

# **Georgia's State Plan**

Effective: January 2020

## **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 State Plan**

*The State of Georgia continues to operate a program to serve the broad purposes of Title 1, 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 and
- 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 due to race, color, national origin, disability, 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 childcare, transportation, diversion payments, community outreach services, and reimbursement for other necessary expenditures that can assist families in obtaining employment and remaining employed, thus reducing the need for cash assistance;
- cash assistance that is normally provided by electronic payment processing information card;
- 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 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 are 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 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 recipients 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. Third party contractors help to develop resources at the local level and help to ensure the involvement of numerous local service providers, agencies and businesses.

To ensure 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 level;
- 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 roles; and

- The number of applicants diverted from cash assistance.

## **B. CIVIL RIGHTS**

No applicant for or recipient of benefits or services provided by the Georgia Department of Human Services (DHS) - 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 an equal opportunity to access the 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, national origin, political affiliation or disability. Such access includes providing meaningful access to individuals who are limited English proficient (for example, providing language assistance through qualified interpretation and translation services).

In Georgia, it is forbidden to deny access for benefits to or for a person otherwise eligible for those benefits, solely due to their race, color, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, national origin, political affiliation or disability and 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 (Section 504), the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975.

DFCS' policy also prohibits unlawful discrimination in its administration of TANF.

## **C. AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT AND SECTION 504**

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 affords 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 ADA and Section 504 are 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, job application procedures, hiring, firing, advancement, compensation, training, terms, and conditions of employment, and to all employment-related activities.



Title II of the ADA and Section 504 prohibit 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.

A qualified individual with a disability has the right to request an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, and to request a reasonable modification to DFCS' policies, practices, or procedures, when such modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination based on disability.

#### **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. MIDDLE CLASS TAX RELIEF AND JOB CREATION ACT OF 2012**

In accordance with section 4004 of the Middle-Class Tax Relief Act of 2012 (Public Law 112-96), this describes Georgia's policies and procedures to prevent access to the TANF cash assistance benefits through electronic transactions at casinos, liquor stores and adult-oriented entertainment (strip clubs). This section will also explain how the State will ensure that the recipients have adequate access to their cash assistance and be allowed to withdraw the cash with minimal fees or charges.

##### **Prevention Methods**

- The Georgia Application for Benefits, Form 297, was revised to include the information on the Middle-Class Tax Relief Act of 2012, including restrictions and penalties. This form is completed by the customer at application and renewal.
- Each applicant and recipient are required to participate in the completion of their TANF Family Service Plan (TFSP), Form 196 was revised to include the debit card restrictions. This plan is signed by the TANF customer acknowledging it was discussed and understood.
- TANF staff receives continuous refresher training on the debit card restrictions.
- The Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012 verbiage was added to the flyer that is mailed out to all recipients.
- The Office of Inspector General (OIG) Benefits Recovery Unit (BRU) is also involved in the prevention process:

OIG has communicated with all licensed liquor and tobacco stores in the State of Georgia concerning the TANF purchasing regulations

implemented under the Middle-Class Tax Relief Act of 2012. In addition to the communiqué, fraud prevention posters were provided to the retailer for display at the point-of-sale (POS) terminals and ATM machines. OIG BRU conducts random site visits to licensed liquor and tobacco stores in the State of Georgia to educate them on the TANF purchasing regulations implemented under the Middle-Class Tax Relief Act of 2012.

OIG BRU receives referrals for investigation on benefit recipients who are suspected of violating the TANF purchase regulations articulated in the Middle-Class Tax Relief Act of 2012. OIG also works with Conduent, our EBT and EPPICard Debit Card vendor to gain quarterly reports that are used to identify transactions that have occurred at restricted retailers. If a retailer is identified on the report, OIG contacts the owner/operator of the retailer to advise of their status as a restricted retailer for the TANF EBT transactions.

### **Adequate Access to Cash Assistance**

A TANF recipient can use their card when they need to, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They are able to get cash from a teller in a bank, from a financial institution's automated teller machine (ATM) that displays the MasterCard, Money Pass or Comerica Bank logo, or from any commercial point of sale (POS) machine. The Georgia Debit MasterCard is accepted at merchant and bank locations worldwide; everywhere the Debit MasterCard logo is displayed.

There is online website access to the applicant/recipient's card account, balance, and transaction history and is the quickest and easiest way to review transactions and deposits posted to the account. The information is displayed immediately in date and time order and reflects transactions posted to the account at the time they are conducted.

If the applicant/recipient is having trouble finding an ATM close to their residence, they can go to the EPPICard website, select Georgia as their State, select ATM locator to the left, scroll down toward the bottom and select ATM locator on the left. The ATM locator will indicate the distance to the nearest ATM access.

If applicants/recipients have any problems with their debit card or ATM locator, they may call the Georgia EPPICard Customer Service at 1-800-656-1347 (24 hours a day, 7 days a week).

### **Free, Fees and Surcharges**

#### **Free Services:**

1. Deposit notification-the customer can receive phone, email or text messaging

- notification for each deposit posted to their card.
2. Purchases using signature or personal identification number (PIN) at merchant locations.
  3. The customer can use their PIN for purchases with cash back with no fee.
  4. Bank teller cash withdrawals unlimited.
  5. ATM balance inquiries are unlimited.
  6. One (1) instant mobile balance request per deposit.
  7. Two (2) ATM cash withdrawal per deposit at Money Pass or Comerica Bank locations.
  8. One (1) ATM cash withdrawal free if no deposit is received.
  9. Five (5) free calls to the Customer Service Interactive Voice Response (IVR) each month to check balances or hear transaction history.

**Assessed fees:**

1. \$1.25 for ATM cash withdrawals after the free transactions
2. \$1.25 for withdrawals at out of network ATMs
3. \$1.25 per each international ATM balance inquiry
4. \$1.25 plus 3% of transaction amount for each international transaction
5. \$5.00 for each card replacement

**Surcharges:**

Some banks may apply a surcharge to use their ATMs. Customers can avoid these fees by using any Money Pass or Comerica Bank ATMs. The ATM messages should always be read carefully. The customer can cancel if they wish to avoid the fee or press enter and pay the fee. Customers should look for the Money Pass or Comerica logo on the ATMs.

Information on accessing TANF benefits, fees and charges, customer service and card replacement is provided to the Debit MasterCard cardholder on the card carrier and on the website at [www.EPPICard.com](http://www.EPPICard.com).

