Welfare Rules Databook: State and Territory TANF Policies as of July 2024

OPRE Report 2026-021

Welfare Rules Databook

ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN & FAMILIES

September 15, 2026

Dear TANF Partners:

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. When Congress created TANF in 1996, it gave states substantial flexibility to design programs that respond to the needs of their communities while advancing TANF's statutory purposes. Three decades later, this anniversary provides an important opportunity to reinvigorate state leadership and consider how TANF can better promote work, independence, strong families, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer resources.

The *Welfare Rules Databook: State and Territory TANF Policies as of July 2024* provides an important resource for that effort. It documents how states and territories have used their flexibility across eligibility rules, benefit levels, work requirements, time limits, earnings policies, and other central features of TANF. The considerable variation documented in these pages reflects consequential policy choices about whom TANF serves, what is expected of recipients, and how states help families move toward self-sufficiency.

Throughout this anniversary year, we have also used a series of issue briefs to encourage renewed examination of TANF policy. These briefs have addressed the TANF Contingency Fund, child-only cases involving immigration-status-ineligible parents, the gap between TANF's perceived and actual work requirements, the caseload reduction credit, and restrictions on the use of TANF benefits through EBT cards. Each highlights an area where stronger policy, accountability, or state leadership can help TANF better achieve its statutory purposes.

We encourage governors, state legislators, TANF administrators, researchers, and other partners to use this Databook not simply as a reference, but as an opportunity to compare approaches, learn from other jurisdictions, and reconsider policies that may no longer best serve families or taxpayers.

TANF was built on the principle that states should lead. As we mark its 30th anniversary, states have an opportunity to exercise that leadership anew and build programs that more effectively help families move from dependency toward work, stability, and self-sufficiency.

Sincerely,

Alex J. Adams
Assistant Secretary
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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Director
Office of Family Assistance
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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

WELFARE RULES DATABOOK: STATE AND TERRITORY TANF POLICIES AS OF JULY 2024

FINAL REPORT

OPRE Report 2026-021

August 2026

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The Urban Institute

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This product was finalized and published after March 2026, reflecting ACF's updated approach in which some research portfolios were realigned to be embedded in the ACF offices that manage the programs. Consistent with this approach, this product was reviewed and approved by leadership of the ACF Office of Family Assistance.

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ABOUT THE URBAN INSTITUTE

The nonprofit Urban Institute is dedicated to elevating the debate on social and economic policy. For nearly five decades, Urban scholars have conducted research and offered evidence-based solutions that improve lives and strengthen communities across a rapidly urbanizing world. Their objective research helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

ABOUT ACF

The Administration for Children & Families (ACF) is a division of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS). ACF promotes the economic and social well-being of families, children, individuals, and communities. ACF sponsors rigorous research and evaluation projects of ACF programs and the populations they serve. These include evaluations of existing programs, evaluations of innovative approaches to helping low-income children and families, research syntheses, and descriptive and exploratory studies.

ABOUT THE WELFARE RULES DATABASE

The Welfare Rules Database is maintained by the Urban Institute under funding from the Administration for Children and Families. This project produces a comprehensive, up-to-date database of TANF policies for the 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the territories. The database contains hundreds of variables and is designed to capture TANF policies across time. The data are made available for public use; for more information visit https://wrd.urban.org.

Acknowledgments

The authors owe thanks to all the individuals who helped to design the project and these tables, who provided and verified the data, and who assisted in carrying out the project tasks.

Particular thanks are owed to Girley Wright (the ACF project officer), Lauren Deutsch Stanton (a Social Science Research Analyst at ACF), and other HHS staff for their continued guidance on the project and their review of this report. We also greatly appreciate the many state and territory administrators and staff who provided the detailed policy documents on which these tables are based and conducted often time-consuming reviews of draft tables to improve their accuracy and relevance. The project would not be possible without their substantial involvement.

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Welfare Rules Databook: State and Territory TANF Policies

The purpose of this publication is to provide researchers and policymakers with easy access to detailed information on the policies that govern cash assistance under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.[1]

The dozens of tables highlighted in this report collectively describe how states and territories determine eligibility for TANF benefits, how they compute program benefits for eligible families, and the work requirements and time limits that they impose. In Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2024, 841,000 families received cash aid from TANF in the average month.[2]

TANF cash assistance policies vary widely across states and territories due to the nature of the TANF program and funding. TANF is a block grant, providing federal money that states and territories combine with their own funding (there is a "maintenance of effort" or MOE requirement) to meet the goals of the program.[3] The four purposes of the program are to "(1) provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; (2) end the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; (3) prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and (4) encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families."[4] Some requirements are established at the federal level. However, states and territories are allowed to determine how much of their block grant funds to spend on cash assistance compared with other services, and to establish most of the specific policies used in providing those benefits. State and territory policies—ranging from initial eligibility determination to benefit computation to ongoing eligibility requirements—can vary greatly. For example, a family eligible for several hundred dollars of cash aid each month in one state or

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[1] Throughout the Databook, the term "states" refers to the 50 states and the District of Columbia and "territories" refers to Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. (The territory of American Samoa and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands do not operate TANF programs.) The Welfare Rules Database does not track information on the TANF programs administered by federally recognized tribes within a state.

[2] The policies shown in this Databook are primarily for July 1, 2024, and fall within FFY 2024, which covers the period of October 2023 through September 2024. For information about the number of families receiving TANF in FFY 2024, as well as other caseload data, see the Office of Family Assistance website (accessed October 9, 2025): https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/data/tanf-caseload-data-2024. The figure of 841,000 families cited here does not include those who receive benefits paid through separate state programs funded with maintenance-of-effort dollars (SSP-MOE) or solely-state-funded (SSF) programs.

[3] States and territories are required to maintain specified levels of funding, based in part on historical spending levels in each place. The requirement for state and territory expenditures is referred to as the maintenance of effort (MOE) requirement; additional detail about MOE requirements can be found on the Office of Family Assistance website: https://acf.gov/ofa/policy-guidance/tanf-acf-pi-1996-02-maintenance-effort-requirements.

[4] Additional detail about the TANF program can be found on the Office of Family Assistance website: https://acf.gov/ofa/programs/tanf/about.

territory may be eligible for much less in another state or territory and completely ineligible in a third place. Thus, while TANF is a single program from the perspective of federal law, in practice the program operates differently in every state and territory.

This publication presents the key policies that each state and territory used to determine cash aid under the TANF program as of July 1, 2024. The Databook also provides longitudinal tables describing various state policies for selected years between 1996 (the year the program was created) and 2024, as well as a list of state and territory policy changes since the 2023 Databook tables. All the tables in this publication are based on the information in the Welfare Rules Database (WRD), a publicly available, online database funded by the Administration for Children and Families (ACF), US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and developed and maintained by the Urban Institute. The Databook summarizes the more detailed information in the WRD. Users interested in more information than is provided in this Databook are encouraged to use the full database, available at https://wrd.urban.org. This site includes a point-and-click interface and extensive documentation.

Cash aid funded wholly or partly by federal TANF dollars is the primary focus of the Databook. During FFY 2023 (the most recent year for which financial data are available), 24.6 percent of combined federal TANF funds and state MOE funds were used on "basic assistance" (cash aid). Other TANF and MOE funds were spent on work, education, and training activities; child care; refundable tax credits; child welfare services; pre-kindergarten/Head Start; out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention; program management; and other activities.[5] The WRD covers only the policies for TANF cash aid and related policies, such as work requirements for aid recipients; it does not cover policies for other programs that may be provided through TANF or MOE funds.

This Databook describes five groups of policy information:

1. Initial eligibility in 2024
2. Benefits in 2024
3. Activity requirements in 2024
4. Ongoing eligibility and transitional benefits in 2024
5. Policies across time, 1996–2024

Each chapter begins with an overview of the policies, followed by information relating to specific tables. The appendices provide additional information on policy changes from the prior year, the division of

[5] See table A.1 "Federal TANF and State MOE Expenditures Summary by ACF-196R Spending Category, FY 2023" on the ACF website (accessed October 9, 2025), https://www.acf.gov/ofa/data/tanf-financial-data-fy-2023. TANF spending in the territories is not included in this financial data.

recipients across program components in certain states, and supplemental information on select TANF policies. The tables are provided in a separate document. The following sections first discuss the background and structure of the WRD and then describe the contents and structure of the detailed tables.

The Welfare Rules Database

The WRD is a comprehensive resource for comparing cash assistance programs across all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and the US territories, researching changes across time in cash assistance rules within a single state or territory, or determining the rules governing cash assistance in one state or territory at a point in time. The WRD is longitudinal and currently provides information on state Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and TANF policies from 1996 through 2024. Beginning in 2022, the WRD also provides information on TANF policies in Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. The WRD was initially developed in the mid-1990s to meet the needs of researchers under the Urban Institute's Assessing the New Federalism project and was made publicly available in August 1999. ACF currently funds the maintenance and development of the WRD.

The Development of the WRD

The WRD was developed in response to the increasing difficulty since the early 1990s of tracking how states operate their cash assistance programs for needy families. Under AFDC, the structure of eligibility and benefit computation was mostly determined at the federal level. States were allowed to set certain policies—such as the standards used to establish eligibility and benefits, and the rules for two-parent families—but those choices were detailed in the state plans submitted to HHS/ACF and in annual reports issued by HHS and ACF summarizing the state plans. In the early to mid-1990s, as more states received waivers to experiment with welfare rules, it became increasingly difficult to research state policies. The waiver terms and conditions agreed to by the states and the federal government often did not provide full implementation details, and the implementation schedules often changed after the agreement was reached. The August 1996 passage of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA), replacing AFDC with the TANF block grant, further increased both the degree of variation across state programs and the difficulty of tracking program rules.[6] (The Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, which reauthorized the TANF program in 2006, modified work participation requirements and further altered state TANF policies.)

[6] Pre-PRWORA AFDC policies were not fully phased out in all states/territories until July 1, 1997. The WRD captures policies beginning in 1996, which include AFDC policies before the transition to TANF was completed.

Currently, each state and territory is required to submit a TANF state plan to the federal government approximately every two years, and states and territories are also required to notify the federal government if any of their policies change after the plan is submitted. TANF state plans provide an overview of states' and territories' choices under the block grant; however, the plans' level of detail varies considerably across states and territories, and alone, the plans generally offer insufficient information to completely understand the details of eligibility, benefit computation, and client requirements.

The WRD provides detailed information about the extensive variation in state and territory policies, going beyond the level of detail in most states' and territories' official state plans and capturing changes in policies that occur between the submissions of those plans. The WRD focuses on cash assistance policies and some closely tied transitional benefits; it does not attempt to capture other uses of TANF or MOE funds (such as state earned income tax credits and child care programs).

Although in general the WRD can be thought of as tracking TANF policies, the state and territory cash assistance programs tracked by the WRD are not always exclusively funded with TANF dollars. Some states' cash assistance policies incorporate a separate state program (SSP), and other states and territories may use a solely state funded (SSF) program.[7] States and territories may choose to use different types of funding for families in different situations, although the materials used by caseworkers—which are generally the source materials for this project—do not typically indicate what funding is used in what circumstance. Thus, if a state or territory funds benefits to two-parent families under an SSF program, or funds benefits to certain units including an alien under SSP funding, those benefits policies are included in the WRD to the extent they are described in the TANF caseworker materials, but the WRD does not separately identify which policies use SSP or SSF funds. This is particularly relevant for readers examining both the eligibility and benefit policies in the Databook and information on TANF spending or caseloads. The federal government's administrative data sources *do* capture information on SSP programs (it is usually shown separately from information on TANF programs); but information on SSF programs is not collected or disseminated by the federal government.

Sources of Information for the WRD, and Verification of the Data

The primary sources of information for the WRD (and thus for the tables in the Databook) are the caseworker manuals and regulations used in each state or territory.[8] The Urban Institute obtains the

[7] See Falk, Gene. "The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Primer on TANF Financing and Federal Requirements." Congressional Research Service. August 14, 2023. https://www.congress.gov/crs_external_products/RL/PDF/RL32748/RL32748.45.pdf (PDF).

[8] Owing to the difficulty of obtaining caseworker manuals during the transition from AFDC to TANF, the 1996 data in the WRD are coded using several different sources, including (1) caseworker manuals, when available; (2) AFDC state plans submitted by states to the federal government; (3) waiver terms and conditions; and (4) telephone calls to states to clarify the implementation dates of waivers.

manuals or regulations for each state and territory, as well as the ongoing updates to those manuals or regulations. These documents provide a consistent source of detailed information on policy changes and implementation dates across places and time.[9]

After reviewing and coding the documents describing 2024 procedures, project staff conducted a verification process with the states and territories. The draft 2024 tables were submitted to program administrators who were asked to identify incorrect information and to indicate where project staff could locate missing information not initially identified in the policy materials used for coding. The verification process occurred between May and October 2025.

Table 1 shows the extent to which each state's and territory's 2024 data were reviewed. In most states and territories (51 out of 54), a TANF program contact reviewed the materials and all issues that were raised were fully resolved (shown as "Fully verified" in the table below). In Puerto Rico, we could verify some of the information in the tables but had outstanding questions after the verification period (shown as "Partially verified"). In the other two territories, we were unable to verify any information during the verification period (shown as "Not verified").

A similar verification process has been performed each year since the first Databook, which described policy variations in 1999. Portions of the 1996–98 data in the WRD have been verified against selected secondary sources but have not been fully reviewed by state TANF staff.

Table 1. Verification Status of the Information in the Welfare Rules Database Project's Databook for July 1, 2024

State/Territory	Status of verification [10]
Alabama	Fully verified
Alaska	Fully verified
Arizona	Fully verified
Arkansas	Fully verified
California	Fully verified
Colorado	Fully verified
Connecticut	Fully verified

[9] Policy information for the states is available in the WRD starting in 1996. The territories were added to the WRD as of 2022.
[10] "Fully verified" (51 states) means the state reviewed the draft tables, and all issues that were raised were fully resolved. "Partially verified" (one territory) means we were able to verify some of the information in the tables but had outstanding questions left after the verification period. "Not verified" (two territories) means we were unable to verify any information during the verification period.

State/Territory	Status of verification [10]
Delaware	Fully verified
DC	Fully verified
Florida	Fully verified
Georgia	Fully verified
Guam	Not verified
Hawaii	Fully verified
Idaho	Fully verified
Illinois	Fully verified
Indiana	Fully verified
Iowa	Fully verified
Kansas	Fully verified
Kentucky	Fully verified
Louisiana	Fully verified
Maine	Fully verified
Maryland	Fully verified
Massachusetts	Fully verified
Michigan	Fully verified
Minnesota	Fully verified
Mississippi	Fully verified
Missouri	Fully verified
Montana	Fully verified
Nebraska	Fully verified
Nevada	Fully verified
New Hampshire	Fully verified
New Jersey	Fully verified
New Mexico	Fully verified
New York	Fully verified
North Carolina	Fully verified
North Dakota	Fully verified
Ohio	Fully verified
Oklahoma	Fully verified

State/Territory	Status of verification [10]
Oregon	Fully verified
Pennsylvania	Fully verified
Puerto Rico	Partially verified
Rhode Island	Fully verified
South Carolina	Fully verified
South Dakota	Fully verified
Tennessee	Fully verified
Texas	Fully verified
Utah	Fully verified
Vermont	Fully verified
Virgin Islands	Not verified
Virginia	Fully verified
Washington	Fully verified
West Virginia	Fully verified
Wisconsin	Fully verified
Wyoming	Fully verified

Contents of the WRD

The WRD provides in-depth information on a wide range of policy topics. These topics are currently organized into 32 categories that together describe the most significant dimensions of state and territory policies regarding cash assistance to needy families. It is useful to consider the rules in the sequence in which individuals seeking and receiving assistance will likely encounter them. The 32 categories are listed below, organized into five sections, beginning with initial eligibility. (The organization of the tables in this report is similar to the organization of the database, but with slightly different categorizations.)

