

# Temporary Assistance For Needy Families (TANF)



***Your Guide To Putting  
The Pieces Together***



Helping families in tough times...

## Table of Contents

<a href="#"><u>What's New in TANF!</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Service Centers &amp; Programs</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>Cash Help for Families</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>How to Apply for Cash Help</u></a>	9
<a href="#"><u>Documents You Should Bring</u></a>	10
<a href="#"><u>TANF Rules</u></a>	11
<a href="#"><u>What is the Time Limit on TANF?</u></a>	14
<a href="#"><u>Sanctions: What Happens If You Don't Follow the Rules?</u></a>	15
<a href="#"><u>Appeals: If You Think DHS Is Wrong</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Legal Services</u></a>	17
<a href="#"><u>Exemptions: What Happens If You Can't Work?</u></a>	18
<a href="#"><u>POWER: For People with Health Problems</u></a>	19
<a href="#"><u>Child Care Choices</u></a>	20
<a href="#"><u>Homeless Services Integration</u></a>	23
<a href="#"><u>Domestic Violence Help</u></a>	24
<a href="#"><u>Child Support Rules</u></a>	26
<a href="#"><u>Raising Children Who Aren't Your Own</u></a>	30
<a href="#"><u>Benefits of Working While on TANF</u></a>	32
<a href="#"><u>What is Earned Income Credit?</u></a>	33
<a href="#"><u>Your Right to a Safe and Healthy Workplace</u></a>	35
<a href="#"><u>What if I Have a Physical or Mental Disability?</u></a>	36
<a href="#"><u>No Discrimination or Harassment</u></a>	37
<a href="#"><u>What if I Need to Miss or Leave Work Early?</u></a>	38
<a href="#"><u>TANF Partners</u></a>	39
<a href="#"><u>Help for Immigrants</u></a>	40
<a href="#"><u>Rules For Teen Parents</u></a>	42
<a href="#"><u>Service Center Waiting Rooms</u></a>	44
<a href="#"><u>Be Smart: Stay Organized</u></a>	45
<a href="#"><u>Additional Resources</u></a>	46
<a href="#"><u>Need To Report a Change?</u></a>	47

# NOTES

---





## What's New in TANF!

**The TANF program has changed to better serve you.** The Department of Human Services (DHS) has built a program to help you meet your goals and meet the needs of your family. Each family is different and has different needs.

**The Orientation & Assessment.** The TANF program includes an orientation that will inform all TANF customers of the program benefits and requirements. It will also provide information

about services to help you gain employment and become independent. An assessment will be provided to all TANF customers to identify the most suitable services. Completing the orientation and assessment is required for you to receive help and benefits from DHS.

**Helping you with Challenges.** Services will be provided that match your goals, needs, and family circumstances. To receive a TANF benefit, you are also required to participate in activities. The activities are designed to help you find work, which will help you care for your family. There may be some challenges that make it hard or impossible to work. For people who have these challenges, we will work to provide services to meet those needs. We will work with you so that you can get the education, training, skills and services to help you overcome challenges that may have prevented you from working. DHS will help you through the process. For example, if someone has been unable to work because they have no child care, we will help find child care. Then someone will check in with you and make sure that you have what you need to move to the next step in the process.

**TANF Employment Vendors.** The TANF employment vendors will help you find jobs and connect with training or education programs. The vendors have dedicated case managers to work with you, individually and help you make a plan that includes your goals and interests. In the new TANF program you can only go to a vendor if you have been referred to them. The assessment will help us find the vendor that best fits with your needs and interests. You will not be able to switch between vendors unless DHS refers you to a new vendor or service provider. Several support programs will be available to you, if needed, to ensure that you have the help you need.

**Participation Requirements.** Once you are approved for benefits or referred to a vendor, it is very important for you to meet your work or participation requirements. If you don't participate for the required number of hours each week your benefits will be reduced. If you continue missing your work or participation requirements, you will be cut off of TANF.

We are working hard to build programs and services to help you reach your goals. We know that it is hard and we are here to help. But most importantly, success is in your hands.

***We wish you great success!***

# General Information

## Service Center Addresses

---

### **ANACOSTIA SERVICE CENTER**

2100 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
Telephone: (202) 645-4614  
Fax: (202) 727-3527

### **CONGRESS HEIGHTS SERVICE CENTER**

4001 South Capitol Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20032  
Telephone: (202) 645-4525  
Fax: (202) 645-4524

### **FORT DAVIS SERVICE CENTER**

3851 Alabama Avenue, SE  
Washington, DC 20020  
Telephone: (202) 645-4500  
Fax: (202) 645-6205

### **H STREET SERVICE CENTER**

645 H Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Telephone: (202) 698-4350  
Fax: (202) 724-8964

### **TAYLOR STREET SERVICE CENTER**

1207 Taylor Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20011  
Telephone: (202) 576-8000  
Fax: (202) 576-8740

### **Virginia Williams Family Resource Center (VWFRC)**

33 N Street, NE,  
Washington DC 20002  
Telephone: (202) 526-0017  
Telephone: (202) 727-8871

### **CHANGE CENTER**

Telephone: (202) 727-6600  
Fax: (202) 535-1664

### **OFFICE OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE (OMA)**

645 H Street, NE  
Washington, DC 20002  
Telephone: (202) 698-4220  
Fax: (202) 724-8963

## Hours Of Operation

---

**Monday thru Friday—8:15am-4:45pm**  
**Open Wednesdays until 8:00pm**

# ECONOMIC SECURITY ADMINISTRATION

## ESA Programs

**Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** - Provides cash assistance to help heads-of-households meet the needs of children less than 18 years of age who live with their parents or a relative. Multiple services to help TANF customers obtain and retain employment are also provided.

