

# TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE

## FACT SHEET



Automated Community Connection to Economic Self-Sufficiency (ACCESS) staff in the Department of Children and Families (DCF) prepared this fact sheet to give a general description and explanation of the Temporary Cash Assistance Program (TCA). The Department determines eligibility for public assistance programs in Florida.

Specific eligibility policy is available in federal regulations, state statute or administrative rule. Note: ACCESS updates this fact sheet when eligibility standards change.

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**DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES  
AUTOMATED COMMUNITY CONNECTION TO ECONOMIC  
SELF-SUFFICIENCY (ACCESS)**

The ACCESS Program provides financial and medical assistance, food assistance, and other supportive services to needy persons and families. Each program has eligibility requirements from state or federal law.

Apply for assistance at <http://www.myflorida.com/accessflorida/>, by calling the statewide call center at 1-850-300-4DCF (4323) or by contacting your [local Children and Families ACCESS Service Center](#) or [local Community ACCESS partner site](#).

**Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA)**

**Program Description**

The TCA program provides cash assistance to families with children under age 18 (or under age 19 if they are full time students in a secondary school or its equivalent) that meet the program's technical, income, and asset requirements. TCA helps families become self-sufficient so the children may remain in their own homes or the homes of relatives.

Pregnant women, with no other dependent children, in their third trimester of pregnancy may also be eligible to receive TCA; if their physician restricts them from work. Otherwise, TCA eligibility is available in the ninth month of pregnancy.

**Social Security Number**

Everyone applying for TCA must have a social security number or proof of application for one. Individuals who are not requesting benefits for themselves do not have to provide a number or proof of application for one.

**Residency and Citizenship**

- All individuals must be U.S. citizens or qualified noncitizens.
- All individuals must be residents of Florida. A resident is an individual who lives in the state for purposes other than vacation and intends to remain.

**Assets**

- Assets are resources or items of value owned (solely or jointly) by an individual with access to the cash value of the assets. Households may have \$2,000 in countable assets. Homestead property value does not count toward the asset limit.

- Licensed vehicles for individuals with a TCA work requirement may not exceed a combined equity value of \$8,500. Vehicle equity value in excess of \$8,500 counts toward the \$2,000 asset limit.
- Families without a work requirement may exclude one vehicle with an equity value of no more than \$8,500.
- Vehicles used to transport a physically disabled member of the assistance group are excluded from asset consideration.

### **Income**

Eligibility for TCA depends on the household's income. Net countable income (income minus allowable deductions) cannot exceed the maximum possible payment for the family size. (See TCA Benefit Chart on Page 6.)

### **Relationship**

A child must live in the home of a parent or a relative who is a blood relative of the child. The degree of relationship to the child can be no greater than first cousin once removed. Parents and children, including half-siblings, who live together, must apply together.

### **Work Requirements**

Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) provide work activities and services necessary for participants to obtain or retain employment. TCA recipients must participate in work activities unless they meet one of the following exemptions:

- One custodial parent with a child under three months of age,
- Minor children under age 16 who are not the payee of the TCA benefit,
- Full-time students age 16 – 18 who are not the payee of the TCA benefit,
- Individuals receiving Social Security Income or Social Security disability benefits (SSI/SSDI), or
- Individuals in the home caring for a disabled family member.

Consequences for failure to participate in work activities include:

1<sup>st</sup> penalty: Cash assistance is terminated for entire family for a minimum of 10-days or until the individual who failed to comply does so, whichever is later.

2<sup>nd</sup> penalty: Cash assistance is terminated for entire family for one-month or until the individual who failed to comply does so, whichever is later.

3<sup>rd</sup> penalty: Cash assistance is terminated for entire family for three-months or until the individual who failed to comply does so, whichever is later.

### **Time Limits**

Time limits apply beginning with the first non-prorated benefit issued on or after October 1996. An adult is limited to a cumulative lifetime total of 48 months.

The following individuals are exempted:

- Child only cases (relatives whose needs are not included in the benefits)

- Months an individual caring for a disabled family member who resides in their home
- SSI/SSDI recipients
- A minor child

### **Family Cap**

The program limits additional TCA benefits for a child born to a current TCA recipient. These children will be evaluated to determine whether they will be added to the TCA benefit amount at the full amount, half amount, or no additional benefits.

When a child is born to a TCA recipient (more than 10 calendar months from the date of application for TCA) the family receives half of the normal increase for an additional person. For any additional children born to a TCA recipient, the family receives no increase. This provision does not apply to:

- a first-born child,
- when courts transfer legal custody of a child,
- when the children no longer live with their parents due to death or incapacitation, or
- when the mother is a recipient of SSI.

### **Learnfare**

Learnfare is a technical factor of eligibility for TCA. This policy has two separate requirements:

- School age children (age 6 up to 18) are subject to the school attendance requirement; and
- Parent(s) or relative(s) must participate in school conferences.

Families will lose benefits for any child who is habitually truant from school or who is a school dropout unless the child has “good cause” for non-attendance or a hardship exemption from the school.

Parents or relatives must have a conference with a school official each semester to discuss the child’s school progress. A parent or relative will lose their portion of the benefits if they fail to participate in a school conference without “good cause”.