I. Initial Eligibility

A. Does the state or territory try to divert some families from becoming recipients?

Diversion

B. How does family composition or individual status affect eligibility?

Eligibility by Number/Type of Parents

Eligibility of Units Headed by a Minor Parent

Eligibility of Pregnant Women

Employment-Related Eligibility of Two-Parent Families

Eligibility of Individual Family Members

Inclusion of Aliens in the Unit

Treatment of Additional Adults in the Household[11]

Other Nonparent Caretaker Policies

C. What level of assets can a family have and still be eligible?

Asset Test

D. How is income counted in determining eligibility?

Countable Income

Income and Assets of Children

In-Kind Income

[11] Treatment of Additional Adults in the Household includes policies related to both financial and nonfinancial eligibility, as well as benefit computation. Therefore, the category could be included under sections I.A, I.D, and II.A.

Deemed Income

Child Support[12]

Earned Income Disregards

E. How much income can a family have and still be eligible?

Income Eligibility Tests

Dollar Amounts[13]

II. Benefits

A. If a family passes all eligibility tests, what is received?

Benefit Computation[14]

Benefit Issuance

III. Activity Requirements

A. Once determined eligible, what must a recipient family do to maintain benefits?

Contracts and Agreements

School Policies for Dependent Children

Immunization and Health Screening Requirements

Child Support Sanctions[15]

B. What work activities are required?

Activities Exemptions

Activities Requirements

Activities Sanctions

Minor Parent Activities Requirements and Bonuses

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[12] The Child Support category captures policies that apply to the treatment of child support income paid *to* members of the assistance unit. Refer to Appendix 2 for information on the treatment of child support paid *by* individuals with countable income to children outside the unit.
[13] Information in the Dollar Amounts category is also relevant to other categories, including Deemed Income, Income Eligibility Tests, and Benefit Computation.
[14] Most states and territories base benefits on the net income of the recipient. Net income is calculated by determining the gross income of a recipient and subtracting any earned income disregards the state/territory may allow. Therefore, the Earned Income Disregard category is also relevant for section II.A.
[15] The child support requirements for which a recipient may be sanctioned are included in the Child Support category listed under section I.D.

Components

IV. Ongoing Eligibility and Transitional Benefits[16]
   A. What eligibility tests must recipient families pass for continuing eligibility?
   B. Are children eligible if born while the family receives benefits?
      Family Cap
   C. How long can a family receive benefits?
      Time Limits
   D. What happens after cash assistance ends?
      Transitional Benefits

General Points about the WRD

In using the Databook and full database, it is helpful to keep in mind the following aspects of the WRD.

- The WRD contains information on the cash assistance rules in effect in each state across time. It also includes information on the cash assistance rules for territories beginning with data for 2022. It does not include information on proposed legislation or on policies that have been agreed-upon but not yet implemented.
- The WRD focuses on the rules applied in determining families' eligibility, benefits, and requirements. The database does not contain information regarding caseloads, budgets, outcomes, or administrative practices.
- The database contains at least one "record" (a set of coded variables) for each state/territory, time period, and category of rules.
- The database contains additional records when the state or territory changes a policy or when the policy varies by geographic region, demographic characteristics of the assistance units, or "component" groups across the state or territory. (The term "component" is used when the state's or territory's caseload is divided into mutually exclusive groups based on multiple characteristics. Appendix 1 provides additional information about components.)
- The WRD indicates when states or territories vary policies either by sub-state/territory regions or by county. When eligibility or benefit levels vary by sub-state/territory regions, those amounts are

[16] The categories under sections I.B–I.E and II.A may also be relevant to ongoing eligibility. In most states and territories, recipients are also required to pass nonfinancial and financial tests to continue receiving benefits. These tests may differ for initial and ongoing eligibility.

generally captured for all regions. However, when policies vary at the city/county level, data are recorded only for the largest city/county in the state or territory.[17]

- The database contains for every time period, state/territory, and category of rules one record designated the "majority rule" record. This record represents the policy that affected the majority of the caseload during the time period.

It is important to note that neither the WRD nor the Databook addresses the issue of how rules may be implemented in practice. As noted above, the WRD is based on caseworker manuals and regulations, which typically do not include information on the likelihood of various outcomes. For instance, if a particular type of recipient may be assigned to one of several work activities, the manuals do not typically address which activity is most likely to be assigned. Thus, for certain policies, two states or territories may look similar in the database and yet in practice be different, and other states' or territories' policies may look different and yet be similar in practice.

Winding Down Policies in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic

The public health emergency that was declared at the outset of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 remained in effect through May 11, 2023. Throughout this period, some states and territories used the TANF program's existing flexibility to modify their policies to better support families during the pandemic.

From 2020 through 2023, the Databook captured pandemic-related policies that may have significantly impacted participants' eligibility and benefits during that period, including changes to job search and activity requirements, asset limits, time limits, and special policies applied to benefit computation. In those years, if a state or territory had temporary policies in place at some point during the year that were initially instituted in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we noted these policies throughout the tables and report. In cases where a significant number of states or territories made policy changes, we added additional columns to the tables to describe the COVID-19 policies.

With the end of the public health emergency, this year's Databook report will no longer differentiate between policies implemented in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other permanent policies. The columns specifically describing COVID-19 policies have been removed from the tables and, unlike in recent years, the 2024 Databook will not capture COVID-19 policies in place at any point during the year; all policies shown in the report were in place as of July 1, 2024. If a state or territory implemented a policy in

[17] The states that vary policies at the city/county level (that are included in this report) are California, Colorado, and New York. The largest cities/counties in each state are Los Angeles County in California, Denver County in Colorado, and New York City in New York. The WRD provides additional information on states that allow cities/counties to vary other policies (that are not included in this report).

response to the public health emergency and did not repeal that policy by July 1, 2024, we treat that policy as we would any other and capture it in the standard policy tables, even if it may have originally been intended to be temporary.

The Databook

The descriptions of the policies in this Databook are focused on what is relevant to the individuals and families to whom the policies apply. The report describes the rules that affect individuals and families in each state and territory, but it generally does not specify whether those policies are imposed as a result of federal or state/territory requirements. Thus, this report does not exhaustively describe federal requirements or prohibitions. Federal TANF policies are fully described in resources available from the Administration for Children and Families.[18]

The tables described in the Databook are designed to provide readers with easy access to key TANF policies across states and territories as of July 1, 2024. The first four chapters of the Databook provide information across four broad policy areas: initial eligibility, benefits, requirements, and ongoing eligibility and transitional benefits. The last chapter provides longitudinal tables for selected policies with data from 1996 through 2024. Appendix 1 provides information on the division of the caseload into "components" in states that apply policies differently across groups of recipients. Beginning with the 2024 Databook, Appendix 2 includes a rotating table that describes additional TANF policies. This year's report describes the treatment of child support paid to children outside the assistance unit. Appendix 3 lists the changes in state and territory policies between the 2023 and 2024 tables.

The data for the tables are extracted from the WRD and represent only a portion of the information in the database. Even for the policy areas addressed in this report, further details are available online in the WRD. In general, the Databook tables focus on the "majority rule" for an aspect of policy, while the full online database allows exploration of policy variations across months of the year and different subsets of the caseload.

Each table follows the same general structure. Typically, the body of each table includes one row per state and territory, which represents the policies in place as of July 1, 2024. If different policies were used for different types of families, the tables show the policies for the predominant type of family receiving TANF in the state or territory—generally, single-parent units with children. If a state's or territory's policies

[18] For an index of TANF-related laws and regulations compiled by the Administration for Children and Families, Office of Financial Assistance, see the Office of Family Assistance website: https://acf.gov/ofa/programs/tanf/laws-regulations.

in a category vary by geographic area, the policies for the most populous area in the state or territory are shown. [19]

Some tables include more information than just the rules for the majority of the caseload. In some cases, additional information is included in an additional row for the state or territory; in other cases, additional information is included in footnotes.

- **Additional data as a second row**. A second row is added to the body of the table if a state or territory divides its entire caseload into mutually exclusive groups that are treated differently across more than one policy. These groups—called "components" in the WRD—are usually defined by more than one characteristic, such as units either meeting any one of a number of work-exemption criteria or not meeting any of those criteria. Descriptions of states' and territories' components are located in Appendix 1.
- **Additional data as a footnote**. Several types of variations may appear as footnotes in the tables. These include variation by type of assistance unit (two-parent units versus one-parent units, or applicants versus recipients) or geographic areas. These types of policies are footnoted in some, but not all, tables. The tables do not capture all the variation in policies across regions and types of units, but the full database contains this information. In addition, states and territories with variations in policy in different counties or regions are footnoted.

Each 2024 table is numbered by chapter and section. For example, table III.A.1 refers to the first table in chapter III, section A. The longitudinal tables are numbered L1 through L10. The primary tables described in this report and their numbering are the same as in the Databook describing the July 2023 policies, with the exception of the rotating policy table, Appendix 2. In this year's Databook, this table contains information on the treatment of child support paid by parents, relative caretakers, grandparents, or stepparents to children outside of the assistance unit.

Initial Eligibility

The tables presented in this chapter of the Databook describe key aspects of the rules imposed on families and individuals to determine initial eligibility for TANF cash assistance as of July 1, 2024. Rules for *initial* eligibility apply to individuals who are applying for the first time or who are reapplying for assistance after a period of not receiving assistance. To be eligible, an applicant family must pass both non-financial tests, based on the characteristics of the family and its members, and financial tests, based on the income and

[19] In the tables regarding eligibility and benefits, states with sub-state variation in the dollar amounts used for eligibility or benefit standards are denoted.

asset holdings available to the family. This chapter is divided into five sections covering initial eligibility rules related to diversion, family composition, assets, income definitions, and income.

A. Does the state or territory try to divert some families from becoming recipients?

Many states and territories have policies that attempt to divert from assistance applicants who may be able to achieve economic stability with some type of government assistance or other source of income, instead of regular monthly cash aid. These types of policies were developed during the 1990s, first under state/territory waivers and then after the passage of PRWORA. Some states and territories use a formal diversion program (described below), while others require job search at application, and some states and territories use both approaches.

Formal Diversion Payments (Table I.A.1)

Under formal diversion programs, families may choose to receive a lump-sum cash payment to address immediate needs instead of receiving a monthly TANF benefit. Generally, states and territories provide benefits to families to alleviate short-term problems that interfere with either keeping or finding employment. Many states and territories require recipients of diversion assistance to be currently employed or seeking employment. Families that accept diversion payments typically are barred from applying for monthly TANF benefits for some period, but the period of ineligibility may be reduced by approaches such as deducting a portion of the diversion payment from future TANF benefits. Most diversion programs are voluntary; however, states and territories may require certain families to enroll in a diversion program and participate in job search or job-related activities before applying for monthly TANF benefits.

For the purposes of the WRD, a formal diversion program is defined as diverting eligible applicants or recipients from ongoing TANF receipt by providing a lump-sum cash payment directly to the family or to a vendor for expenses incurred by the family. Other strategies states and territories may use to divert applicants from ongoing receipt of cash benefits (such as requiring an applicant to participate in job search or resource and referral services) are not identified as formal diversion programs in the WRD.

The maximum diversion payment is either a flat payment, regardless of the family's size and the state's or territory's maximum benefit (represented in table I.A.1 by a dollar amount), or a multiple of the maximum benefit the family would have received in monthly TANF benefits (represented in the table by a number of months of benefits). If the state or territory provides diversion payments based on a multiple of the

maximum monthly benefit, the amount will vary by the family size and the level of the state's or territory's maximum benefits.

Table I.A.1 describes whether a state or territory provides a diversion payment, the maximum payment, the form of the payment, how often a recipient may receive the maximum payment, the period of TANF ineligibility after receiving a diversion payment, and whether the months that a family is diverted count toward the state's or territory's time limit. Highlights for 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-four states have formal diversion programs.
- Of the states with formal diversion programs, nine states provide families the same diversion payment regardless of the family's size. These payments range from $1,000 in Florida, Kansas, and Texas to $10,000 in Colorado. An additional two states provide families a fixed amount that depends on the family's size. For a family of three, these payments range from $750 in New Jersey to $1,500 in New Mexico.
- Eighteen states pay diverted families an amount equal to a multiple of the maximum monthly benefit for the family's size; the multiple ranges from 1 to 12 but is most commonly 3 times the maximum benefit. Additionally, California pays the greater of $2,000 or three times the maximum aid payment for the family size, and Virginia pays the greater of $1,500 or four times the maximum benefit for the family size.
- Three states determine families' diversion payments on a case-by-case basis.
- Among the states with formal diversion programs, six count the payments toward the TANF time limit in some or all cases.

Families applying for a diversion payment must still be eligible for assistance using the state's or territory's eligibility rules (see sections I.B–I.E). The rules generally are the same for families that apply for diversion and those that apply for monthly assistance.

Related tables: For information on diversion programs for selected years between 1996 and 2024, see table L1.

Mandatory Job Search at Application (Table I.A.2)

In states and territories requiring job search upon applying, applicants must look for jobs either before or while their applications are processed. To be eligible for aid, applicants must prove they have searched for jobs at a set number of businesses or participated in the state's or territory's job-related programs. The goal of these requirements is for applicants to find jobs and no longer need assistance or at least be employed by

the time they begin receiving assistance. States and territories may exempt some applicants from searching for a job at the time of application. Exempt groups often include applicants who are ill or incapacitated, caring for someone who is ill or incapacitated, over a certain age, or pregnant.

Table I.A.2 indicates which states and territories require applicants to search for a job upon applying as a condition of eligibility, what kinds of activities are required, who is exempt from the activities, and the consequences of not complying with the requirement. Findings for 2024 include the following:

- Sixteen states require the applicant to seek employment either before or while the application is processed.
- Of the states that require job search, 14 may deny the application if the individual fails to meet the job search requirements.

B. How does family composition or individual status affect eligibility?

To be eligible for either a diversion payment or monthly benefits, a family must pass several non-financial tests based on the demographic characteristics of the overall family or individuals within the family. Families generally include at least one eligible child, but states and territories may also allow TANF eligibility for pregnant women with no other children. States and territories vary in whether they allow TANF for children living with caretakers who are not relatives; further, some states and territories do not offer TANF to families that include two parents who do not have disabilities.

When a family passes a state's or territory's initial tests, the next step in the eligibility process is to determine what many states and territories refer to as the "assistance unit"—the group of people whose needs are considered in establishing the benefit. The definition of the assistance unit can have substantial implications for a unit's eligibility. In states and territories that increase eligibility limits with unit size, a larger assistance unit might increase the family's chance of eligibility. In some cases, however, including additional individuals in the unit and including their income in the unit's countable income might lower the chance of eligibility. In most states and territories, the size of the assistance unit also determines the maximum benefit that will be paid.

In general terms, the assistance unit consists of the dependent children and their parents—including any parents in the household, even if those parents are not married. However, states and territories vary in the treatment of stepparents, alien parents, a parent's nonparent partner, and parents and children who receive benefits from the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program. When the only adults in the family are prohibited from being in the assistance unit (due to immigrant status, receipt of SSI, certain time limits or

sanctions, or nonparent caretaker status in some states and circumstances), or when they choose not to be in the unit (nonparent caretakers in other states and circumstances), a "child-only" assistance unit is formed.[20]

Eligibility of Pregnant Women with No Other Children (Table I.B.1)

At the most basic level, to be eligible for TANF, the family must include a child or, in some states and territories, a pregnant woman. Table I.B.1 indicates whether units with pregnant women who have no other children are eligible to receive TANF cash assistance. The table also indicates whether the father and unborn child are also eligible for benefits—usually meaning they are included in the assistance unit. For states and territories that provide TANF benefits to pregnant recipients with no other children, the table also provides the month of pregnancy in which benefits may begin. Key findings for 2024 include the following:

- In cases when an applicant is pregnant but has no other children, 36 states consider the applicant potentially eligible for benefits for at least a portion of the pregnancy.
- Among the states that allow eligibility for a pregnant woman with no other children, 10 states also consider the father eligible, and two states count the unborn child in the size of the assistance unit.