**Program on Work, Employment and Responsibility (POWER)** - Provides cash assistance to TANF recipients who are unable to work due to temporary medical problems.

**General Assistance for Children (GAC)** - Provides cash assistance to households caring for unrelated children whose parents and other relatives are absent from the household and who do not or cannot provide financial support for the care of the child.

**Food Stamps** - Provides monthly benefits to help eligible low-income households buy food. A part of this program also helps customers obtain and retain employment.

**Medicaid** - Provides federally-funded health insurance for eligible low-income families, elderly and/or adults with disabilities.

**Alliance** - Provides health insurance to needy District residents who do not qualify for federal Medicaid benefits. This includes non-disabled non-qualified non-citizen childless adults, and some individuals who are over income for Medicaid.

**Refugee Assistance** - Provides temporary cash and medical assistance to qualifying persons from foreign countries seeking a safe place of refuge.

**Interim Disability Assistance (IDA)** - Provides cash assistance to adults with disabilities who have applied for and are awaiting a determination of their eligibility for Supplemental Security Income (SSI).

**Burial Assistance** - Provides assistance to low-income families who need help with funeral expenses.

**For more information about ESA programs and services  
Call (202) 698-3900**



DC Department of Human Services, 64 New York Avenue, NE - 6th Floor,  
Washington, DC 20002

# DHS Fact Sheet



Vincent C. Gray, Mayor  
District of Columbia

David A. Berns, Director  
Department of  
Human Services

# Cash Help for Families



## Who Can Get Cash Help?

- **Families with children and pregnant woman can get cash help (TANF).**
  - ◊ [See Page 6](#) or call 698-3900 to find the closest DHS Service Center. Go to the Service Center to apply.
- **You can get cash help for a child living in your home, even if the child is not yours.**
  - ◊ If you are not a relative of the child or CANNOT prove you are family, ask for GAC (General Assistance for Children). You can receive GAC if you are a godparent or family friend ([see page 29](#)).

## You and your family may be able to get:

- Cash help while you look for a job or while you are working
- Cash help while you recover from an illness
- Cash help while you move out of a situation of abuse in your home
- Cash help while you are getting treatment for drug or alcohol use
- Cash help while you go to school
- Cash help for an emergency
- A job or job training
- Help to find and pay for child care
- Help to stay clean from drugs and sober from alcohol
- Help getting child support
- Medical coverage
- Food Stamps

**You may be able to get food stamps and medical coverage for your family, even if you cannot get cash help.**



# How to Apply for Cash Help



Fill out the application. You only need to fill out one application for Food Stamps, Medicaid, TANF and/or GAC. Apply right away because your benefits will date back to the day you first apply.

**Below is a list of documents you should bring to assist in a speedy and accurate interview process.**

## **TANF Application**

- Photo Identification
- Two (2) Living with Statements (*statement from non-family member*)
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Bank Accounts, or other resources
- Proof of Income (*earned or unearned*)
- Birth Certificate of Children (*Listing Parent's names*)
- Social Security Numbers
- Proof of Child Care (cost)
- Visas, green cards, or immigration papers if you are not a United States citizens.

### **REMEMBER:**

- **Apply right away. You can apply even if you do not have all of the documents.**
- **You will have time to get the documents you need after you apply.**
- **If after providing all of your documents, your worker says that the proof you gave is not enough, you can talk to a supervisor, call DHS, or call a lawyer for free help ([see page 17](#)).**

# Documents You Should Bring

**Below is a list of documents you should bring to the Service Center to assist in a speedy and accurate interview process.**

## **TANF Application**

- Photo Identification
- Two "Living with Statements" (*statement from non-family member*)
- Proof of Residency (*DC Drivers License, utility bill, rent receipt, etc*)
- Proof of Bank Accounts, or other resources
- Proof of Income (*Earned or Unearned*)
- Birth Certificate of Children (*listing parent's names*)
- Social Security Numbers (ST ? - DO YOU NEED ORIG. CARD?)

## **TANF Recertification**

- Proof of Residency (ST ? - DO YOU WANT TO REPEAT?)
- Proof of Income (*Earned or Unearned*)
- Proof Bank Accounts, or other resources

## **Food Stamp Application**

- Photo Identification (if no ID, Collateral Contact can be used)
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Income (*Earned or Unearned*)
- Proof of Household Expenses (*Rent, Utilities, Phone and Medical*)
- Proof of Child Care Expense
- Proof of Bank Accounts, or other resources

## **Food Stamp Recertification**

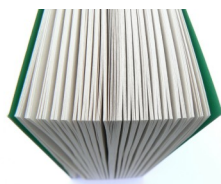
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Income (*Earned or Unearned*)
- Proof of Household Expenses (*Rent, Utilities, Phone and Medical*)
- Proof of Child Care Expense
- Proof of Bank Accounts, or other resources

## **Medicaid Application**

- Photo Identification
- Proof of Residency
- Proof of Income (*Earned or Unearned*)
- Birth Certificate of Children and Yourself or verification of U.S. citizenship
- Proof of Pregnancy (if applicable)
- Proof of Bank Accounts, or other resources
- Proof of Disability from Social Security Administration
- Medical Report from Physician

**IMPORTANT:** You can apply even if you do not have these documents with you. We will let you know what you need to bring back to finish your application.

# Rules To Get TANF



## These are the TANF rules:

1. You must have an **orientation and an assessment**.
2. **Orientation:** We tell you how we can help and what you will need to do to get and keep TANF.
3. **Assessment.** Your assessment will determine what customized services and referrals you need and what work activities will help you reach your goals.
4. **Your Plan:** You will be required to do the activities listed in the plan that you and your case worker develop. The work activities will help you become independent and get prepared for a job.
5. **Child Care Support:** We can help you get the support you need to take care of your family. Your worker may refer you to an agency to help get child support ([see page 25](#)).

