.33%	21.50%
Lancaster	1,619	545,724	0.30%	8.00%
Lawrence	583	85,512	0.68%	27.00%
Lebanon	338	141,793	0.24%	15.60%
Lehigh	710	369,318	0.19%	18.00%
Luzerne	1,064	317,417	0.34%	25.30%
Lycoming	696	113,299	0.61%	16.90%

APPENDIX B: TANF PARTICIPATION BY COUNTY

June 2021 TANF Participation by County

County	TANF Participation: Adults and Children	Total Population	% of Population Participating in TANF	% of Population Age 0-17 in Poverty
STATE TOTAL	64,976	12,801,989	0.51%	16.80%
McKean	328	40,625	0.81%	23.70%
Mercer	519	109,424	0.47%	26.70%
Mifflin	222	46,138	0.48%	16.60%
Monroe	384	170,271	0.23%	14.50%
Montgomery	968	830,915	0.12%	6.50%
Montour	27	18,230	0.15%	16.10%
Northampton	425	305,285	0.14%	16.70%
Northumberland	333	90,843	0.37%	18.10%
Perry	78	46,272	0.17%	10.60%
Philadelphia	29,125	1,584,064	1.84%	34.60%
Pike	100	55,809	0.18%	17.80%
Potter	42	16,526	0.25%	23.70%
Schuylkill	311	141,359	0.22%	13.60%
Snyder	30	40,372	0.07%	16.60%
Somerset	241	73,447	0.33%	16.20%
Sullivan	**	6,066	**	19.10%
Susquehanna	27	40,328	0.07%	17.80%
Tioga	134	40,591	0.33%	19.10%
Union	65	44,923	0.14%	16.60%
Venango	142	50,668	0.28%	21.00%
Warren	113	39,191	0.29%	14.70%
Washington	705	206,865	0.34%	9.70%
Wayne	75	51,361	0.15%	17.80%
Westmoreland	1,136	348,899	0.33%	12.00%
Wyoming	34	26,794	0.13%	11.70%
York	879	449,058	0.20%	12.80%

** Data is suppressed to ensure personally identifiable information is not indirectly revealed in instances where there are 10 or fewer records.

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