



Oregon

Kate Brown, Governor

Department of Human Services

Office of the Director
500 Summer St. NE, E-15
Salem, OR 97301-1097
Voice: 503-945-5600
Fax: 503-581-6198
TTY: 503-945-5896

Report to the 2019 Legislative Assembly Regarding Temporary Assistance for Needy Families As Required by ORS 412.079

Background:

ORS 412.079 requires DHS to submit a report on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families every 15th day of each odd numbered year regular session. This report provides details about the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) time limit that is in place in both federal and state law. Data includes projections about how this time limit will impact families with children living in poverty.

Average Time a Household Received Cash Assistance by Family Size: The TANF program provides cash assistance and services to single- parent households and two-parent households, including households in which one or both parents receive Social Security benefits of Social Security Disability Income (SSDI) or Social Security Income (SSI), and households in which the primary caretaker is a relative other than the child's parent. General Fund moneys are also used to provide cash assistance for families in which one or both parents are applying for Social Security benefits.

TANF on-going cash assistance for all household types in December 2018 reveal the following average months on TANF by Benefit Group Size since July 2003:

Average Federal Months on TANF by Benefit Group Size

Benefit Group Size	Total Number of Cases	Average Number of Federal Months	Median Number of Federal Months
1	416	46.69	35
2	5,861	30.08	21
3	3,468	33.62	26
4	1,832	37.23	31
5	757	40.71	32
6	278	41.78	35
7	90	44.72	36
8	23	52.09	41
9	19	53.89	54
10	6	61.33	63
11	2	27.50	28
13	1	65.00	65
All Family Size	12,753	33.69	25

Average Countable Months an Individual Received Cash Assistance by Family Size (based on Oregon’s Time Limit): Federal law prohibits providing assistance to a family that includes an adult in the need group who has received cash assistance under any state program with funds provided by the Federal government, for more than 60 months (whether or not consecutive). TANF time limits do not apply to families in which the only recipients are children. Examples include: an adult who is not receiving TANF because he or she is receiving Supplemental Security Income (SSI); or an adult who is not in the need group because he or she is a relative caregiver who is not the child’s parent; or when the adult is not in the need group for another allowable reason.

In 2003, federal legislation established a benefit for adults to receive cash TANF cash assistance. States are allowed exempt up to 20 percent of their TANF cash assistance caseload from time limits based on hardship as defined by the state. House Bill 2469 (2007) established a state 60-month time limit for adults receiving TANF cash assistance. HB 2469 also defined the state exemptions to TANF time limits. Those exemptions are listed in ORS 412.079 (2). In addition, the department established an economic hardship exemption which applied to all adults during periods when Oregon’s unemployment rate is equal to or exceeds 7 percent. This exemption began in July 2008 and ended in May 2012. Oregon’s time limit suspends counting of time on TANF whenever a hardship exemption applies. The time limit applies only to adults and teen parents who are the head of household. Children may continue receiving TANF for themselves even after the adult or teen parent exceeds the 60-month time limit and does not meet an exemption, so long as the adult continues to adhere to program requirements.

Effective May 2012, there were two main amendments to ORS 412.079 made through Senate Bill 1579, one of which clarified that a person cannot receive TANF beyond 60 months in this or another state. The other amendment made time limits applicable to

adults in two-parent households in the same way they apply to single parent households (and regardless of the source used to fund the two-parent program).

The table below displays the average countable months on TANF based on state time limit criteria. This information includes the average countable months for families receiving TANF on-going cash assistance in December 2018 by Benefit Group Size, as accumulated since July 2003. Benefit groups are the people whose basic and special needs are used in determining eligibility and who meet all eligibility requirements.

**Average Countable Months on TANF by Benefit Group
(Based on Oregon Time Limit criteria)**

Benefit Group Size	Total Number Of Cases	Average Number of State Months	Median Number of State Months
1	416	28.87	27
2	5,861	22.91	18
3	3,468	25.06	21
4	1,832	27.57	25
5	757	28.97	26
6	278	29.15	28
7	90	29.69	26
8	23	35.35	34
9	19	34.11	33
10	6	40.67	38
11	2	27.50	28
13	1	61.00	61
All Family Size	12,753	24.95	21

The reason for the low average countable months above is not only based on hardship criteria but also stems from the economic hardship exemption which applied to all families between July 2008 and April 2012.

Wages and Benefits after Becoming Employed: The average starting full-time (30 or more hours per week) wage reported by TANF clients during the 2018 state fiscal year ending June 2018 was \$12.68 per hour. Under the new raised exit limit policies, a typical TANF family of three (one adult, two children) would no longer qualify for cash assistance:

- In areas with the Metro minimum wage (\$11.25) if the adult worked for more than 21 hours per week;
- In areas with the Standard minimum wage (\$10.25) if the adult worked for more than 23 hours per week;
- In areas with the Rural minimum wage (\$10.00) if the adult worked for more than 24 hours per week.

Rate of Return to Cash Assistance: For the state fiscal year ending June 2018, 85.98 percent of the families who left TANF cash assistance due to employment were not receiving aid 18 months later. Of these families, 62.66 percent did not return to cash assistance during the entire 18 month period, while 23.33 percent returned for some period of time, they had left cash assistance again by the end of the 18 months. The remaining 14.2 percent of families who left cash assistance due to employment returned to cash assistance and were still receiving cash assistance at the end of the 18 month period.