

	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES</b> <b>TANF POLICY MANUAL</b>			
	<b>Chapter:</b>	<b>1000</b>	<b>Effective Date:</b>	<b>November 2023</b>
	<b>Policy Title:</b>	<b>TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)</b>		
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### **TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families)**

#### **REQUIREMENTS**

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) eliminated the open-ended entitlement of Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). The PRWORA created a block grant for states to provide time-limited cash assistance for needy families, with work requirements for most recipients. The law also made far-reaching changes to childcare, the Child Support Enforcement program and benefits for legal immigrants.

#### **BASIC CONSIDERATIONS**

The passage of the PRWORA was largely an outgrowth of the following findings of the U.S. Congress:

- Marriage is the foundation of a successful society.
- Marriage is an essential institution of a successful society that promotes the interests of children.
- Promotion of responsible fatherhood and motherhood is integral to successful child rearing and the wellbeing of children.
- In 1992, only 54 percent of single-parent families with children had a child support order established and only about one-half of that number received the full amount due.
- The number of individuals receiving AFDC had more than tripled since 1965. More than two-thirds of these recipients were children. Eighty-nine percent of children receiving AFDC benefits lived in homes in which no father was present. While the number of children receiving AFDC benefits nearly tripled between 1965 and 1992, the total number of children in the United States declined by 5.5 percent.
- The increase in the number of children receiving public assistance was closely related to the increase in births to unmarried women. Between 1970 and 1991, the percentage of births to unmarried women increased from less than 11

percent to nearly 30 percent of all live births.

- It was estimated that the rate of pregnancy among unmarried teenagers rose 23 percent from 1976 to 1991, and the overall rate of pregnancy for unmarried women rose 14 percent from 1980 to 1992.
- By contrast, the overall pregnancy rate for married couples decreased by more than 7 percent between 1980 and 1991. If the current trend in non-marital births was to continue, it was estimated that 50 percent of all births by the year 2015 would be out- of- wedlock.
- The increase of teenage pregnancies among the youngest girls was found to be particularly severe and linked to the predatory sexual practices of men significantly older than the girls. It was decided that the issue of male responsibility had to be addressed as part of an effective strategy to combat teenage pregnancy.
- It was determined that out-of-wedlock births and raising children in single-parent homes have negative consequences for the parent, the child, the family, and society.

For example, only 9 percent of married-couple families with children under 18 years of age had income below the national poverty level.

In contrast, 46 percent of female-headed households with children under 18 years of age were below the national poverty level. It was also found that children born into families receiving welfare assistance are three times more likely to receive welfare themselves when they reach adulthood than children not born into families receiving welfare.

Based on its findings, Congress decided that preventing out-of-wedlock pregnancies and reducing out-of-wedlock births was in the nation's interests, and that policies needed to be developed that addressed what Congress termed a national "crisis".

The PRWORA eliminated the AFDC program, JOBS and Emergency Assistance (EA), and created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant. The purposes of TANF are to:

- aid needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives,
- end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage,
- prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies, and
- encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The following work requirements were established under TANF.

- Unless a state opts out, non-exempt adult recipients who are not working must participate in community service two months after they start receiving benefits.

- Adults are required to participate in work activities within two years after they start receiving assistance under the block grant.
- States may exempt parents with children under twelve months of age from work requirements and may disregard them in calculating participation rates.
- States may not penalize parents with children less than six years of age for not working if childcare is not available.

In conjunction with the PRWORA, states are required to:

- operate a family assistance program and specify which state agencies will administer and supervise the program,
- operate a child support enforcement program,
- operate a foster care and adoption assistance program,
- establish standards and procedures to ensure against fraud and abuse, and
- establish standards and procedures to ensure that domestic violence will be identified.

In operating the TANF program, Georgia provides cash assistance on a temporary basis to needy families with dependent children. We believe that welfare is not good enough for any family, and that children are better off when responsible caretakers are able to provide for their families.

Therefore, the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS), through the Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS), assists parents and grantee relatives in creating a secure future for their families through stable employment. Georgia emphasizes that there is dignity in work and urges responsible adult behavior and economic self-sufficiency to end dependency on government assistance.

To meet this primary goal, DHS provides all possible assistance to parents and grantee relatives with job preparation, work opportunities, support services and enforcement of child support obligations to children living in these families. In so doing, Georgia will enable needy families to become self-sufficient and leave the TANF program as soon as possible.

Promoting the well-being of the children of Georgia is the mission of the Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services. In order to fulfill its mission, the Department assists families in their efforts to acquire the necessary means to achieve economic self-sufficiency.

A TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP) will be developed with the family and may include:

- job search, job training, and assistance with job placement
- support services such as childcare, transportation, and other necessary expenditures that assist families in obtaining and sustaining employment, thus eliminating the need for cash assistance
- support services intended to support and maintain two-parent families, and
- support services intended to prevent teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

According to the TFSP, assistance is provided in the following manner:

- cash assistance that is provided by electronic benefit transfer.

Georgia is committed to developing strong families by utilizing all work requirements contained in the federal legislation. This commitment includes the provision of childcare and other support services necessary to not just place people in jobs, but to help keep them employed.

Participants who go to work and become ineligible for cash assistance due to employment may continue to receive childcare, as well as other support services, if available, ensuring stable employment and decreasing recidivism.

Georgia's focus is on what is beneficial to children extends beyond merely providing cash assistance. Georgia is committed to end the cycle of welfare dependency that has characterized entitlement-based programs in the past.

Children in TANF families have access to Georgia's Pre-Kindergarten and HOPE Scholarship programs. DHS has begun an initiative that seeks to strengthen families by expanding out-of-school services to youth throughout the state. Refer to Georgia's TANF State Plan.

Children in Georgia benefit from the availability of child welfare, public health and community-based programs and prevention programs can benefit a broad range of at-risk youth.

Georgia requires responsible parental behavior as a condition of eligibility for public assistance. It is expected that the public assistance grant will be used for the well-being of the children and families. It includes, but is not limited to, providing shelter, paying utilities, or purchasing non-food items.

The State has continued its immunization requirement implemented prior to the PRWORA.

Georgia has also added work acceptance and maintenance requirements, a teen living arrangement provision, and participation in work activities. These efforts are coupled with aggressive child support enforcement.