

Georgia's State Plan Renewal

FFY-2014– FFY 2015

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

**Georgia Department of Human Services
Division of Family and Children Services**

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Georgia's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Renewal State Plan for FFY 2014- 2015

The State of Georgia continues to operate a program to serve the broad purposes of Title I, Block Grants to States for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (P.L. 104-193), using the state family assistance grant made under Section 103 of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996.

INTRODUCTION

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-193), Title I, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) states that the purpose of the TANF program is to strengthen the economic and social stability of families, in part by:

- providing assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives
- ending the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage
- preventing and reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies
- encouraging the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Georgia will continue to conduct a program under the provisions of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) and the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA 2005). Georgia's primary goal is to provide necessary assistance on a temporary basis to needy families with children, to assist parents with job preparation, and to provide work opportunities, support services, and the enforcement of child support obligations to children living in these families.

Georgia will not discriminate against any person applying for or receiving TANF benefits because of race, color, national origin, disability (including learning disabilities or language deficiencies), status, age, or any other protected status. In so doing, Georgia will help all needy

families become self-sufficient and able to leave the TANF program as soon as possible. There is no entitlement to any assistance under Georgia’s TANF program. Assistance is provided for a maximum of forty-eight months, except as noted in the hardship sections of this plan.

Promoting the well-being of the children of Georgia is a major part of the mission for the Department of Human Services (DHS) and its Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS). In order to fulfill its mission, the Department assists families in their efforts to acquire the necessary means to achieve economic self-sufficiency. Assistance is provided in the following manner:

- work activities that include job search, job training, and assistance with job placement;
- support services such as child care, transportation, diversion payments, community outreach services, and reimbursement for other necessary expenditures that can assist families in obtaining employment and remaining employed, thus eliminating the need for cash assistance;
- cash assistance that is normally provided by electronic benefits transfer;
- support services intended to support and maintain two-parent families; and
- support services intended to prevent teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

In the administration of the TANF program in Georgia:

- Work is given the highest priority in the provision of services and benefits.
- The needs of children receive high priority in choosing program options.
- Benefits are directly linked to the exercise of responsible behavior on the part of parents receiving benefits on behalf of their children.
- Parental responsibility and employment initiatives are incorporated into the program’s design.
- Efforts to reduce teen pregnancy are pursued in cooperation with non-profit agencies and other governmental organizations.
- Efforts to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The focus on employment reflects Georgia’s commitment to meet all work requirements contained in the federal legislation. This commitment includes the provision of childcare and other support services necessary to not just place people in jobs, but to help keep them employed. Participants who go to work and lose cash benefits may continue to receive Medicaid and SNAP (Food Stamps).

The focus on children reflects Georgia’s commitment to an aggressive effort to end the cycle of welfare dependency that was characterized as an “entitlement-based” program in the past. Georgia’s focus on what is beneficial to children extends beyond merely providing cash assistance. Children benefit from the availability of child welfare, public health and community-based programs and, consequently, prevention programs benefit a broad range of at-risk youth. Children in TANF families have access to Georgia’s Pre-Kindergarten and HOPE Scholarship programs.

Georgia requires responsible parental behavior as a condition of eligibility for public assistance. The State has retained its family cap provision, immunization requirement, work acceptance and maintenance requirement, a teen living arrangement provision, and participation in work activities. These efforts are coupled with aggressive child support enforcement. In submitting this plan, Georgia restates its commitment to continue and expand these efforts.

I. GENERAL PROVISIONS

A. PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

The Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services administers the TANF program at the state level while services are delivered at the local level through the network of Division of Family and Children Services offices located in each of Georgia's 159 counties.

The identified services are available in all political subdivisions in the State. The services are directed by county Division of Family and Children Services staff in collaboration with other local public and private agencies. A range of job placement, job preparation and support services is available in each county office, but may vary in scope depending on local resources. All services provided are in keeping with the current goal of reducing dependency by helping families leave the cash assistance rolls as soon as possible and by diverting applicants toward employment so they will have no need for cash assistance.

Services are provided through a structure that connects TANF applicants and recipients to jobs, job preparation and support systems. The Department uses non-financial agreements when possible and paid agreements when necessary to ensure that clients are able to access needed services. Some services may be provided through other divisions within The Department of Human Services (DHS).

Working with other state agencies and providers outside of DHS is crucial to the Department's success in making needed services available. The range of services needed by clients is provided through partnerships with the Department of Public Health, Department of Education and local Boards of Education, the Board of Regents, Community Action Agencies, United Way, Chambers of Commerce, business associations, community-based organizations and religious groups.

Coordination of local services and obtaining the cooperation and involvement of communities are priorities of DHS. Community Resource Developers help to develop resources at the local level and help to ensure the involvement of numerous local service providers, agencies and businesses.

To insure the effective and efficient management of the Georgia TANF program, outcome-based performance measures are identified and evaluated on an ongoing basis. These outcome measures include, but are not limited to:

- Increases in family income, including a review of family income as a percentage of the federal poverty rate;
- The number of TANF families that achieve employment;
- Decrease in the out-of-wedlock pregnancy rate, with special focus on data about teens;
- The number of former TANF recipients returning to the rolls; and
- The number of applicants diverted from cash assistance.

B. TITLE VI / SECTION 504 CIVIL RIGHTS

No applicant for or recipient of benefits or services provided by the Georgia Department of Human Resources (GDHS) - Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall be subjected to unlawful discrimination in the application for or receipt of benefits and services. All persons have a legal right to equal access to all benefits and services for which they may be eligible, and must not be denied benefits and services due solely to their race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, country of national origin, political affiliation or disability.

In Georgia, it is forbidden to:

- deny benefits to a person otherwise eligible for those benefits, solely due to that person's race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation or disability.
- provide disparate treatment to persons solely due to their race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation or disability.

The aforementioned requirements apply to individuals, childcare facilities and other agencies or organizations to which the Division makes referrals or from which services are purchased.

The legal authority that ensures equitable participation in federally funded programs is provided in part from Title VI of the Civil Rights Acts of 1964, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

The Division, however, is conscious of a moral obligation to deliver all services, whether federally financed or not, in a non-discriminatory manner.

C. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) gives civil rights protections to individuals with disabilities. These protections are similar to those provided to individuals because of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion.

The Americans with Disabilities Act is intended to remove barriers that a person with disability may have to employment, public accommodations, public services, and telecommunications. It prohibits discrimination in all employment practices, including making provisions for persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training, terms and conditions of employment, and to all employment-related activities.

Title II of the ADA prohibits discrimination against a qualified individual with a disability in all programs, activities, and services of public entities. It applies to all state and local governments, their departments and agencies, and to any entities with which a government agency contracts for services.

In Georgia, applicants and recipients are assessed for barriers to employment including disabilities, prior to developing a work plan that accommodates any identified challenges.

D. CONFIDENTIALITY

The state statute that provides the legal basis for safeguarding the confidentiality of assistance-related information is the Official Code of Georgia Annotated 49-4-14. The statute restricts the use or disclosure of information concerning applicants for, or recipients of, public assistance to purposes directly connected to the administration of public assistance. (See Appendix A).

E. CULTURAL CHANGE

The strategies developed in recent years with the introduction of a new emphasis on preparing TANF recipients for employment has been expanded and standardized. County DFCS offices have been reorganized to provide the resources necessary to obtain employment. Staff is and continues to be trained in the new skills needed for their changing roles.

In FFY 2010, the agency rolled out a new business process, Georgia Reengineering Our Work (G.R.O.W.). The G.R.O.W. process has three functions that case managers focus on (1) interviewing applicants, (2) processing applications, and (3) finalizing applications. An applicant in North Georgia applying for benefits may be interviewed by a case manager in Middle Georgia. The application may then be transmitted to a case manager in West Georgia for processing, and transmitted to another location for finalization or approval. After approval, the case will be transferred back to the county where the applicant resides. The G.R.O.W. process symbolizes the concept of doing more with less.

In FFY 2011, Georgia DHS added a new process, Document Imaging System (DIS). The document imaging system gives the public assistance customers the option to scan in documents from a home computer scanner, a scanning station in a public community center, such as the Community Action Agencies/Authorities (CAA's), certain Child Support Offices, or local DFCS offices. Customers who are employed and unable to report to the local DFCS office can renew their benefits online and scan the required supporting documents to an image repository where the case manager or the other staff can access the documents. Georgia expects to have the DIS process implemented statewide by December 2013.