### IMPORTANT:

- You do not have to do work activities if you do not get TANF for yourself, for example, if you are a grandparent or get SSI.
- If you are not able to follow your plan, you must meet with your case worker to make a new plan. If you have good reasons for not being able to follow your plan let your case worker know so that you do not lose your cash help.

## Every 12 months that you receive TANF benefits, you will be required to come in for a review.

- You will receive a letter asking you to come in or schedule a review.
- You must come in for the review in order to keep your TANF benefits.
- If you do not come in for your 12-month review your benefits will **stop**.



## **TANF Rules (continued)**

# TANF Work & Education Rules

### **Most people have heard about the work rules for TANF.**

- You must meet with a job counselor at an employment vendor. The job counselor will help you find a job or help you prepare for a new job.
- To receive TANF money, you need to do a “work activity” for 30 hours each week (or 20 hours if your child is under six). You can work more hours if you want.
- Higher hours apply if you are a family with two parents who get TANF.
- You can do more than one “work activity” to meet the 30 hours per week. For example, you can do “work experience” for 20 hours a week and “education” for 10 hours a week.
- if you have reasons why you can’t do these work activities, talk to your job counselor. We will help you get the services you need.

## **Work Plans**

- Your job counselor will ask you about your work, education and goals. You and the counselor will make a work plan. The work plan is also called an **Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP)**.
- Your work plan will say what kind of work activities you must do to get TANF money and to prepare you for finding a job.

## **Education**

### **Education counts as a work activity.**

- **Your job counselor or DHS worker can help you get money to finish high school or go to college.**
- DHS has a program called the **Tuition Assistance Program Initiative for TANF (TAPIT)**. TAPIT can give you **up to \$4,000** each year for tuition, books, and fees.
- The Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE) can help you apply for other financial aid to attend school. Talk with your case worker or call (202) 727-2824.



## **TANF Rules (continued)**

### **These things count as a work activity:**

- **Work**
- **Work Experience**
- **Education: GED classes, Adult Basic Education, College**
- **Vocational Education Training**
- **Job preparation or job search**
- **Community Service Programs**

## **Help with Work Expenses**

**If you are doing a work activity, you will get help to pay for work expenses like transportation or work clothes. This help is called a “work allowance” or “stipend.”**

- The travel stipend is \$15 a day. To get the travel stipend, you need to work or be in training at least four hours a day.
- You may also be able to get a “work allowance” to buy tools or a uniform for work.
- Tell your job counselor if you need help to get or continue your job, education, or training.

### **REMEMBER:**

- **You and your job counselor will work together to choose the goals that you need to meet.**
- **Think about activities you need to get a good job.**
- **If you do not follow what is in your plan, your TANF money may be cut.**
- **You can change your plan if your circumstances change. Let your job counselor know as soon as this happens.**



## What is the Time Limit on TANF?

### **Most people can now only get TANF money for 60 months.**

- 60 months = 5 years
- The months you and your family received welfare money before March 1, 1997 do not count. Only your time after March 1, 1997 counts toward your 60 month time limit.
- Some caregivers, like grandparents, aunts, and uncles who are receiving TANF just for children may be able to receive TANF for longer than 60 months ([see page 30](#)).
- In the District, you may be able to get benefits for yourself and your children for longer 60 months for certain exemptions. Talk with your case worker about this.
- TANF customers who have been on TANF for 60 months or more have received a 20% reduction in their TANF Benefit. Additional cuts may occur each year.
- If you have been on TANF for 60 months or more you will receive priority scheduling for your orientation and assessment to enable you to receive the necessary services ([see page 12](#)). Call 202-698-1860 to schedule your orientation and assessment.

# Sanctions: What Happens If You Don't Follow The Rules?



**If you do NOT follow your plan or work requirements, your TANF benefits will be cut, unless you have a good reason. This is called a sanction. The new sanction process is described below.**

- The **first time** you do not follow your plan for four (4) weeks, without a good reason you will receive a Level 1 Sanction. The Level 1 Sanction reduces your benefits by the head of household portion (approximately \$70).
- The **second time** you do not follow your plan for four (4) weeks you will receive a Level 2 Sanction. The Level 2 Sanction reduces your benefits by **50%**.
- The **third time** you do not follow your plan for four (4) weeks you will receive a Level 3 Sanction. The Level 3 Sanction **cuts off your TANF benefits entirely for 1 month**. When you follow your plan for four (4) weeks, and complete an updated assessment, you can get TANF benefits again.
- If you have a good reason for not following your plan, your TANF MAY NOT be cut. See page 18 to see if this applies to you. You must let your worker or job counselor know about your reason RIGHT AWAY.

- If you only get TANF for children, you do not have to do a work activity and your TANF benefits cannot be cut. [See page 30.](#)
- If you do NOT get a notice and your money is cut, call your DHS worker, DHS Change Center at 727-6600, or call a lawyer for free help.

## Appeals: If You Think DHS Is Wrong...



Sometimes we make mistakes. If you think DHS has made a mistake, you can appeal. You must appeal within 90 days of the date on your notice or letter. **You can appeal when:**

- ◇ You receive a notice of a change that you don't agree with
- ◇ Your money, Food Stamps or health benefits stop coming
- ◇ Your money or your food stamp benefit is cut or lowered
- ◇ Your good reason for not doing a "work activity" was denied or ignored
- ◇ Your good reason for not helping Child Support was denied or ignored
- ◇ You don't get the work allowance

When you appeal, you will have a "fair hearing". A fair hearing is a chance to tell your story. A special "hearing officer" reviews your file and listens to your case.

