

What is TANF and What Changes are Happening in DC?

TANF is the District's only cash-based assistance program. It serves as a vital lifeline for families with little or no income, helping to pay for rent, utilities, diapers, clothes, transportation, and other essentials.

Having available cash provides power, flexibility, and greater stability, especially during uncertain economic times.

Last year, Mayor Bowser proposed significant cuts to TANF. The Council rejected these changes for FY26, but without further intervention, they will go into effect in FY27 and will directly harm **15,000 children** in the District.

The changes included in the Mayor's budget will:

- ▶▶ End cost-of-living adjustments for TANF benefits;
- ▶▶ Reinstitute time limits for families receiving TANF for 60 months or more; and
- ▶▶ Increase sanctions for not meeting work readiness requirements

These budget cuts reflect policies that in FY2029 could leave a family of three with just **\$151** per month in cash income, down from a maximum benefit of \$803 they receive today.

Not only have such policies never demonstrably worked, but Mayor Bowser also **soundly rejected them a decade ago precisely due to the evidence proving they are ineffective and harm children.**

The Council must restore \$106,767,000 in funding to TANF over FY27 through FY29 in order to reverse these harmful cuts.

To learn more, visit childrenslawcenter.org/TANF. For questions, contact Leah Castelaz at LCastelaz@childrenslawcenter.org and Maria Manansala at mmanansala@dcfpi.org.