Eligibility Rules for Two-Parent Applicant Units in Which Neither Parent Has a Disability (Table I.B.2)

Some states and territories have different eligibility rules for families that include two parents—either married or unmarried—compared with families with one parent or no parents. If the family includes two parents, and neither parent has a disability, the family is ineligible for TANF in some states and territories. In other states and territories, a family with two parents who do not have disabilities must pass additional eligibility tests (not imposed on other families) based on the parents' current or prior labor force status.[21]

The additional requirements imposed on two-parent families may include an "hours test," a work history test, or a waiting period. Under an hours test, the unit is ineligible if the parent who is the principal wage earner is working more than a specified number of hours per month.[22] States and territories may apply this rule when determining the initial or continuing eligibility of two-parent families. Under a work history test,

[20] In some states, reaching a time limit results in removing the needs of the adult from the assistance unit.
[21] Some states and territories choose to provide benefits to two-parent units under solely state-funded or separate state programs (SSFs or SSPs) funded by state and territory monies rather than the TANF block grant. Table I.B.2 includes those states and territories as providing benefits to two-parent families regardless of the funding source as long as these provisions are specified in the state's or territory's TANF policy manual.
[22] Under AFDC, the principal earner could be working no more than 100 hours per month in order for the family to be potentially eligible for aid.

the eligibility of two-parent units is restricted to those in which the principal wage earner worked during a certain number of calendar quarters over a specified number of years, or in which the principal wage earner satisfies other criteria related to labor force attachment.[23] Waiting periods restrict the eligibility of two-parent families until a certain number of days or weeks after the family would otherwise have been eligible.[24] For example, under a 30-day waiting period, if the principal wage earner becomes unemployed and the family would not have been eligible when the parent was working, the family would not become eligible to apply for assistance until one month after the parent loses employment.

Table I.B.2 presents the eligibility rules for families with two parents in which neither parent has a disability. Highlights for 2024 include the following:

- Three states (Louisiana, New Hampshire, and North Dakota) and two territories (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) do not allow two-parent families in which neither parent has a disability to receive TANF.
- In five states and one territory, two-parent families are potentially eligible, but face additional tests not imposed on single-parent families (i.e., a work hours test, work history test, or application waiting period).

Related tables: For information about the hours test for two-parent families in which neither parent has a disability and the families are already receiving benefits (as compared with those who are applying for benefits), see table IV.A.1. Table L2 provides information on the rules for two-parent units in selected years from 1996 through 2024.

Special Rules Imposed on Minor Parent Eligibility (Table I.B.3)

Parents who are teenagers may or may not be eligible to receive a benefit on their own, and in most cases, they are eligible only if they are living with their parents or in another state- or territory- approved setting.[25] Table I.B.3 describes special eligibility rules for families in which the parent is a minor (usually defined as under age 18 and never married). The first column indicates whether minor parents can ever head a TANF unit and receive the benefit in their own name. The second column indicates whether the state or territory

[23] Under AFDC, the principal earner was required to have worked during at least six calendar quarters within a 13-calendar-quarter period that ended within one year of applying for assistance. Generally, work history could also be established if one of the following applied: (1) the applicant received unemployment compensation (UC) benefits within 12 months of the date of application, or (2) the applicant would have been eligible for UC benefits within the previous 12 months but did not apply or the applicant's employment was not covered by UC laws.
[24] Under AFDC, waiting periods were imposed only on two-parent units. However, under TANF, some states and territories have begun to apply waiting periods to all types of units. The WRD does not currently capture waiting periods that apply to all units.
[25] In general, states and territories may not provide federally funded assistance to minor parents who are not living in an adult-supervised setting. However, there are some exceptions to this requirement.

requires the minor parent to live with a parent or in another state-approved setting (referred to in the table as a living arrangement restriction). Findings from the 2024 data include the following:

- Forty-four states and territories allow minor parents to apply for TANF as the head of a unit.
- Two states (Hawaii and Nebraska) do not require the minor parent to live with a guardian or in an approved setting.

Related table: Table I.D.1 provides information on the treatment of the grandparents' income in cases when minor parents are living with one or both of their parents and also heading their own assistance units.

Inclusion of Stepparents in the Assistance Unit (Table I.B.4)

State and territory rules vary for whether a stepparent (i.e., a person who has married the child's biological or adoptive parent, but who has not legally adopted the child) is included in the assistance unit. Stepparents may be required to be part of the unit, may be prohibited from being part of the unit, or may be included in the unit at the option of the family. Table I.B.4 focuses on rules for stepparents who have no child in common with their spouses, have no biological children of their own in the assistance unit, are living in the home, and are not incapacitated. (State and territory rules for stepparents not meeting these criteria may vary and are addressed in further detail in the WRD.) Policy highlights from 2024 include the following:

- Twenty-two states require that stepparents be included in the assistance unit.
- Eleven states and one territory (Guam) allow the unit head to choose whether to include the stepparent.
- Eighteen states prohibit stepparents from being included in the assistance unit.

Related table: Information about the treatment of income from a stepparent who is *not* included in the assistance unit can be found in table I.D.2.

Eligibility of Aliens (Tables I.B.5, I.B.6, and I.B.7)

If a family is potentially eligible for aid, but one or more members of the family are not citizens, complex rules govern whether the aliens can be included in an assistance unit. The eligibility of aliens depends on several factors, including when they arrived in the United States, how long they have resided here, the specific status that allows them to be in the United States (e.g., lawful permanent resident, refugee, etc.), and the extent to which they have worked since arriving.[26] The federal rules require that some groups of aliens

[26] The federal policies related to TANF eligibility and benefits for aliens apply in the territories as well as in the states. In this section, "United States" refers to both the states and territories.

be considered potentially eligible for TANF, but states and territories retain wide discretion regarding the eligibility of most aliens.

Under the AFDC program, the only aliens categorically ineligible for aid were illegal aliens and aliens in the country temporarily (under student visas or temporary work visas). Further, the income of a legal immigrant's sponsor could be treated as available to the immigrant (a process known as "deeming") for a limited time; however, most legal immigrants were potentially eligible for benefits.

After the passage of PRWORA, aliens' access to federal TANF benefits was significantly restricted. PRWORA created the "qualified alien" distinction, which more narrowly defined the group of aliens potentially eligible for most federally funded TANF assistance.[27] The federal law also extended sponsor deeming and further limited qualified aliens' access to assistance based on their date of entry into the country. Qualified aliens who entered the United States before August 22, 1996 (the date PRWORA was passed), are potentially eligible for federally funded assistance without any waiting period, whereas most qualified aliens who arrived in the country on or after August 22, 1996 are subject to a five-year bar on federal TANF assistance.[28] After the five-year bar, qualified aliens are potentially eligible for federally funded TANF assistance.

Some immigrants are exempt from the various restrictions and must be potentially eligible for TANF. Refugees and asylees must be considered potentially eligible in all states and territories for their first five years in the country. Also, military personnel and veterans and their families can never be denied eligibility due to their immigrant status (even if they have only been in the country a short time).[29] Finally, aliens who

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[27] "Qualified aliens" include lawful permanent residents, asylees, refugees, aliens paroled into the United States for at least one year, aliens whose deportations are being withheld, aliens granted conditional entry before April 1, 1980, certain battered alien spouses and their children, battered alien children and their parents, and Cuban and Haitian entrants. We use the term "qualified alien" in this report when we are referring to people meeting the federally-established definition. When referring generally to people living in the United States who are not citizens, we use the word "aliens."

[28] The five-year bar applies only to those qualified aliens who entered the United States—whether legally or illegally—on or after August 22, 1996. In the case of a person who entered illegally in 1994 and become a lawful permanent resident in 2000, as long as that person has been continuously present in the United States, the bar would not apply. See the Department of Justice's Interim Guidance on Verification of Citizenship, Qualified Alien Status and Eligibility under Title IV of PRWORA at 62 Federal Regulation 61415 (November 17, 1997). Further, if aliens enter the United States on or after August 22, 1996, but are not qualified when they enter, the five-year clock begins on the date their immigrant status becomes qualified.

[29] States and territories must permit the following qualified aliens who meet the state's and territory's eligibility criteria to receive TANF benefits for five years after the date of entry into the United States or the date asylum or withholding of deportation was granted: refugees (and victims of severe forms of trafficking and certain family members), asylees, aliens whose deportation has been withheld, Amerasians, and Cuban and Haitian entrants. Also, states and territories may never deny eligibility to veterans or individuals on active duty along with their spouses and unmarried dependent children. Further, certain groups of immigrants must be provided with TANF eligibility to the same extent as refugees.

arrived in the United States prior to the passage of PRWORA who have accumulated 40 quarters of work history cannot be denied TANF eligibility due to their immigrant status in any state or territory.[30]

Although federal law determines which aliens are *potentially* eligible for federally funded benefits and the periods in which they may be eligible, states and territories have substantial flexibility. States and territories can choose to provide or deny assistance to certain groups of aliens the federal government has indicated are potentially eligible for federally funded benefits. States and territories can also provide state- or territory-funded assistance to certain aliens ineligible for federally funded assistance, such as qualified aliens during the five-year bar or certain aliens who do not meet the "qualified aliens" definition.[31]

States and territories have made three types of decisions about the eligibility of aliens:

1. Will some or all qualified aliens who arrived before PRWORA (pre-PRWORA) be eligible for benefits?
2. Will some or all aliens who arrived on or after the date of the PRWORA legislation (post-PRWORA) be eligible for benefits during the five-year bar?
3. Will some or all post-PRWORA aliens be eligible for benefits after the five-year bar?

Tables I.B.5, I.B.6, and I.B.7 describe the variation in state and territory policies concerning pre-PRWORA and post-PRWORA aliens.[32]

Table I.B.5 describes selected state and territory policies regarding pre-PRWORA qualified aliens who are potentially eligible for federally funded assistance, but who do not fall into groups required to be covered (in other words, they are "nonexempt"). Since PRWORA was passed more than 27 years before the policies covered by this Databook, the policies regarding pre-PRWORA entrants do not affect a large number of applicants; however, some families still apply for TANF in which the adults entered the country prior to August 1996 and have not obtained citizenship. The table provides eligibility rules for two groups of

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As of July 1, 2024, this includes Iraqis and Afghans granted Special Immigrant visas and certain Afghans and Ukrainians paroled into the US. See guidance documents "TANF-ACF-PI-2010-05 (Eligibility of Iraqi and Afghan aliens who have been granted special immigrant status for Federal TANF and State Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) benefits)", and "TANF-ACF-PI-2022-05 (Eligibility of Ukrainian Humanitarian Parolees for TANF)", available on the HHS, ACF, and OFA websites, for additional details.

[30] Forty quarters is equivalent to 10 years of work for one person; however, an alien may be credited with quarters of coverage worked by a parent or a spouse under certain circumstances.

[31] Individuals in one group of nonqualified aliens—those who are in the United States without authorization—are not eligible for benefits in any state or territory. However, there are other groups of nonqualified aliens who are eligible in some states and territories.

[32] These state rules must be viewed in the context of the federal prohibitions and requirements affecting the eligibility of aliens for federally funded assistance. The eligibility rules for aliens are very complex. This discussion is a summary intended for researchers and should not be used for assessing the policy options available to a state or territory under federal law or whether a state's or territory's policies fully comport with federal law.

pre-PRWORA aliens—lawful permanent residents and asylees.[33] As mentioned above, even if a state or territory does not provide assistance to *all* pre-PRWORA qualified aliens, those who are federally exempt from eligibility restrictions based on work history (having accumulated 40 quarters) or veteran or military status are still potentially eligible for federally funded benefits in all states and territories.

Highlights from the 2024 data include the following:

- Fifty-two states and territories consider all pre-PRWORA qualified aliens who are lawful permanent residents eligible for assistance.
- Fifty-two states and territories consider all pre-PRWORA qualified aliens who are asylees eligible for assistance.
- One state (Mississippi) does not consider any pre-PRWORA lawful permanent residents or asylees eligible for assistance (except for those who must be considered potentially eligible based on federal rules).

Table I.B.6 shows whether states and territories use their own funding to provide assistance to post-PRWORA aliens who are ineligible for federal TANF assistance. The first three columns of the table focus on three groups of qualified aliens during their first five years, when they are ineligible for federally funded TANF due to the five-year bar (unless they qualify for a military or veteran exemption). The three groups of qualified aliens shown in the table are lawful permanent residents, parolees, and people who meet the specific definition of "battered alien." (Several other groups of qualified aliens—including refugees, asylees, and people with deportation withheld—are not shown in this table because they must be considered potentially eligible for federally funded TANF in every state and territory during their first five years.) The last column of the table describes whether any nonqualified aliens, other than those who are not lawfully present, are potentially eligible for benefits using state or territory funds. Key policies for 2024 include the following:

- Thirteen states fund benefits for all qualified aliens in each of the three categories shown in Table I.B.6 (lawful permanent residents, parolees, and battered aliens) during their first five years.
- Ten states fund benefits for at least some nonqualified aliens.

Table I.B.7 shows whether post-PRWORA aliens are eligible for assistance after they have resided in the United States with qualified alien status for at least five years. After the five-year bar, qualified aliens

[33] Versions of this table for 2014 and earlier years showed policies for additional categories of aliens. However, due to the diminishing numbers of pre-PRWORA entrants in the population applying for TANF, many states' and territories' caseworker manuals do not provide explicit policies for this group. Thus, this table focuses on the two statuses that are likely the most prevalent among aliens who entered prior to PRWORA.

may be provided with TANF using federal funds, but the state or territory is not required to provide aid. The table provides eligibility rules for several categories of qualified aliens: lawful permanent residents, asylees or refugees, aliens with deportation withheld, aliens paroled in the country for at least one year, and battered aliens. Even if a state or territory does not provide assistance to all qualified aliens following the five-year bar, those qualifying for special exceptions based on veteran or military status are still eligible for federally funded benefits in all states and territories. Further, some states and territories may provide aid only to some subgroups, for example only those who have attained 40 quarters of work history. Policies from 2024 include the following:

- Forty-seven states and territories consider all post-PRWORA qualified aliens who are lawful permanent residents and who are beyond the five-year bar to be potentially eligible for assistance.
- Five states only consider a lawful permanent resident past the five-year bar to be potentially eligible for assistance if that person can be credited with 40 quarters of work (or if federal rules require eligibility based on military or veteran status).
- Forty-four states and territories consider all post-PRWORA qualified aliens who are past the five-year bar and fall into any of the other four groups shown in Table I.B.7—asylees/refugees, deportees, parolees, or battered aliens—to be potentially eligible for assistance.
- For post-PRWORA qualified aliens who are past the five-year bar and fall into any of the other four groups shown in the table—asylees/refugees, deportees, parolees, or battered aliens—four states do not provide any eligibility (unless federal rules require eligibility based on military or veteran status).

Two points are important to note for all three tables concerning the treatment of aliens. First, even if a state or territory will potentially fund cash aid to an immigrant in a particular circumstance, that immigrant might still be ineligible if the immigrant has a sponsor whose income is deemed available for the immigrant's support. Policies related to sponsor deeming are not shown in the tables but are included in the WRD[34]. Second, all alien rules discussed here apply to individuals, not to entire families. Within a family, some individuals may be ineligible based on immigrant status, while others may remain eligible.

Related table: Information about the treatment of income from immigrant parents who are not eligible to be in the assistance unit can be found in table I.D.4.

[34] The WRD continues to track changes to policies related to aliens. However, the "inclusion of aliens in the unit" category is not currently available for download.

