

- Colorado Works is the state name for the federal TANF program.
- There are four federal purposes of TANF that the Colorado Works Program supports.
- Human Services is responsible for the administration of the Colorado Works program.
- The Colorado Works program has a 60-month lifetime maximum benefit period.
- Colorado Works provides a safety net for Colorado's neediest families.
- Colorado Works provides cash assistance and job training to move families toward long-term self-sufficiency.

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF COLORADO WORKS

On August 22, 1996, "The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996" (PRWORA) was signed into law. It created the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, which replaced the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Emergency Assistance (EA), and Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) programs under Title IV of the Social Security Act. The law marked the end of the Federal entitlement to this assistance program.

The States and Territories administer the TANF programs. States, Territories, and Tribes each receive a block grant allocation, and States must maintain a historical level of State spending known as maintenance of effort. The basic block grant amount covers cash benefits, administrative expenses, and services targeted to needy families. The 1996 law offers States great flexibility in designing individual State TANF programs.

In Colorado, the TANF Program is referred to as the Colorado Works Program. States may use TANF funds in any manner "reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of TANF."

Four Purposes of TANF

- Provide assistance to needy families so the children may be cared for in their homes.
- End the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
- Prevent and reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
- Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Work Requirements and Activities

In exchange for financial assistance, families receiving Colorado Works/ TANF must enter into an Individual Responsibility Contract that defines what steps they will take to achieve self-sufficiency and what services or supports the agency will provide to assist in that effort.

With few exceptions, recipients must work as soon as they are job ready, as determined by County policies. Failure to participate in work requirements can result in a reduction or a termination of benefits to the family. Various work activities count towards a State's participation. Many of the work activities are time limited and most all activities are work focused.

Five-Year Time Limit

Families with an adult who have received federally funded assistance for a total of five years (or less at state option) are not eligible for cash aid under the TANF program. States may extend assistance beyond 60 months to up to **20%** of their caseload. They may also elect to provide assistance to families beyond 60 months using State-only funds, or they may provide services to families that reach the time limit using Social Services Block Grants.