

TANF Benefits for Grandparents



What is TANF?

TANF stands for *Temporary Assistance for Needy Families*. It is a federal program to provide money and help to needy families with dependent children.

Can grandparents get TANF benefits?

If your dependent grandchild lives with you, you may be eligible for a one-time payment of \$1,000.

How do I know if I am eligible for the TANF grandparent benefit?

You are eligible if:

- Your dependent grandchild, great-grandchild or great-great-grandchild lives with you at your house,
- The child's parent does not live with you,
- Your grandchild gets TANF,
- You or your spouse are the primary caregiver or receive TANF benefits for your grandchild (payee),
- You are 45 or older or will turn 45 during the month you apply,
- Your spouse is 45 or older (it does not matter which of you is the child's caregiver or payee),
- Your family income is at or below 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL), and
- Your resources are below the limit for TANF benefits.

How much can I earn and still be eligible?

Find your family size and your family's gross monthly income (before deductions) on this chart.

<i>Family Size</i>	<i>Monthly Income before deductions</i>
1	\$2,010
2	\$2,707
3	\$3,403
4	\$4,100
5	\$4,797

If you earn **less** than this amount, you are eligible.

Effective January, 2008

Note: If there are more than 5 people in your home, add \$580 for each additional person.

What resources can I have and still qualify for TANF?

Your countable resources **cannot** be worth more than \$1,000 for your household.

But you don't need to count everything you own. You do **not** need to count:

- Your home and lot
- Your personal property
- Burial plots for you and your immediate family
- Resources that may be in your name but are not legally available
- Resources that belong to people in your household who get SSI
- A car worth less than \$4,650

Information Not Legal Advice

This pamphlet is for information only and is not a substitute for the advice of an attorney.

How do I know if my grandchild is dependent?

A dependent child:

- Lives in Texas
- Is under 18, or under 19 and a full-time student in high school, vocational, or technical school who will graduate before turning 19
- Does not have enough income or resources for a healthy and decent living
- Lives with a parent, grandparent, sibling, stepparent, stepsibling, aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, or nephew
- Does not have a parent's support because the parent is:
 - away from home,
 - physically or mentally unfit to take care of the child, or
 - dead.

Do I have to qualify to be a TANF caretaker?

To receive the one-time, \$1000 TANF benefit as a grandparent of a child receiving TANF, you must qualify as what is called a “payee” or as a “caretaker.” To qualify as a TANF caretaker you must meet the requirements to be included in the on-going TANF grant. To qualify as a payee, you do not have to meet the requirements to be included in the on-going TANF grant.

- You must live and plan to stay in Texas,
- You must be a U.S. citizen or an eligible alien resident,
- You or your spouse must provide a Social Security number, and
- You must sign a Personal Responsibility Agreement (PRA).

What is the difference between a payee and a caretaker?

A payee is not included in the grant, and the payee's income and resources do not count in determining eligibility for child-only TANF. If an adult who could just be a payee instead wants to be included in the grant, then the adult's income and resources will be counted to determine eligibility for the children and the adult together, and the adult will be called a caretaker for TANF purposes.

Can I be my grandchild's payee or caretaker if I do not qualify for TANF?

You can be your grandchild's payee even if you do not qualify for TANF. To be a “caretaker” in the TANF program, you would have to be included in the grant and your income and resources would count in determining eligibility. Just as you can apply for TANF for the grandchild (child-only TANF, with you being the “payee”) you can apply for child-only Medicaid.

Can I qualify for TANF if my grandchild lives with me but someone else is the child's conservator?

Yes. If your grandchild lives with you, you can apply for TANF even if a court has appointed Child Protective Services or someone else as the child's conservator. Note: the child cannot receive benefits in more than one household.

Can I qualify for ongoing TANF benefit if I already got OTTANF?

Yes. If you got One Time Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (OTTANF) for yourself and your grandchild, you can also apply for ongoing TANF payment.

If my grandchild gets SSI, can I apply for the extra \$1,000 TANF payment?

No, you do not qualify just because your grandchild gets SSI. Your grandchild must get TANF or be certified to get TANF to qualify for the extra benefit.

Can I get another TANF payment if another grandchild moves in with me?

No. You cannot get a second payment for another grandchild. And if your grandchild moves in with another grandparent after you got a payment, the other grandparent cannot get a payment for that month for that grandchild.

What is the Personal Responsibility Agreement (PRA)?

Signing a PRA means you agree to:

- Not quit your job
- Not use alcohol or drugs
- Take parenting classes, if referred
- Get medical screenings and immunizations for your grandchild
- Make sure your grandchild goes to school

How do I apply for the extra TANF grandparent payment?

Contact the local office of the Texas Health & Human Services Commission.

For more information...

- Contact your local office of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission
- Visit the Texas Law Help web site at: www.texaslawhelp.org.
- Call our attorney-staffed office. Advice is free. **The Health Law Program: (866) 979-4343.**