CLYDE L. REESE, III, ESQ.
COMMISSIONER

DFCS LEADERSHIP:

Ron Scroggy
Division Director

Kathy Herren
Deputy Director

David Kelley
Field Operations Director

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF)

WHAT IS TANF?

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is the cash assistance program formerly known as welfare. The TANF program was created in the 1996 welfare reform law. The federal legislation was enacted on August 22, 1996 as part of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act. Georgia implemented its TANF program July 1, 1997.

In order for adults to receive TANF, they must participate in a work program. There are other circumstances where adults who are receiving Supplemental Support Income (SSI) disability or other caretakers of children can receive TANF as a payee and not be included in the cash assistance grant.

HOW DOES A FAMILY APPLY FOR TANF?

Paper applications can be filed at any local DFCS office by mail, fax or in person. If you have difficulty completing the application, someone will assist you at the local office. It is important to look at all application paperwork as adult applicants often have job search criteria to meet before their TANF application is approved.

If approved, TANF cash assistance generally begins on the first day following the month application is date-stamped as received in the county office. The application process can take up to 45 days.

WHO CAN RECEIVE TANF?

Families must meet both financial and non-financial requirements established in state law. In general, families must include a child (or a pregnant woman) and be residents of Georgia. Children under age 7 must comply with TANF immunization requirements, and children ages 6 to 17 must attend school and have satisfactory attendance, and parents or caretakers must participate in school conferences. Children age 18 that are included in the Assistance Unit (AU) because they are in school full-time, must have satisfactory school attendance.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF TANF?

The purpose of the TANF program is to:

1. To provide assistance to needy families with children so that they can live in their own home or the homes of relatives;
2. To end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits through work, job preparation, and marriage;
3. To reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies; and
4. To promote the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

WHAT IS REQUIRED OF TANF RECIPIENTS?

Adults who receive TANF and who are not disabled are required to participate in work activities such as work experience, job search and/or others.

HOW LONG CAN A FAMILY RECEIVE TANF?

Georgia provides assistance for 48 months. The Federal law limits receipt of assistance to not more than 60 months. States may extend assistance beyond 60 months to up to 20 percent of their caseload provided for hardship. A hardship exists when one or more of the criteria has been or is a barrier to the AU's attainment of self-sufficiency:

- The AU meets the domestic violence criteria
- The AU has an active child protective services case and the circumstances necessitating the CPS case creates a barrier to the AU's 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.

HOW IS TANF FUNDED?

The basic TANF block grant is based on the amount of federal funds that a state received under the former Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program. To qualify for the federal block grants, states are required to "maintain effort" through providing state funds equal to 80 percent of the amount of state funds that were expended under the former AFDC program. This "maintenance-of-effort (MOE)" requirement is reduced to 75% if the state meets federal work participation requirements.

2011 STATISTICS:

- In FY 2011, the total number of Adults receiving TANF was 3,442
- In FY 2011, the total number of TANF cases was 19,256.
  (the difference between the two numbers is the number of cases that contain only children)