In addition to contacting Georgia EPPICard Customer Service, the customer is also able to contact DHS Customer Service and report challenges or concerns with access. There are ongoing procedures in place to handle complaints received via the DHS customer service phone lines which may include notifying Conduent to assist with resolution. According to Conduent – delivering Georgia’s TANF client benefits via the open-loop MasterCard-branded Georgia EPPICard Debit Card provides far greater accessibility for accessing funds than a closed-loop EBT card.

With all of the accessibility options, coverage is widespread throughout the State of Georgia and nationwide. If a TANF client ever needs assistance with access, Conduent will reach out to them to provide assistance and direct them to their nearest and most convenient location. Conduent has a very good partnership with MasterCard and Money Pass. If there are any rural locations where access is limited, they have worked with the vendor in the past for ongoing recruitment of financial institutions.

## **F. CULTURAL CHANGE**

The strategies developed in recent years with the emphasis on preparing TANF recipients for employment has been expanded and standardized. County DFCS offices were reorganized to provide the resources necessary to obtain employment. Staff were 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 had three functions that case managers focused 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 was then transferred to a case manager in West Georgia for processing and transmitted to another location for finalization or approval. After approval, the case was transferred back to the county where the applicant resides. The G.R.O.W. process symbolized the concept of doing more with less.

In FFY 2011, Georgia DHS added a new process, Web Centered Enabling Capturing Enterprise (WEC) or Document Imaging System (DIS). The document imaging system gave 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 implemented the DIS process statewide in 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 could not change, but the way the work was done could. Business Operations Planning (B.O.P.) was added. B.O.P. was: (1) the standardization of G.R.O.W. within each Region. All Regions had the same procedures to complete a case from start to finish. (2) Self Service was standardized lobby resource, (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 consisted of: (1) Customer Support, (2) Business Support, and (3) Eligibility Specialist. Our customer support staff supported all walk-in work and were the faces of DFCS. The business support staff scanned mail to DIS, answered general inquiries, registered, and initiated cases. The eligibility specialists keyed cases, interviewed applicants, finalized cases, and handled case maintenance. With these measures in place, we strived to provide our customers with a timely and efficient outcome.

To improve the overall service of the public assistance programs, Georgia decided to expand their process under Georgia One. Georgia One provided convenient access, service accountability, and improved the customer experience for those in need of our services. Through a combination of technology and self-service options, DFCS is now able to provide Food Stamps, TANF, Childcare and Medicaid recipients the opportunity to track and manage their benefits throughout the entire process. This change helped us serve our customers more efficiently and effectively.

Even though we added these exciting changes in our process, paper applications are still available and should be requested at the local DFCS office.

In FFY 2015, DFCS chose to return to the “One Caseworker, One Family” model, to improve the customer experience. This return to the previous model allowed the customers and the case managers to have better communication regarding case timeliness and questions. This created a positive impact on our customer service, and it has also increased caseworker morale. With case managers having ownership of their cases, they better manage their time, causing increased output.

## **G. TECHNOLOGY**

Technology is ever evolving. A collaborative effort was initiated in 2014 by four of Georgia’s Health and Human Services agencies. This collaboration led to a computer-based integrated eligibility system (IES) called Georgia Gateway. Customers with benefits through the Department of Community Health (DCH), the Department of Human Services (DHS) the Department of Public Health (DPH), and/or the Department of Early Care and Learning (DECAL) will have one shared account to better manage their benefits. This allowed for a single point of entry for staff to make eligibility determinations across multiple programs including: Medical Assistance, SNAP, TANF, Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP), Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Childcare and Parent Services (CAPS). Georgia Gateway was piloted in February 2017, with the final wave rolling out in September 2017. This new technology replaced the Division of Family and Children Services’ computer-based system, SUCCESS, which had been in place since 1998.

## **H. 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, 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 or caretaker 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).

**I. 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.

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 (LEP).

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.

Reasonable Modifications (e.g., sign language interpreters) are provided for applicants and recipients who are qualified individuals with a disability, as defined by the ADA, 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, contacting 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 workplace 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 consider, 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 recipient 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 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 – 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 recipient 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 recipient 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 recipient 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 recipient 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 recipient 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 recipient 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 recipient, who has a disability, be it physical, mental, or emotional. These services assist the participant 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 recipient 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 considering a recipient’s abilities, disabilities, work history and vocational interests.

Parenting Skills Training – Training intended to help a recipient 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 38-47. 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**

The Child Care Assistance program provides childcare to families to assist in job preparation, job search, placement, and job retention. Clients receiving services in the TANF applicant and TANF Employment Services programs are eligible for childcare assistance without an additional parent fee. Childcare assistance is provided in the form of vendor payments to providers. State funds expended to meet the MOE requirements of CCDF are also counted as basic MOE expenditures in addition to excess State funds spent in this program not being used to match another grant. TANF recipients who go to work and lose their cash benefits may continue to receive transitional childcare assistance for up to twelve months. A sliding fee scale is used for families with income once they are no longer eligible for TANF cash assistance.

**b. 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-TANF Family Assessment to determine if Vocational Rehabilitation Services are needed and whether 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.

**c. 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-TANF 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.

**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 – Work requirement. 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.

## **J. 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.

## **K. 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.
- Natural disasters or pandemics that occur outside the control of the agency creates barriers that cause possible economic disruptions, missed work due to illnesses and reduced work activity.

*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.*

## **L. 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: Using the OASIS tool on the Georgia Department of Public Health's website ([dph.georgia.gov/health-data-and-statistics](http://dph.georgia.gov/health-data-and-statistics)), one can see that the birth rate among girls in Georgia aged 15-19 years old declined from 28.3% to 20.6% between 2014 and 2018. During that same period, the teen birth rate among non-Hispanic White adolescents declined by 6.9%. The decline in the teen birth rate among non-Hispanic African Americans was reduced from 32.9 to 24.5%.

Today, more teen mothers are unmarried than in past generations. Teens aged 10-19 make up the largest population of those unmarried with children. 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 2018, 25% of 10-14-year-old mothers had experienced late or no prenatal care.
- In 2018, 12.6% of births to 10-14-year old's were premature, and 13.8% were low birth weight.