### How To Appeal

There are different ways to appeal:

1. Call your caseworker and tell them that you want a Fair Hearing.
2. Call the Office of Administrative Hearings at 442-9094 and tell them that you want a Fair Hearing.
3. Write a letter and **take it or mail it to:**
  - ⇒ Your caseworker, OR
  - ⇒ The Office of Administrative Hearings, 441 4th Street, NW, Room 450 North, Washington, DC 20001



## How to Appeal (continued)

### **If you appeal before the effective date given in a letter or notice from DHS:**

- ◇ You may be able to keep your TANF money from being cut while you wait for a decision.



### **If you appeal after the effective date given in a letter or notice from DHS:**

- ◇ Your TANF money will be cut while you wait for a decision.
- ◇ You will get a decision on your case within **60 days** of your appeal.

### **Remember:**

- ◇ Turn in your appeal right way.
- ◇ You can appeal a decision up to 90 days after the date of a notice.

## **You can get free legal services from many places.**



### **For free legal help, call:**

- Legal Aid Society of DC (202) 628-1161
- Washington Legal Clinic for the Homeless (202) 872-1494
- Bread for the City Free Legal Clinic (202) 265-2400



## Exemptions: What Happens If You Can't Work?

**You can be excused from working if you have a good reason. If you do not work and you do not have a good reason, your money will be cut.**

### **You Do Not Have to Work If:**

- You are 19 or older and have a child under one year old.
- You have a child under age 6 and you cannot find child care that you can pay for or that is close to your home. DHS can help you find and pay for child care ([see page 20](#)).
- You are injured or disabled (you may be able to switch to the POWER program).
- You need to take care of someone in your house who is ill or disabled.
- You are over the age of 60.
- You need treatment for drug or alcohol use and you cannot work.
- You are a teen parent attending school.
- You are afraid you or your family will be hurt by domestic violence if you work.

- **If you have one of these reasons, you do not have to work, but you can if you want to.**
- **You need to show proof of your reason. Tell your worker your reason if you cannot work.**
- **If you need child care, call your job counselor, DHS Customer Service or the Child Care Connection at (202) 862-1111.**



## POWER: For People With Health Problems

POWER is a program for families in which the parents have physical or mental disabilities that keep them from working.

**For example, parents with these problems might be eligible to enroll in the POWER program:**

- ◇ A heart problem
  - ◇ Drug addiction
  - ◇ Alcohol dependency
  - ◇ Clinical depression
- POWER gives you the same amount of money as TANF.
  - You can get POWER as long as you need it.
  - POWER participants must go to programs to help them get ready for work, like rehabilitation or drug treatment programs.

### What You Need to Do to Get Into the POWER Program

- You must first get TANF before you can get POWER.
- Tell your worker you want to be in the POWER Program.
- Ask your worker to give you a medical form. Take the form to your doctor.
- Return the form to your worker.
- You do not have to work or do a work activity while you wait to find out if you will be in the POWER program. You **CANNOT** lose TANF while you wait.
- Even if you don't get into the POWER program, you can still get TANF money. If it is determined that you cannot be in the POWER program, the months you are on TANF will count on your 60-month clock.

# Child Care



**If you are receiving TANF benefits and are following your Plan,** you may be able to get help to pay for child care. This is called '**child care subsidy**' or a '**voucher**'. Depending on your income and household size, you may have to pay part of the cost of your child care. This is called a '**copayment.**'

- You can get help to care for a child from the age of 6 weeks up to 12 years old, or for a child up to the age of 18 who has a physical or mental disability.
- You may be able to get a child care 'voucher' even if you are an immigrant who does not qualify for TANF.
- You choose from different child care settings.
- The Child Care Services Division will help you find spot and select a facility for your child.

You can choose from:

- ◇ A Licensed Child Care Center
- ◇ A Licensed Family Home Center
- ◇ A Before and/or After School Program
- ◇ A family or friend approved to give care

To get the child care ask your TANF caseworker or your job counselor for the Referral Form and medical forms for your child (*Department of Health Universal Child Health Certificate*).

- Take the medical form to your child's doctor to be completed.
- The medical form must have up-to-date physical exam and current shot information.
- The TANF Referral Form must be current within thirty days.
- For more information call the Child Care Services Division (CCSD) at (202) 727-0284.

**REMEMBER:**

- For help finding child care, call the Child Care Connections at (202) 862-1111.
- If you can't find child care, tell your job counselor immediately.
- If your child is under 6 years old and you can't find child care, you may be excused from doing a work, school or training activity until you find child care, but you MUST tell your job counselor immediately.
- Your TANF money CANNOT be cut off if you tried to get child care, but could not.
- If your money is cut off, you can fight it. Call DHS Customer Service, or [see page 17](#) to find a lawyer for free help.

## Child Care Choices (Options)

### 1. Child Care Centers (nursery schools and preschools)

- The Centers must be licensed and follow the rules of the DC Licensing Office for a clean and safe place with activities for your child's age.
- The staff are trained to respond to children's changing needs as they grow.
- The Child Care Connections also known as Resource and Referral can assist with a list of child care providers approved to use vouchers. The telephone number is (202) 862-1111.

### 2. Family Homes

- The Family Home Providers are licensed and can take care of up to five children, but not more than two children under the age of two.
- The Child Care Connections also known as Resource and Referral can assist with a list of Family Home Providers approved to use vouchers.

## **Child Care Choices (continued)**

---

### **3. Before and After School Care**

- Children who go to school (ages 5 to 12) may need care Before and/or After School.
- The Child Care Connections also known as Resource and Referral can assist with a list of Before and After School providers approved to use vouchers.