In FFY 2012, The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) revisited the G.R.O.W. process to reevaluate its effectiveness. During the evaluation, it became evident that the work couldn't change, but the way the work was done could. Business Operations Planning (B.O.P.) was added. B.O.P. is: (1) the standardization of G.R.O.W. within each Region. All Regions will have the same procedures to complete a case from start to finish. (2) Self Service is the standardized lobby resources, (3) Document Imaging (DIS), (4) Telecommunications- Local Office call center model, and (5) OFI Data Tool- Standardized data management. In making sure we are all on the same page with the B.O.P. process, OFI Teams were formed. The OFI Teams consist of: (1) Customer Support, (2) Business Support, and (3) Eligibility Specialist. Our customer support staff will support all walk-in work and be the faces of DFCS. The business support staff will scan mail to DIS, answer general inquiries, register and initiate cases. The eligibility specialists will key cases, interview applicants, finalize cases and handle case maintenance. With these measures in place, we strive to provide our customers with a timely and efficient outcome.

F. WORK REQUIREMENTS

Those applicants or recipients of cash assistance that are deemed to have a work requirement must participate in work activities in accordance with federal TANF guidelines. In two-parent families, where both parents are deemed to be work eligible and have a work requirement, then both parents are required to participate in work activities. A work eligible individual is expected to participate in work activities immediately after having been approved for cash assistance.

A parent who does not receive TANF because of a disqualification or a penalty must still meet mandatory work requirements unless otherwise exempt.

The only exemption to the work requirement is that a single custodial parent can choose to be exempt from these work requirements if there is a child in the home under twelve months of age. This exemption can be used for a period of 12 weeks (3 months). If there are additional children that enter the home, who are under the age of 12 months, the parent can request to be exempt from work activities at that time. However, the total exemption is not to exceed 12 months during the 48-month TANF lifetime limit of the parent.

A minor, single custodial parent who does not have a high school diploma or its equivalent cannot be exempted from mandatory work activities. Instead, such a parent must participate in education or alternate training activities as soon as it is medically possible following the birth of a child, but no later than twelve weeks after the child's birth.

Non-custodial, non-supporting minor parents who are included in a TANF AU are required to attend school, obtain a high school diploma or GED, participate in parenting and/or money management classes, perform community service, and cooperate with the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS).

G. WORK PARTICIPATION AND ACTIVITY REQUIREMENTS

1. Participation Requirements

Georgia is committed to attain the minimum participation rate established by PL 104-93 for all families receiving assistance for each fiscal year specified in the law.

In order to meet federal work participation standards, numerous obligations are placed upon recipients. A TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP) is developed for each recipient who has a work requirement. The TFSP specifies the recipient's personal responsibilities, employment goal and the steps necessary for the achievement of the goal. Participants with a work requirement are assessed for potential barriers to employment such as hidden learning disabilities and Limited English Proficiency (LEPSI).

The plan specifies the responsibilities of both the recipient and agency in achieving the goal. Every parent with children receiving TANF and every caretaker relative who receives TANF on behalf of children in the home must complete his or her own TFSP. The plan defines the individual's personal responsibilities, emphasizes the contractual nature of assistance, and focuses on the goal of the attainment of self-sufficiency.

Special accommodations (vocational rehabilitation, mental abuse treatment, substance abuse treatment, developmental disorders treatment, language interpreters, ESL programs, and adult literacy programs) are provided for applicants and recipients who meet the criteria of LEPSI or having a disability under the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) guidelines, throughout the process of developing the TFSP.

Due to recent changes in the federal guidelines, participants with a mandatory work requirement were redefined. These participants are now referred to as work eligible individuals.

Work Eligible Individual – A work eligible individual is an adult (or minor child head-of-household) receiving assistance under TANF or a Separate State Program (SSP) or a non-recipient parent living with a child receiving cash assistance.

A non-recipient parent living with a child could be a disqualified parent, a parent who is penalized for failing to meet an eligibility requirement or a parent who is ineligible for TANF receipt due to certain regulations.

Exceptions to work eligible adults:

A recipient parent who is:

- providing care for a disabled family member living in the home provided that the need for such care be supported by medical documentation.
- receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits.

A non-recipient parent who is:

- a minor parent and not the head-of-household;
- a parent who is ineligible to receive assistance due to his/her immigration status; or
- a parent who receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI). A non-parent relative or a legal guardian who is included in the AU would be a work eligible adult.

2. Work Activities

TANF recipients are expected to participate in approved work activities at a level consistent with full-time employment whenever feasible. Placement in an activity is based on an assessment of the individual and in accordance with federal and state law.

Activities of first choice are those that count toward meeting the federal work

participation requirement.

Hours of participation in the following activities count toward the federal work participation rate.

Countable Activities

Unsubsidized Employment – Full or part-time employment in the public or private sector that is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program.

Unsubsidized Self-Employment- is full or part-time employment that is not subsidized by TANF or any other public program. Income earned directly from one's own business or profession, rather than as specified salary or wages from an employer.

Subsidized Private Sector Employment –Employment in the private sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing a recipient.

Subsidized Public Sector Employment – Employment in the public sector for which the employer receives a subsidy from TANF or other public funds to offset some or all of the wages and costs of employing a recipient.

Work Experience - A work activity, performed in return for welfare that provides an individual with an opportunity to acquire the general skills, training, knowledge, and work habits necessary to obtain employment. Work experience participants continue to receive their TANF grants and do not receive wages or compensation by participating in the activity. Daily supervision does not necessarily mean daily contact, but it does mean that a responsible party has daily responsibility for oversight of the individual's participation.

On-The-Job Training – Training in the public or private sector given to a paid employee while he or she is engaged in productive work and that provides knowledge and skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job.

Job Search and Job Readiness – The act of seeking or obtaining employment, preparation to seek or obtain employment, including life skills training and substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment or rehabilitation activities for those who are otherwise employable. Such treatment or therapy must be determined to be necessary by a qualified medical or mental health professional.

Job search includes looking for suitable job openings, making contact with potential employers, applying for vacancies and interviewing for jobs.

Job readiness assistance involves two activities:

- Preparing an individual to obtain employment, such as preparing a resume or job application, interviewing skills, instruction in work place expectations and life skills training; or
- Substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment or rehabilitation activities for those who are otherwise employable

Community Service –Structured programs in which TANF recipients perform work for the direct benefit of the community under the auspices of public or nonprofit organizations. Community service programs must be limited to projects that serve a useful community purpose in fields such as health, social service, environmental protection, education, urban and rural redevelopment, welfare, recreation, public facilities, public safety, and childcare.

Community service programs are designed to improve the employability of recipients not otherwise able to obtain employment, and must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision does not necessarily mean daily contact, but it does mean that a responsible party has daily responsibility for oversight of the individual’s participation.

Counties must take into account, to the extent possible, the prior training, experience, and skills of a recipient when making appropriate community service assignments.

Community service programs may not include activities that meet the definition of another allowable TANF work activity. Community service programs must include structured activities that both provide a community service and improve the employability of the participants.

Vocational Education – (not to exceed 12 months with respect to any individual) – Organized educational programs that are directly related to the preparation of individuals for employment in current or emerging occupations. Vocational educational training programs may include bachelor’s degree programs, advanced degree programs, associate degree programs, instructional certificate programs, industry skill certifications, and other post secondary education activities. Vocational Education may also occur in the form of Distance/On-line learning programs that include but are not limited to learning and developing the following skills:

- Resume writing
- Strategies for researching employers and careers
- Networking skills coaching
- Interview preparation
- Job Search Skills Workshops online
- Career Management Coaching
- Career Counseling skills
- Skills and Values Assessments

Hours of participation in distance learning programs must be documented, monitored and verified following the current TANF rules.

In Georgia, vocational education is generally provided by education or training organizations, such as vocational-technical schools, community colleges, postsecondary institutions and proprietary schools, etc. However, individual counties or regions may also contract with not-for-profit and for profit organizations to provide certified short-term market specific training programs.

A client can receive credit for supervised homework time and up to one (1) hour of unsupervised homework time for each hour of class time in educational activities. However, total homework time counted for participation cannot exceed the hours of attendance required or advised by a particular educational program.

Providing Child Care Services to an Individual who is Participating in a Community Service – Providing childcare to enable another TANF recipient to participate in a community service program. This activity must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision does not necessarily mean daily contact, but it does mean that a responsible party has daily responsibility for oversight of the individual's participation.

Satisfactory School Attendance at secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate – Regular attendance, in accordance with the requirements of the secondary school or course of study, at a secondary school or in a course of study leading to a certificate of general equivalence, in the case of a recipient who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate. This activity must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision does not necessarily mean daily contact, but it does mean that a responsible party has daily responsibility for oversight of the individual's participation.