Repeat births are common in teens. In 2018, 5.7% of all births among teens 15-17 years old were repeat births. This has shown a steady reduction overall of 4% from 2010, however. While the teen birth numbers have been declining, pregnancy in this age group remains a serious public health concern. 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 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 in counties reporting high rates of high school dropouts, HIV/STDs, 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 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.

TANF funding for family planning will be utilized to provide services for:

- Contraceptive supplies included in the current family planning formulary
- Clinic supplies and equipment to support the family planning program
- Other supply items that support the provision of family planning services to clients
- Outreach activities and marketing
- Pregnancy testing
- Activities that target teens must be coordinated with the District's Youth Development Coordinator.

These services will provide pre-pregnancy family planning services to:

- Women of reproductive age at or below 200% of the federal poverty level
- Women in need based on a sliding fee system

Recipients of family planning funds must participate in cost containment measures including but not limited to centralize purchasing of contraceptive supplies.

## **2. 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. This program provides youth with opportunities for intellectual and social enrichment and other

positive alternatives to becoming a teenage parent.

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 other well-being programming, and family and community engagement.

### *Funding Allocation and MOE*

From FFY 2006 to FFY 2019, the Afterschool Care Program funding supported programs and services that served over 25,000 youth through after school and summer programs collectively each year. Each year, approximately \$15M was awarded to selected agencies with additional Maintenance of Effort (MOE) match support of approximately \$35M or more each year.

From FFY 2016 through FFY 2018, the Afterschool Care Program partnered with the Georgia Department of Public Health's Georgia SHAPE Health Initiative as the official DFCS Afterschool Care Program health program for all participating youth. Youth served through the DFCS Afterschool Care funded programs participated in Georgia SHAPE approved activities to aid in the overall improvement of their health and well-being.

In addition to requiring that all funded programs have an emphasis on STEAM, the Afterschool Care Program has also moved forward with further implementation of the Afterschool and Youth Development (ASYD) Quality Standards statewide. Through a collective partnership with other state agencies, each funded program will have the opportunity to utilize the established ASYD Self-Assessment Tool to obtain baseline data of their program's quality and create a plan of improvement to be implemented over the course of the contract year.

Currently (FFY 2020), the Afterschool Care Program is partnering with 37 agencies to provide positive youth development services during the out-of-school time. As in previous programming years, the Georgia Alliance of Boys and Girls Clubs continues to serve the largest number of youth and providing the largest amount in match funding for the Department of Human Services and Georgia Division of Family and Children Services' MOE. In FFY 2019, the Afterschool Care Program served more than 31,000 youth through awarded funding.

By funding services that are provided before school, after school, intercession, and summer hours, the Afterschool Care Program supports the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) purpose.

**TANF Purpose #3:** Preventing and reducing the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies.

**FUNDING:** Segregated TANF funds.

### 3. Georgia Hope Scholarship Program

The Department of Technical and Adult Education plans and administers State post-secondary technical training at less than the baccalaureate degree level in a unified system of technical institutes/colleges. It provides an opportunity for students to learn a skill or upgrade an existing skill to keep pace with technology and competition in a world market. They also administer the State's high school equivalency diploma program (GED®). These programs provide training and education opportunity to TANF clients. They focus on instructional support services, student support services, workforce development initiatives, and performance accountability. Georgia is only claiming the portion of expenditures for Scholarships awarded to students in families receiving TANF and MOE funded assistance.

The HOPE Scholarship program is to provide necessary training, post-secondary education and adult literacy to TANF clients through the Department of Technical and Adult Education to enable them to become employable and retain employment.

For cash assistance benefits, a family must be below the State's Standard of Need. Other requirements may vary according to the program of study and applicants for admission must be at least sixteen years of age. The grade point average to qualify for HOPE comes only from core academic subjects, instead of all courses. The core academic subjects are English/language arts, math, social studies, science, and foreign language. A fourth year of math will be required to graduate with a college prep diploma. Also, a formula called the Freshman Index, combining a student's grade point average with SAT scores, will be used to divert applicants below a certain minimum to the State's two-year colleges. Students qualify for the HOPE Scholarship program with a cumulative grade point average of "B" or better.

**TANF Purpose #2:** To end the dependency of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation and work.

**FUNDING:** The HOPE Scholarship/State MOE Funds.

#### **4. Partner Agency Programs**

The Georgia Department of Education, the Department of Public Health, 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.

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

**FUNDING:** Segregated funds.

#### **5. Support for Needy Families Work Assistance Program (SNF-WKS)**

The Community Partnership Investment Program which falls under the SNF-WKS category, provides various services to needy families. The Atlanta Community Food Bank distributes food and Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless Inc., distributes food, clothes, and other basic assistance to TANF eligible and families. Travelers Aid of Metropolitan Atlanta provides temporary shelter and monetary help to TANF eligible individuals. Agencies may provide day care services so that parents can attend work related activities. Agencies may provide services that address homelessness issues supporting the family's needs and keeping the family together. Agencies may provide services for our youth engaging them in appropriate after school activities and reducing the opportunities for our youth to engage in at risk behavior. A family's income must be below the State's Standard of Need or must be eligible for TANF. Hosea Feed the Hungry and Homeless Inc., Travelers Aid assistance ended effective September 30, 2020.

**TANF Purpose #1:** Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

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

**Funding Source:** Segregated Funds/State MOE Funds

#### **M. EDUCATION AND TRAINING ON THE PROBLEM OF STATUTORY RAPE**

Georgia Department of Public Health provides a Rape Prevention and Education program that is completely funded by a Centers for Disease Control (CDC) grant. It is not TANF or TANF/MOE funded.

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 and state sexual assault coalitions.

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;
- Providing literature, education, and information about the Georgia law on statutory rape to adolescent males participating in the Personal Responsibility Education Program (PREP) and the Evidence-Based Teenage Pregnancy Prevention Program;
- 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).

### **Georgia Law Related to Statutory Rape**

In Georgia, anyone who engages in sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16 may face charges for statutory rape, even if the act was consensual. Furthermore,

engaging in any sexual activity by force or without the other person's consent can result in charges for sexual battery or assault, no matter what the age of the other person (Official Code of Georgia Annotated (O.C.G.A.) §16-6-3). Georgia child welfare policy requires the reporting of suspected abuse, neglect, or exploitation of any child, aged person, or disabled adult no later than 24 hours after the suspected or known abuse. This includes reports of physical or mental injury, sexual abuse or exploitation or negligent treatment or maltreatment. Intake reports that contain an allegation of abuse or neglect will be shared with local law enforcement. In addition to reports of abuse or neglect from the general public, Georgia has a defined list of mandated reporters that includes (but is not limited to): Division of Family and Children personnel, physicians and other hospital personnel, school teachers and other school personnel, law enforcement personnel, reproductive healthcare facility or pregnancy resource center personnel (O.C.G.A. §19-7-5).