### **4. Care By a Relative or Friend**

- If you can't find a licensed child care or family home center you might be able to use a Relative or Friend.
- Relative Home Care (RHC) can be given in the home of the child or the relative.
- Care by a Friend must be given in the child's home.
- The RHC or IHC provider can get paid by the government for taking care of your child.
- The person you select does not need a license.
- The RHC and IHC can take care of up to five children, but not more than two children under the age of two.
- This is the day care choice of last resort and must be approved to get money to pay for it.





# Homeless Services Integration

## DHS has combined some of its programs to make getting services easier.

The Virginia Williams Family Resource Center is an integrated service center for families living in the District. Families who are homeless can visit Virginia Williams to apply for:

Homeless services including:

- Emergency Rental Assistance
- Housing Resources
- Temporary Shelter
- Community Resources

Public benefits including:

- TANF
- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Childcare Subsidy for families working on their TANF goals.

The Virginia Williams Family Resource Center has recently moved.

**The Virginia Williams Family Resource Center is now located at  
33 N Street, NE, Washington, DC 20002  
(202) 526-0017**

**Hypothermia Season:** November 1st through March 31st

During Hypothermia Season, Virginia Williams Family Resource Center is also a warming center. If you or someone you know is in need of Emergency Shelter, please call the **Hypothermia/Hyperthermia Hotline, available 24 hours a day: 1 (800) 535-7252.**

**Homeless Services + TANF Assistance + Child Care  
Services under one roof!**



# Domestic Violence Help

## What is Domestic Violence?

Domestic violence is when someone close to you or in your family hurts you or the children in your care. Domestic violence is:

- ◇ **Physical abuse** such as pushing, hitting, punching, slapping, kicking, strangling, cutting, stabbing, burning, biting, not letting you go to the doctor, or threatening to do any of these things.
- ◇ **Sexual abuse** such as touching you or your child in a sexual way or touching you without your permission, forcing you to have sex, or threatening to do any of these things.
- ◇ **Mental abuse** such as threatening you, making you afraid or controlling your actions.

**You can get help like housing, counseling, and legal assistance for your family if violence happens in your family. To find out where to get help, call EFFORTS at (202) 232-7322 or (202) 629-2720.**



## Domestic Violence Help (continued)

---

### If You Have Experienced Domestic Violence

- ◇ You will still receive TANF.
- ◇ You may not have to work for a short time.
- ◇ A community group will help you make a plan to deal with the abuse.
- ◇ You have to do the things in your plan.
- ◇ Your plan has a time limit. Ask your worker for more time if you need it.
- ◇ You may not have to help DC get child support for your children. Look at the Child Support section [on page 25](#) to learn more.

### How You Can Be Excused From Working

- Tell your worker about the abuse that you or your child(ren) have gone through.
- Your worker will send you to a new office to get help. Be sure to go to this meeting!
- In two weeks, your worker will tell you if you have to participate in work activities.
- You do not have to work while you wait to hear from your worker.
- Your money CANNOT be cut while you wait.



# Child Support Rules

## There are new rules for child support:

- You **CAN** receive both TANF and a portion of your Child Support at the same time.
- To receive TANF you may need to help the Child Support Services Division (CSSD) collect child support from the other parent.

## Child Support Services Division (CSSD) staff will ask you to:

1. Meet with them at the CSSD office. If you can't attend, call CSSD at 442-9900 to set up a new meeting.
2. Provide information about the other parent, such as:
  - Social Security Number
  - Birth date
  - Address
  - Relative's address
  - Place of work

**If you miss meetings at CSSD or don't provide information, your TANF money can be reduced.**

**You may not have to help CSSD if you have a good reason. If you have a good reason, your TANF money CANNOT be cut.**

## You have Good Reasons if:

- ◇ You are afraid that you, your children or a close family member could be harmed from domestic violence if you help CSSD.
- ◇ Your child was conceived because of a rape by a stranger, someone you know, or a relative.
- ◇ Your child is going to be adopted or you are deciding whether to give up your child for adoption.
- ◇ You may have other good reasons. Discuss them with you DHS or Child Support worker.

- **For more information about child support, call the National Women's Law Center at (202) 588-5180. Ask for the booklet "Making Ends Meet: A Guide to Collecting Child Support."**

## Child Support Rules (continued)

### If You Have A Good Reason

- **Tell your DHS worker and your Child Support worker AND:**
  - ◇ If you have a stay-away order or Civil Protection Order (called a "CPO"), give a copy to your DHS and Child Support workers.
  - ◇ If you want to get an order, go to the Domestic Violence Intake Center on the fourth floor of the DC Superior Court or Call 879-0152 to set up a meeting.
  
- **Provide Proof. You have 20 days to take proof of your reason to the Child Support Services Division. Proof is:**
  - ◇ A police record.
  - ◇ A copy of your stay-away order (CPO).
  - ◇ A letter from your doctor, counselor, or other person that you talked to about the abuse.
  - ◇ A letter from a friend or family member who knows about the abuse.
  - ◇ Pictures showing the injuries or scars of the abuse.
  - ◇ A sworn letter from you about the abuse.
  - ◇ Letter from a social worker or adoption agency if you are placing your child up for adoption.
  - ◇ Birth certificate, police record, or other record that your child was conceived during a rape.

**After you give proof, CSSD will let you know if you must help them obtain child support.**



If CSSD tells you to help them but you think you have a good reason not to help, you can appeal. Call the Office of Administrative Hearings at (202) 724-5431. You can also call a lawyer for free help ([see page 16](#)).