A client can receive credit for supervised homework time and up to one (1) hour of unsupervised homework time for each hour of class time in educational activities. However, total homework time counted for participation cannot exceed the hours of attendance required or advised by a particular educational program.

Education Related to Employment, in the case of a recipient who has not received a high school diploma or a certificate of high school equivalency. Education related to a specific occupation, job, or job offer. Education related to employment must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. A client can receive credit for supervised homework time and up to one (1) hour of unsupervised homework time for each hour of class time in educational activities. However, total homework time counted for participation cannot exceed the hours of attendance required or advised by a particular educational program.

English as a Second Language (ESL) – Education designed to provide the client with skills in speaking, reading, or writing English commensurate with the requirements of his/her employment goal. ESL is not counted as a stand-alone activity. It must be included under the Education Related to Employment or Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment activities.

Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment – Training or education for job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the changing demands of the workplace. Job skills training directly related to employment must be supervised on an ongoing basis no less frequently than daily. Daily supervision does not necessarily mean daily contact, but it does mean that a responsible party has daily responsibility for oversight of the individual's participation.

A client can receive credit for supervised homework time and up to one (1) hour of unsupervised homework time for each hour of class time in educational activities. However, total homework time counted for participation cannot exceed the hours of attendance required or advised by a particular educational program.

Mental Health Counseling/Treatment – Treatment that assists recipients in alleviating the symptoms of mental illness that interfere with their ability to function in the home and in the workplace. This is countable as a job search/job readiness activity for up to six (6) weeks.

Substance Abuse Counseling/Treatment – Treatment designed to help a client overcome a dependence on or addiction to drugs and/or alcohol. This is countable as a job search/job readiness activity for up to six (6) weeks.

Life Skills Training – Training intended to help a client develop the skills necessary to manage activities that typify what is considered as normal daily life, enabling the client to function in society. This is countable as a job search/job readiness activity for up to six (6) weeks.

Vocational Rehabilitation Services – Services provided to a participant, who has a disability, be it physical, mental, or emotional. These services assist the client in overcoming barriers that interfere with the individual's ability to work, thus, enabling the client to achieve his/her employment goals. This is countable as a job search/job readiness activity for up to six (6) weeks.

Non-Countable Activities

Placement in certain activities that do not count toward Georgia's work participation rate may nevertheless be necessary in order to prepare the client for successful participation in countable work activities. Hours of participation in the following activities cannot count toward the federal work participation rate.

Job Search and Job Readiness training that continues after the six- week limit has been reached.

Vocational Training that is in excess of the 12-month limit.

Job Readiness Training that is independent of job search activity.

Assessment – An in-depth assessment is intended to assist in the development of a reasonable work plan by taking into account a client’s abilities, disabilities, work history and vocational interests.

Parenting Skills Training – Training intended to help a client develop the skills necessary to effectively care for his/her child.

3. Support Services

When needed, support services are provided to assist TANF recipients to participate in work activities that will preserve months of potential TANF eligibility and lead to stable employment. Support services for TANF recipients are provided through a combination of federal TANF and State MOE funds. These services may include:

- childcare;
- transportation, including, but not limited to, driver’s license fees, vehicle repairs and car insurance;
- work clothing, when required for employment;
- eyewear, medical and dental services when required for employment;
- tools, when required for employment;
- occupational licensing fees;
- emergency assistance with rent and utilities;
- rehabilitation services;
- specialized non-medical services designed to help developmentally disabled TANF recipients move into the work force;
- specialized non-medical support services designed to move into the workforce TANF recipients with identifiable mental health barriers to employment.
- employment intervention services
- transitional support services, and,
- work support services

Persons eligible for these services must meet the state’s defined TANF income and resources guidelines. See Appendix C. There are some support services that are considered non-assistance and may have different income and resources limits. See non-assistance on pages 31-38. Support services are provided when necessary, but cannot exceed the maximum allowed by state law and funding. Benefits are provided at application and during periods of eligibility through cash to the TANF

client and payments to providers. If sanctioned, clients may lose a portion or all of their benefits and support services.

TANF Purpose # 2: End the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.

FUNDING: State MOE and Federal TANF funds.

a. Child Care

Childcare is provided in the form of payments to providers. A sliding fee scale is used for a family with income, while an applicant or recipient of TANF may be eligible for services without a fee if the caretaker is active in job search, job training, or other work-related activities.

b. Transportation Services

Georgia funds transportation programs to assist families in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a lack of sufficient transportation. Initiatives include a reverse commute initiative, direct subsidies and the Wheels-to-Work program that provides vehicles to eligible participants. These services are available to TANF applicants engaged in job search activities or other activities deemed necessary for the completion of the application process. These services are also available to TANF recipients engaged in work activities that support their TANF Family Service Plan.

c. Rehabilitation Services

Rehabilitation services are provided to a participant who has a disability that is physical, mental, emotional, or developmental (including learning disabilities and language deficiencies), that interferes with the individual's ability to work. DFCS case managers make referrals to Rehabilitation Services after completing assessments of TANF participants. We use Form 490- Applicant Services Employment Assessment and Form 491- Employment Services family Assessment to determine if Vocational Rehabilitation Services are needed and whether or not provision of this service will remove the barrier to economic self-sufficiency. Based on an assessment of the participant's needs, these services are provided through contracts or referrals to partner state or community agencies that will assist TANF participants in becoming and remaining employed. In these programs, a State licensed health care provider completes a treatment plan that describes the nature of treatment or therapy and indicates that such treatment or therapy is necessary for the participant to be able to work.

d. Mental Health Services

Mental health services consist of medical or mental health treatment, therapy, counseling, and other services to address mental or emotional disorders that can interfere with an individual's ability to work or look for work. We use Form 490- Applicant Services Employment Assessment and Form 491- Employment Services Family Assessment to evaluate the participant's need for placement in Mental Health Services activity. A professional mental health staff member determines, on a case- by- case basis, what type and to what degree Mental Health Services are required by the TANF participant. Mental Health Services include non-medical evaluation and diagnosis; individual, family, group and activity therapy; and counseling. Emergency services include non-medical short-term support services during a psychiatric crisis.

A network of providers, including community service boards, boards of health and private agencies, provide a range of non-medical services to people in their home communities, day treatment or training programs, crisis intervention, supported employment and service coordination.

e. Developmental Disabilities Services

The Developmental Disabilities program provides supported employment services that assist participants with developmental disabilities, to find and maintain employment. In addition, the program provides family and personal counseling, social development, and a range of in-home services to help participants with developmental disabilities continue to live with their families. These services are provided through referrals to partner state or community agencies.

4. Sanctions

Sanctions are applied to those families that fail to meet the personal responsibilities and work requirements outlined in the TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP). Prior to the application of a sanction, the case manager should determine if the need for good cause exists. Good cause could include accommodation for language deficiencies, developmental disabilities or other disabilities as recognized by the ADA. Good cause could also include a situation, event, or condition beyond the individual's control, which prevents the individual from meeting one of those requirements.

The sanctions are applied as follows:

- An initial failure to meet work requirements or stated obligations, without good cause, is called a material violation and can result in a 25% reduction of the family's grant.
- A subsequent material violation of work requirements or stated obligations can result in the termination of TANF case for three or twelve calendar months based on the number of violations.

An assessment is made of the possible risk to children from a failure to comply with the TFSP or from a failure to achieve self-sufficiency within the time limit.

Recipients who may have committed a material violation are given an opportunity to conciliate and thus avoid the imposition of sanction only one time in their receipt of TANF life. The county DFCS office must initiate the conciliation process. A successful conciliation results in no sanction imposed on a TANF family.

H. TWO-PARENT FAMILIES

In order to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, Georgia broadened the definition of deprivation to allow more able-bodied two-parent families with marginal resources to access the benefits and support services of the TANF program. Effective FFY 2007, cash assistance to families with two able-bodied parents will continue to be paid out of 100% State funds; however, these funds will not be used for MOE purposes.

The TANF program provides these parents an opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities to enhance their job skills, parenting skills and general life skills leading to self-sufficiency.

I. HARDSHIP WAIVERS

Georgia has established a 48-month limit on the receipt of TANF for either an assistance unit (AU) that includes a parent (unless the parent receives SSI) or an adult who receives TANF. The lifetime limit may be temporarily waived for an AU due to hardship or if the AU includes someone who is, or has been a victim of domestic violence.

