

TANF and Welfare Reform

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www.legis.wisconsin.gov/lrb/pubs/tapthepower.htm

Welfare reform is a process of modifying public assistance programs. There are a number of drivers to welfare reform including changes in federal or state laws, economic conditions, population, program reviews, or technology. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) was created as part of the 1996 welfare law; it is a federal program to provide states with block grant funds to operate specific public assistance related programs to aid families. While the programs created and administered with TANF funds are unique to each state, there are some restrictions placed on use. The Great Recession saw increased draw on TANF funds for families and renewed discussions on reforming public assistance benefits at the federal and state level. In the 2014 calendar year, an average of over 64,000 people per month in Wisconsin received TANF funds.

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- Brown, Kate, and Gary Blackmer. *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: High Expectations, Stronger Partnerships, and Better Data Could Help More Parents Find Work*. Report Number 2014-08. Oregon Secretary of State, 2014. <http://sos.oregon.gov/audits/documents/2014-08.pdf>.
- Falk, Gene. *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF): Welfare-to-Work Revisited*. CRS Report R42767. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014. http://greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/R42767_gb_0.pdf.
Reviews the work standards required by TANF.
- Falk, Gene. *The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: A Primer on TANF Financing and Federal Requirements*. CRS Report RL32748. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2014. [http://greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/RL32748_gb_0.pdf](http://greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/sites/greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/files/RL32748_gb_0.pdf).
- Farrell, Mary, et al. *The TANF/SSI Disability Transition Project: Innovative Strategies for Serving TANF Recipients with Disabilities*. OPRE Report 2013-51. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2013. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/tanf_ssi_final_report_fixed.pdf
Report looking at different ways to utilize TANF funds for those with disabilities. Details three pilot approaches taken in MN, CA, and MI.
- Haskins, Ron, Vicky Albert, and Kimberly Howard. *The Responsiveness of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Program During the Great Recession*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution, 2014. <http://www.brookings.edu/research/papers/2014/08/responsiveness-tanf-great-recessions-haskins>.
Review how TANF responded to unemployment during the Great Recession; includes state breakdown information.
- House Budget Committee Majority Staff. *The War on Poverty: 50 Years Later*. Washington, DC: United States House of Representatives, Committee on the Budget, 2014. http://budget.house.gov/uploadedfiles/war_on_poverty.pdf.
"...this report reviews the causes of poverty, the history of antipoverty efforts, federal programs' effect on labor-force participation, and the current status of these programs today."
- Huber, Erika, David Kassabian, and Elissa Cohen. *Welfare Rules Databook: State TANF Policies as of July 2013*. OPRE Report 2014-52. Washington, DC: Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for children and Families, United States Department of Health and Human Services, 2014. http://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/welfare_rules_databook_final.pdf.
- Irving, Shelley K. "Comparing Program Participation of TANF and Non-TANF Families Before and During a Time of Recession." *Household Economic Studies*. Washington, DC: United States Census Bureau, 2011. <http://www.census.gov/prod/2011pubs/p70-127.pdf>.
- Katel, Peter. "Straining the Safety Net: Is Joblessness Overwhelming Aid Programs?" *CQ Researcher* 19, no. 27 (2009). (331.86/C761d)
- McCarty, Maggie, et al. *Drug Testing and Crime-Related Restrictions in TANF, SNAP, and Housing Assistance*. R42394. Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2013. <https://www.fas.org/sgp/crs/misc/R42394.pdf>.
Information on the drug and crime related restrictions on TANF funds.
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- Pavetti, LaDonna, et al. *Creating Subsidized Employment Opportunities for Low-Income Parents: The Legacy of the TANF Emergency Fund*. Washington, DC: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, 2011. <http://www.cbpp.org/files/2-16-11tanf.pdf>.
Analysis of the TANF emergency fund successes and failures.
- Pierson, Christopher. *Beyond the Welfare State? The New Political Economy of Welfare*. 3rd ed. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2007. (330/P3D)
- Purtell, Kelly M., Elizabeth T. Gershoff, and J. Lawrence Aber. "Low Income Families' Utilization of the Federal 'Safety Net': Individual and State-Level Predictors of TANF and Food Stamp Receipt." *Child Youth Services Review* 34, no. 4 (2013): 713-724. <http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3375851/>.