The Georgia Division of Family and Children Services will coordinate and partner with state, county, and municipal law enforcement to promote safety programs and tips designed to prevent the occurrence of statutory rape, including information regarding legal definitions and consequences of statutory rape and the state law regarding the age of consent to reducing teenage pregnancy to satisfy the requirements of 402(a)(1)(A)(vi). Training is designed to reach state and local law enforcement officials, community educators which include teachers, coaches, nurses and other health professionals such as those providing counseling services.

In addition, the Georgia Bureau of Investigations Criminal Justice Coordinating Council leads the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children Task Force and provide aggregated quarterly reports. The CJCC has contracted with agencies to provide to law enforcement, prosecutors, the medical community, mental health providers on awareness, assessment, warning signs, medical treatment, clinical and counseling treatment, and the referral process. The Department of Public Health's Sexual Violence Prevention Unit and the Rape Prevention Education Program provides information from the OCGA section on statutory rape.

## **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 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:

1. 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, 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 their grandparents.

The GRG Monthly Subsidy Payment (MSP) is a cash payment of \$100.00 per child, per month. The payment may be ongoing (UAS 729) or retroactive (UAS 730) and can be offered to a grandparent or his/her spouse who meets the following criteria:

- is a caretaker of his/her grandchild
  - is 55 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)
  - parent of child is not in home (mother, father or minor parent)
2. 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.
  3. Cash assistance - also includes the share of the assigned child support collection that is distributed to the family and disregarded in determining eligibility for and the amount of the TANF assistance payment. For cash assistance benefits, a family’s income must be below the State’s Standard of Need.

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

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).
- During the COVID-19 pandemic statewide emergency (declared March 13, 2020), Georgia made a number of temporary changes to the TANF program based on the situation, which will remain in place until otherwise modified, in writing, by the Governor. Effective January 25, 2021, the following types of incomes became excluded from consideration in determining eligibility during the pandemic:
  - Lost Wages Assistance (LWA)
  - State Extended Benefits (SEB)
  - Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation (FPUC).

These incomes were excluded to align TANF policy with the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) policy.

**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 childcare 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.

Effective February 2017, with the implementation of the aforementioned new eligibility system called Georgia Gateway, a new standard deduction replaced the \$90 standard work deduction and the \$30 + 1/3 deduction for earned income. These deductions were replaced with a standard deduction of \$250 for earned income for each employed individual in the assistance unit.

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 the gross income is below the GIC, 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 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. Women's Treatment and Recovery Service (WTRS)**

Substance abuse outpatient and or residential treatment are available through the Women's Treatment and Recovery Service (WTRS) 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 WTRS program is available to individuals with active TANF cases, individuals whose cash assistance was terminated within the previous twelve months because of employment, or 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 WTRS program is set at 235% of the FPL for individuals not eligible for TANF cash assistance.

#### **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 Food Stamps or
- are currently receiving Medicaid or
- are currently receiving Child Care

#### **c. Foster Care Payments**

Children who enter foster care are initially eligible for Foster Care services from the time they enter care up to six months. This can be described as short-term emergency care. Initial services may continue for up to six months, however, if the child is determined eligible for IV-E Foster Care Payments, then he/she will be moved to the appropriate IV-E program. Otherwise, the child will be moved to the appropriate non-TANF funded

program at the end of the six months. The following UAS codes are authorized under prior law, as established under Emergency Assistance for Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) criteria:

1. UAS code 503, Initial TANF Family Foster Care (FFC) – To charge expenditures for a child when he/she first enters family foster care
2. UAS code 542, Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR) – Non IV-E eligible children placed with a relative, but the relative is not an approved foster parent.
3. UAS code 579, Initial TANF Specialized Foster Care (SFC) State Approved Per Diem Waiver – To charge expenditures when a child is first placed in SFC and who requires a State Office written waiver for per diem (per diem above the basic state rate and above the \$1.75 more which can be authorized by the County Director).
4. UAS code 607, Initial TANF Institutional Foster Care – Institutional Foster Care Per Diem and other placement related services may be charged. This program covers Room and Board and Watchful Oversight of children placed in Child Caring Institution (CCI) placement.
5. UAS code 611, Initial TANF Privately Supervised Family Foster Care-Licensed and Approved Private Foster Care Agencies Per Diem and other placement related services may be charged. This program covers Room and Board and Watchful Oversight of children placed in Child Placing Agency (CPA) placement.

\*See Appendix E for AFDC State plan excerpt

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Ensure that a child meets all AFDC criteria to be IV-E eligible. The following must exist in the removal home to meet the AFDC Relatedness criteria for IV-E purposes:
  - Age – A child must be under the age of 18
  - Living with a specified relative in the removal home – A child must meet AFDC eligibility criteria in the month in which either a voluntary placement agreement (VPA) is entered into or a court order is initiated to remove the children from the home. For the purpose of meeting the living with a specified relative prior to removal from the home requirement, one of the two situations will apply:
    - The child was living with the parent or specified relative, and was AFDC eligible in that home in the month of the voluntary placement agreement or initiation of court proceedings; or
    - The child had been living with the parent or specified relative within six months of the voluntary placement agreement or the initiation of the court proceedings, and the child would have been AFDC eligible in that month if s/he had still been living in that home.
  - Deprivation – The child must have been deprived of the care, guidance or support of one or both parents (married or unmarried), if paternity is established. Deprivation must exist in the eligibility month.
  - Financial need (income and resources) – The income and assets of the removal home family must be considered. The income limits are based



on 200% of the Federal Poverty Level and assets of less than \$1000 in resources. (Source: Georgia COSTAR manual).

- Citizenship/immigration – The child must be a United States citizen or a lawfully admitted qualified immigrant to be IV-E eligible.
2. Verify the citizenship or immigration status of any child in foster care under the responsibility of the State, without regard to whether foster care maintenance payments are made on behalf of the child.
  3. Ensure children meet the definition of “qualified immigrant” as defined in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) to be eligible for foster care maintenance or adoption assistance (except children receiving adoption assistance pursuant to agreements signed before August 22, 1996, may continue to receive such assistance).