Georgia grants hardship waivers solely on a case-by-case basis, using criteria established by the State. The granting of a waiver can result in an extension of TANF eligibility for up to three months at a time. Extensions of TANF eligibility count toward the 60-month federal lifetime limit. Waivers granted to the federal limit cannot exceed 20 percent of Georgia's TANF caseload except for reasons of domestic

violence.

Specific criteria are used to help make a determination of whether a hardship waiver may be granted to a TANF assistance unit (AU). A hardship exists when one or more of the following criteria are a barrier to the attainment of self-sufficiency:

- The assistance unit meets the domestic violence criteria when a member of the AU is or has been a victim of domestic violence and the threat of the domestic violence is a barrier to the attainment of self-sufficiency.
- The AU has an active child protective services case and the circumstances necessitating the CPS case create a barrier to the attainment of self-sufficiency.
- The disability of the grantee relative, other eligible adult or a household member is a barrier to employment for the grantee relative or other eligible adults.

- ◆ Documentation of the disability of a grantee relative, household member or other eligible adult must specifically support that the individual has significant barriers that hinder their ability to obtain gainful employment and must include a complete vocational rehabilitation assessment. If the disability is that of a household member, documentation must specifically address attempts made to develop opportunities for participation in any work activity, including the reason that the attempts failed to yield positive results. The documentation must also include the lack of resources or the lack of compatibility of available resources to assist with the disabled household member in order that the grantee relative or other eligible adult could participate in work activities that might lead to employment.

Waivers to the time limit are granted only to those who have complied with TANF program requirements. When an AU is granted a hardship waiver, it remains subject to all TANF program requirements for as long as it continues to receive.

J. REDUCING OUT-OF-WEDLOCK PREGNANCIES

1. Department of Public Health (DPH)

Preventing teen pregnancy is a priority for the Department of Public Health (DPH). In partnership with the Georgia Department of Human Services, DPH addresses teen pregnancy through two programs using a comprehensive approach, the Georgia Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program and Georgia Women's Health Family Planning Program.

The scope of the problem: During 1998 to 2009, the birth rate among girls in Georgia 15-19 years old declined 25.7%, from 63.9 births per 1,000 females in 1998 to 47.5 in 2009. This decline continued in 2010 at 13.3% from 2008 and 35.5% from 1998. During that same period, 1998 to 2010, the teen birth rate among non-Hispanic White

adolescents declined 41.9%. The decline in the teen birth rate among non-Hispanic African-Americans was 42.9% and 27.6% among Hispanic adolescents.

Today, more teen mothers are unmarried than in past generations. In 2010, 87.7% of teens that gave birth were not married, compared to 77.2% in 1998. Single-parent families, especially young families, are at a greater risk of emotional and financial instability. Teen mothers are also at greater risk of receiving late or no prenatal care, having a premature birth (<37 weeks) or low birth weight baby (<2,500 grams), and experiencing an infant death (<1 year).

- In 2006, 6.0% (1,007) of 15-19 year old mothers had experienced late or no prenatal care.
- In 2010, 14.1% (2,016) of births to 15-19 year olds were premature, and 11.9% (1,703) were low birth weight.
- The infant mortality rate for 15-19 year olds was 11.06 infant deaths per 1,000 live births for 2003-2005.

Repeat births are common in teens. In 2010, 19.8% of all births among teens 15-19 years old were repeat births. Births to 10-14 year olds made up 1.3% of all births to 10-19 year olds in 2010. While the teen birth numbers have been declining, pregnancy in this age group remains a serious public health concern. In 2010, 365 girls ages 10-14 became pregnant and 184 gave birth. It is imperative that Georgia reduce the incidence of teenage pregnancy among adolescents in order to reduce the Georgia teen birth rates.

Progress: Teen birth rates have decreased both in Georgia and nationally. Georgia has made significant progress in reducing teen births and the associated personal and economic costs; but Georgia must continue to reduce the teen birth rate even further by reducing sexual activity and other risky behaviors among unmarried teens. Unintended pregnancies, particularly those occurring very early in a woman's reproductive years, often have adverse health, social, and economic consequences for the mother and her child. Teen pregnancy and out-of-wedlock parenting is linked to poverty and welfare dependency. Teenage mothers are more likely to be unmarried, drop out of school, and rely on Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Georgia Adolescent Health and Youth Development (AHYD) Program:

The goal of the AHYD program is to prevent teenage pregnancy by helping adolescents to grow up healthy, educated, employable, and connected to their families and communities.

The Program was established as a result of a teenage pregnancy prevention initiative funded by the Georgia General Assembly in July 1998. The Adolescent Health and Youth Development Program, is housed in the Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Programs (HPDPP), within the Department of Public Health (DPH). The AHYD program aims to prevent welfare dependency and improve economic opportunity and responsible parenting.

Currently, funding for the program is administered through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Public Health (DPH) and the Department of Human Services (DHS). Funds are provided to county health departments and local public health districts to support the planning, development, implementation, and evaluation of successful programs that address the broad range of social and economic factors that affect teen behavior, including substance abuse, violence, tobacco use, obesity, and teen sexual activity.

Specifically, the AHYD program provides funding to 13 District AHYD Programs and a Youth Development Coordinator (YDC) in each of the funded districts. The state office provides ongoing program monitoring as well as technical assistance and training to district and program staff.

District AHYD Programs: Teen Center Programs are operated through county health departments statewide and are located in counties reporting high rates of high school dropouts, HIV/STIs, and/or teen pregnancy.

Youth Development Coordinators (YDC) coordinates efforts between district and county health departments including AHYD Programs. Youth Development Coordinators form critical partnerships with out-of-school programs and county and community agencies, holding workshops with communities, faith-based institutions, and public health leaders to foster collaboration around key adolescent health and youth development issues.

The state AHYD Consultant provides YDCs with ongoing program and fiscal monitoring, technical assistance, training and resources.

Specific strategies: Research shows that successful teen pregnancy prevention programs address the broad range of social and economic factors that affect teen behavior. No single approach is effective by itself. In Georgia, a comprehensive approach is utilized. This approach consists of several strategies including the following:

Coordinated district adolescent health services: County health departments actively partner with local youth organizations/providers to co-sponsor health education, promote events, and to assure that youth have access to needed services and opportunities within their communities. These services are: legal services; food and housing assistance, dental services; tutoring and academic support; entrepreneurship; mental health counseling; youth development, physical activity, socialization, mentoring and other related services. AHYD supports these local partnerships and collaborations by providing funding for a district Youth Development Coordinator to foster collaboration and coordination of efforts throughout Georgia. Annual district and teen center programs' work plans demonstrate local collaboration.

Comprehensive preventive health services: The Teen center programs provide comprehensive prevention services, including abstinence education, drug and alcohol prevention education, and adolescent reproductive health services. Services are offered in

teen-friendly facilities and in locations where teens feel comfortable. Most of the youth who come to the Teen Centers do so with the knowledge of their parents. Teens come with a wide variety of needs. Teens may ask for information, attend abstinence classes, learn to improve their reaction to stress and conflict, get advice on nutrition and physical activity, obtain sports physicals, be tested for a sexually transmitted disease or pregnancy, join a support group, or just need someone to talk to. These programs also provide youth access to screening for a variety of health problems and when identified, provide or link them to needed services including immunizations and physicals. Teens are referred to Teen Centers by their parents, other teens, school staff, caseworkers, community members, and outreach workers. Some programs also pair pregnant teens with experienced mothers to encourage pregnant teens to access prenatal care, provide them with information and resources to help them care for their babies, and to prevent additional unplanned pregnancies.

Abstinence education: Abstinence education is the only certain way to eliminate the risk of pregnancy and STDs. It is the primary prevention method promoted across AHYD funded programs. Abstinence education emphasizes sexual abstinence as the best choice for preventing pregnancy and sexually transmitted diseases.

Outreach and community referral: Local adolescent health and youth development programs coordinate with other professionals and agencies to assist adolescents and their families in obtaining needed AHYD services and information. Specially trained staffs with first-hand knowledge of and experience working with at-risk teens are regularly available.

Parent education and involvement: Information and education programs are available to help parents strengthen their parenting and communication skills, build strong bonds with their teens, and understand the developmental changes specific to adolescence. Each program has established a Parent Advisory Committee (PAC) to provide parents a meaningful way to participate in planning, decision-making, and opportunities for positive health promotion in the community. PACs, in collaboration with local public health officials, are responsible for determining the programs and activities offered in each local community. The Board of Health in each county is responsible for establishing and promulgating the by-laws for nomination, selection, and participation in the PAC. PAC meetings must be held at least quarterly, and each Teen Center must offer a Parent Education Program (PEP) for parents in the community to educate and train them on how to be more effective communicators with their teens about sexual issues and values.