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- United States Government Accountability Office. *TANF Electronic Benefit Cards: Some States Are Restricting Certain TANF Transactions, But Challenges Remain*. GAO-12-535. Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, 2012. <http://www.gao.gov/assets/600/592787.pdf>.
- United States Government Accountability Office. *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families: Action Is Needed to Better Promote Employment-Focused Approaches*. GAO-15-31. Washington, DC: United States Government Accountability Office, 2014. <http://www.gao.gov/products/GAO-15-31>.
By receiving TANF funds, states are required to provide some work-related activities. This report identifies that more TANF recipients could receive assistance to obtain employment.
- Wilde, Elizabeth T., et al. "Impact of Welfare Reform on Mortality: An Evaluation of the Connecticut Jobs First Program, A Randomized Controlled Trial." *American Journal of Public Health* 104, no. 3 (2014): 534-538. Available full text through www.badgerlink.net.
Study examined health of participants in CT's TANF funded work incentive pilot; discussion includes information on work results.
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families. *Wisconsin's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families State Plan*. Madison, WI: Wisconsin Department of Children and Families, February 21, 2014. http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/tanf/pdf/2013-2015_amended_tanf_state_plan.pdf.
All states receiving TANF funds are required to submit a plan annually.
- Zedlewski, Sheila R. *Welfare Reform: What Have We Learned in Fifteen Years?* Brief 24. Washington, DC: Urban Institute, 2012. <http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/412539-Welfare-Reform-What-Have-We-Learned-in-Fifteen-Years.pdf>.
- Related Web Sites**
- Center on Budget and Policy Priorities. *Policy Basics: An Introduction to TANF*. Accessed December 26, 2014. <http://www.cbpp.org/cms/?fa=view&id=936>.
Provides general overview of TANF as well as suggestions for revisions.
- The Council of State Governments Knowledge Center. *Welfare*. Accessed January 2, 2015. <http://knowledgecenter.csg.org/kc/category/policy-area/human-services/poverty/welfare>.
Listing of CSG articles related to welfare, arranged by date.
- National Conference of State Legislatures. *Restrictions on Use of Public Assistance Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) Cards*. September 30, 2014. <http://www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/ebt-electronic-benefit-transfer-card-restrictions-for-public-assistance.aspx>.
37 states currently issue TANF cash benefits through an EBT (Electronic Benefit Transfer) card. Table lists the states, their laws, and restrictions.
- United States, Bureau of Labor Statistics. *Databases, Tables & Calculators by Subject*. "Wisconsin." Accessed December 19, 2014. <http://data.bls.gov/timeseries/LASST5500000000000003>.
Unemployment statistics for Wisconsin – monthly, annually, in table and graphs respectively.
- United States Department of Health & Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Family Assistance. *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*. Accessed December 26, 2014. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/programs/tanf>.
Provides data, policy, and laws and regulation information including the most recent report to congress from 2013: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/ofa/resource/tenth-report-to-congress>.
- United States House of Representatives, Committee on Ways and Means. *Green Book*. Accessed December 19, 2014. <http://greenbook.waysandmeans.house.gov/2014-green-book>.
Provides introduction, overview, and statistics of federal assistance programs; chapter 7 deals with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.
- University of Wisconsin, Institute for Research on Poverty. *Wisconsin Studies (W-2)*. Accessed January 2, 2015. <http://www.irp.wisc.edu/research/welreform/wisconsin.htm>.
Review of studies done on Wisconsin Works (W-2), the name of the program that administers the TANF funds in Wisconsin.
- Urban Institute. *Welfare Rules Database*. Accessed January 2, 2015. <http://anfdata.urban.org/wrd/Query/query.cfm>.
Comprehensive database to research case assistance programs in the U.S. Sortable by category, coverage, states and years.
- Wisconsin Department of Children and Families.
- *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)*. Accessed December 23, 2014. <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/tanf/>.
Includes general information and annual plans since 1996.
 - *Wisconsin Works (W-2) and Job Supports Home Page*. Accessed January 2, 2015. <http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/w2/>.
Information about the Wisconsin program utilizing the TANF funds including agency directories, brochures, reports, and research statistics.

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