## **Child Support Rules (continued)**

### **If You Are Worried About Your Safety But Decide That You Want Child Support Anyway:**

- You can ask your TANF worker for the name of a group that can help ([see page 23](#)).
- Tell your TANF and Child Support workers that you are afraid but want to get child support.
- If you want to get a stay-away order or you already have one, go to the Domestic Violence Intake Center on the fourth floor of the DC Superior Court or call (202) 879-0152. They can help you plan so that you can get child support with less fear of domestic violence.
- If you want child support but do not want to get a CPO, you should:
  - ◇ Ask the Child Support worker to keep your address and your children's addresses secret.
  - ◇ Think about using the address of a friend, relative, or post office box for your court papers.

## Child Support Sanctions

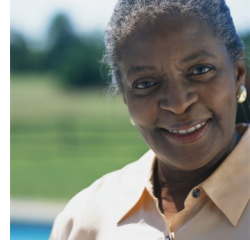
**If you don't have a good reason AND you don't help the child support agency get child support from the other parent of your child:**

- Your money can be reduced by 25%.
- If you have a good reason not to help, your money CANNOT be reduced. [See page 25](#) to see if this applies to you.
- Before your money is cut, you should get a letter or "notice."  
The letter will have directions on how to avoid or fight the cut.

If you don't help CSSD get child support and your money is cut, you will lose one quarter (25%) of your TANF benefit. See the chart below to see the amount of money you will lose if you do not help.

Number of people on grant.	Amount of TANF Check	Amount of TANF after sanction	Amount you lose by child support sanction
1		*	*
2	\$336	\$252	\$84
3	\$428	\$321	\$107
4	\$528	\$396	\$132
5	\$602	\$452	\$150

# Raising Children Who Aren't Your Own



When you are raising a grandchild or another child who is not your own, you are a **kinship caregiver**.

- You do **NOT** need “legal custody” to receive money. Just show that the child lives with you.
- Some kinship caregivers are relatives and some are not.
- The children cared for by kinship caregivers can get cash help.

## Cash Help For Non-Relatives

If you are not related to the child in your care by blood or marriage, or if you cannot prove that you are related to the child, you can get General Assistance for Children (GAC).

- Apply for GAC at any Service Center. [See page 6](#) for the closest Service Center.
- GAC money is only for the children. Your income WILL NOT be used to decide if the children can get GAC help.
- If you apply for GAC, a social worker will come to your home to make sure that the children live with you and that the home is a safe place.

## **Raising Children Who Aren't Your Own (continued)**

### **Cash Help For Relatives**

If you are related to the child by blood or by marriage, you can receive TANF benefits. Apply at your local DHS Service Center. Call 698-3900 or [see page 6](#) for the closest Service Center.

**If you are a relative and caring for a child that is not your own, you have two TANF choices:**

**1. You can get money for yourself AND the child.**

- We will use your income (including any retirement checks) to decide if you and the child can receive TANF.
- You may only get TANF for 60 months.
- You may have to do a work activity and seek employment.  
[See page 12.](#)

**2. You can get TANF just for the child, and NOT yourself.**

- We WILL NOT use your income to decide if the child can get TANF.
- There is no time limit on how long the child can get TANF money.
- You will not be required to do a "work activity."
- You will be asked for help getting child support. BUT, if you cannot help, the child's money will not be reduced.

# Benefits of Working While on TANF



**When you find a job, you may be able to keep part of your TANF money while you are working.**

**You can receive up to \$1,250 in TANF bonuses while working!**

Tell your job counselor right away when you start working.

- ◇ To keep some of your TANF money, you need to give your first pay stub to your job counselor right away.
- ◇ Make a plan with your job counselor to give him/her the pay stubs that DHS needs.

**How much of your TANF money you keep depends on how much you earn and how soon you tell your job counselor that you are working.**

- ◇ For example, if there are three people in your family and you get \$428 from TANF and you earn \$600/month, you can keep \$267 in TANF and all of the money from your paycheck. This means that you will have a total of \$867 every month to support your family instead of just \$428. See the table below for the benefits of working.
- ◇ If you don't report your job earnings you may have to repay TANF money later!

**Example for Family of 3:**

TANF Check	Job Paycheck	TANF Check with Job	Paycheck and TANF
<b>\$428</b>	\$600	\$267	<b>\$867</b>

**Your TANF check may decrease but you make more in the end!**



# What is the Earned Income Credit?



**The Earned income Credit, often called the EIC, helps families that work.**

- You must file your taxes to get it. You get the EIC after you file your taxes.
- You can get EIC money if you are married or single.
- You only need to have earned some money from a job.
- Getting money from the EIC will not affect your TANF, Food Stamps, Medicaid, SSI or other benefits.
- For free help to apply and fill out the forms, call the National Law Center on Homelessness and Poverty at (202) 638-2535 or call the IRS at 1-800-829-1010.

IF you have	And earn less than	You can get
No Children	\$10,000	Up to \$263
1 Child	\$15,000	Up to \$3,050
2 Children	\$20,000	Up to \$4,283
3 or more Children	\$24,000	Up to \$4,070



## Minimum Wage

**In PAID JOBS: The law says you must get at least \$8.25 per hour**, including tips. Your employer might be breaking the law if you get less than \$8.25 per hour.

- This means you should get at least \$8.25 an hour or more in Washington, DC.
- If you work more than 40 hours a week in a paid job, you should get overtime.
- If you have a paying job and have a problem getting the minimum wage or overtime:
  - ◇ Tell your job counselor or DHS worker.
  - ◇ Tell the DC Office of Wage-Hour at 541-3602, or the U.S. Department of Labor at 1-866-487-2365.