**\*See Appendix F – Child Welfare Policy Manual Policy Number 9.6 for the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Relatedness Criteria**

#### **d. Kinship Care**

##### **Relatives Caring for Children Currently or Previously in the Custody of DFCS**

Georgia pays a cash benefit to certain non-parent relatives to assist them in caring for children in the custody of DFCS or when attempts to reunite these children with their parents have failed.

Relative Foster Care Maintenance Payments and Adoption and Guardianship Subsidies: Basic assistance provided on behalf of a child or children for whom the child welfare agency has legal placement and care responsibility and is living with a caretaker relative; or child or children living with legal guardians. This category also includes ongoing adoption subsidies. The only TANF funding toward adoption payments is specifically for non-IV-E eligible, special needs adoption payments to two-parent families. All expenditures are for cases that are not eligible for IV-E foster care assistance or subsidies. Included are expenditures for payments made to foster parents standing in loco parentis, if state law provides. This amount is tracked using the following descriptions:

- **Relative Care Subsidy (RCS)/Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy (ERCS):** – The Relative Care Subsidy/Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy program enables the Department to provide financial support for children transferred by the courts from the temporary legal custody of the Department to the permanent custody of an approved relative caregiver who meets the TANF degree of relationship. The purpose of RCS/ERCS is to financially assist relatives providing a permanent home for a child formerly in agency custody. The RCS/ERCS payments are available to help defray basic expenses that, otherwise, may jeopardize the child’s opportunity to experience permanency. Subsidy payments must be used for the child’s needs or expenses. The Relative/Enhanced Relative Care Subsidy (RCS/ERCS) provides financial support to assist relative caregivers with the basic care of a related child placed in their home. The relative must have an approved Relative Care Assessment (RCA), and the child must be in their custody. Income eligibility criteria: The income of the child, excluding the child’s wages, is less than the amount of the subsidy. *Effective January 1, 2014, no new cases may be added to RCS or ERCS.*

- **The RCS monthly rate is (effective July 1, 2019):**
  - \$647.88
- **The ERCS monthly rates are as follows (effective July 1, 2019):**
  - Child aged birth through 5: \$705.97
  - Child aged 6 through 12: \$754.33
  - Child aged 13 and older: \$812.73
- **Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR):** Effective January 1, 2014, ERR replaced RCS and ERCS. The ERR program provides financial support to relative caregivers who meet the TANF degree of relationship for the basic care of a related child *in the custody of DFCS* placed in their home. Income eligibility criteria: The income of the child, excluding the child's wages, is less than the amount of the subsidy.
  - **The ERR monthly rates are as follows (effective July 1, 2019):**
    - Child aged birth through 5: \$705.97
    - Child aged 6 through 12: \$754.33
    - Child aged 13 and older: \$812.73
- **Subsidized Guardianship & Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship:** Subsidized Guardianship (SG) and Enhanced Subsidized Guardianship (ESG) programs provide financial assistance to relative caregivers who meet the TANF degree of relationship that have *obtained permanent guardianship* of a child who was in DFCS custody. Effective August 1, 2014, the ESG program replaced the SG program. All new cases after August 1, 2014, are placed in the ESG program. Income eligibility criteria: The income of the child, excluding the child's wages, is less than the amount of the subsidy.
  - **The SG monthly rate is (effective July 1, 2019):**
    - \$647.88
  - **The ESG monthly rate is (effective July 1, 2019):**
    - Child aged birth through 5: \$705.97
    - Child aged 6 through 12: \$754.33
    - Child aged 13 and older: \$812.73

The purpose of these payments is to assist relatives caring for children currently in DFCS custody or who were previously in DFCS custody. These payments preserve the State's ability to place children in foster care with relatives and/or support permanency with relatives while providing appropriate oversight of placements to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

The following eligibility criteria must be determined for ERR payments:

- The relative must meet the TANF degree of relationship
  - Grandparent (up to great-great-great)
  - Sibling (half, whole, step)
  - Aunt/uncle (up to great-great)
  - Niece/nephew (including child and grandchild of niece/nephew)
  - First cousin
  - First cousin once removed (the child of a first cousin)
- A Relative Care Assessment (RCA) has been approved
- An Enhanced Relative Rate Application or Agreement has been signed by the relative and approved by the County Director/Designee
- The relative must be a citizen or legal permanent resident of the United States (U.S) if the child is undocumented

The following eligibility criteria must be determined for SG payments:

- The relative must meet the TANF degree of relationship
  - Grandparent (up to great-great-great)
  - Sibling (half, whole, step)
  - Aunt/uncle (up to great-great)
  - Niece/nephew (including child and grandchild of niece/nephew)
  - First cousin
  - First cousin once removed (the child of a first cousin)
- A Relative Care Assessment (RCA) has been approved.
- Non-reunification was granted by the court
- A Subsidized Guardianship Application and Agreement has been signed by the relative and approved by the County Directory/Designee. The Application/Agreement must be signed prior to the transfer of permanent guardianship.
- The child has resided with the relative under DFCS supervision for a minimum of six months prior to the transfer of permanent guardianship.
- The relative was granted permanent guardianship of the child until age 18
- The child is a citizen or legal permanent resident of the U.S.
- The income of the child, excluding the child's wages, is less than the amount of the SG payments.

The relatives must agree to submit six month and 12-months reviews to determine continued eligibility and they must comply with court and DFCS requirements regarding the reporting of changes in the circumstances in the home.

There is only one rate available to new families which is 91% of the current foster care per diem rate based on the child's age. Current payments are as follows:

1. Enhanced Relative Rate (ERR):
  - For children in DFCS custody placed with a relative.
  - Payment is at 91% of the foster care per diem rate based on the child's age.
  - The child's monthly income, excluding the child's wages, must be less than the amount of the subsidy.
2. Subsidized Guardianship (SG):
  - The relative has accepted permanent guardianship of the child.
  - Payment is at 91% of the foster care per diem rate based on the child's age.
  - The child's monthly income, excluding the child's wages, must be less than the amount of the subsidy.

**NOTE:** Payments to relatives previously eligible and currently receiving will continue if all other eligibility criteria are met.