Treatment of Non-caretaker Adults in Household (Table I.B.8)

When a child's household includes adults who are neither the child's parents nor caretakers, state and territory rules vary on whether those non-caretaker adults may be considered members of the assistance unit. For the purposes of the WRD, a non-caretaker adult is defined as an adult living in the household who is neither the primary caretaker of the children nor a stepparent or parent of any children in the household. A non-caretaker adult could be an adult who is related to the parent or children (for instance, the children's aunt), the unmarried partner of the parent, or a friend of the parent who is not a relative or in a relationship with the parent. Table I.B.8 describes whether these individuals are eligible to be included in the TANF unit. Additionally, the table provides information about how states and territories count income and calculate benefits when these individuals are not included in the assistance unit. The table also details whether shared living costs affect eligibility or benefits. Key policies from 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-four states and two territories (Guam and Puerto Rico) always exclude all non-caretaker adults in the household from the assistance unit.
- Five states (Hawaii, New York, Oregon, Vermont, and Virginia) potentially allow any adult in the household to be included in the unit.

Eligibility Requirements for Children (Table I.B.9)

States and territories define the maximum age of a child for purposes of TANF and may require that a child lives with either a parent or another relative to be potentially eligible for TANF. Table I.B.9 addresses these basic criteria for determining the potential eligibility of a family (as opposed to individuals within the family). The first two columns of the table show the maximum age at which a child can be TANF-eligible; the first column provides the maximum age for children who are not in school, and the second column gives the maximum that applies for children who are still enrolled in school. The last column of table I.B.9 addresses a second issue related to overall family eligibility—whether a child whose caretaker is a nonrelative is potentially eligible for TANF.[35] Policies from 2024 include the following:

- A teenager who is *not* attending school is still considered a child for purposes of TANF through age 17 (until reaching their 18th birthday) in 49 states and territories, through age 18 in Nebraska, and through age 15 in D.C. In addition, Michigan, Puerto Rico, and Virginia require all school-age children to be in school full-time as a condition of eligibility for either the child (Virginia), the non-compliant child and the parent (Puerto Rico), or the entire family (Michigan).

[35] AFDC did not cover children with nonrelative caretakers.

- In 49 states and territories, the maximum age to be considered a child for purposes of TANF is slightly higher (generally through age 18) for those who are attending school.
- Twenty-one states and one territory (the Virgin Islands) consider children living with nonrelative caretakers potentially eligible for TANF.

Inclusion of Supplemental Security Income Recipients in the Assistance Unit (Table I.B.10)

States and territories also vary in the treatment of parents and children who receive certain disability-related benefits. Recipients in the states may be eligible for the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, which provides cash aid to low-income individuals who are age 65 or over and low-income individuals under age 65—including children—who are determined by the program to have a qualifying disability. (Families and children in the territories are ineligible for SSI benefits. Instead, they may receive assistance from other programs for people with disabilities, such as the Aid to the Blind, Aid to the Permanently and Totally Disabled, or Old-Age Assistance programs.)

Table I.B.10 shows whether SSI recipients are included in a state's TANF assistance unit and when counted in the unit, how their income is treated. SSI benefits are typically higher than TANF benefits, so including SSI recipients in the unit and counting their SSI income might reduce a family's likelihood of eligibility. Information on the treatment of other disability-related benefits is included as a footnote in the table for the territories, when available. Highlights for 2024 include the following:

- Five states (Alaska, Idaho, New Hampshire, West Virginia, and Wisconsin) include SSI recipients in the TANF assistance unit. New Hampshire and Wisconsin include both child and adult SSI recipients, whereas Idaho includes adult SSI recipients, and Alaska and West Virginia include SSI recipients who are children.

Related table: For additional detail about SSI recipients, table II.A.5 gives the maximum benefit paid to a child-only TANF case with one child when the parents are excluded from the assistance unit due to SSI receipt.

Inclusion of Nonparent Caretakers in the Assistance Unit (Table I.B.11)

Many children live with caretakers who are not their parents—often a grandparent or another relative. Nonparent caretakers may or may not be considered part of the TANF assistance unit, depending on their characteristics and, in some cases, their own choice. Being included in the unit could increase the TANF benefit (depending on the caretaker's income), but it could also lead to additional requirements that would

not be placed on a child-only unit (a unit with no adults counted in the assistance unit) related to time limits and work requirements.

Table I.B.11 shows the state and territory policies regarding nonparent caretakers. The first four columns of the table address whether nonparent caretakers are included in the unit, and under what circumstances caretakers are included when inclusion is optional. The final column of the table provides information as to whether a caretaker's spouse is included in the unit when the caretaker is included. This column is relevant in the situation when a child's caretakers are a married couple—for example, the child's grandmother and grandfather. Key policies from 2024 include the following:

- Four states (Alabama, North Carolina, South Dakota, and Wisconsin) never allow nonparent caretakers to be included in the assistance unit.
- Twenty-four states and one territory (Guam) allow nonparent caretakers to choose whether to be included in the assistance unit.
- Twenty states and one territory (the Virgin Islands) allow for the inclusion of some nonparent caretakers (e.g., those with lower incomes, or those who are relatives), but do not allow others to be included in the unit.
- Additionally, New Jersey and New York require the inclusion of some nonparent caretakers and do not allow others to be included in the unit. North Dakota requires the inclusion of some nonparent caretakers, allows for the inclusion of other nonparent caretakers, and does not allow others to be included in the unit.

Related tables: For additional information about cases with nonparent caretakers, see table I.B.9 for whether the state or territory ever provides TANF to a child living with a caretaker who is not a relative. Additionally, table I.D.3 describes the treatment of the income and assets of nonparent caretakers, table II.A.5 gives the maximum benefits paid to child-only units with a single child living with a nonparent caretaker, and table III.B.4 describes work-related activity requirements for nonparent caretakers.

C. What level of assets can a family have and still be eligible?

If the family passes the nonfinancial eligibility tests, the next step in determining TANF eligibility may be an asset test. Most states and territories restrict the amount of assets a family may hold and still be eligible for assistance; however, these amounts vary greatly by state and territory and by type of asset. If the family's total assets exceed the amounts established by the state or territory, the family is ineligible for assistance.

Asset Limits for Applicants (Table I.C.1)

States and territories determine the maximum value of assets—including vehicles—an applicant family may hold and still remain eligible for benefits. Table I.C.1 describes each state's and territory's asset tests for applicants. The first column of the table provides the limit on the value of countable assets a family may hold and still be eligible for assistance. The second column describes whether some or all of the value of a vehicle is excluded in determining the amount of a family's assets for eligibility purposes; any portion not excluded is counted as part of the family's total asset value, which is then compared to the asset limit. When a portion of the vehicle's value is exempted, the value may be given in terms of equity or fair-market value. The fair-market value is the amount for which the vehicle could be sold, while the equity value is the fair-market value minus any amount still owed on the vehicle. When a family still owes money on a vehicle, the equity value will be less than the fair-market value, so this distinction is important when comparing vehicle exemption amounts across states and territories. Policy highlights for 2024 include the following:

- Forty-five states and territories have asset limits for applicants. In these states and territories, the limits that apply to most applicants range from $1,000 in six states to $15,000 in Michigan. Additionally, California's asset limit for assistance units with an older adult or a person with a disability is $17,452. The asset limit for all other assistance units is $11,634.

Related tables: Asset limits may be different for determining the initial eligibility of applicants compared to the continuing eligibility of recipients. For information on the asset test for recipients, see table IV.A.3. Tables L8 and L9 provide information on asset limits for recipients and the vehicle exemption for recipients, respectively, for selected years from 1996 through 2024.

D. How is income counted in determining eligibility?

Once a family has passed any asset test imposed by the state or territory, the family's available income is computed for eligibility purposes. States and territories have discretion in determining what portion and types of earned and unearned income are counted, in addition to whose income is counted, for eligibility purposes.[36]

[36] While there are many types of income, this report only addresses state and territory variations in the treatment of earnings (in chapter I, Initial Eligibility and chapter IV, Ongoing Eligibility) and child support payments (in chapter IV, Ongoing Eligibility). The WRD captures variations in the treatment of certain other types of income, including interest income and lump-sum income. Currently, no state counts income from tax refunds such as the earned income tax credit (EITC) or child tax credit (CTC). The Virgin Islands likewise does not count income from the EITC. The treatment of EITC income in Guam and Puerto Rico and the treatment of CTC income in Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands is currently unavailable in the WRD.

Generally, if people are considered part of the assistance unit, their earned and unearned income is counted as part of the unit's total (gross) income. Many states and territories also count a portion of or all income from certain individuals who are not part of the assistance unit but who have an obligation to support a member of the assistance unit. Typically, states and territories view a portion of the income of these individuals as being required for their own needs; they "allocate" that portion to the individual and any remaining income is deemed available to the assistance unit as unearned income. This income may or may not actually be available to the unit, but the state or territory assumes the individual bears some financial responsibility and therefore requires that a portion of the individual's income count as income of the unit. In particular, when a stepparent or a grandparent (the parent of a minor parent) lives in the same home as the applicant but is not considered part of the assistance unit, a portion of that person's income is sometimes counted as part of the applicant's income for eligibility and benefit computation purposes. Other groups of individuals whose income may receive special treatment are nonparent caretakers and immigrant parents who are members of the household but not included in the assistance unit.

Treatment of Grandparent Income (Table I.D.1)

When minor parents are potentially eligible to head their own assistance units, a portion of their parents' income may be deemed available to the minor's unit when determining eligibility and benefits. When the grandparents' (the parents of the minor parent) income is deemed available to the unit, the state or territory may allow grandparents to disregard a portion of their earned income, similar to the earned income disregards available to applicants. States and territories may also allow for an additional disregard approximating the amount of the grandparents' basic needs and the needs of their dependents outside the TANF assistance unit. The remaining income is deemed available to the minor parent's TANF unit and is counted as unearned income for eligibility and benefit computation purposes.

Table I.D.1 describes the treatment of grandparent income for applicants. The first column indicates if the state or territory deems income in this situation, the second column indicates the initial earned income disregard available to the grandparents, and the third column describes any other disregards available to the grandparents (which are most often disregards approximating the grandparents' basic needs). The table also indicates the income standards used by states and territories to determine any needs-based disregard. Key policies from 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-seven states and one territory (Puerto Rico) require a portion of the grandparent's income be deemed available to the minor parent.
- Four states (Arkansas, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Vermont) do not require deeming of income from the grandparent.

- In the remaining 12 states and territories, there is no policy regarding deeming since the minor parent is included in an assistance unit with the grandparent (the minor parent's adult parent).

Information pertaining to disregards for child support payments for dependents outside the home or alimony is not captured in the table but can be found in the WRD.

Related tables: See table I.E.3 (Standards for Estimating Eligibility) to determine the income standards listed in the final column for a family of three. For more information about minor parents, see table I.B.3, which describes whether minor parents are potentially eligible to head their own TANF units.

Treatment of Stepparent Income (Table I.D.2)

In states and territories where a stepparent is either always excluded from the assistance unit or given the option to be excluded from the assistance unit, a portion of the stepparent's income may be deemed available to the unit. As with their policies for grandparent deeming, states and territories generally allow stepparents to disregard a portion of their earned income, similar to the earned income disregards available to applicants. States and territories may also allow stepparents to subtract from their income a second disregard approximating the amount of their basic needs and the needs of their dependents outside the TANF assistance unit. The remaining income after these disregards is deemed available to the stepparent's spouse and the spouse's dependents and is counted as unearned income for eligibility and benefit computation purposes.

Table I.D.2 describes the deeming process for stepparents' income. The first column indicates if the state or territory deems income, the second column indicates the initial earned income disregard available to the stepparent, and the third column describes any other disregards available to the stepparent (which are most often needs-based disregards). The table also indicates the income standards used by states and territories to determine any needs-based disregard. Policy highlights for 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-one states and territories require that some of the stepparent's income be deemed to the unit.
- D.C. does not require deeming of income from the stepparents.
- In the remaining 22 states, there is no policy regarding deeming since the stepparents must be included in the unit.

As noted for table I.D.1, information pertaining to disregards for child support payments for dependents outside the home or alimony is not captured in the table but can be found in the WRD.

Related tables: See table I.E.3 (Standards for Estimating Eligibility) to determine the income standards listed in the final column for a family of three. For additional information on whether stepparents are potentially eligible to be included in the assistance unit, see table I.B.4.

Treatment of Income and Assets of Nonparent Caretakers (Table I.D.3)

In general, the treatment of a nonparent caretaker's income and assets depends on whether that person is included in the assistance unit. Typically, if caretakers are included in the unit, then their income and assets are counted; if caretakers are not included in the unit, then their income and assets are not counted. This means that a "child only" unit (composed of a child living with a nonparent caretaker who is not counted in the unit) often has a countable income of $0. However, states and territories may establish different policies, such as treating income differently for eligibility determination versus benefit computation. Table I.D.3 describes the state and territory policies regarding the income of nonparent caretakers. Key highlights from the 2024 data include the following:

- For caretakers who are not in the assistance unit, three states (Arizona, Nevada, and Texas) include at least a portion of their income for eligibility and/or benefit computation.
- All 47 states and one territory (the Virgin Islands) that include at least some caretakers in the assistance unit count at least a portion of the included caretaker's income for eligibility and benefit calculations.

Related table: For information on whether nonparent caretakers are included in the assistance unit, see table I.B.11.

Treatment of Income of Parents Excluded from the Assistance Unit Due to Immigrant Status (Table I.D.4)

In many cases, the restrictions placed on immigrants' eligibility for TANF (see Tables I.B.5 through I.B.7) result in a parent not being eligible to be in the assistance unit, while one or more children are potentially eligible. For example, in the case of two lawful permanent residents who have been in the United States for three years, and who have a baby who was born in the United States, the baby is potentially eligible for TANF (because he or she is a citizen) while the parents are still within the five-year bar, and therefore ineligible in many states and territories. In all cases when a parent is in the household but is not included in the assistance unit, either all or a portion of the parent's income is considered available to the potentially eligible children for purposes of determining their eligibility and benefits. As with grandparent and stepparent deeming, states and territories may allow parents who are excluded from the unit due to immigrant status to disregard a portion of their earned income, similar to the earned income disregards

available to applicants. States and territories may also allow additional disregards, and some states and territories only count a prorated portion of the parent's income.

Table I.D.4 describes state and territory policies that apply to units in which a child has a parent who is living in the household but not eligible to be part of the assistance unit due to immigrant status. The first column indicates if the state or territory deems income from immigrant parents in this situation, the second column shows the initial earned income disregards available to the immigrant parent, the third column reflects any additional income disregards provided, and the fourth column conveys the computation methods used in determining both eligibility and benefits. Key highlights from the 2024 data include the following:

- Three states deem all the excluded parent's income available to the unit for both eligibility and benefit calculations.
- Forty-seven states allow parents who are excluded from the unit due to immigrant status to disregard some portion of their income, with different disregards sometimes used for eligibility determination and for benefit computation.
- A large majority of states (47) utilize the "standard" method of computation—adding deemed income to the unit's other income and then performing the eligibility and benefit computations with the unit size of the eligible members. Other states use other formulas. California and Montana, for example, compute eligibility and benefits using the family size that includes the family members who are ineligible due to immigrant status but cap the benefit at the maximum payment for the family size that includes only the eligible members. Oregon also computes eligibility using the unit size that includes family members who are ineligible but computes the benefit using the unit size that only includes eligible members.
- One state (Wisconsin) and two territories (Guam and Puerto Rico) do not allow eligibility for families in which a parent in the household is excluded due to immigrant status.

    - **Related tables:** Tables I.B.5, I.B.6, and I.B.7 describe the variation in state and territory policies concerning the eligibility of pre-PRWORA and post-PRWORA aliens.

E. How much income can a family have and still be eligible?

To determine initial eligibility for benefits, many states and territories use income eligibility tests—that is, tests that compare the unit's gross or net income amount to a specified income threshold. If the applicant's countable income (for purposes of that test) exceeds the threshold, the applicant is not eligible to receive

benefits. Income eligibility tests and the calculation of countable income vary greatly across states and territories.

This section of the Databook describes the types of eligibility tests in the states and territories, the earned income disregards used for the net income tests, and the income eligibility standards used for the various tests. It also presents a calculation of the maximum income for initial eligibility upon applying. The first three tables in this section must be used together to fully understand the income eligibility tests in each state and territory.

