

We are each the experts in our own lives and know how to meet our needs better than anyone else. We all deserve to have what we need to put food on the table, pay for our families' everyday needs, and pursue our own goals in life.

## Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 101

TANF is a federal program, administered differently by each state, that provides resources and modest cash assistance for families living on extremely low incomes. **TANF's main goal is to help families meet their most basic needs and to protect children from the devastating effects of "deep poverty"** (as measured by living 50% or more below the Federal Poverty Line). Despite recent improvements, Washington's social safety net is insufficient, but offers critical, lifeline support to those living on the lowest incomes.

### TANF eligibility requirements

- Household must include children
- Meet citizenship requirements (Immigrants are not eligible for TANF until they have been a resident for at least 5 years)
- Equity value resource limit of \$6,000 and up to one vehicle worth up to \$10,000
- Must meet ongoing WorkFirst participation and eligibility requirements, potentially including 20 hours of work, school, or job search



### Monthly payment standards

Family Size	Payment Standard*
1	\$417
2	\$528
3	\$654
4	\$771
5	\$888

### Maximum monthly earned income limits

Family Size	Income Limit
1	\$834
2	\$1056
3	\$1308
4	\$1542
5	\$1776

\*Regardless of rising costs of living and inflation, TANF grant amounts do not increase without an action from the legislature.

## Snapshot: Families Using TANF in 2022

- The average benefit for a family receiving TANF was \$537.19 or \$17.66 per day
- 70% of all TANF/SFA recipients were children (Average child age: 8)
- TANF served an average of 28,839 families per month – this includes a monthly average of 48,536 children.
- The median length of stay on TANF is 19 months.
- An average of 13% of families using TANF were also experiencing homelessness

## Washington can do more to protect children and their families living in deep poverty

- In 2022, the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for a family of three was \$23,030
- Families surviving on \$11,515 or less are living in “Deep Poverty”
- If TANF is your only income, you are living on \$7,848 annually, that leaves you at just 34% FPL
- Families at the maximum income limit (\$1308) are cut off when they reach 68% FPL (or \$15,660 per year) just barely above “deep poverty”
- The consequences of living in deep poverty as a child can lead to lifelong effects like chronic illness and decreased educational outcomes
- Washington has the freedom to make improvements to TANF that better support families and create more equitable outcomes

**Figure: Income and TANF Benefits for a Family of 3 in King County, 2022**