The following relative(s) or parent(s) are exempted from school conferences:

- Relatives whose needs are not included in the TCA benefit;
- Parents or relatives who home school their children (with school approval); or
- Parents or relatives whose only child subject to educational participation meets a good cause or educational exemption.

### **Immunization**

To receive TCA for children under age five, the applicant must verify that each child has a complete record of all necessary immunizations or is up-to-date with immunizations. Immunizations are waived if the failure to immunize the child is because of religious reasons or good cause.

### **Child Support Enforcement**

Custodial parents or relative applicants must cooperate with the state's child support enforcement program to identify and locate the non-custodial parent(s), establish the paternity of the child, and obtain child support payments for the child. By accepting TCA, the family is attesting to sign any right, title, and interest of its support to the Department.

When the parent or caretaker refuses to provide information regarding the non-custodial parent(s), TCA benefits are denied, unless good cause is granted.

**Note:** A pregnant woman with no other deprived children is not subject to child support cooperation until the child's birth.

### **Relocation Assistance**

Eligible families that need resources to escape domestic violence, move to another area with greater employment opportunities, or to accept a job offer, may choose a lump sum relocation payment instead of a monthly TCA benefit.

Families that accept the relocation payment for employment related reasons may not reapply for TCA for six months, unless they have an emergency. If these families reapply within six months, they must repay a prorated amount of the relocation assistance payment. Relocation assistance eligibility is determined by LWDBs.

### **Up-front Diversion**

Up-front diversion is a one-time payment of up to \$1000 to help families facing an unexpected emergency. A family receives this payment instead of ongoing TCA. An up-front diversion payment is available to TCA-eligible families that:

- Meet certain up-front diversion eligibility requirements,
- Agree not to apply for TCA for three-months, except in an emergency, and
- Receive approval for the payment from the LWDB.

If the family has an emergency and re-applies within three months of the diversion payment, they must repay the entire diversion payment through eight months of a prorated reduction to the TCA payment.

### **Cash Severance Benefit**

Cash severance is a one-time cash assistance benefit of \$1000 available to certain recipients who choose to terminate their TCA benefits. Those eligible must:

- Be a recipient of TCA, but also employed and receiving earnings,
- Show receipt of TCA at least six consecutive months in Florida since October 1996,
- Expect to maintain employment for at least six-months, and
- Sign an agreement not to apply for cash assistance for six-months, except in an emergency.

If the family has an emergency and reapplies within the six-month period, they must repay the entire severance payment through eight months of a prorated reduction to the TCA payment.

### **Temporary Cash Assistance Benefit Chart**

The chart below shows the maximum payment of TCA available based upon the family size and the amount of the family's shelter obligation. A household's actual TCA payment will vary based upon the household's countable income. The family size is the number of eligible household members in the family.

<b>TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE MONTHLY PAYMENT MAXIMUMS</b>			
	Shelter Obligation		
	\$50.01 and up	\$0.01- 50.00	\$0
Family Size	Payment Standard	Payment Standard	Payment Standard
1	\$180	\$153	\$ 95
2	\$241	\$205	\$158
3	\$303	\$258	\$198
4	\$364	\$309	\$254
5	\$426	\$362	\$289
6	\$487	\$414	\$346
7	\$549	\$467	\$392
8	\$610	\$519	\$438
Additional Person	+\$62	+\$52	+\$48

### **Relative/Nonrelative Caregiver Program**

Provides monthly financial support to relatives and nonrelatives meeting "child only" TCA eligibility requirements that:

- Have custody of a child adjudicated dependent by a Florida court and placed in the home of the relative or nonrelative by the Department of Children and Families,
- For Relative Caregiver Program, the relative must be within the fifth degree of relationship to the parent or stepparent of the child placed in their care (also includes any nonrelated half-siblings of the child), and

- The eligibility process examines only the needs, income, and assets of the child to establish eligibility and payment amounts. Based on the child's age, maximum monthly payments are as follows:

Age 0 through 5	\$242 per child
Age 6 through 12	\$249 per child
Age 13 through 17	\$298 per child

**Note:** A nonrelative caregiver includes relatives outside the 5<sup>th</sup> degree of relationship.

#### **Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) Card**

Cash benefits (excluding GAP payments and Nonrelative Caregiver) are automatically placed in a recipient's EBT account within the first three business days of each month. Cardholders that do not receive their card in the mail or need a replacement card due to loss, theft, or damage may obtain one by calling the Customer Call Center Hotline or going to their MYACCESS account.

Recipients using their TCA benefits out of the state for more than 30 consecutive days, with no subsequent in-state usage, will have their TCA benefits terminated (unless the recipient is temporarily absent and has an intent to return to the state).

#### **Guardianship Assistance Program (GAP)**

This program allows relatives and nonrelatives caring for a child removed by the DCF to receive a higher monthly payment amount than the TCA, Relative Caregiver, and Nonrelative Caregiver programs. Eligibility for this program is determined by the Office of Child Welfare within the DCF.

Once the caregiver becomes a licensed foster parent and the child is eligible for foster care board payments for at least six consecutive months, the caregiver may enter into a Guardianship Assistance Agreement (GAA) to enroll the child into GAP. GAP payments are available up to the age 18, unless the caregiver enters into the GAA when the child is 16 or 17 years of age, then the GAP payment may be available up to the age of 21. GAP payments are negotiated based on the needs of the child; minimum payment is \$333 per child.