#### **e. 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.

#### **f. Disaster/Emergency Assistance**

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

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

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
- Residency (disaster area must be verified)
- Identity
- Citizenship

Other eligibility criteria:

- Income guidelines are based on 200% of the FPL

Disaster TANF benefit amount is based on the size of the assistance unit. TANF Mandatory Forms or Work requirements are not applicable to those receiving Disaster TANF.

#### **g. Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Crisis Intervention Services Payment (CRISP)**

Georgia has recognized a growing population of grandparents taking upon themselves the role of caretaker for their grandchildren. Therefore, 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 their grandparents.

GRG (CRISP) is a one-time cash payment that equals up to four 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 55 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)
- parent of child is not in home (mother, father, or minor parent)

#### **h. Employment Intervention Services**

Employment Intervention Services (EIS) was suspended for new clients effective July 1, 2011, due to a reprioritizing of TANF funds. However, effective February 15, 2015, EIS was reinstated. It is available to TANF applicants who have a full-time job but are temporarily on unpaid leave due to a temporary illness and are scheduled to return to work within four months. The AU must meet the gross income ceiling (GIC) test or be eligible for less than the maximum amount of cash assistance and so decline to receive cash assistance to preserve months of potential TANF eligibility.

#### **i. Work Support Program**

Effective July 1, 2011, the Work Support Program was suspended for new clients due to a reprioritizing of TANF funds. Effective February 15, 2015, the Work Support Program was reinstated. The Work Support Program assists applicants and recipients who find employment and become ineligible for ongoing TANF (or who choose to end reduced TANF payments to save months). It consists of three sub-programs:

- Work Support Payments (WSP): Payments of \$200 per month for the 12 months following case closure.
- Transitional Support Services (TSS): Regular TANF support services will be available as needed to those clients who qualify for the Work Support Program for the 12 months following case closure.
- Transitional Shelter Assistance (TSA): Payments of up to \$1500 will be available for shelter and essential utility deposits for those eligible for the Work Support Program. This is to assist TANF families' transition into stable and permanent housing. This will be a once in a lifetime payment. TSA is effective June 1, 2015.

#### **j. Community Outreach Services**

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, Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), financial literacy services, medical insurance opportunities, food assistance, housing assistance, etc.

#### **k. Pre-K Family Support**

The Pre-K Family Support program services identify at-risk children enrolled in Pre-K and assist these families with access to services to promote stability, good parenting and coping skills. Georgia funds transportation programs to assist families in overcoming barriers to employment resulting from a lack of sufficient transportation. 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 TFSP. Pre-K transportation services are provided to TANF recipients for their children to attend pre-kindergarten while they participate in training and educational programs, job search and employment. To receive Pre-K transportation, a family must be eligible for TANF, Food Stamps and/or Medicaid. A family's income must be below the State's Standard of Need or they must be eligible for TANF.

**TANF Purpose #1:** Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of caretaker relatives.

**TANF Purpose #2:** End dependency of needy families by promoting job preparation and work.

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

**Funding Source:** Segregated Funds/State MOE Funds.

**I. Foster/Adoption Parent Services** The Foster/Adoption Parent Services is to enable the county departments to reimburse services required in the screening preparation and approval of foster and adoptive families and homemakers. Preventive Services is where the Child Protective Services (CPS) staff provide intake, investigations, family support and ongoing CPS services (Family Preservation). A family's income must be below the State's Standard of Need or must be eligible for TANF.

**TANF Purpose #1:** Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of caretaker relatives.

**TANF Purpose #2:** End dependency of needy families by promoting job preparation and work.

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

**Funding Source:** Segregated Funds/State MOE Funds.

### **m. Room and Board Watchful Oversight**

Private contributions assist the Room and Board Watchful Oversight (RBWO) program. The contributions are used to pay for services for some children in RBWO placements. The funds are also used to contract with community-based organizations to provide employment training, housing assistance, social skills training and after-school program activities who come from eligible families in order for them to obtain self-sufficiency within families. Eligibility criteria: A family's income must be below the State Standard of Need or must be eligible for TANF. (Source: Georgia's COSTAR manual).

Two types of Room and Board Watchful Oversight are funded by TANF:

- UAS 607 Initial TANF RBWO: Institutional Foster Care Per Diem and other

placement related services may be charged from the date of placement for a maximum of 6 months under this UAS Program Code.

- UAS 611 Initial TANF RBWO: Privately Supervised FFC – Licensed and Approved Private Foster Care Agencies Per Diem and other placement related services may be charged from the date of placement for a maximum of 6 months under this UAS Program Code.

**TANF Purpose #1:** Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their homes or in the homes of caretaker relatives.

**TANF Purpose #2:** End dependency of needy families by promoting job preparation and work.

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

**Funding Source:** Segregated Funds/State MOE Funds.

#### **n. The Atlanta Community Food Bank**

The Atlanta Community Food Bank manages all of the food banks in Georgia. The food banks distribute food to low- and middle-income individuals and families throughout the State. The food distribution occurs through local food pantries. The local food pantries submit monthly reports to the food banks who then report to the Atlanta Community Food bank. Under the State MOE program, qualified families receiving food from the food banks must be TANF eligible (child under 18 years old, income eligible, resident of Georgia). The income limit for this program is 300% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL).

**TANF Purpose #1:** Provide assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.

**Funding Source:** Segregated Funds/State MOE Funds.

#### **o. Family Violence Emergency Assistance**

The Family Violence Emergency Assistance (FVEA), effective February 15, 2015, is intended to stabilize low-income families while addressing family violence issues and homelessness. FVEA will provide one-time assistance of up to \$3000 for rent, utilities, deposits, and moving expenses to victims in state-certified domestic violence shelters. This allows the victims a transition to safe and stable housing. Clients must meet 300% of the FPL to qualify for this assistance.

### **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 HEARING, APPEALS PROCESS, AND BENEFIT RECOVERY**

The DFCS administrative appeal process provides an opportunity for a hearing to any applicant who requests a hearing because his or her claim for financial assistance is denied, or is not acted upon with reasonable promptness, and to any recipient who is aggrieved by a DFCS action resulting in suspension, reduction, discontinuance, or termination of assistance or determination that a protective, vendor, or two-party



payment should be made or continued. A hearing request is a clear expression made by an applicant, recipient, or his/her authorized representative to the effect that such individual wants the opportunity to present the applicant's or recipient's case to a higher authority. The hearing request, made verbally or in writing, must be directed to the applicant's or recipient's county DFCS office in accordance with and within the timeframes outlined in DFCS policy. The State Office of State Administrative Hearings (OSAH) will conduct a hearing. The applicant or recipient may represent themselves at the hearing or may authorize another person (i.e., an authorized representative, such as legal counsel, relative, or friend) to act as his or her representative. The continuation of benefits and recovery for the overpayment of benefits will be made in accordance with applicable regulations and DFCS policy.

