



# TANF What Is It?



The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Cash Assistance program provides temporary cash benefits and supportive services to the neediest of Arizona's children and their families. The program helps these families meet their basic needs for well-being and safety and serves as their bridge back to self-sufficiency. Eligibility is based on citizenship or qualified resident status, Arizona residency and limits on resources and monthly income.

## Who?

In 2016, 45,706 Arizonans, or roughly 1% of all Arizonans, participated in TANF.

**Vulnerable Children living in impoverished circumstances through no fault of their own are the primary participants in TANF.**



In 2016,  
**33,363 Participants were Children**  
&  
**12,343 were Adults**

18,987 Total Cases

Source: Data provided by Arizona Department of Economic Security

*Child poverty has a huge impact on the nation's economy. Economists estimate that child poverty costs the nation \$500 billion a year in lost productivity as well as spending on health care and the criminal justice system.*

Source: 10 Important Questions About Child Poverty - Family Economic Hardship. National Center for Children in Poverty. [http://www.nccp.org/pages/pdf/page\\_131.pdf](http://www.nccp.org/pages/pdf/page_131.pdf).

**Families Participate in TANF for short episodes, but often use up more than half to three quarters of their lifetime limit during one episode.**

**More than half** of all households whose cases were closed in 2014, had participated in TANF for **6 months or less**

**The average** time participating in TANF for all households whose cases were closed in 2014, **was:**

**9 months** (in one episode, does not include multiple episodes.)  
**19% participated for more than 12 months**

**Arizona's 12 Month LIFETIME TANF Participation Limit Is Most Stringent in the Country**



Source: Data provided by Arizona Department of Economic Security

# Why?

Lack of Skills and Education combined with a Lack of Good Paying, Stable Jobs and Opportunities to Improve Job Skills.

**2% of Participants had an Associates degree or higher**

Source: Data provided by Arizona Department of Economic Security

- Job Loss**
- Low Paying Temporary or Part Time Job**
- No Time or Money to Devote to Improving Job Skills**
- Lack of Affordable Childcare**
- No Reliable Transportation to Get To and From Work**
- High Regional Unemployment Rate**

# How?

**Qualifying for TANF is NOT EASY!**

- Monthly family income after adjustments may not exceed 36% of the 1992 federal poverty level, reduced by 20%. (Family of 2 = \$220; family of 3 = \$278.)
- Prepare for and accept a job
- Make sure children ages 6-15 attend school
- U.S. citizen or lawfully residing in the U.S.
- Valid Social Security Number.
- Arizona resident.

\*Not an exhaustive list

# How Much?

**\$278 a month** for a family of three is the **maximum** benefit allowed

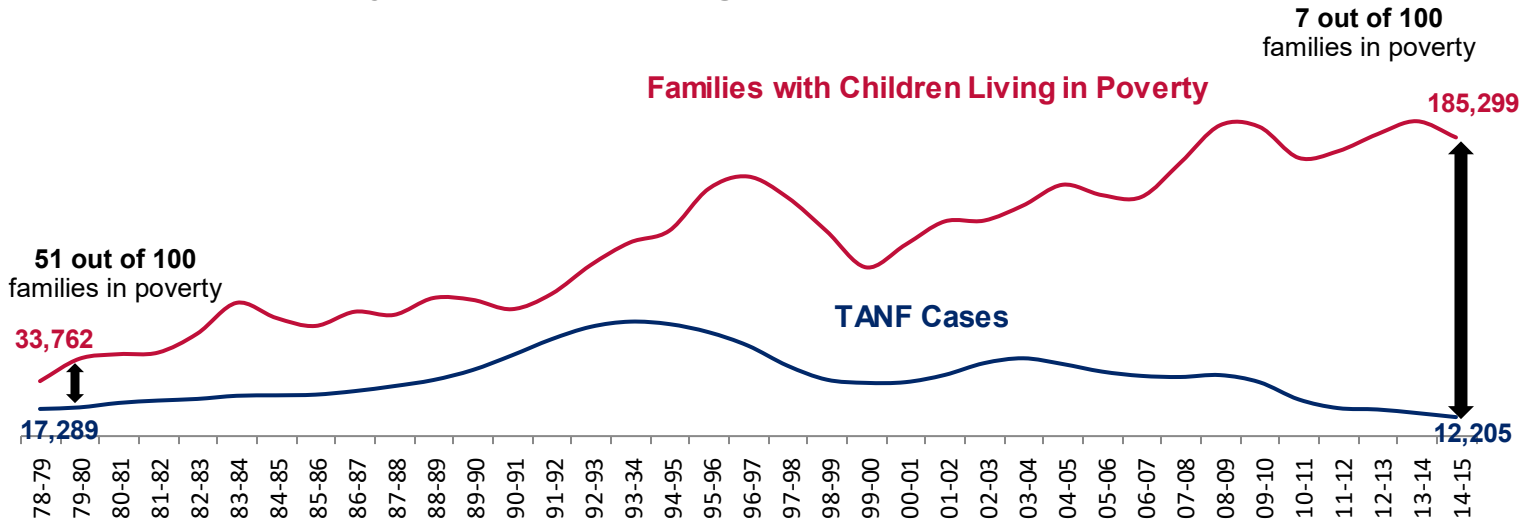
**43rd**

Arizonans participating in TANF receive one of the lowest amounts of assistance in the country

**- 48%**

No Other State Reduced TANF Benefits More Than Arizona Between 1996 and 2016 \*adjusted for inflation

## Because of the Meager Benefits, Time Consuming Qualifying Process and Highly Restrictive Lifetime Limits to Participation, Fewer and Fewer Arizona Families in Poverty are Participating in TANF



Source: CBPP analysis of poverty data from the Current Population Survey and TANF caseload data from Health and Human Services and (since 2006)

# AZ Needs to Work Harder on "Welfare to Work"

TANF, sometimes referred to as "Welfare", was created in 1996. It was the famed "welfare reform" that was supposed to help families go from "welfare to work".

**Arizona Diverts Most TANF Federal Block Grant Funding *Away From Work Supports*, Making it More Difficult for People to Go from "Welfare to Work"**

**ONLY 1.6%** of TANF Block Grant Funds spent in Arizona went to **Work Activities in 2015**

*That's Down from 16% in 2001*

**0%** was spent on Child Care

Source: Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, *How States Have Spent Funds Under the TANF Block Grant*, By Liz Schott, and Iffe Floyd, January 5, 2017



In 2016

**98%**

of all TANF Participants Were Actively Job Searching  
or Improving Employment Skills

**46%** of all adults participating in TANF had an  
income in the previous year<sup>(2014)</sup>

**The Most Frequent Reason** for Adult TANF Participants  
Leaving TANF was: **Earning an Income** <sup>(2014)</sup>

## **The Privatized Jobs Program has been a Poor Performer:**

Only 3 out of 10 Participants in the Jobs Program Got Jobs

Fewer than 2 in 10 Participants Were Still Employed after 90 Days

Source: Arizona Department of Economic Security, State Fiscal Year 2016 Annual Welfare Reform Report