Faith/health community partnerships: The AHYD program has formed a partnership with members of the faith community, held conferences with community, faith, and public health leadership to encourage collaboration, and working together for positive youth development and health promotion.

Use of risk reduction strategies: Teen Centers using risk reduction strategies that include contraception must follow the DPH “Standard Protocols for Registered Professional

Nurses in Public Health”, including encouraging parental involvement, signed informed consent, and distribution of contraceptive devices only in a clinical setting by a health care professional.

Best practices for prevention programs: All prevention programs funded by DPH must incorporate best practices for effective teen pregnancy and STD prevention programs. In addition, all programs must have a demonstrated impact on key outcomes related to teen pregnancy and STD prevention.

Georgia’s Women Health Family Planning Program: The AHYD program works synergistically with the Georgia Women’s Health Family Planning Program, also located in the Department of Public Health, Division of Public Health (Maternal and Child Health Program (MCH). It coordinates family planning services through county health departments. These services are essential to the well-being of women, men, adolescents, and the community at large.

The Family Planning Program offers opportunities for individuals to plan and space their pregnancies in order to achieve personal goals and self-sufficiency. MCH has developed strategies and implemented services to prevent and reduce repeat adolescent pregnancies, including facilitating referrals to family planning services, increasing community awareness, and promoting life skills and abstinence at the community level. Families, parents, and legal guardians are encouraged to participate in the decision of minors to seek these services. Adolescents are counseled on how to resist coercive attempts to engage in sexual activities. Abstinence as the most effective way to prevent pregnancy, contraceptive and safer sex practice options to reduce the risk for STD/HIV, and pregnancy are discussed with all adolescents. Adolescents are not assumed to be sexually active because they seek family planning services.

2. DHS Afterschool Care Program

DHS DFCS Afterschool Care Program

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) Afterschool Care Program is designed to support the Georgia Department of Human Services’ (DHS) broader goal of *promoting self-sufficiency and independence among families and protecting Georgia’s vulnerable children and adults*. Educational attainment, positive youth development and an enhanced well-being are key factors in preventing future welfare dependency among today’s youth, particularly youth of economically disadvantaged families. Through out-of-school time programs, parents and caregivers can ensure youth have a safe and enriching environment when the traditional school day ends.

By providing funding through a Statement of Need (SON) solicitation process, DHS partners with community-based organizations and public agencies throughout the state of Georgia to provide afterschool and summer services to youth. The mission of the DFCS

Afterschool Care Program is to provide resources to youth-serving organizations within the state of Georgia who serve families within low-to-moderate income communities during the out-of-school time. The vision of the DFCS Afterschool Care Program is to ensure every child and teenager has access to high quality youth development programming within their community.

Programs and Services

Organizations that are funded through the DFCS Afterschool Care Program provide project-based learning activities and/or apprenticeship experiences to youth participants. Project-based learning is a hands-on and creative approach to teaching, which provides academic support to students in a way that is fun and engaging. Projects are interdisciplinary in nature and they build on student interest and provide students with an opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned through the actual completion of the project. The Apprenticeship experience is a method of engaging youth in work-based skill development training that can assist them in identifying and pursuing certain professional and career choices. Apprenticeships are taught by professionals with real-world experiences in the apprenticeship field selected by the program. Each of these programs includes opportunities for students to participate in relevant service opportunities.

Funding Allocation and MOE

In FFY '10, the Afterschool Care Program supported 318 afterschool and/or summer program sites. These sites collectively served over 22,000 youth throughout the state of Georgia. Award amounts ranged from \$25,000 to \$7 million dollars and each contracting organization and agency that provided afterschool and/or summer services to youth and their families were required to provide a commitment of matching funds. The total commitment of matching funds for FFY '10 was \$28M to support DHS' Maintenance of Effort.

In FFY'11, Afterschool Care Program funding supported programs and services that served over 33,000 youth through after school and summer programs collectively (majority of youth are served through the Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs). With an additional \$1 million dollars provide to the Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs, the Afterschool Care Program was able to increase the Maintenance of Effort through commitments of matching funds that increased from the previous \$28 million to now over \$30 million. In FFY' 11, funded programs also increased their commitment to ensuring positive academic and youth development outcomes through their continued partnerships with other local community-based agencies, schools and business partners.

In FFY'12, Afterschool Care Program funding supported programs and services that served over 34,800 youth through after school and summer programs collectively (majority of youth are served through the Georgia Alliance of Boys & Girls Clubs). DHS awarded approximately \$15M and \$37M was committed in matching funds. As an

additional enhancement to programming, funded programs increased their commitment to serving youth in foster care and working to create a unified method of tracking academic process of youth served.

TANF Purpose #3: Prevent and reduce the incidence of Out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

FUNDING: Segregated TANF funds

3. Georgia Hope Scholarship Program

In addition to the out of school initiatives, Georgia continues to offer additional educational opportunities for youth through the Hope Scholarship program. Georgia residents who are attending a Georgia public, private or technical college to earn a certificate or degree are eligible for a HOPE Scholarship.

The HOPE Scholarship is Georgia's unique and nationally recognized program for helping its students succeed. Helping Outstanding Pupils Educationally (HOPE) is former Governor Zell Miller's educational program to reward students who have maintained a "B" average by helping with tuition, books and fees as they continue their education after they graduate from high school. The Georgia Lottery for Education, which began in 1993, funds the program.

Georgia is only claiming the portion of expenditures for Hope Scholarships awarded to students in families receiving TANF or MOE funded assistance. The program meets TANF purpose three (reducing out-of-wedlock pregnancy).

TANF Purpose #3: Prevent and reduce the incidence of Out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

FUNDING: The HOPE Scholarship/ State MOE Funds

4. Partner Agency Programs

The Georgia Department of Education, the Children and Youth Coordinating Council, Department of Juvenile Justice, School to Work Program, Department of Labor, Workforce Investment Act, and the Board of Regents provide funds for expanded after-school programs, summer programs, programs requiring parental involvement, programs aimed at preventing children from dropping out of school, and other alternative programs that provide youth with opportunities for intellectual and social enrichment, and other positive alternatives to becoming a teenage parent.

Such programs supplement the basic education curricula and are designed to focus efforts on at-risk children as they move toward adulthood. The services provided by these programs can help prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and teenage pregnancies. Since these services can serve needy and non-needy families, Georgia has imposed no income or resource limits on program participants.

The Georgia Family Connection agency currently provides rape education to include statutory rape to both male and female youth in the community.

TANF Purpose #3: Prevent and reduce the incidence of Out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

FUNDING: Segregated funds

K. EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE

Georgia has a multi-pronged effort to address the problem of rape in general to include statutory rape and date rape.

The Sexual Violence Prevention (SVP) Unit is located in the Division of Public Health, Health Promotions and Disease Prevention Programs. The Rape Prevention Education Program (RPE) was created as a result of the Violence against Women Act of 1994. Funding through the Rape Prevention and Education Program formula grants are provided to States and Territories to support rape prevention and education programs conducted by rape crisis centers, state sexual assault coalitions, and other community partners.

The Rape Prevention and Education program is guided by six prevention principles, which are:

- Preventing first-time perpetration and victimization;
- Reducing modifiable risk factors while enhancing protective factors associated with sexual violence perpetration and victimization; and
- Using the best available evidence when planning, implementing, and evaluating prevention programs;
- Incorporating behavior and social change theories into prevention programs;
- Using population-based surveillance to inform program decisions and monitor trends; and
- Evaluating prevention efforts and using the results to improve future program plans.

The RPE Program provides rural, urban and suburban areas the opportunity to change sexual violence through the implementation of the following legislatively approved activities:

- Educational Seminars;
- Training programs for professionals;
- Preparation of informational material;
- Operation of hotlines;

- Training programs for male and female students and campus personnel designed to reduce the incidence of sexual assault at colleges and universities;
- Increase the awareness about drugs used to facilitate rapes or sexual assaults; and
- Other efforts to increase awareness in underserved communities and among individuals with disabilities as defined in Section 3 of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. Section 12102),

L. HEALTHY MARRIAGES INITIATIVE

The mission of the healthy marriage initiative is to help couples that have chosen marriage for themselves, gain greater access to marriage education services, on a voluntary basis, where they can acquire the skills and knowledge necessary to form and sustain a healthy marriage. In accordance with the fourth purpose of TANF, “encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families,” The Department of Human Services (DHS) has contracted with the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) to provide a healthy marriage-training program. This training program will promote marriage as a viable life style option through improved perceptions, attitudes and skills for developing a healthy marriage.