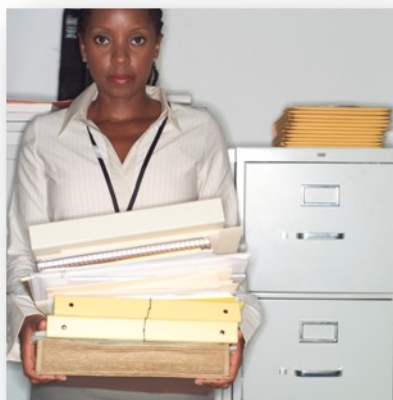
**REMEMBER:**

**In work experience (unpaid work) you should never work more than 35 hours in a week. If you do, tell your job counselor or your worker.**

## Your Right To A Safe and Healthy Workplace

**Your job should give you what you need to be safe, such as gloves, a back brace or a good chair for typing.**

- Your job should be healthy and safe. If it is not:
  - ◇ Tell your employer or job counselor, or
  - ◇ Call the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) at (410) 865-2055 for an investigation.
  
- If you are hurt at a work experience site and you do the kind of work employees usually do, you can apply for worker's compensation.
  - ◇ It does not matter whose fault the injury was.
  - ◇ You should tell your supervisor you were injured and ask for Forms 7 and 7a.
  - ◇ If they do not give you the right papers, call the Workers Compensation Office at 576-6265 or go to the office at 1200 Upshur St, NW.



## If You Have a Physical or Mental Disability

Your workplace must give you help to stay at work if you have a mental or physical disability that keeps you from working.

- ◇ For example, you may need a wheelchair ramp, or time off for AA or NA meetings.

If you have problems getting your workplace to give you help, call:

- ◇ Your job counselor, or
- ◇ DHS—698-3900.

### **YOU MAY ALSO:**

- ◇ Call the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) at (202) 275-7377.
- ◇ Call the DC Office of Human Rights at (202) 727-3900.

### **Important:**

**You may be able to switch into the POWER program.** If you cannot work for a physical or mental health reason, you can ask your worker about the POWER program. See page 19.





## No Discrimination or Harassment

### You Cannot Be Discriminated Against or Harassed.

It is illegal for your boss or supervisor to discriminate against you or harass you for any of these reasons:

- ◇ Race or color
- ◇ The country you come from
- ◇ Sex
- ◇ Sexual orientation (because you are gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, or straight)
- ◇ Disability
- ◇ Religion
- ◇ Age
- ◇ Personal appearance
- ◇ Because you are a student
- ◇ Family responsibilities
- ◇ Marital status or
- ◇ Political affiliation

Here are some examples of discrimination:

- ◇ "This is a man's job."
- ◇ "People with accents can't have this job."
- ◇ "This job is for young people."
- ◇ "Overweight people can't do this job."

## Sexual Harassment is Illegal

You do not have to put up with:

- ◇ Pinching, grabbing, or touching,
- ◇ Unwanted sexual advances, sexual comments, or
- ◇ Other sexual acts or pictures that make you uncomfortable.



## What if I Need to Miss or Leave Work Early?

- Tell your supervisor at your job, right away, your reason if you must **miss** or **leave work early**.
- If you miss or leave work and you do not have a good reason your TANF money may be cut.
- You may have to show **proof** of your reason.

### Examples of Good Reasons Are:

- You are sick or injured.
- You are caring for someone in your family who is sick or injured.
- You do not have child care for your child.
- You have an emergency (like a death in your family) and it keeps you from working.



## TANF Partners

DHS works with many organizations to make sure you get the services that you need. Customers involved in programs with more than one agency will be offered the opportunity to collaborate and unify their case plans. With this approach, you will only have to follow one main plan instead of several.

We'll work with these organizations to make a successful unified plan for you:

- Department of Employment Services (DOES)
- Office of the State Superintendent of Education (OSSE)
- University of the District of Columbia (UDC)
- UDC Community College
- Office on Returning Citizen Affairs
- Department on Disability Services (DDS)
- Department of Health (DOH)
- Department of Mental Health (DMH)
- The Collaboratives
- EFFORTS and other Community Service Programs



# Help for Immigrants

There are new rules for immigrants who need TANF cash, Food Stamps, or Medicaid. Not all immigrants can get these benefits, but MANY can. It depends on how long you've been in the country and what kind of immigration papers you have (if any).

- The rules can be confusing. Ask for help from the Centers listed below or on the next page.
- If you do not have papers, but your children do, or your children are U.S. citizens, you can get help for your children.
- If you only want help for your children, you do not have to tell the worker what type of immigration papers you have.
- You only need to show social security numbers for the people applying for help.
- Some children who have no immigration papers or who have been in the U.S. for a short period of time can get free health insurance.
- If you say that you are "not qualified," your worker should not ask questions about your status. If your worker asks you questions about your status, you do not have to answer.
- To get information about TANF, Food Stamps, or Medicaid benefits, in your native language [see page 40](#).

**These offices provide help with immigration and other legal matters, even if you do not have papers.**

- |  |                |
|--|----------------|
| • Ayuda, Inc.                                      | (202) 387-0434 |
| • CARECEN  | (202) 328-9799 |
| • Asian Pacific American Legal Resource Center     | (202) 393-3572 |
| • National Asian Pacific American Legal Consortium | (202) 296-2300 |
| • EFFORTS (domestic violence help)                 | (202) 232-7322 |



## **Help for Immigrants (continued)**

### **Interpretation Services**

- You can apply for benefits even if you do not speak English
- If you want to apply, you can bring an interpreter but you **do not have to**.
- If you need an interpreter, your worker can call one on the telephone when you are at the Service Center. This telephone service is called the **“language line.”**
- You may also call the ESA Bilingual Customer Service at: 1-800-874-9426 and enter the Client Code: 511053; select your language when asked and then enter the Access Code: 645001 to be transferred to an interpreter.
- All Service Centers have signs in Spanish and Amharic.