Income Eligibility Test for Applicants (Table I.E.1)

To determine initial eligibility for benefits, most states and territories impose income eligibility tests on applicants. States and territories use the total gross income calculated from the unit's earned and unearned income as a starting point for these tests. States and territories may impose one income test on applicants or use a combination of tests, which might include a gross income test, a gross earnings test, an unearned income test, and a net income test.

A gross income test compares the unit's total income (earned and unearned, including any deemed income) with a state- or territory-determined standard. If the unit's income is less than the standard, the next test is applied (if applicable) or the unit is considered eligible and a benefit is computed. A gross earnings test and an unearned income test operate similarly, but only the unit's earned income is used for a gross earnings test and only the unit's unearned income is used for an unearned income test.

States and territories may also impose net income tests, either after a gross income test or in lieu of it. Net income is calculated by subtracting the state's or territory's earned income disregards from the unit's gross earned income and then adding the unit's unearned income to this amount. The net income is then compared to an income standard determined by the state or territory. If the net income is less than the standard, the next test is applied (if applicable) or the unit is considered eligible and a benefit is computed.

Table I.E.1 describes states' and territories' income eligibility tests for determining whether an applicant is eligible for assistance.[37] The table indicates the state or territory income standard used for each test. "No explicit tests" indicates that either the state or territory imposes no income tests on applicants (other than the implicit test inherent in the benefit computation formula) or the state or territory imposes an income test, but the calculation of the test and disregards allowed for the test are no different from those used to calculate the benefit. Policies from 2024 include the following:

[37] In some states and territories, applicants with earnings are ineligible for cash assistance. In these cases, table I.E.1 describes the income eligibility tests an applicant must pass to be eligible for nonfinancial assistance.

- Forty-seven states and territories have explicit net or gross income tests for applicants.
- Of these states, eighteen require applicants to pass two or more income eligibility tests.
- Seven states have no explicit income eligibility tests for applicants.

Related tables: Table I.E.3 provides the eligibility standards used to determine eligibility for a three-person family. Tables I.D.1, I.D.2, and I.D.4 describe policies concerning the deeming of income from grandparents, stepparents, and immigrant parents, respectively, that may be used when determining gross income for income eligibility tests. Table I.E.2 describes the earned income disregards that may be used for net income tests. Table I.E.4 combines information on the income eligibility tests applied to applicants with information on the earned income disregards and eligibility standards to show the maximum earnings a family can have and still be eligible for TANF. Table L3, in the last section of this report, provides the same information as in table I.E.4 for selected years from 1996 through 2024. Table L3(a) shows the same information as Table L3, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers.

Earned Income Disregards for Initial Income Eligibility Purposes (Table I.E.2)

States and territories that impose a net income test generally disregard a portion of the unit's earned income before comparing the income to the state's or territory's income standard. The amount of disregarded earned income varies greatly across states and territories. Table I.E.2 describes the earned income disregards applied to applicants' income in determining net income for the income eligibility tests.[38] When a state or territory has more than one net income test and imposes different disregards for the tests, the table will show two rows for the state or territory. Each row describes both the disregard and for which net income test the disregard applies. When a state or territory has no explicit net income tests, the table indicates "no explicit net income test." Some states and territories may have net income tests but may not apply a general earned income disregard; instead, they may disregard earnings only for specific expenses, such as child care. In those cases, "No disregards allowed" appears in the table. Key policies from 2024 include the following:

- Eighteen states and territories have no explicit net income test for initial income eligibility purposes, so this table is not applicable. (In states and territories that do not impose an explicit net income test as defined by the WRD, a unit's net income affects eligibility status by impacting whether they are eligible for a positive benefit.)

[38] Some states and territories consider units who have received assistance in one of the previous four months as recipients for the purpose of earned income disregards, even if they stopped receiving assistance and are reapplying for benefits.

- One state (Ohio) has a net income test that allows applicants to deduct specific costs, including dependent care expenses, but they do not disregard any other earnings when applying the net income test.
- Two states (California and Texas) have two different net income tests, which use different disregards.

Additional disregards for child care expenses paid by a family or special disregards for units affected by a family cap or time limit are not included in the Databook; however, this information is included in the WRD.

Related tables: In some cases, states and territories also use net income tests to determine a recipient's continuing eligibility. The earned income disregards used in applying net income tests for recipients' ongoing eligibility are captured in table IV.A.5. (When a state or territory has established different earned income disregards for applicants and recipients, the disregards are generally lower for applicants and higher for recipients.) See table II.A.1 for the earned income disregards used in computing net income for purposes of determining the benefit level; whether a unit is eligible for a positive benefit is an implicit net income test in most states and territories.

Standards for Determining Eligibility (Table I.E.3)

As described earlier, most income tests involve state- and territory-established income amounts that vary by the size of the assistance unit. The WRD includes the standards for each family size from 1 through 12. Table I.E.3 provides the standards for a three-person assistance unit.

Table I.E.3 identifies the standard by the name used in the caseworker manual. Under the former AFDC program, the standard for income eligibility tests was called the "need standard." Currently, because of the complexity of state and territory programs, there is no longer a single need standard concept. Instead, states and territories may compare an assistance unit's income against multiple standards, depending on the type or amount of income. Therefore, the term "need standard" is not used in the table unless the state explicitly uses it to refer to its eligibility standard. Key policies from 2024 include the following:

- Standards for determining eligibility vary significantly across states and territories. The values for a family of three range from a $188 "Recognizable Needs" standard in Texas to a $7,270 "Need Standard" in Washington.

These values must be interpreted in conjunction with the information in other tables. The numbers do not by themselves indicate the maximum income at which a family may be eligible. That maximum depends on multiple policies, and on whether a family's income is earned or unearned.

Some details concerning eligibility standards are not included in table I.E.3. In some states or territories, different dollar amounts may be used in different regions of the state or territory; in those cases, table I.E.3 includes the amounts for the most populous area of the state or territory. In other states and territories, the amounts may be higher for families with certain types of "special needs," such as a pregnancy; the amounts in table I.E.3 assume no special needs. Also, states or territories may vary standards for one-parent families, two-parent families, and child-only units; table I.E.3 includes values for a one-parent family with two children. States or territories may prorate the eligibility or benefit standards depending on whether a unit pays for shelter; the amounts in the table assume the unit pays all shelter costs and does not live in public housing or have a housing voucher.

Related tables: These standards by themselves are not comparable across states and territories since the income tests differ. To determine how the standards are used in practice, see tables I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.4, I.E.1, and IV.A.4.

Maximum Earnings for Initial Eligibility for a Family of Three (Table I.E.4)

Table I.E.4 synthesizes the various financial rules related to initial eligibility to provide information on the maximum amount a family of three can earn and still be eligible for assistance. The calculation incorporates information on the income eligibility rules for applicants, earned income disregards for eligibility and benefit computation, benefit computation policies, and the eligibility and payment standards. The calculation determines the maximum amount of earnings an applicant can have and still be technically eligible for assistance in each state and territory. Technical eligibility does not mean the unit will necessarily receive a cash benefit, but the unit will have passed all eligibility tests and will be eligible for some positive amount. Most states and territories distribute a cash benefit only if it is greater than $10.

The calculation assumes the assistance unit includes one parent and two children, has only earned income, has no child care expenses, contains no children subject to a family cap, has no special needs, pays for all shelter costs with no subsidies, and is subject to the benefit standard that applies to the majority of the state's or territory's caseload.

Key findings for 2024 include the following:

- The maximum monthly earnings a family of three can have at application and be eligible for TANF varies significantly across states and territories. The values for a family of three range from $378 in Indiana to $3,077 in Minnesota.
- Across the states and territories, the average (mean) earnings level that is the maximum possible amount allowing initial TANF eligibility is $1,107. The median figure is lower, at $965.

Related tables: Table L3 provides the maximum income for initial eligibility for selected years from 1996 through 2024. Table L3(a) shows the same information as Table L3, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers. Table IV.A.6 provides information on the amount of earnings a *recipient* may have and remain eligible for assistance. (The figures for recipients may differ from those for applicants due to differences in income eligibility tests and earnings disregards.)

Benefits

The tables in this chapter of the Databook describe key aspects of the rules for calculating and distributing the assistance unit's benefit as of July 1, 2024. The tables include information on how benefits are calculated, the maximum benefits for different types of assistance units, and how benefits are administered.

A. If a family passes all eligibility tests, what is received?

Rules for calculating benefits apply once the family has passed all eligibility tests, both nonfinancial and financial. State and territory rules for calculating benefits vary, and the calculations across states and territories range in complexity. In the more straightforward calculations, net income is subtracted from a state- or territory-determined standard (often called the payment standard), which varies by family size, and the benefit paid is the difference (sometimes referred to as the income deficit). Other states and territories, however, may use more complex calculations or pay a flat grant amount. The following section describes these policies in greater detail.

Earned Income Disregards for Benefit Computation (Table II.A.1)

When states and territories use net income for benefit computation, they disregard a portion of the assistance unit's income in calculating the income of the unit. Table II.A.1 describes the earned income disregards allowed when calculating the benefit. If a state or territory pays a flat grant amount (explained further below), then earned income disregards are not relevant to benefit computation and "No disregards – flat grant amount" appears in the table. In some cases, states and territories use different earned income disregards to determine the benefit of a unit in its first month of eligibility versus subsequent months. This information is included in the tables and notes. Policies for 2024 include the following:

- All 52 states and territories that vary benefits with income use an earned income disregard.
- Of the states and territories that do have earned income disregards for benefit computation, 32 have a disregard that applies in all months (including Virginia whose income disregard amount varies by unit size) and 20 have an income disregard that changes over time.

Some states and territories disregard a portion of the child care expenses paid by a family or allow special disregards for units subject to a family cap or time limit. Those disregards are not included in the table but are captured in the WRD.

Related tables: Disregards for benefit computation and income eligibility may differ. For information on the earned income disregards used for an applicant's income eligibility, see table I.E.2. See table IV.A.5 for

the earned income disregards used with income eligibility tests for recipients' ongoing eligibility. Table L4, in the last section of this report, describes the earned income disregards used for benefit computation for selected years from 1996 through 2024.

Benefit Determination Policies (Table II.A.2)

Table II.A.2 describes how states and territories compute benefits for units that pass all applicable eligibility tests. In many states and territories, net income is subtracted from a state- or territory-determined payment standard, which typically varies by the size of the assistance unit. The benefit paid to the family is then the difference between the net income and state or territory payment standard, sometimes referred to as the income deficit. States and territories may also impose a statutory maximum benefit, generally varying by family size. In these states and territories, the benefit is either the income deficit or the statutory maximum, whichever is less. Still other states and territories may multiply the income deficit by a percentage, which is sometimes referred to as the benefit reduction rate. This percentage of the income deficit is the benefit provided to the unit. States and territories may combine both a statutory maximum and benefit reduction rate into their calculation. Finally, some states and territories may provide a fixed (flat grant) amount, regardless of family income. Policies for 2024 include the following:

- A majority of states and territories (37) compute benefits for all or most of their caseload by subtracting income from a selected dollar amount (a payment standard); the benefit equals the difference (the income deficit). One of these states, Maryland, adds a flat amount to the benefit for each unit member.
- Fifteen states pay only a portion of the income deficit, impose a maximum, or use both of those strategies in combination.
- Two states—Arkansas and Wisconsin—determine benefits for eligible families in a way that does not vary with family income.

Related tables: For the income standards named in this table, table II.A.3 gives the value of the standard for a three-person family. Table II.A.4 combines information from table II.A.2 with information on benefit standards for various family sizes and presents the benefit paid to an assistance unit with no net income and with two, three, four, five, or six members. Table II.A.1 describes the earned income disregards allowed in calculating the net income used for benefit computation, and tables I.D.1, I.D.2, I.D.4, and IV.A.2 include policies on the treatment of unearned income (amounts deemed from grandparent units, stepparent units, immigrant parents, and treatment of child support income). Table L5, in the last section of this report, provides the maximum benefits paid to a three-person unit for selected years from 1996 through 2024.

Table L5(a) shows the same information as Table L5, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers.

Standards for Determining Benefits (Table II.A.3)

As described earlier, benefit computations involve state- or territory-established income amounts that almost always vary by the size of the assistance unit. The WRD includes the benefit standards used for each family size from 1 through 12. Table II.A.3 provides the standards for a three-person assistance unit with one adult and two children. The first two columns of the table describe what we refer to in general terms as the "payment standard"—the dollar amount from which net income is subtracted, or the flat grant amount in the few states that use that approach. The first column gives the state's or territory's name for this standard, and the second column gives the amount of this standard for a three-person family. In states and territories that impose a statutory maximum benefit, the third and fourth columns of the table provide the state's or territory's name for that standard and the amount of the maximum benefit for a three-person family. Policy highlights from 2024 include the following:

- Eleven states have a statutory maximum benefit. The amount for a family of three ranges from $260 in Mississippi to $1,370 in Minnesota. (The amount for Minnesota includes the SNAP allotment; excluding the portion intended for food assistance, the maximum benefit in Minnesota is $731.)

In some states and territories, different dollar amounts may be used in different regions of the state or territory; in those cases, the table includes the amounts applied to the most populous area of the state or territory with a footnote indicating that the benefits are not constant across the state or territory. In other states and territories, the amounts may be higher for families with certain special needs, such as a pregnancy; the amounts in the table assume no special needs. Also, a few states or territories may have different sets of standards for one-parent families, two-parent families, and child-only units (in other words, the payment standard might differ for a single parent with two children compared with a married couple with one child, even though both units have three people); the table shows the values for a one-parent family with two children. Finally, states and territories may prorate the eligibility or benefit standards depending on whether a unit pays for shelter; the amounts in the table assume the unit pays all shelter costs and does not live in public or subsidized housing.

Related tables: The standards by themselves are not necessarily comparable across states and territories, since benefit computation procedures differ. To determine how the standards are used in practice, see table II.A.2. Table II.A.4 provides the benefit paid to two- to six-person units with no other income, and table L5 provides the three-person maximum benefits for selected years from 1996 through 2024. Table L5(a) shows the same information as Table L5, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to

2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers. Table II.A.5 provides the benefit paid to a unit consisting of a single child, with no adults.

Maximum Monthly Benefit for a Family with No Income (Table II.A.4)

The maximum benefit calculation combines the information on a state's or territory's benefit computation policies with the dollar amounts used for benefit computation to present the benefit paid to a unit with no income. If a state or territory computes benefits as a payment standard minus net income, then this figure will simply equal the payment standard. In other cases, this figure will equal a statutory maximum benefit (which is less than the payment standard). In still other cases, it will be a percentage of the payment standard. Table II.A.4 provides information on the maximum benefit in each state or territory for family sizes two through six. The calculation assumes the assistance unit includes one parent and the other unit members are children, the unit contains no children subject to a family cap, no assistance unit members have special needs, the unit pays for all shelter costs with no subsidies, and the unit is subject to the benefit standard that applies to the majority of the state's or territory's caseload. Key findings for 2024 include the following:

- The maximum monthly benefit for a family of three with no income ranges from $204 in Arkansas to $1,291 in New Hampshire.
- Across the states and territories, the average (mean) maximum monthly benefit for a family of three is $575. The median figure is slightly lower, at $556.

Data for family sizes larger than six people may be found in the WRD.

Related tables: Table L5 provides the benefit paid to a three-person assistance unit with no net income for selected years from 1996 through 2024. Table L5(a) shows the same information as Table L5, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers. Table II.A.5 gives the maximum benefits paid to child-only units with one child.

