

What is TANF? (Pronounced tan if)

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families sometimes called public assistance or cash assistance.

TANF is an assistance program for families with children who live in deep poverty. The focus of the TANF program is constantly evolving. Our goal is to ensure that the program is meaningful in helping families move themselves out of poverty.

WHO: In order to qualify for TANF there must be children in the home, have less than \$3,000.00 in assets and be at 30% of the 2002 federal poverty level. For a family of three the eligibility level is \$375.00/month. In addition the family must not have used up their 60 month limit. (The average TANF family is a family of three, therefore I will use this family size for all examples.)

In MT our caseload is about 4,500 families. The biggest age group is children under two. There are many TANF grandparents who are raising grandchildren. (See handout)

Some requirements of TANF

Time clock-a family has a lifetime limit of 60 months of TANF. There are three exceptions to the time clock, domestic violence, caring for a child with disabilities and I can't remember the other one. (I will find out)

Work activities-The adults in the home must work for the TANF grant. Single parents-30 hours a week-two parent families 35 hours a week each.

Work activities are limited to paid employment, working at a participating site (WEX), and some training and vocational activities. The parent works for their TANF grant. (at 30 hours a week \$375.00/month = \$3.10/hour).

Sanctions-Montana has a full family sanction policy. If a parent does not comply with the requirements then the family loses its TANF grant. Following a penalty period, the family may apply for TANF.

CSE Child Support Enforcement- Families must comply with CSE in less good cause is in place. If the state collects child support for TANF families, they keep it to pay themselves back. The majority of TANF families do not receive any child support from the non-custodial parent.

Funding-

TANF is funded with a block grant that has remained the same level since 1996. In President Bush's budget the TANF block grant remains at the same 1996 level.

MOE (maintenance of effort). MOE is the state contribution to our TANF program. It is a similar idea as match but both MOE and TANF are a set amount. (TANF about 44 million/year and MOE a little over 14 million/year)

The TANF program transfers funding out to many other places such as administration, systems, and other programs. (see spread sheet)