II. SPECIAL PROVISIONS

A. INTERSTATE PROGRAM REGULATIONS

A family subject to the TANF lifetime limit that moves into Georgia from another state can receive TANF cash assistance for the 48-month limit established by Georgia, regardless of a different lifetime limit in the previous state of residence. Assistance received in any other state in January 1997 or thereafter counts toward Georgia’s 48-month lifetime limit on the receipt of TANF cash assistance.

B. NON-CITIZEN PROVISION

TANF cash assistance is provided to qualified aliens in the same manner as to citizens of the United States. For aliens who are victims of severe forms of trafficking, cash assistance is provided to the same extent as to aliens who have been granted refugee status. Federal funds will be used except for those aliens who enter the United States on or after the date of the enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 and who are not exempted by law from the five-year prohibition. TANF cash assistance is paid out of 100% State funds to those qualified aliens who are not eligible for federally funded TANF solely because of their date of entry into the United States.

C. OBJECTIVE CRITERIA

1. Assistance

Assistance is provided to needy families. A family is defined as “one or more children living with a responsible parent(s), other caretaker relative or legal guardian”. Assistance includes cash payments and other benefits designed to meet a family’s ongoing, basic needs. Assistance includes certain support services to families who are not employed.

Georgia currently has three categories of TANF assistance:

- Basic assistance- provides cash assistance, which is intended to assist families in meeting their ongoing basic needs. Families receiving this assistance comprise Georgia’s child only cases.

Grandparents Raising Grandchildren

In addition to offering basic assistance, Georgia has recognized a growing population of grandparents taking upon themselves the role of caretaker for their grandchildren. Therefore, the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) will provide supplemental support necessary to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives.

The GRG Monthly Subsidy Payment (MSP) is a cash payment of \$50.00 per child, per month. The payment is ongoing and can be offered to a grandparent or his/her spouse who meets the following criteria:

- is a caretaker of his/her grandchild
 - is 60 years of age or older, or
 - any age and is disabled, is not participating in an existing foster care program and is not receiving per diem payments, and
 - has a household income of less than 160% of the federal poverty level (FPL).
- Work assistance - services and cash assistance that are provided to needy families in which the parent or grantee-relative are deemed to have mandatory work requirements.
 - Cash assistance - cash provided to needy families in Georgia’s solely state funded program.

Assistance will not be provided to a pregnant woman without other dependent children, although Medicaid and other support services may be available.

Assistance excludes non-recurrent, short-term benefits designed to deal with individual crises rather than ongoing needs. Short-term benefits that are not considered assistance cannot provide for a need that will extend beyond four months. Assistance also excludes childcare, transportation and other support services provided to employed families. The receipt of assistance does not count against a family's time limit when a grantee relative who is not required to be an AU member does not receive assistance for her/him but instead receives assistance for the children only.

The term "assistance" is important because specific TANF requirements only apply to families receiving assistance. These requirements are:

- time limits (for federally-funded assistance)
- work and personal responsibility requirements
- assignment of child support
- data collection requirements, including three quarterly reports and one annual report

The State provides services, referrals and/or cash assistance, or a notice of denial within forty-five days of the application date. Applicants applying for assistance for themselves and dependent children are required to seek and accept employment.

Parents and caretakers approved for cash assistance are required to agree to certain work and non-work obligations in order to receive benefits. These agreements specify the client and agency responsibilities, the temporary and contractual nature of receipt of TANF, and the work activities required of participants. Teen parents are required to live in an adult-supervised setting unless DHS determines that it may be detrimental to the child or parent to impose this requirement.

Eligibility for TANF is based on objective, non-financial and financial criteria.

a. Non-Financial Rules

Age – Assistance is provided for children under age 18. Families have the option to include children who are 18 years of age and who are still in school, including high school, vocational or technical school, adult education classes, college, valid home study programs, or a course of study granting a GED.

Application for Other Benefits – Applicants and recipients must apply for all other monetary benefits for which they may be eligible.

Citizenship – Cash assistance is provided to qualified aliens who were residing in the United States prior to the date of the enactment of the Personal Responsibility

and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 in the same manner as citizens of the United States. State funding provides cash assistance to those qualified aliens who are not eligible for TANF solely because of their date of entry into the United States.

Convicted Drug Felons – Individuals with felony drug convictions on or after 1/1/97 are not eligible for assistance.

Convicted Serious Violent Felons – Individuals convicted of one of the “serious violent felonies” specified in Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 17-10-6.1 (murder or felony murder, armed robbery, kidnapping, rape, aggravated child molestation, aggravated sodomy, and aggravated sexual battery) are not eligible for assistance.

Cooperation with the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) – Georgia meets all federal requirements regarding referrals to DCSS. Minor absent parents are also referred to DCSS. Failure to cooperate in establishing paternity or obtaining child support makes the family ineligible for benefits.

Cooperation with Fraud Investigation – Families that fail to cooperate with a fraud investigation or an eligibility investigation are ineligible to receive TANF.

Deprivation – Deprivation, for purposes of determining eligibility for cash assistance, is based on the continued absence, incapacity, or death of one or both parent(s). When both able-bodied parents are in the home, deprivation is based on establishing a recent connection to the workforce.

Enumeration – Applicants and recipients are required to provide or apply for a Social Security Number (SSN) according to established rules. Failure to provide or apply for an SSN without good cause results in the ineligibility of the individual for whom a number is not provided.

Family Cap Provision – The family cap limitation requires that the maximum cash assistance grant not be increased for the addition to the family of a child conceived while the parent was receiving TANF and after the family received cash assistance for ten or more months. This provision does not apply to a child born as a result of a verifiable rape or incest.

Family Planning – Following through on a family planning referral is an obligation to be met by all parents and recipients of childbearing age.

Fleeing Felons and Probation/Parole Violators – Fleeing felons and probation/parole violators are ineligible for assistance. The State provides appropriate law enforcement officials with the last known address.

Immunization – No assistance is paid on behalf of a preschool age dependent child unless the child has received all of the specified immunizations appropriate for the age of the child.

Living with a Specified Relative – A child must live with a specified relative or with a legal guardian. If the only child in the family receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI), the parent(s) or other grantee relative may be eligible for cash assistance.

Minor Parent Provision – Minor parents and their children must live with a parent, legal guardian, another relative or in a supportive living arrangement, unless there is good cause not to do so. A minor parent who does not meet this requirement is ineligible for assistance.

Personal Responsibilities – Based on an assessment of family needs and circumstances, family members are required to meet certain personal responsibility requirements. Failure to meet these requirements may result in the imposition of sanctions.

Prenatal Care – Individuals who fail to participate in prenatal care arranged by the Department are ineligible for TANF.

Residency – Applicants and recipients must live in Georgia. A family moving into Georgia from another state is subject to Georgia's 48-month lifetime limit on the receipt of TANF, irrespective of a different lifetime limit that may have been in effect in the family's previous state of residence.

Sanction Provision – Failure to meet work requirements and/or personal responsibilities can lead to a 25% reduction in benefits for the first material violation. Any subsequent material violation will result in TANF ineligibility for a period of three or twelve calendar months based on the number of material violations.

School Attendance – Children must attend school according to guidelines established by the Department of Education. Failure without good cause to ensure that children attend school may result in sanctions. Additionally, no assistance is provided to teenage parents who are not attending school or other equivalent training program and who do not obtain passing grades.

Third Party Resources – Applicants and recipients must provide information regarding third party resources.

Work Requirements – Work requirements are administered based on federal regulations.

b. Financial Rules

Resources: The resource limit is \$1,000.

The resources of individuals used in determining the family size are considered. Resources such as cash, checking and savings accounts, credit union accounts and tax refunds are counted in determining eligibility. This list is not inclusive.

The resource value of vehicles is determined as follows:

- The equity value up to \$4,650 of one vehicle that is used to look for work or used to travel to work or education and training is excluded. If not used for these purposes, the equity value up to \$1,500 is excluded.
- The equity value of any other vehicle in the family is counted toward the resource limit.
- Individual Development Accounts: An Individual Development Account (IDA) may be established by or on behalf of a TANF applicant or recipient for one of the following purposes:
 - Post-secondary educational expenses
 - First home purchase
 - Business capitalization (start up of a new business)

Funds in an IDA, up to \$5,000, are not considered as a resource and any interest earned will not be considered income in determining TANF eligibility.

Income: Income limits for TANF eligibility are based on the State's Gross Income Ceiling (GIC) and Standard of Need (SON).