Maximum Monthly Benefit for a Child-Only Unit with One Child, No Income (Table II.A.5)

Table II.A.5 provides the maximum monthly TANF benefit that could be paid to a child-only unit consisting of a single child. Information is shown for three different circumstances that may lead to child-only units: when the child lives with a nonparent caretaker who has never been included in the unit, a parent or caretaker who receives SSI, or a parent who is excluded due to immigrant status. (If a state's or territory's TANF program does not provide benefits in one or more of those situations, no value is shown and more information is provided in a footnote.) Policies for 2024 include the following:

- Among the states and territories whose TANF programs include at least two of these three types of child-only units, seven states pay different TANF benefits depending on the reason that the unit includes only children.
- Across the states and territories, the average (mean) child-only benefit is $320 when the child lives with a nonparent caretaker and $304 when the child lives with a parent excluded from the unit due to immigrant status. The average child-only benefit across the states is $311 when the child lives with a parent excluded from the unit due to SSI receipt.

Related tables: For more information on policies leading to a unit being child-only, tables I.B.5, I.B.6, and I.B.7 provide information on parents who are immigrants, table I.B.10 provides information on SSI recipients, and table I.B.11 provides information on nonparent caretakers.

Benefit Issuance Policies (Table II.A.6)

Table II.A.6 provides the method by which states and territories deliver TANF benefits to families. The four possible methods for distributing benefits are paper checks, electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards, electronic payment cards (EPC), and electronic funds transfers (EFT). An EBT card is a state- or territory-issued debit card on which benefits are deposited by the state or territory, similar to (and sometimes the same as) the cards used by the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). An EPC card is similar to an EBT card; however, EPC cards are issued and maintained by a third-party brand, such as Visa or MasterCard, rather than the state or territory. An EFT is an electronic direct deposit into a recipient's checking account. In addition, some states and territories may offer benefits in the form of direct vendor payments or vouchers. These instances are footnoted.

Under the Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012, states and territories are directed to prevent the use of EBT and EPC cards "in any liquor store; any casino, gambling casino, or gaming establishment; or any retail establishment which provides adult-oriented entertainment."[39] The last column of table II.A.6 describes the locations where states prohibit the use of EBT or EPC cards, beyond those already prohibited under federal law. Policies for 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-nine states and two territories (Guam and Puerto Rico) allow electronic benefits transfer (EBT) as a form of benefit issuance.
- Thirteen states allow electronic payment cards (EPC) as a form of benefit issuance.

[39] Public Law 112-96. Middle Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012: https://www.congress.gov/112/plaws/publ96/PLAW-112publ96.pdf (PDF).

- Twenty-nine states and one territory (the Virgin Islands) allow electronic funds transfer (EFT) as a form of benefit issuance.

Activity Requirements

The tables in this chapter of the Databook describe requirements that individual members of an assistance unit must meet to become or remain eligible for assistance, as of July 1, 2024. To receive benefits, most states and territories require recipients to negotiate and sign contracts detailing what is required of individuals within the unit. These requirements vary considerably by state and territory but can include conditions for dependent children as well as conditions for the adult head of the household. All states' and territories' TANF programs include work requirements, as well as sanctions if work requirements are not met.

A. Once determined eligible, what must a recipient family do to maintain benefits?

States and territories place various types of requirements on members of the assistance unit—including not only work requirements but also other types of behavioral requirements. For example, dependent children may be required to maintain a minimum grade point average in school, and adults may be required to keep current with immunizations for their children. Fulfilling behavioral requirements can be a condition of initial and continuing eligibility.

Behavioral Requirements and Bonuses (Table III.A.1)

Behavioral requirements affect adults and minor parents in many states and territories. Requirements imposed on children may include school, immunization, health screening, and other health requirements. Table III.A.1 captures whether the following requirements and bonuses are imposed for either initial or continuing eligibility:

- School policies may require children to attend school or to achieve at least a minimum grade point average. This Databook addresses only the school requirements imposed on dependent children, not those that may be imposed on minor parents. (Although not included in this report, information about school requirements for minor parents is available in the WRD.)
- States and territories may also offer a school bonus, which provides financial incentives for assistance units whose children meet specific attendance or achievement standards.
- Immunization policies require parents or caretakers to have their children immunized. Sometimes, proof of immunization for children is not required if they are enrolled in school because the school systems impose their own immunization requirements. Additionally, the immunization requirement

may be waived if the immunization requirement might risk a child's health or violate a family's religious beliefs.

- Health screening requirements may include regular checkups for both children and adults, although the requirements usually apply only to children. Other health requirements primarily involve compliance with the rules of the Early and Periodic Screening, Diagnosis, and Treatment (EPSDT) program.

Requirements are only included in this table if (1) they are either explicitly mentioned in the state's or territory's TANF manual as a requirement for cash assistance or recipients must sign a contract including one of the requirements to receive benefits and (2) a sanction results from noncompliance. The dollar amounts of bonuses and the dollar amounts of sanctions for not complying with requirements are not included in the table but are available in the WRD.

Policies from 2024 include the following:

- Forty states and territories have some sort of school requirements recipients must follow to remain eligible.
- Twenty-three states have immunization requirements for recipients.
- Five states require health screenings for recipients.

B. What work activities are required?

Under the TANF block grant, the federal government requires states and territories to (1) meet the annual work participation rates determined by the federal government and (2) ensure that every recipient is working (as defined by the state or territory) as soon as the state or territory determines he or she is able or after 24 months of benefit receipt, whichever is earlier.[40] States and territories that do not meet the federal requirements may be sanctioned financially. States and territories may determine who is exempt from

[40] The work participation rate is the percentage of the state or territory TANF caseload with a work-eligible individual that must be participating in work activities in order to meet federal requirements. In 2024, federal rules required that among a state's or territory's cases that include a work-eligible individual, 50 percent participate in work activities an average of 30 hours a week (an average of 20 hours per week if a single-parent family with a child under 6); two-parent families (with two work-eligible individuals) were required to participate at a rate of 90 percent for an average of 35 hours a week. The caseload reduction credit reduces states'/territories' work participation rate targets. For more information on the work participation rate, see the FFY 2014 and 2015 TANF Report to Congress available at https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/documents/ofa/12th_annual_tanf_report_to_congress_final.pdf (PDF).

activities requirements, what activities are possible for nonexempt recipients, and what sanctions are imposed on individuals who do not comply with requirements.[41]

Work-Related Activity Exemptions for Single-Parent Head of Unit (Table III.B.1)

States and territories may, but are not required to, exempt certain individuals or groups from participating in work-related activities. Table III.B.1 describes each state's or territory's rules for exempting a single-parent head of an assistance unit from work-related requirements. The table includes exemptions for individuals who are working a specified number of hours in an unsubsidized job, are ill or incapacitated, are caring for an ill or incapacitated person, are older than a state- or territory-specified age, are in a specified month of pregnancy, or are caring for a child under a specified age.

Policies for 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-five states and territories exempt single-parent unit heads from work requirements if they are ill or incapacitated.
- Eighteen states and two territories (Guam and Puerto Rico) exempt single-parent unit heads from work requirements if they are 60 years or older and one state (New Jersey) exempts single-parent heads if they are 62 years or older. Additionally, six states and one territory (the Virgin Islands) exempt single-parent heads if they are 65 years or older.
- Nine states and one territory (Puerto Rico) exempt single-parent unit heads from work requirements during some portion of a pregnancy.
- Three states (Colorado, Idaho, and New Mexico) do not allow any of the work-related activity exemptions shown in the table.

The exemptions shown in this table are the most common, but this list is not exhaustive. For other exemption criteria, see the WRD. Also, some states and territories will consider some of these criteria as "good cause" for noncompliance, even if they do not provide an explicit exemption in these cases.

Related tables: See Table L6 for information about the exemptions for a parent caring for a young child for selected years from 1996 through 2024.

[41] What a state/territory requires of a particular group of recipients may be more or less than what would be required for those individuals to "count" as participating in work activities for purposes of federal calculations. The Welfare Rules Database captures work requirements and other policies as determined by the states and territories, rather than the policies to meet the federal participation requirements.

Work-Related Activity Requirements for Single-Parent Head of Unit (Table III.B.2)

Work programs vary widely across states and territories based on several factors, including who must work, how much work is required, and what activities are considered work. Table III.B.2 provides a general overview of state and territory activity requirements. The table describes when the recipient must begin participating, the activities that may be allowed, and how many hours the recipient must participate each week, including what share of those hours can be spent in education and training programs. Not all assistance units have the same work requirements. For simplicity, this table only includes the activities requirements for units headed by a single-parent 20 years old or older with children at least 6 years of age. Work activity requirements for other units may be found in the WRD.

Policies for 2024 include the following:

- Thirty-eight states and territories require single-parent unit heads to immediately meet work requirements upon benefit receipt.
- Forty-one states and territories require single-parent unit heads to work a minimum of 30 hours per week.

This table should be interpreted as providing an overview of states' and territories' work-related activity policies rather than a full picture of those policies. In particular, caseworker manuals (which are the primary source documents for the WRD) do not generally indicate the likelihood that a recipient will be assigned to one activity or another. Thus, two states or territories could have the same potential activities but have very different policies for how often different activities are assigned in practice. Alternatively, one state or territory might include a potential activity not listed in another state's or territory's list but in practice rarely assign anyone to that activity. Despite these limitations, the table provides a starting point for understanding the range of work-related requirements across states and territories.

Sanction Policies for Noncompliance with Work Requirements for Single-Parent Head of Unit (Table III.B.3)

If adults required to participate in activities do not comply with the requirements, the state or territory can sanction the unit. States and territories have discretion in defining what constitutes noncompliance and the consequences for noncompliance. Typically, if a recipient does not participate in assigned activities for the specified number of hours, the recipient is not complying and could be sanctioned. A sanction generally results in the removal of the noncompliant individual from the unit for benefit computation, a percentage reduction in the entire unit's benefit, a full benefit sanction, or complete case closure. A full benefit sanction results in the unit losing its entire benefit for some period, whereas a complete case closure often requires

the applicant to reapply after the sanction period. Often states and territories increase the severity of the sanction based on the number of times or the amount of time the individual is noncompliant.

Table III.B.3 describes sanction policies for failing to comply with work requirements. The table provides both the initial sanction (for the first instance of noncompliance) and the most severe sanction (after multiple instances of noncompliance). For both the initial and most severe sanctions, the table describes the amount of the reduction in benefits and the duration of the sanction. When the sanction is described as "adult portion of the benefit," the state or territory re-computes benefits using an assistance unit size that excludes the noncompliant adult. (If the adult has any income, some or all of it is deemed available to the children to prevent an increase in benefit.) When the sanction is instead described as "pro rata portion of the benefit," the state or territory reduces the benefit by one-half in the case of a two-person unit with a noncompliant member, by one-third in the case of a three-person unit with a noncompliant member, and so on.

Policy highlights from 2024 include the following:

- Nine states reduce the entire TANF benefit by a fixed percentage for the first case of noncompliance with work requirements. Eight states and two territories (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands) reduce the TANF benefit by removing the adult portion of the benefit for the first case of noncompliance with work requirements. Illinois and Maryland reduce the adult portion of the benefit by 30 percent. Washington reduces the TANF benefit by the adult portion or 40 percent, whichever is greater.
- Thirty-two states and territories close the TANF case as the most severe sanction for noncompliance with work requirements.

The WRD includes more details on sanctions, including any sanctions that occur between the initial and most severe sanctions.

Related table: See table L7 for information about the most severe sanction for selected years from 1996 through 2024.

Work-Related Activity Requirements for Parents Outside the Unit and Nonparent Caretakers (Table III.B.4)

Parents and caretakers who are not included in the assistance unit are generally not required to engage in work-related activities. However, in some cases, adults who are not included in the assistance unit are still subject to work-related activity requirements, with variations in policy across states and territories and in the reason that the adult is not in the unit. Nonparent caretakers who are in the assistance unit are generally required to participate in the same way as parents, but these policies vary across the states and territories.

Table III.B.4 shows the work-related activity requirements for parents who are not in the assistance unit due to immigrant status or due to time limits. The table also shows the policies for nonparent caretakers who are not in the assistance unit and for nonparent caretakers who are in the assistance unit.

Key policies for 2024 include the following:

- Forty states and territories do not require parents outside the assistance unit due to immigrant status to participate in work requirements. Participation is required in ten states and optional in three states.
- Among the four states in which a child-only unit may be created due to a family reaching a time limit, two states (Indiana and Oregon) require parents outside the assistance unit due to time limits to participate in work requirements, one state (Texas) offers parents outside the assistance unit due to time limits the option to participate in work requirements, and one state (California) does not require parents outside the assistance unit to participate in work requirements.
- Fifty-two states and territories do not require nonparent caretakers outside the assistance unit to participate in work requirements; their participation is optional in two states (New York and Oklahoma).
- All fifty states and territories that ever include a nonparent caretaker in the assistance unit require those caretakers to participate in work requirements.

Ongoing Eligibility and Transitional Benefits

The tables in this chapter of the Databook describe key aspects of the rules that affect recipients' ongoing eligibility as of July 1, 2024. After a family applies for assistance and passes all eligibility tests, its members become recipients and a benefit is calculated. However, the recipients still face eligibility requirements that affect their ability to continue receiving benefits. States and territories may impose income and asset tests on recipients, which generally differ from the initial eligibility tests for applicants. Having an additional child may or may not affect eligibility limits and benefits. States and territories also impose time limits, which reduce or eliminate benefits to recipients based on their accumulated total months of benefit receipt. Additionally, states and territories may provide some "transitional" cash benefit to families who are leaving TANF. The following four sections describe the requirements that affect ongoing eligibility and transitional assistance.

A. What eligibility tests must recipient families pass for continuing eligibility?

Like applicants, recipients must pass both nonfinancial and financial tests to remain eligible for assistance each month. The nonfinancial rules generally do not vary for applicants and recipients; however, for some rules, such as two-parent eligibility, they may. Unlike nonfinancial rules, the financial rules often differ for applicants and recipients. The following provides more information on two-parent hours tests, treatment of child support income, asset tests, income eligibility tests, and earned income disregards for recipient units, as well as the maximum amount a recipient can earn and remain eligible.

Eligibility Rules for Two-Parent Recipient Units in Which Neither Parent Has a Disability (Table IV.A.1)

In addition to the standard eligibility tests that all recipient units must pass, some states and territories may impose "hours tests" on two-parent units. Under an hours test, the unit is not eligible if the principal wage earner is working more than a specified number of hours per month. States and territories may apply this rule when determining the initial or continuing eligibility of two-parent families. For states and territories providing benefits to two-parent families, table IV.A.1 describes the hours test imposed on two-parent

recipients where neither parent has a disability ("unemployed-parent" families, in the former AFDC program).[42] Policies for 2024 include the following:

- Forty-six states and one territory (Guam) have no limit on hours worked per month for two-parent recipient units in which neither parent has a disability.
- Mississippi and South Dakota limit the hours worked in a month to 100.

Related tables: See table I.B.2 for details on the hours test for applicants and table L2 for information on the rules for two-parent units for selected years from 1996 through 2024.

Treatment of Child Support Income for Recipients (Table IV.A.2)

TANF recipients are required to assign their child support income to the state. The state or territory then decides what portion, if any, of the child support collected is counted for eligibility determination, what portion, if any, is transferred to the family as unearned income, and how much of the portion transferred to the family is counted as income in determining the benefit.[43] Table IV.A.2 describes each state's and territory's treatment of child support income for recipients.

The first column of the table displays the amount of collected child support counted for recipients' eligibility determination (regardless of whether any is transferred to the family). Those states and territories that do *not* count child support collections for determining recipients' eligibility typically establish some method to ensure that families with high and continuing child support amounts do not remain on TANF indefinitely. The second column of the table shows what portion of the collected child support is transferred to the family as unearned income, and the third column indicates how much of that transferred amount is disregarded for benefit computation. As an example, the $50 "pass-through" that was allowed under AFDC would be represented in this table with a "$50" coded in both the second and third columns; $50 is transferred to the unit as unearned income, and, of that amount, all $50 is disregarded for benefit computation.