### **Bilingual Centers You Can Call:**

<b>Mary’s Center</b>	<b>(202) 483-8186</b>
-Spanish & Amharic interpretation services available	
Clinical Del Pueblo	(202) 462-4788
Washington Free Clinic	(202) 667-1106
Unity Health Plan	(202) 745-4300
CARECEN	(202) 328-9799
Council of Latino Agencies	(202) 328-9451
Newcomer’s Community Service Center	(202) 462-4330

### **Social Services For Immigrants**

Even if you do not have papers, you can get help such as:

- ◇ Emergency food assistance from food banks
- ◇ Emergency medical assistance
- ◇ Head Start preschool for your children
- ◇ Free or low cost school lunches
- ◇ Health care at community clinics
- ◇ Emergency shelter and rent assistance
- ◇ Job training
- ◇ Adult education
- ◇ Child care services



# Rules For Teen Parents

**A teen parent is 19 years old or younger, has a child or is pregnant, AND is not married. Some teen parents can get their own TANF benefits, food stamps, and medical cards.**

There are special rules that apply to teen parents who receive TANF.

## **Rule 1: Teen Parents Under 18 Must Live with Their Parent(s) or Adult Relative(s)**

- Teen parents must live with their own parent or other adult relative to get TANF benefits, EXCEPT when there is a good reason not to.
- If you are living with your parents or adult relatives, you will need to show proof.
- Some teen parents may have **good reasons** not to live with their parents or other adult relatives.

### **Good Reasons Are:**

- ◇ Your parents have died or they won't let you live with them.
- ◇ You don't know where your parents live.
- ◇ You or your children would not be safe if you lived with your parents or other adult relatives.
- ◇ You have some other good reason not to live with your parents or other adult relatives.

**You need to show proof of your reason. If you have trouble, call a lawyer for free help ([see page 17](#)).**

## Rules for Teens (continued)

- It can be hard to get proof.
  - ◊ For example, it may be hard to show proof that your parents won't let you live with them. If you have problems, see page 17 for legal help.
- If you are told that you must move back to your parent's home and you do NOT agree, appeal RIGHT AWAY. [See page 16](#) for appeal instructions.

### **Rule 2: Teen Parents Must Go To School**

- Teen parents who don't have a diploma or GED you must participate in the "New Heights" program and stay in school. As part of "New Heights" program, you must show you are going to high school or getting your GED to get TANF money. Show this with:
  - ◊ A letter from your school.
  - ◊ Attendance reports.
  - ◊ A letter from a person that knows you attend school.
  - ◊ A copy of your school registration.
- If you have a good reason you can't go to school, tell your case worker, and you may be able to still get TANF money. These reasons include:
  - ◊ Your child is less than 12 weeks old.
  - ◊ Your child is less than 6 and you can't find child care.
  - ◊ Your are physically or mentally disabled.





# Service Center Waiting Rooms

To reduce your wait time, we have two (2) lines in the Service Centers.

## **Application and Recertification Line:**

If you are applying or recertifying for benefits, wait in this line. Customers are seen by the next available caseworker.

## **Express Service Line:**

If you have something to do that can be done quickly, wait in this line. Use this line if you need to:

- Return Information
- Provide Proof of Income
- Reactivate your EBT Accounts
- Get Referrals

# Be Smart: Stay Organized



**We are here to help you! Try to stop problems before they start.**

## **Helpful Tips:**

1. Follow the rules of the TANF program and **take advantage** of all of the helpful services.
2. If your situation changes, let DHS know **right away**.
3. When you get a letter from DHS **read it right away**. If you are able to, do what it says immediately. If you cannot do what it says, or think it's unfair, call your worker, or a lawyer for free help, immediately.
4. Keep copies of all of the letters and forms that you receive and that you give to your worker.
5. Keep all of your letters and forms in one place—like a folder. This will help you if you do not agree with DHS.
6. Write down the dates of all of the calls you make to your worker.



## Additional Resources

---

### **GENERAL ASSISTANCE**

Answers, Please (Information & Referrals)	211 or 202-463-6211
DHS Customer Service	202-724-5506
DHS Office of the Administrator	202-698-3900
Child Care Assistance	202-727-0284
Child Support Office	202-442-9900

### **EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**

Department of Employment Services (DOES)	202-724-7000
DOES Toll Free Number:	1-877-319-7346
Office of Work Opportunity	202-698-1860
Food Stamp Employment & Training	202-535-1178

### **FOOD ASSISTANCE SERVICES**

EBT Customer Service	1-888-304-9167
WIC (Women Infant & Children)	1-800-345-1942
Food Banks	
Bread for the City (Northwest Location)	202-265-2400
Bread for the City (Southeast Location)	202-561-8587
So Others Might Eat (S.O.M.E.)	202-797-8806

### **HEALTH CARE & DISABILITY**

DC Healthcare Alliance	202-639-4030
Office of Medical Assistance (OMA-Medicaid)	202-698-4220
Social Security	1-800-772-1213

### **HOUSING ASSISTANCE**

HUD (Temporary & Permanent Housing)	202-275-9200
Coalition For the Homeless-	(202) 526-0017
Virginia Williams Family Resource	(202) 727-8871
Shelter Hotline	1-800-535-7252

# Need to Report a Change?



CONTACT OUR CHANGE CENTER  
(202) 727-6600 (Office)  
(202) 535-1664 (Fax)

Change Center  
P.O. Box #90150  
Washington, DC 20090-0150

If you have changes in your circumstances, please let us know. The Change Center handles the following changes:

Adding a newborn  
Change of address  
Change of income  
Employment  
Household member moved in/out  
Change in household expenses



DC | DEPARTMENT *of*  
HUMAN SERVICES

**David A. Berns, Director**

**Economic Security Administration  
Deborah A. Carroll, Administrator,**



**Government of the District of Columbia  
Vincent C. Gray, Mayor**