

TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE IN MARYLAND

Background

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) of 1996 is the national welfare reform law that established the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. TANF is a block grant program designed to make dramatic reforms to the nation's welfare system by moving recipients from a system of entitlement and long-term dependency to independence and self-sufficiency. TANF replaced the national welfare program known as Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC). Each state was given flexibility to design its programs in ways that address its unique needs and circumstances.

Temporary Cash Assistance

Maryland's TANF program is known as Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA). The goal of TCA is to protect children and their caretakers by assisting families to become independent through work. The program has a requirement for all applicants and recipients to seek employment and be involved in work activities from the date of an application for assistance. TCA case managers (who are employed within the Department of Human Resources' (DHR) Family Investment Administration) often find themselves interacting with some of DHR's other administrations such as:

- The Child Support Enforcement Administration (CSEA)
- The Social Services Administration (SSA)

Families with minor children in the home may receive TCA for a total of 60 months (5 years) over the course of a lifetime. A family may apply for TCA when their available resources are not fully meeting the family's needs. Families may be eligible for assistance (including medical assistance coverage) if they:

- Live in Maryland
- Are citizens of the United States or 'Qualified' immigrants
- Care for a related child(ren) in the home
- Provide all required verifications
- Cooperate with CSEA
- Participate in approved work activities
- Comply with substance abuse screening and treatment as required
- Are found to be within the income and asset guidelines

What follows in the subsequent chapters is an in-depth description of the Temporary Cash Assistance program as implemented by the state of Maryland.