[42] Louisiana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands do not provide TANF benefits to two-parent assistance units in which neither parent has a disability. Also, in some states and territories, benefits are provided to two-parent units under solely state-funded or separate state programs funded by state and territory monies rather than the TANF grant. The table includes those states and territories as providing benefits to two-parent families regardless of the funding source.

[43] States are required to pay a share (equal to the state's Medicaid match rate) of all child support collected on behalf of TANF recipients to the federal government. States may still provide all child support collected to the recipient; in that case, the state must use other funds to pay the federal share.

Key policies in place as of July 2024 include the following:

- Twenty-nine states and territories consider at least a portion of the child support income collected by the state for purposes of a recipient's eligibility.
- Twenty-one states do not transfer any portion of the child support collected to the family.

Asset Limits for Recipients and Related Assets Policies (Table IV.A.3)

States and territories determine the maximum amount of assets—including vehicles and restricted assets—a family may hold and still remain eligible for benefits. Table IV.A.3 describes each state's and territory's asset tests for recipients. The first column of the table provides the limit on the value of unrestricted assets a family may hold and still be eligible for assistance. Unrestricted assets include the cash value of any asset the state or territory counts toward the limit, regardless of the asset's purpose. The asset limits applied to determine a recipient's ongoing eligibility may vary from limits applied to determine an applicant's initial eligibility.

The second column describes whether some or all of the value of a vehicle or vehicles is excluded in determining the amount of a family's assets for eligibility purposes. When a portion of the vehicle's value is exempted, the value may be given in terms of equity or fair-market value. The fair-market value is the amount for which the vehicle could be sold, while the equity value is the fair-market value minus any amount still owed on the vehicle. When a family still owes money on a vehicle, the equity value will be less than the fair-market value, so this distinction is important when comparing vehicle exemption amounts across states and territories.

The last three columns describe programs that allow families to save money in a special account, often with no fees, sometimes with their savings matched with funds from the government or other entity (referred to as the match rate in the tables), and with some requirements placed on the uses of the funds. These programs may be available to non-TANF as well as TANF families, but even those not explicitly connected with the TANF program are shown in the table to provide a more complete picture of asset-related policies affecting TANF families. In states and territories that limit the countable assets that families may have and still be eligible for TANF, the funds in an account of this type are not counted against the asset limit. For example, a unit may be allowed to save money toward educational expenses or the purchase of a home without that money counting toward its overall asset limit. Some, but not all, restricted accounts are federally defined individual development accounts (IDAs). In the table, accounts that states and territories specify as IDAs are distinguished from other restricted accounts.

Key policies from 2024 include the following:

- Forty-five states and territories have asset limits for recipients. For these states and territories, the limit that applies to most recipients ranges from $1,000 in Georgia, Pennsylvania, and Texas to $15,000 in Michigan. Additionally, California's asset limit for assistance units with an older adult or a person with a disability is $17,452. The asset limit for all other assistance units is $11,634.
- Forty-one states offer some type of restricted asset account.

Related tables: See tables L8 and L9 for information on asset rules in effect in selected years from 1996 through 2024. See table I.C.1 for the asset tests applied at application.

Income Eligibility Tests for Recipients (Table IV.A.4)

Table IV.A.4 describes income eligibility tests that states impose to determine whether a recipient (whose income might have increased since initial eligibility) is eligible to continue receiving benefits. The table indicates which state income standard is used for each test. Even if a family passes all eligibility tests, it is possible in some states and territories that the family will not qualify for a positive benefit under the state's or territory's benefit computation formula. In those cases, the family will not receive a benefit. In some cases, states and territories may have streamlined their eligibility policies and do not perform any income tests other than the implicit test imposed by benefit computation. In these states and territories, the table will indicate "no explicit tests." Key policies for 2024 include the following:

- Thirty states and territories have an explicit net income, gross income, unearned income, or gross earnings test for recipients.
- Eight states require recipients to pass two or more income eligibility tests.
- Twenty-four states have no explicit income eligibility tests for recipients.

Related tables: To determine the value of the particular standard for a family size of three, see table I.E.3. Tables I.D.1, I.D.2, and I.D.4 describe policies concerning the deeming of income from grandparents, stepparents, and immigrant parents, and table IV.A.2 shows the extent to which child support collections are counted in determining gross income for income eligibility tests. Table IV.A.5 describes the earned income disregards used for the net income tests listed in IV.A.4. The tables in sections I.B, I.D, and II.A are also relevant to ongoing eligibility. In most states and territories, recipients are required to pass both nonfinancial and financial tests to continue receiving benefits.

Earned Income Disregards for Continuing Income Eligibility Purposes (Table IV.A.5)

Table IV.A.5 describes the earned income disregards associated with the net income tests in table IV.A.4, which may differ from the amount of earnings disregarded for purposes of initial eligibility or from the amount of earnings disregarded for benefit computation. Policies for 2024 include:

- Ten states use earned income disregards for recipient eligibility purposes.
- All but one of the remaining states and territories do not use an earned income disregard because they do not have an explicit net income test. In Oregon, recipients without earnings who are not in the JOBS Plus component face an explicit net income test, but it only includes unearned sources of income.

Related tables: Table I.E.2 contains the earned income disregards that apply to new TANF applicants for the purpose of determining their initial eligibility, and table II.A.1 gives the earned income disregards for benefit computation.

Maximum Earnings for Ongoing Eligibility for a Family of Three (Table IV.A.6)

Table IV.A.6 synthesizes the various financial rules related to ongoing eligibility to provide information on the maximum amount of income a family of three can earn and remain eligible for assistance in the 2nd, 7th, 13th, and 25th month of combining work and welfare. This calculation incorporates information on the income eligibility rules for recipients, earned income disregards for ongoing eligibility and benefit computation, benefit computation policies, and the eligibility and payment standards. The calculation determines the maximum amount of earnings a three-person family can have and still be technically eligible for assistance in each state and territory, in each month. Technical eligibility does not mean the unit will necessarily receive a cash benefit—most states and territories only distribute a cash benefit if it is over $10—but the unit will have passed all eligibility tests and be eligible for some positive amount.

The calculation assumes the assistance unit includes one parent and two children, has only earned income, has no child care expenses, contains no children subject to a family cap, has no special needs, pays for all shelter costs with no subsidies, and is subject to the benefit standard that applies to the majority of the state's or territory's caseload.

Policy highlights for 2024 include the following:

- The maximum earnings a recipient can have and remain eligible for assistance in month two ranges from $585 in Arizona to $4,950 in Connecticut. Eight states have no maximum in the second month.

- In 20 states and two territories (Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands), the maximum earnings allowed are lower at the 25-month point (the latest month shown in the table) compared with maximum possible earnings in the 2nd month.

Related tables: Table I.E.4 provides information on the amount an applicant may earn and be eligible for assistance. Table L3 displays how much an applicant may earn and be initially eligible for selected years from 1996 through 2024. Table L3(a) shows the same information as Table L3, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers.

B. Are children eligible if born while the family receives benefits?

Benefits to recipients who give birth to a child while receiving aid may or may not be affected by the addition of the child to the assistance unit. A type of policy often referred to as a "family cap" prevents or limits an increase in a family's benefit when another child is born. In the states and territories with this type of policy, the increase in benefit that an assistance unit would otherwise receive for adding another member to the unit is limited.

Family Cap Policies (Table IV.B.1)

Table IV.B.1 describes states' and territories' family cap policies. The table first indicates whether the state or territory imposes a family cap, then provides the number of months following the case opening after which a newborn child is excluded from the assistance unit. The table also describes the impact on the benefit when an additional child is born (whether there is no increase in benefit or some increase smaller than what would occur in the absence of a family cap). In some cases, the amount of cash paid directly to the family does not increase, but the increment that would have been paid in the absence of the policy is instead paid to a third party or provided in the form of a voucher. That information is noted in the table as "none (voucher)" and is explained further in the footnotes. States and territories with "none (disregard)" displayed in the table increase the earned income disregards for families that have a capped child; again, more details are provided in the footnotes. The table also indicates how long a cap, once applied, endures. The table indicates "always capped" if a family is never able to regain benefits for a capped child, even after the case has been closed for a period. Otherwise, the table provides the number of months a family must remain off TANF for the cap to be removed—that is, for the child to be included in the benefit computation should the family apply for assistance again. Policies for 2024 include the following:

- Six states and one territory (Guam) have a family cap policy.
- For the states with family cap policies, five states and Guam do not increase the cash benefit for an additional child born to the unit. Of these, two states employ special provisions for families with a

capped child. Arizona allows an additional earned income disregard for each month the unit member is excluded, equal to the lost benefit amount for units subject to the family cap. South Carolina provides benefits through vouchers up to the amount of increase in cash benefits the unit would have received for the child.

- One state (Florida) does increase the benefit, but at less than the normal increment.
- Five states and one territory (Guam) will not remove the special treatment of the capped child after the family's case has been closed for a specified number of months. In Arkansas, where special treatment is discontinued after case closure, a family's case must have been closed for six months in order for the state to remove the family cap.

Related tables: See table L10 for information on states' and territories' family cap policies in selected years from 1996 through 2024.

C. How long can a family receive benefits?

Since the passage of PRWORA, assistance units that include adults have generally been able to receive no more than 60 months of federally funded TANF aid. Therefore, most states and territories have limited the number of months an assistance unit that includes adults may receive benefits. (Child-only units are generally not subject to time limits.)

States and territories impose two basic types of limits on recipients: (1) lifetime limits (either the federal 60-month lifetime limit or a shorter state- or territory-determined limit), which permanently eliminate the entire benefit, or (2) other intermittent state or territory time limits (periodic time limits, benefit waiting periods, or benefit reduction time limits), which interrupt or reduce benefits for a certain period but do not eliminate them entirely. Both types of time limits may terminate benefits to the entire unit or just the adults in the unit. In addition, while some states and territories impose only the 60-month federal lifetime limits or only other state or territory time limits, other states and territories impose a combination of the two types.

Not all assistance units are subject to time limits. States and territories may continue to provide federally funded benefits to up to 20 percent of their caseload (referred to as the "hardship exemption") beyond the federal 60-month lifetime limit.[44] Exactly which families are eligible to receive this extension of benefits (which adds months of assistance after reaching the federal lifetime limit) varies by state or territory. Families who receive a hardship exemption remain eligible as long as the circumstances that led to their extension continue to exist. In addition, states and territories may use state- or territory-only funds to

[44] Note that federal rules refer to this policy as a hardship "exemption," but the WRD definition would consider this policy an "extension," as it adds additional months of assistance after a family reaches the lifetime limit.

provide various exemptions (which stop the time limit clock from accruing months towards the 60-month lifetime limit) or extensions (which extend assistance beyond 60 months).

Time Limit Policies (Table IV.C.1)

Under TANF, the federal government imposed a maximum 60-month lifetime limit on receipt of TANF funds by families with an adult. Therefore, a family is generally no longer eligible for federal cash assistance if an adult family member has received federally funded TANF assistance for 60 months, either consecutively or nonconsecutively.[45] Some states and territories may adopt shorter lifetime limits, while others choose to fund recipients after the 60 months with state dollars. States and territories may also choose to terminate benefits only for the adults in the unit, in which case all children in the assistance unit remain eligible for benefits as a child-only unit after the lifetime limit expires.

The first four columns of table IV.C.1 describe states' lifetime limit policies.[46] The first column indicates the total months in which the state or territory allows benefits, and the second, third, and fourth columns identify whose benefits are terminated.

Policies for lifetime time limits in 2024 include the following:

- Forty states and territories have a lifetime limit of 60 months.
- In states and territories with lifetime limits, 50 states and territories terminate the benefit for the entire unit once the time limit is reached. Two states (California and Oregon) terminate the benefit for the adult only. Indiana terminates the benefit for the adult only once the benefit reduction time limit is reached and for the entire unit once the lifetime limit is reached.

States and territories have developed several other time limits that interrupt or reduce benefits. These limits are imposed instead of or in addition to the lifetime limits and include periodic limits and benefit waiting periods. Under a periodic limit, a unit (or the head of the unit) may receive benefits for only a specified number of months in a given period. For example, a state or territory might impose a 12-out-of-24-month periodic limit on the unit, in which the unit is eligible to receive only 12 months of benefits in any 24-month period. Under a benefit waiting period, a unit (or the head of the unit) is ineligible for benefits for a specified number of months after the unit has received benefits for another specified number of months. To use the 12 and 24 example again, a unit may receive 12 months of assistance and is then ineligible for 24 months. This means the unit may receive 12 months of benefits over any period, but after it receives its 12th

[45] The TANF regulations indicate that the federal 60-month lifetime limit does not apply to child-only units (units that include no adults). However, a few states and territories count months in which units are child-only because of the ineligibility of their parents based on immigrant status or illegal activity.
[46] This table describes time limit policies that apply to units with an adult in the assistance unit.

month of assistance, it will be ineligible for benefits for the next 24 months. Both the periodic limit and the benefit waiting period limit may apply to the entire unit or just the adult head of the unit. The intermittent time limit columns of table IV.C.1 describe other state and territory time limit policies. The first of these columns describes the type of other time limit imposed, and the second and third columns identify whose benefits are terminated. Policies for intermittent time limits in 2024 include the following:

- Eight states have time limit policies other than lifetime limit policies. Of those eight states, three impose a periodic time limit and five impose a benefit waiting period.
- Seven states terminate the benefit for the entire unit once this non-lifetime time limit is reached and one state (Texas) terminates the benefit for the adult only.

Related tables: Tables IV.C.2(a) and (b) and IV.C.3(a) and (b) describe time limit exemption and extension policies.

Time Limit Exemption and Extension Policies (Tables IV.C.2(a) and (b) and IV.C.3(a) and (b))

Exemption and extension policies are important for understanding time limits in the states and territories. Exemptions and extensions could significantly increase the number of months beyond the state, territory, or federal time limit that an assistance unit may receive benefits and, depending on the criteria, could impact a substantial portion of a state's or territory's caseload. As defined for the purposes of the WRD, exemptions are policies that stop a recipient's time-limit "clock" before it reaches the 60-month lifetime limit, and extensions are policies that prolong a recipient's eligibility once the unit has reached the 60-month lifetime limit.

Tables IV.C.2(a) and (b) and IV.C.3(a) and (b) describe time limit exemption and extension policies, respectively. The exemption and extension policies for both lifetime limits and other limits are displayed in the tables. If the policies vary depending on the type of time limit, the differences in the policies are described in the tables' footnotes. The funding source for benefits received under an exemption or extension may vary between federal and state and territory funds. Families receiving an exemption from the time limit are assumed to be funded with state- or territory-only dollars. Families receiving an extension may be funded with federal dollars if they meet the federal "hardship exemption" criteria as described above; however, states and territories may also use their own funding for other extensions. In some cases, a state or territory may use its own funds to provide an exemption or extension in a manner not permitted by federal TANF rules. Similarly, states and territories that provide extensions for all families after reaching the 60-month federal lifetime limit are assumed to be using non-federal funds.

Time limit exemption and extension policies for 2024 include the following:

- Forty states provide time limit exemptions for at least one of the circumstances listed in the tables.
- Forty-nine states and territories provide time limit extensions in at least some cases shown in the tables.

Related tables: Table IV.C.1 describes the time limit policies for each state and territory.

D. What happens after cash assistance ends?

While some families might lose TANF eligibility after reaching a state, territory, or federal time limit, other families might become ineligible due to other circumstances, such as increased earnings. States and territories may elect to provide a transitional cash benefit to these families.

Transitional Cash Benefits (Table IV.D.1)

Table IV.D.1 describes state and territory policies for providing continued cash benefits to families transitioning off the TANF program, usually due to increased work and earnings. The table captures only those transitional benefits paid as cash. (Some transitional benefits are in the form of increases in supplemental food benefits.) Also, the table only captures benefits provided to families who previously received TANF; it does not capture benefits directed more broadly at working families regardless of prior TANF receipt. The table first describes whether a state or territory provides a transitional cash benefit and the hours of work required for participants to receive it. It also displays the monthly benefit amount and the length of time a family can receive this benefit.