Effective May 8, 2018, in accordance with O.C.G.A. Section 50-13-41(c), every decision of an OSAH judge is a final decision. If the applicant/recipient (also referred to as the petitioner) or DHS/DFCS seek to appeal the final decision, a petition for judicial review shall be made by the commencement of a civil action, with the proper service of process made in accordance with applicable law, in the Fulton County Superior Court or in the Superior Court of the county of residence of the petitioner within 30 calendar days after service of the final decision from OSAH.

## **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.

## **G. FATHERHOOD PROGRAM**

### **Re-Entry Project P.A.V.E. Program**

An Interagency Agreement was formed between the Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Department of Corrections (DOC), to maximize financial and emotional support to children, reduce recidivism, and educate non-custodial parents of their rights, roles and responsibilities. The Fatherhood Program has multiple goals which include assisting non-custodial parents with developing life skills, understanding and using responsible parenting practices, finding employment, securing housing, and establishing relationships with non-custodial children while the parent is either incarcerated or residing in a Transitional Care Center operated by the DOC. Enrollment into the Fatherhood Program requires the participant to attend an Orientation/Enrollment workshop.

The Fatherhood Re-Entry Project offers the Parental Access, Visitation, and Education (P.A.V.E.) Program to all Transitional Center (TC) residents with active child support cases. There are thirteen (13) Transition Centers in Georgia; eleven (11) of the facilities house male residents and two (2) house female residents. The program is facilitated by six vendors contracted through the DOC.

P.A.V.E. consisted of two components which included training and support group services. The FY12 and FY13 data from Corrections showed 3,098 residents have attended the training sessions and 3,129 have attended the support group meetings. DHS provided quarterly training for the vendors. This program ended FFY16.

### **Employment Services**

The Fatherhood Program works to assist non-custodial parents (NCP) with an active Child Support case, in locating employment paying above minimum wage. Referrals to the Fatherhood Program are made through the agency. The Fatherhood Agents are required to meet with local child support staff, judges, and employers to inform and educate them on the status and progress of participants. The Fatherhood Agents also develop and deliver a number of services, including: Life skills training, resume writing, coaching and mentoring; and accountability sessions. Additionally, participants are connected to appropriate resources to obtain employment, short-term and advanced job skill training, GED courses, job searches and leads.

Persons eligible for these services through the Fatherhood Program must meet the State's defined TANF income and resources guidelines. The participants must be TANF eligible with a dependent child under the age of 18. The participant's income must be less than 200% of the federal poverty level (FPL).

### **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 Brian Kemp, 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:**

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Date

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Brian Kemp, Governor

## 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 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

92-2

State of Georgia

Attachment 3a  
Page 1

**EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE TO NEEDY FAMILIES WITH CHILDREN**

A. Kinds of emergencies covered:

1. Energy emergencies, including emergencies which result from a circumstance or combination of circumstances which require immediate action, such as:

- impending cutoff of utilities
- cutoff of utilities within the 30 days prior to application

2. Family emergencies involving child abuse/ neglect, including those which:

- result in a child abuse and neglect report, place a child at risk of an out-of-home placement, or result in the opening of a preventive service case.

B. Kinds of assistance provided:

1. For energy emergencies the following assistance is provided:

- payments to vendors to avoid cutoff or to reconnect services disconnected within the last 30 days
- payments to clients to avoid cutoff or to reconnect services disconnected within the last 30 days

2. For family emergencies the following assistance is provided:

- payment for psychological or psychiatric services, including testing
- payment for child care
- payment for temporary child placement
- payment for emergency shelter care
- payment for legal services
- payment for transportation
- payment for intensive family services
- payments to avoid foreclosure/ eviction
- payments for medical and dental services
- payments for parental skills training
- payments for parental aide services
- payment for other emergency services required to meet the family's emergency needs

TN# 92-2  
Supersedes  
TN# 90-5 ✓

Approval  
Date 7/29/92

Effective  
Date 4-1-92

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3. For family emergencies the following services are provided:

- provision of emergency counseling **OFFICIAL** crisis intervention •
- emergency provision of employability services child care services •
- child protection services • child placement services • homemaker services •
- psychological/ psychiatric services, including testing •
- emergency shelter care • transportation • legal assistance to staff on behalf of a child in emergency services •
- parental skills training •
- intensive family services

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**Appendix D**

	<b>GEORGIA DIVISION OF FAMILY AND CHILDREN SERVICES CHILD WELFARE POLICY MANUAL</b>			
	<b>Chapter:</b>	(9) Eligibility	<b>Effective Date:</b>	December 2018
	<b>Policy Title:</b>	Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) Relatedness Criteria		
	<b>Policy Number:</b>	9.6	<b>Previous Policy #:</b>	N/A

**CODES/REFERENCES**

The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) aka The Welfare Reform Act of 1996  
 Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Section 471 (a) (27)  
 Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Sections 472 (a) (1) & (2)  
 Title IV-E of the Social Security Act Sections 472 (a) (3) (A) & (B) and (4)  
 Title 45 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Part 1356 (l)

**CODES/REFERENCES**

**REQUIREMENTS**

The Division of Family and Children Services (DFCS) shall:

1. Ensure that a child meets all AFDC Relatedness criteria to be IV-E eligible. The following must exist in the removal home to meet the AFDC Relatedness criteria for IV- E purposes:
    - a. Age- A child must be under the age of 18 to be eligible for IV-E.
    - b. *Living with a specified relative in the removal home- A child must meet AFDC eligibility criteria in the month in which either a voluntary placement agreement (VPA) is entered into or a court order is initiated to remove the child from the home. For the purpose of meeting the living with a specified relative prior to removal from the home requirement, one of the two following situations will apply:*
      - i. *The child was living with the parent or specified relative, and was AFDC eligible in that home in the month of the voluntary placement agreement or initiation of court proceedings; or*
      - ii. *The child had been living with the parent or specified relative within six months of the month of the voluntary placement agreement or the initiation of the court proceedings, and the child would have been AFDC eligible in that month if s/he had still been living in that home.*
- NOTE:** The “living with” and “removal from” condition must be met by the same specified relative. A child may be “physically or constructively” removed from the home (see policy [9.4 Eligibility: Removal from the Home](#)).
- c. Deprivation- The child must have been deprived of the care, guidance or support of one or both parents (married or unmarried), if paternity is established. Deprivation must exist in the eligibility month.
  - d. Financial need (income and resources) - The income and assets of the removal home family must be considered.
  - e. Citizenship/immigration- The child must be a United States citizen or a lawfully admitted qualified immigrant to be IV-E eligible.
2. *Verify the citizenship or immigration status of any child in foster care under the*