- The countable income of all AU members is considered.
- The income of other legally responsible persons in the home (such as the parents of a minor caretaker) is also considered.
- The countable gross income of all AU members must be below the GIC.
- Net income is compared to the SON. The State pays the deficit up to the family maximum.
- Certain deductions are applied to earnings.
- A childcare deduction is allowed for individuals who incur a childcare expense while they are working.

The countable income of all persons included in determining family size is considered as follows:

- Income, including wages, unemployment benefits, child support, contributions and Social Security benefits, is considered in the determination of eligibility.

- Certain sources of income, such as educational assistance, adoption assistance, SSI, the earnings of a child who is a student and state and federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) income are excluded from consideration in determining eligibility. This list is not all-inclusive.
- Lump sums received by the family are considered and a period of ineligibility is established using the federal poverty limit (FPL).

Budgeting: The income of all assistance unit members is considered in the determination of TANF eligibility. In addition, the income of the following individuals is considered in determining eligibility and the payment amount:

- disqualified individuals
- penalized parents
- ineligible parents
- Individuals who are financially responsible for an AU member.

The amount of income budgeted is based on the amount that best represents what the AU has received or will receive on an ongoing basis.

Deductions are applied to earned income as follows:

- Apply a standard work deduction.
- Deduct incurred child care expenses up to the following maximums:
 - \$200 per month for each child under age 2.
 - \$175 per month for each child age 2 and over.

Other deductions to income include verified child support paid by a family member to children outside the home.

If a minor parent living with her parents applies and is included in the determination of the family size, a portion of the income of the minor's parents is considered in the eligibility determination.

The countable gross income must be below Georgia's GIC. If it is, all income remaining after allowable deductions are applied is compared to the SON. Payment, if any, is made based on the amount of the deficit or the Family Maximum, whichever is less.

Lump sum budgeting is computed by comparing the amount of the lump sum to the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) for the household size. The household is ineligible for the number of months the income meets the FPL. The period of ineligibility can be shortened only for good cause reasons.

Sanctions are applied to the final grant amount after all income and deductions are determined, and before any recoupment are deducted.

2. Non-assistance

Non-assistance is also provided to needy families. Non-assistance is benefits or services that do not count toward the 48-month lifetime limit on receipt of TANF because they do not meet the TANF definition of “assistance”. Georgia has chosen the option of defining a “needy family” for each category of non-TANF assistance.

Non-assistance includes:

- payments designed to remedy a specific crisis situation that are not intended to deal with ongoing basic needs and cannot continue for more than four calendar months
- work subsidies (e.g., payments to employers or to third parties to help cover the costs of employee wages, benefits, supervision, and training)
- certain support services
- contributions to, and distributions from, Individual Development Accounts (IDAs)
- services that do not provide basic income support
- transportation assistance provided under a job access or reverse commute project to an individual who is not receiving other assistance
- diversion payments intended to provide employed TANF applicants with needed short term assistance in order to obtain or maintain employment
- work support payments intended to assist with work related expenses

The family that receives non-assistance rather than TANF cash assistance:

- is not subject to TANF lifetime limits
- is not subject to TANF work requirements
- is not subject to TANF personal responsibility requirements
- retains all of its child support

The provision of this type of aid, funded by federal TANF dollars and state MOE funds, is consistent with the efforts being made by Georgia to assist needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives, and to end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits. The various types of non-assistance being provided will also help to strengthen and maintain two-parent families through both the alleviation of short-term financial crises as well as the prevention of potential problems that may place undue strain on families, and will help to prevent and reduce both out-of-wedlock and teenage pregnancies.

a. Ready-for-Work

Substance abuse outpatient and or residential treatment are available through the Ready-for-Work (RFW) program, a gender-specific treatment program designed

to address the needs of women who abuse alcohol and other drugs. Participation in the program is available to individuals who meet one of three non-financial criteria and the sole financial requirement.

Participation in the RFW program is available to individuals with active TANF cases, individuals whose cash assistance was terminated within the previous twelve months because of employment, and individuals with active DFCS child protective services cases. These services are provided through contracts or referrals to partner state or community agencies.

The income limit for the RFW program is set at 235% of the FPL for individuals not eligible for TANF cash assistance. There is no resource limit.

b. Child Protective Services

Child Protective Services are provided to abused or neglected children in order to protect the child and strengthen the family. These services are provided to families who require them and who:

- are currently receiving TANF or
- have received TANF during the past twelve months or
- are currently receiving SNAP (Food Stamps) or
- are currently receiving Medicaid or
- are currently receiving Child Care

c. Early Intervention Services

The Early Intervention Services program funds pregnancy tests, intensive in-home case management and other services for families. There is no resource or income limit assigned to this service. TANF funding will be utilized for outreach activities to increase public awareness of the program and for case management services that will inform individual women about particular services.

d. Second Chance Homes

The Second Chance Homes program provides alternative living arrangements for minor parents and their children by providing 24-hour supervision and a structured environment. In addition to adult supervision, services include childcare, education services, training in parenting skills, and family planning services.

Participation in the program is available to minor parents who currently receive cash assistance. It is also available to minor parents who do not receive cash assistance but whose household income is less than or equal to 100% of the FPL. There is no resource limit.

e. Micro-enterprise

The Micro-enterprise program provides business development training and self-employment services such as life skills management, financial literacy, and entrepreneurial skills and strategies through various community-based resources. The program targets current and former TANF recipients and persons who are at risk of receiving TANF benefits. The program is intended to create jobs, build personal assets, and move participants toward the attainment of economic self-sufficiency. These services are provided through contracts or referrals to partner state or community agencies.

The income limit for the micro-enterprise program is set at 235% of the FPL for individuals not eligible for TANF cash assistance. There is no resource limit.

f. Kinship Care

Georgia pays a cash benefit, to certain non-parent relatives to assist them in caring for children when attempts to reunite children with their natural parents have failed. A relative who accepts permanent custody or legal guardianship of a child, who is transferred from the custody of DFCS, may be able to receive a relative care subsidy, an enhanced relative care subsidy, a subsidized guardianship payment or an enhanced subsidized guardianship payment.

The relative must agree to:

- be the permanent caregiver until the child reaches 18 years of age;
- submit to an annual review by DFCS of the child's circumstances;
- comply with a three-year review mandated by the court;
- comply with court and DFCS requirements regarding the reporting of changes in the circumstances in the home.

The purpose of these payments is to assist relatives who provide a permanent home for a child previously in the division's custody. These payments preserve the state's ability to place children with relatives while providing appropriate oversight of placements that ensure the safety and well-being of children.

The payments are as follows:

- Relative Care Subsidy (RCS) - The relative has accepted permanent custody of the child
 - a monetary payment at a rate of \$10.00 per day, per child, if otherwise eligible.
 - the child's own monthly income must be less than \$400.00.
- Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy (ERCS) – The relative has

accepted permanent custody of the child

- a monetary cash payment at the rate of 80% of the current foster care per diem rate based on the child's current age at the time legal custody is transferred to the relative caregiver.
 - the child's own monthly income must be less than \$400.00
 - the relative caregiver(s) household income must not exceed \$150,000.
-
- Subsidized Guardianship Payment – The relative has accepted legal guardianship of the child
 - a monetary payment at a rate of \$10.00 per day, per child, if otherwise eligible.
 - the child's own monthly income must be less than \$400.00.
-
- Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship Payment – The relative has accepted legal guardianship of the child
 - a monetary cash payment at the rate of 80% of the current foster care per diem rate based on the child's current age at the time legal custody is transferred to the relative caregiver.
 - the child's own monthly income must be less than \$400.00
 - the relative caregiver(s) household income must not exceed \$150,000.

g. Family Connection

Support services are available through Family Connection, and are intended to assist families in their efforts to become self-sufficient. The services are available to all current TANF recipients. The income limit for non-TANF families must be less than or equal to 100% of the FPL. There is no resource limit.

h. Family Violence Services

TANF funds are used to provide various services through the Governor's Office of Children and Families (GOCF). Services available include:

- A statewide network of Family Violence agencies
- Family Violence services to victims of family violence
- A resource to provide referral, education, and awareness of family

- violence issues to the community.
- Provide linkages with community agencies
- Provide safety planning
- Provide emotional support including individual and group support.
- Provide follow-up services
- Provide household establishment assistance and transportation assistance.
- Provide legal and social services advocacy

There is no resource or income limit assigned to this service.

i. Disaster/Emergency Assistance

Non-recurrent, short-term assistance for needy families in need of assistance due to a natural disaster or other emergency situation determined by the local, state or federal government.

