



Financial Eligibility Rules for TANF Cash Assistance

Georgia

I. Rules Used to Determine Recipients' Ongoing Eligibility and Benefit Levels

Asset Test

Recipients must have countable assets below \$1,000.

For recipients who own a car, the equity value in excess of \$4,650 is counted as an asset if the car is used for employment-related reasons. If not, the equity value in excess of \$1,500 is counted as an asset. The entire equity value of second and additional cars is counted as an asset.

Gross Income Limit

All recipients are subject to a gross income test. Gross monthly income (total income with no deductions) must fall below the following amounts:

Gross Income Limits by Family Size

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
\$435	\$659	\$784	\$925

Benefit Calculation

The state determines benefit amounts using "fill-the-gap" methodology, as follows:

1) Countable income is calculated. Countable income equals gross monthly income less these deductions in the following order:

— \$120 and one-third of remaining earnings for four months; then \$120 of earnings for the next eight months; and then \$90 of earnings in subsequent months.

— deduction for out-of-pocket child care expenses: up to \$200 per month for children age 2 and under, and up to \$175 a month for children over 2

2) Countable income is subtracted from the standard of need. The standards of need by family size are:

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
\$235	\$356	\$424	\$500

3) The benefit amount equals the lesser of the maximum benefit and the difference between countable income and the standard of need.

Maximum Benefit Levels

The maximum monthly benefits are as follows:

<u>Family Size</u>			
<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>
\$155	\$235	\$280	\$330

II. Rules Used to Determine Applicants' Initial Eligibility

Asset Test

Applicants must meet the same asset test as recipients, listed above.

Gross Income Limit

All applicants are subject to the gross income test shown above for recipients.

Net Income Test

An applicant's net income (income after specified deductions) must fall below the standard of need for a family of its size. If net income is below the limit, the applicant is eligible for assistance, and benefits are calculated as described above for recipients.

Net income equals gross income less the following deductions:

- \$90 of earnings, unless applicant received benefits in the prior four months. If so, the deduction equals \$120 and one-third of remaining earnings.
- deduction for out-of-pocket child care expenses: up to \$200 per month for children age 2 and under, and up to \$175 a month for children over 2.

III. Other Rules Affecting Eligibility or Benefit Levels

Treatment of Child Support Income

Child support payments are counted as income under the state's fill-the-gap budgeting rules for eligibility and benefit determinations.

Treatment of Housing Assistance

Eligibility and benefits are not affected by a family's actual housing costs or by residence in subsidized housing.

Treatment of SSI as Income

As under AFDC, a family member receiving SSI benefits is excluded from the assistance unit. The SSI recipient's income and resources are not considered when determining eligibility or benefits for the rest of the family.

Treatment of EITC Benefits Received

As under AFDC, an EITC payment received by a family member - whether as a lump sum at the end of the year or through advance payments - is not counted as income for any purpose. Lump sum EITC payments are counted as assets starting in the second month after the month of receipt.

Lump Sum Income

Families receiving non-recurring lump sum income, such as a personal injury award or lottery winnings, are ineligible for assistance for a period of months equal to the lump sum amount divided by the federal poverty level, rounded up to the nearest whole month.

Individual Development Accounts

State policy authorizes Individual Development Accounts (IDAs) for cash assistance recipients.

Funds maintained in an IDA may be used for the following purposes:

- Post-secondary educational expenses
- First home purchase
- Business capitalization

The maximum amount that may be maintained in an IDA is \$5,000.

An individual's IDA contributions must come from earnings.

The IDA program does not include a provision for matching funds.

New Unearned Income Rules

Job Corps and Americorps living allowances and other payments are not counted as income when determining eligibility and benefit levels.