Key policies for 2024 include the following:

- Twenty-eight states provide transitional cash benefits with time limits that range from 1 month in South Dakota and Washington to 24 months in New Jersey, New York, and Vermont.

Additional details on these rules and information on other transitional benefits—such as transitional child care benefits—can be found in the WRD.

Policies across Time, 1996–2024

This chapter of the Databook includes longitudinal tables for selected areas of policy from 1996, 2006, 2014, and 2024 (as of July 1 of each year). For years not shown in these tables, and for prior-year data for policies not covered in this section, see the full online WRD data. Policy information for the territories is not available prior to 2022.

To help users more easily identify changes in policies across time, the changes from one year to the next have been bolded in all the longitudinal tables. Because the tables do not represent every year, the changes may have occurred in a year before the bolded year. Information on when specific changes occurred is available in the WRD.

The following discussion provides more information on the policies included in this section and the specific policies discussed in the tables.

Formal diversion: Table L1 indicates which states and territories have a formal diversion program that diverts eligible applicants or recipients from ongoing TANF receipt by providing a one-time cash payment directly to the family or to a vendor for expenses incurred by the family. Other strategies that states may use to divert applicants from ongoing receipt of cash benefits (such as requiring an applicant to participate in job search or resource and referral services) are not identified as diversion programs in the table.

States and territories did not have the option to divert units under AFDC. However, a few states experimented with diversion through waivers. Generally, diversion programs began as pilot projects in a few counties and, after TANF, were expanded statewide.[47]

Two-parent eligibility: Table L2 describes states' and territories' deviation from the prior federal AFDC rules for two-parent, assistance units in which neither parent has a disability, over time. The key AFDC policies were the 100-hour rule for applicants and recipients, a 6-out-of-13-quarter work history test, and a 30-day waiting period. "Standard AFDC" describes the states and territories that impose the AFDC rules. "Modified" describes the states and territories that no longer impose all the former AFDC requirements on units but still impose some additional requirements. The specific combination of modified rules is footnoted. States and territories that no longer impose any special requirements on two-parent units are denoted by "none."

[47] Years in which the state implemented a diversion program as a pilot project in only a few counties are footnoted.

Many states and territories began modifying or removing special requirements for two-parent units under waivers. This process continued under TANF, which does not require states and territories to impose any special requirements on two-parent units.

Initial eligibility at application: Table L3 calculates the amount of earnings a three-person unit can receive and still be technically eligible for assistance. Technically eligible means the unit is eligible for assistance but may not actually receive a cash benefit. Most states and territories will not pay out a benefit for less than a specified amount (usually $10), but as long as the unit's potential benefit is positive, the unit is technically eligible. The calculations in this table are based on the states' and territories' income eligibility tests, earned income disregards, benefit computation, and eligibility and payment standards.

Initial eligibility at application, inflation-adjusted: Table L3(a) shows the same information as Table L3, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers.

Earned income disregards for benefit computation: Table L4 describes the earned income disregards allowed in determining net income used for benefit computation. The disregards in this table apply to recipients.[48] Earned income disregards for benefit computation under AFDC were a standard $120 and 33.3 percent for the first four months, $120 for the next eight months, and $90 thereafter. Through waivers, many states and territories began changing their disregard policies, which often allowed units to keep more of their income and remain eligible for aid. This broadening of disregards continued under TANF, which allows states and territories to determine their own disregard policies.

Maximum monthly benefit for a family of three with no income: Table L5 indicates the benefit that a family of three will receive if it has no income. The benefits are calculated assuming the assistance unit includes one parent and two children, contains no children subject to a family cap, has no special needs, pays for all shelter costs with no subsidies, and is subject to the benefit standard that applies to the majority of the state's or territory's caseload.

Maximum benefits have always varied across states and territories. Benefit computation formulas and payment standards were two policies that states and territories were able to determine under AFDC. The wide variation in states' and territories' benefits still exists under TANF. In many states, benefits have changed relatively infrequently across time.

[48] If units in the first month of receipt (applicants) receive different disregards, they are footnoted. This table does not include disregards related to child care or any other special disregards for units affected by family caps or time limits.

Maximum monthly benefit for a family of three with no income, inflation-adjusted: Table L5(a) shows the same information as Table L5, with amounts for years prior to 2024 inflated to 2024 dollars using the consumer price index for all urban consumers.

Work-related exemption when caring for a child under X months: Table L6 indicates what age a child must be under for the unit head to be exempt from work-related requirements. The unit head is assumed to be a single parent age 20 or older with a high school diploma or GED. Under AFDC, parents were exempt from the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) program if they had children younger than 36 months old.[49] Under waivers, many states and territories began reducing the age of the child exemption. Then, with the passage of TANF, the federal government reduced the maximum age for the exemption to 12 months for the states' and territories' participation rate calculations. States and territories can exempt units with children younger or older than 12 months, but units with children over 12 months old will be included in their work participation rate denominator. States and territories with waivers were allowed to continue their previous exemption policy under TANF until the waivers expired.

Most severe sanction policy for noncompliance with work requirements for single-parent adults: Table L7 describes the most severe sanction policy for noncompliance with work requirements. Under AFDC, the worst-case sanction for not complying with work requirements was the removal of the adult for benefit computation purposes. The unit was sanctioned for six months or until compliance, whichever was longer. By 1996, a few states had begun to impose more severe sanctions on noncompliant units. These policies continued and expanded under TANF. The federal government requires that all states and territories sanction individuals for not complying with work requirements, but states and territories are allowed to determine the severity of the sanction.

Asset tests: Tables L8 and L9 describe the asset limits and vehicle exemptions for recipients, respectively. If the tests differ for applicants, they are footnoted. Since the beginning of TANF, states' and territories' asset limits (and the decision whether to impose limits) have generally trended toward fewer restrictions or higher asset thresholds. Under AFDC rules, the federal government set the maximum amount of assets a unit could retain and still remain eligible at $1,000 of countable assets, with an exclusion of $1,500 of the equity value of a vehicle. During the early 1990s, states and territories began experimenting with higher asset limits and vehicle exemptions through waivers. Under TANF, states and territories determine the maximum allowable level of assets.

[49] States and territories had the option to require JOBS participation of parents with children as young as 12 months old.

Family caps: Table L10 indicates which states have implemented family cap policies. States and territories did not have the option to cap additional children under AFDC. However, a few states experimented with family caps through waivers.[50] TANF neither requires nor prohibits family cap policies.

[50] Years in which the state imposed a family cap as a pilot project in only a few counties are footnoted.

Appendix 1: Component Descriptions

The WRD and this report define a state's or territory's TANF program as having a component when the state or territory divides its entire caseload into mutually exclusive groups that are treated differently across more than one policy area. These groups are usually defined by more than one characteristic. Not every state or territory uses components. For those that do, appendix table 1 describes how recipients are divided among the components, how long recipients can remain in the various components, and any interaction between the components in the state or territory.

Appendix 2: Treatment of Child Support Paid by Parents, Relative Caretakers, Grandparents, or Stepparents to Children Outside of the Assistance Unit

In addition to allowing earned income disregards and work expense deductions when computing income for purposes of TANF eligibility and benefits, states and territories may allow individuals to deduct some or all of the value of child support payments made to children outside of the assistance unit. These child support payment deductions can reduce the amount of a family's income that is considered when determining eligibility or benefit amounts. Appendix table 2 describes each state's and territory's treatment of child support *paid* to children outside of the assistance unit by adults within the household. See table IV.A.2 for information on treatment of child support income *received* by the assistance unit.

The first column of this table captures whether child support payments are deducted when the payments are made by parents or caretakers who are included in the unit. If payments are deducted from their income when determining eligibility or benefit amounts, the second column describes the process for applying the deductions to earned and unearned income. The remaining columns describe the treatment of child support paid by other individuals. The third column of the table describes policies regarding child support payments made by nonparent caretaker relatives who are not part of the assistance unit (in situations when parents are not in the household). The fourth column describes whether child support payments made by the parent of a minor parent (grandparent) are deducted from the grandparent's income prior to deeming to the unit when the grandparent is living in the household but not part of the unit. The fifth column describes whether child support payments made by a stepparent are deducted from the stepparent's income prior to deeming to the assistance unit when the stepparent is not a part of the assistance unit but is living in the household, has no child in common with the spouse (head of unit), and has no dependents of their own living in the unit. The sixth column describes policies that apply to units in which a child has a parent who is living in the household but not eligible to be part of the assistance unit due to immigration status.

Key policies for 2024 include the following:

- Nineteen states allow parents and caretakers included in the unit to deduct child support payments made to children outside the assistance unit.

- Thirty-nine states allow at least one category of adults *not included in the unit* to deduct child support payments made to children outside the assistance unit from deemed income.

Appendix 3: State Policy Changes between 2023 and 2024

For the policies captured in the tables, this appendix describes the state policy changes that occurred between the 2023 and 2024 Databook tables (that capture policies as of July 1 of each year). In any given year, there are also corrections made in the WRD database to historical coding that are reflected in that year's tables. This list includes the changes between the two years that were due to policy updates in the states; it does not include changes due to an improved understanding of existing policies.

Table I.B.1. Eligibility Due to Pregnancy with No Other Children

- Indiana and Oklahoma made policy changes to allow TANF benefit eligibility during pregnancy for adults with no other children.
- Five states made policy changes to allow TANF benefit eligibility in the first month of pregnancy (IN, ND, OH, OK, RI).

Table I.B.8. Treatment of Non-caretaker Adults in Household

- South Dakota and Wyoming made policy changes which increased the amount that benefits are reduced when a non-caretaker adult living in the household is not included in the TANF unit and is sharing living costs.

Table I.B.9. Eligibility Requirements for Children

- New Hampshire made policy changes which allowed children living with nonrelative caretakers to be potentially eligible for TANF benefits.

Table I.C.1. Asset Limits for Applicants

- California, Connecticut, Maine, and Washington increased the asset limit for applicants.
- Three states increased the amount of the vehicle exemption for applicants (CA, ME, WA).

Table I.E.1. Income Eligibility Tests for Applicants

- States that test income against the Federal Poverty Guidelines updated their eligibility tests to reference the more recent year's guidelines (AZ, NV, NM, OH, WI).

Table I.E.2. Earned Income Disregards for Initial Income Eligibility Purposes

- Virginia increased the earned income disregard used to determine initial eligibility.

Table I.E.3. Standards for Determining Eligibility

- Twenty-six states increased their income standard amounts, either by increasing the dollar amounts or because their policy is set to use the most recent poverty guidelines when calculating the amounts (AL, AK, AZ, CA, CT, DE, DC, FL, IL, IN, ME, MA, MN, MO, NE, NV, NH, NM, ND, OH, SC, SD, VA, WA, WI, WY).

Table I.E.4. Maximum Income for Initial Eligibility for a Family of Three

- Nineteen states made policy changes that resulted in higher limits on the maximum earnings an applicant could receive in a month and still be eligible for assistance (AL, AK, CA, CT, DC, IL, ME, MN, NV, NH, NM, ND, OH, SC, SD, VT, VA, WA, WY).

Table II.A.1. Earned Income Disregards for Benefit Computation

- Three states changed how they calculate earned income disregards for benefit computation (NY, ND, VT).

Table II.A.2. Benefit Determination Policies

- Two states, Alaska and Arizona, increased the percentage of the standard used to calculate the benefit.

Table II.A.3. Standards for Determining Benefits

- Twenty-one states increased their payment standard amounts, either by increasing the dollar amounts or because their policy is set to use the most recent poverty guidelines when calculating the amounts (AL, AK, CA, CO, CT, DE, DC, IL, IN, ME, MN, NH, NM, ND, OH, SC, SD, TX, VA, WA, WY).
- Maine increased their statutory maximum benefits. Washington made policy changes that removed their statutory maximum benefit amount.

Table II.A.4. Maximum Monthly Benefit for a Family with No Income

- Nineteen states and territories made policy changes that resulted in higher maximum monthly benefit amounts for a family with no income (AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, IL, IN, ME, MN, NH, NM, ND, OH, SC, SD, TX, WA, WY).

Table II.A.5. Maximum Monthly Benefit for a Child-Only Unit with One Child, No Income

- Seventeen states made policy changes that resulted in higher maximum monthly benefit amounts for child-only units with one child and no income (AL, AZ, CA, CO, CT, DC, IL, IN, ME, MN, NM, OH, SC, SD, TX, WA, WY).
- New Hampshire made policy changes that resulted in higher maximum monthly benefit amounts for child-only units with one child and no income living with a non-parent caretaker or living with a parent excluded from the unit due to immigrant status.
- Wisconsin made policy changes that resulted in higher maximum monthly benefit amounts for child-only units with one child and no income living with a non-parent caretaker.

Table II.A.6. Benefit Issuance Policies

- Oregon made policy changes to further restrict the types of establishments where TANF benefits can be used to make purchases.

Table III.B.1. Work-Related Activity Exemptions for Single-Parent Head of Unit

- Rhode Island made policy changes to allow an exemption from activity requirements beginning in the first month of pregnancy.
- Vermont made policy changes to allow an exemption from activity requirements for participants caring for a child aged younger than 1.5 months.

Table III.B.2. Work-Related Activity Requirements for Single-Parent Head of Unit

- Idaho and Vermont made policy changes to minimum activity hour requirements.
- New Hampshire changed the allowable activities that count towards the overall hourly requirements.

Table IV.A.2. Treatment of Child Support Income for Recipients

- Illinois changed their policies to transfer all of the child support collected to the family and disregard the full transfer for benefit computation.
- Vermont increased the portion of child support collection transferred to the family and disregarded for benefit computation to $100.

Table IV.A.3. Asset Limits for Recipients and Related Assets Policies

- Four states increased the asset limit for recipients (CA, CT, ME, WA).

- Three states made changes to the amount of the vehicle exemption for recipients (CA, ME, WA).
- Washington made policy changes to the allowed types of restricted assets savings accounts.

Table IV.A.4. Income Eligibility Tests for Recipients

- States that test income against the Federal Poverty Guidelines updated their eligibility tests to reference the more recent year's guidelines (AZ, CA, CT, IN, NM, VA, WI).

Table IV.A.6. Maximum Income for Ongoing Eligibility for a Family of Three

- Twenty-three states made policy changes that resulted in higher limits on the maximum earnings a recipient could receive in a month and still be eligible for assistance (AL, AK, CA, CO, CT, DE, DC, IL, IN, ME, MA, MN, NH, NM, NY, ND, OH, SC, SD, VT, VA, WA, WY).

Table IV.B.1. Family Cap Policies

- Three states eliminated their family cap policies (IN, ND, TN).

Table IV.C.1. Time Limit Policies

- Arkansas reduced the lifetime limit on TANF benefit receipt to 12 months.
- Connecticut increased the lifetime limit to 36 months.

Table IV.C.2(b). Time Limit Exemption Policies (continued)

- Arkansas increased the number of months in which a unit may be exempt for receiving benefits in another state.
- Massachusetts and Vermont changed the number of circumstances under which a unit may receive an exemption to the time limit.

Table IV.C.3(a). Time Limit Extension Policies

- Maine reduced the minimum number of weekly hours that a unit must work to be eligible for an extension to the time limit.

Table IV.C.3(b). Time Limit Extension Policies (continued)

- Arizona and Washington made policy changes that increased the number of circumstances under which a unit may receive an extension to the time limit.
- Vermont made multiple updates to the number of circumstances under which a unit may receive an exemption to the time limit.
- Georgia, North Carolina, the Virgin Islands, and Washington made policy changes to the time limit extensions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

IV.D.1. Transitional Cash Benefits

- Arkansas reduced the time limit on transitional benefits.
- Vermont began providing transitional cash benefits to families who previously received TANF.

Appendix 1

- New Hampshire modified the guidelines for the New Hampshire Employment Program (NHEP) TANF component to include families with children cared for by a court-appointed guardian who is able-bodied for employment.

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