*responsibility of the State, without regard to whether foster care maintenance payments are made on behalf of the child.*

3. *Ensure children meet the definition of “qualified immigrant” as defined in the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) to be eligible for foster care maintenance or adoption assistance (except children receiving adoption assistance pursuant to agreements signed before August 22, 1996 may continue to receive such assistance).*
4. Complete the Person Detail and Income and Resources pages in Georgia SHINES to allow the Revenue Maximization (RevMax) Specialist to determine if the child meets the AFDC Relatedness criteria in the removal home.

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## PROCEDURES

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The Social Services Case Manager (SSCM) will:

1. Complete the Person Detail and Income and Resources pages in Georgia SHINES.
2. Complete the “living with” and “removal home” information on the Application and Background page in Georgia SHINES, including:
  - a. The child’s caretaker in the month the VPA was signed or the court order was initiated.
  - b. The relationship of the caretaker to the child as parent, relative or other.
  - c. Whether the child lived with a specified relative in the past six months, if other is checked.
  - d. The person from whom legal custody was removed.

**NOTE:** The SSCM must ensure the removal home box is checked on the address for the child for the information to pre-populate to the Medicaid/IV-E application.

- e. Household members of the removal home.
  - f. Available information about income and resources.
  - g. Documentation of a child’s qualified immigrant status and updates to the Citizenship page if the child does not meet qualified immigrant status requirements.
3. Upload the following in External Documentation in Georgia SHINES:
  - a. Income and/or resource verification, if applicable.
  - b. Documentation of the child’s qualified immigrant status.
  - c. Child’s birth certificate.

**NOTE:** If the birth certificate is not uploaded, the RevMax Specialist may check Vital Statistics for children born in Georgia.

4. Contact the RevMax Specialist if you have any questions regarding which home constitutes the removal home.
5. Submit a Notification of Change (NOC) via Georgia SHINES to report any changes to the RevMax Specialist.

The Social Services Supervisor will:

1. Review the case record to ensure the following:
  - a. Completion of the following pages in Georgia SHINES:
    - i. Person Detail
    - ii. Income and Resources
    - iii. Application and Background
  - b. Verification is uploaded into External Documentation in Georgia SHINES.
  - c. Any changes are reported to RevMax via the NOC.

2. Staff with the SSCM if any follow-up is needed.

## **PRACTICE GUIDANCE**

In all references to AFDC relatedness, the eligibility of the child is based on the AFDC program in effect in Georgia's State Plan on July 16, 1996.

### **Specified Relative and Removal Home**

The removal home is the home of the specified relative from whom legal custody of the child was removed. The following relationships meet the requirements of a specified relative:

5. Parents (either by birth, legal adoption or step-relationship)
6. Grandparents (up to great-great-great)
7. Siblings (whole, half or step)
8. Aunts/uncles (up to great-great)
9. Nieces/nephews (up to great-great)
10. First cousin
11. First cousin once removed (the child of a first cousin)
12. Spouses of any person named in the above group, even after the marriage is terminated by death or divorce

**EXCEPTION:** The spouse of a stepparent or the spouse of a step-sibling is NOT within the specified degree of relationship

Relationship is established by one of the following:

6. Birth
7. Marriage
8. Legal adoption

An individual who has legal custody of the child does not meet the relationship requirement. Adoption or severance of parental rights does not terminate blood relationship for the specified relative requirement. The requirement for "living with a specified relative" is met if a newborn child is placed in DFCS care and responsibility directly from the hospital.

### **Eligibility Month**

The eligibility month is defined as the month in which one of the following occurs:

2. The initiation of court proceedings (i.e., the filing of the complaint or petition) that led to the removal of the child; or
3. The date a VPA was signed by all parties.

### **Parental Deprivation**

Deprivation results from one of the following situations in the removal home:

1. Death.
2. Separation: Parents are legally separated and one of the parents is not living in the same house.
3. Divorce: Parents are divorced and one of the parents is not living in the same house.
4. Continual absence: One of the parents is continually absent from the home where the child resides.
5. Institutionalized/incarcerated: One of the parents is in an institution or incarcerated, prior to the child's placement.

6. Incapacitated or disabled: Any condition of mind or body which substantially reduces or eliminates the ability of the parent to support or care for the child. The parent's disability should be determined, and the disability continues for at least 30 days. If the parent is receiving SSI or Social Security disability benefits, Veteran's Disability benefits (100%), Railroad benefits, or Worker's Compensation benefits, the incapacitation requirement is met, and verification of benefits shall be included in the record (such as a copy of the award letter, or copy of a check).
7. Termination of parental rights: The child is deprived from the date of the termination of parental rights.
8. Unemployment of the principal wage earner: This condition only applies when both parents are present in the household. The child can be considered deprived if the principal wage-earning parent is unemployed.

### **Citizenship/Immigration Status**

IV-E can be claimed for an otherwise eligible child pending the SSCM's verification of immigrant status from Homeland Security.

### **Qualified Immigrant**

PRWORA defines a qualified immigrant as an immigrant who, at the time the immigrant applies for, receives or attempts to receive a Federal public benefit, is:

- An immigrant who is lawfully admitted for permanent residence under the Immigration and Nationality Act.
- An immigrant granted asylum under section 208 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.
- A refugee who is admitted to the United States under section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act.
- An immigrant who is paroled into the United States under section 212(d)(5) of the Immigration and Nationality Act for a period of at least one year.
- An immigrant whose deportation is being withheld under section 243(h) of the Immigration and Nationality Act.
- An immigrant who is granted conditional entry pursuant to section 203(a)(7) of the Immigration and Nationality Act as in effect prior to April 1, 1980.

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## **FORMS AND TOOLS**

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[Medicaid Manual Policy 2215 Citizenship/Immigration/Identity](#)