Families are eligible for a one time only payment that is equivalent to four (4) times the TANF grant amount for their particular family size. If families choose to receive this benefit, they will not be eligible for on-going TANF cash assistance for four (4) months. Families are eligible for this assistance once in a calendar year.

In order to be eligible for this assistance the family must meet the following TANF Basic Eligibility Criteria as defined in DHS/DFCS Economic Support Services Policy Manual Volume I TANF:

- Household Composition
- Age
- Relationship
- Deprivation
- Income
- Resources

j. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Crisis Intervention Payment (CRISP)

Georgia has recognized a growing population of grandparents taking upon themselves the role of caretaker for their grandchildren. Therefore, the Georgia Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) will provide supplemental support necessary to Grandparents Raising Grandchildren (GRG) so that children can be cared for in their homes or in the homes of relatives.

GRG (CRISP) is a one- time cash payment that equals up to 3 times the maximum TANF benefit amount for that AU size. This assistance is available to a grandparent or his/her spouse that meets the following criteria:

- is a caretaker of his/her grandchild

- is 60 years of age and older, or
- any age and disabled, not participating in an existing foster care program and is not receiving per diem payments, and
- has a household income of less than 160% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

k. Employment Intervention Services

Due to a reprioritizing of TANF funds, payments for EIS have been suspended for new clients effective July 1, 2011. Existing clients will be allowed to use up their remaining months of this service.

l. Work Support Program

Due to a re-prioritizing of TANF funds, payments for WSP have been suspended for new clients effective July 1, 2011. Existing clients will be allowed to use up their remaining months of this service.

m. Community Outreach Services

In order to increase economic stability and greater levels of economic self-sufficiency, DFCS staff provides needy families at or below 200% of the Federal Poverty Level, with literature designed to inform them of various support services offered by federal, state and other public or private agencies in their communities. These services include such things as cash assistance opportunities, EITC, Financial Literacy Services, Medical Insurance opportunities, Food assistance, Housing assistance, etc.

D. COMMUNITY SERVICE REQUIREMENT

Georgia has elected not to implement the optional provision available under TANF, Section 402(a) (1) (B) (iv). Instead, the State has decided to utilize available resources to support parents and caretakers in seeking and securing employment or participating in education or work activities that will ultimately lead to full time employment and self-sufficiency.

E. ADMINISTRATIVE APPEAL PROCESS AND BENEFIT RECOVERY

The administrative appeal process provides an opportunity for recipients to challenge alleged errors in the calculation of benefits or the facts upon which an adverse action is proposed. Prior to the administrative appeal process the case manager should determine the need for accommodation for language deficiencies, developmental disabilities or other disabilities as recognized by the ADA, if these needs had not been previously identified. A fair hearing request may be made in writing by contacting the county DFCS office. An applicant or a recipient has thirty days from the date of a notice of a proposed adverse action to request a hearing. The Legal Service Office will conduct a hearing. The applicant or recipient may represent themselves at the hearing or may authorize another person to act as their representative. In addition, a benefit recovery process is in place in order to repay benefits that have been paid to recipients in error.

F. ELDER CARE PROVISION

Georgia does not intend to fund any special initiative for training or employment of individuals providing direct care in long term facilities or in occupations providing eldercare. On case by case basis, a TANF recipient may receive assistance or services while they are pursuing training or employment to provide such eldercare. In this regard, assistance or services will include payment for short term training to become a Certified Nursing Assistant (CNA), supplies, uniforms, equipment, etc.

III. CERTIFICATIONS

Georgia will operate a program to provide Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives; dependence of needy parents on government benefits ends by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies is prevented and reduced and annual numerical goals to prevent and reduce the incidence of these pregnancies are established; and the formation and maintenance of two-parent families are encouraged.

This program is known as the Georgia Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and the grant received by families under this program will be called Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance.

The Chief Executive Officer of the State of Georgia, Governor Nathan Deal, in administering and operating a program that provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) with minor children under title IV-A of the Social Security Act, certifies the following:

1. The Department of Human Services, Division of Family and Children Services is the agency responsible for administering and supervising the program.
2. Local governments and private sector organizations:
 - (a) have been and will be consulted regarding the plan and design of welfare services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and
 - (b) Will have at least 45 days from the date of this submission to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.
3. A Child Support Enforcement program is operated under the State plan approved under part D.
4. A Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program is operated in accordance with part E, and the State will take all necessary actions to ensure that children who receive assistance are eligible for medical assistance.
5. Each member of an Indian tribe who is domiciled in the State and is not eligible for assistance under a Tribal Family Assistance plan approved under Section 412 is provided with equitable access to assistance under the state program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.

6. Standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse, including standards and procedures concerning nepotism, conflicts of interest among individuals responsible for the administration and supervision of the state program, kickbacks, and the use of political patronage are established and enforced.
7. A summary of the State plan will be made available to the public.

OPTIONAL CERTIFICATION

The State has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to:

1. Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals,
2. Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services, and
3. Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for as long as necessary) residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provision, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or would unfairly penalize such individuals who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.

CERTIFIED BY THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER OF THE STATE:

Date

Nathan Deal, Governor

IV. FUNDING

Section 403(a)(1)(A) provides that each eligible state shall be entitled to receive for each of the fiscal years 1996 through 2004, with an extension for fiscal year 2005, a grant in an amount equal to the state family assistance grant as defined in section 403(a)(1)(B). In accordance with the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005, grants and payments may be made pursuant to this authority on a quarterly basis through fiscal year 2010 at the level provided for such activities for the corresponding quarter of fiscal year 2004.

State Payments for TANF Program

Section 405 requires that grants be paid to states in quarterly installments, based on state estimates. The State's estimate for each quarter of the fiscal year by percentage is:

For FY 2014-2015

<u>1st</u>	<u>2nd</u>	<u>3rd</u>	<u>4th</u>
<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Quarter</u>	<u>Quarter</u>
<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>	<u>25%</u>

APPENDIX A

Georgia Confidentiality Law

49-4-14. Regulations as to records; use or disclosure of information; penalty.

(a) The board is directed to prescribe regulations governing the custody, use, and preservation of the records, papers, files, and communications of The Department of Human Services, including the county departments, relating to public assistance. Except as otherwise provided in this Code section, such regulations shall provide safeguards restricting the use or disclosure of information concerning applicants for or recipients of public assistance to purposes directly connected with the administration of public assistance. The board is authorized in its discretion to include in such regulations provision for the public to have access to the records of disbursement or payment of public assistance made after March 30, 1965.

(b) No person who obtains information by virtue of any regulation made pursuant to subsection (a) of this Code section shall use such information for commercial or political purposes.

(c) Any person violating subsection (b) of this Code section shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

(Ga. L. 1965, p. 385, §§ 10, 11.)

APPENDIX B

Georgia Statutory Rape Law

§ 16-6-3. Statutory rape

(a) A person commits the offense of statutory rape when he or she engages in sexual intercourse with any person under the age of 16 years and not his or her spouse, provided that no conviction shall be had for this offense on the unsupported testimony of the victim.

(b) Except as provided in subsection (c) of this Code section, a person convicted of the offense of statutory rape shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than one nor more than 20 years; provided, however, that if the person so convicted is 21 years of age or older, such person shall be punished by imprisonment for not less than ten nor more than 20 years. Any person convicted under this subsection of the offense of statutory rape shall, in addition, be subject to the sentencing and punishment provisions of Code Section 17-10-6.2.

(c) If the victim is at least 14 but less than 16 years of age and the person convicted of statutory rape is 18 years of age or younger and is no more than four years older than the victim, such person shall be guilty of a misdemeanor.

Ga. L. 1918, p. 259, §§ 1, 2; Code 1933, §§ 26-1303, 26-1304; Code 1933, § 26-2018, enacted by Ga. L. 1968, p. 715, § 1; Ga. L. 1995, p. 957, § 3; Ga. L. 1996, p. 871, § 1; Ga. L. 1996, p. 1115, § 3; Ga. L. 2006, p. 379, § 10/HB 1059.

APPENDIX C

Georgia's TANF Financial Standards Income

Georgia’s TANF Financial Standards Income

AU Size	Gross Income Ceiling	Standard of Need	Family Maximum	TANF160%FPL GRG Income Limits
1	\$ 435	\$235	\$155	1446
2	659	356	235	1944
3	784	424	280	2442
4	925	500	330	2941
5	1060	573	378	3440
6	1149	621	410	3938
7	1243	672	444	4437
8	1319	713	470	4936
9	1389	751	496	5435
10	1487	804	530	5934
11	1591	860	568	6434
Each additional member	+44	+24	+17	+464

Resources

Each AU	\$1000 limit
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