STATE OF DELAWARE

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SOCIAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

(TANF)

STATE PLAN

Title IV-A Block Grant of the Social Security Act

Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2027 – FFY 2029

Effective October 1, 2026 – September 30, 2029

SUBMITTED TO

United States Department of Health and Human Services
Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance

SUBMITTED BY

Division of Social Services
Herman M. Holloway Sr. Campus, 1901 North DuPont Highway
New Castle, Delaware 19720

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. **Introduction and Outline of Family Assistance Program**

    A. **General Provisions**

    B. **Special Provisions**

2. **Child Support Program**

3. **Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program**

4. **Administration of the Program**

5. **Access to Indian Tribes**

6. **Program Fraud and Abuse**

7. **Domestic Violence Screening**

DELAWARE'S TANF STATE PLAN
Effective October 1, 2026

1. Introduction and Outline of Family Assistance Program

(Section 402(a) of the Social Security Act)

In fulfillment of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan requirements of **Section 402(a) of the Social Security Act**, Delaware submits this State Plan to renew its status as an eligible state for **Federal Fiscal Years 2027 through 2029**. This renewal is submitted to the Secretary of the United States Department of Health and Human Services through the **Administration for Children and Families, Office of Family Assistance**.

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program is Delaware's primary program for providing temporary financial assistance, employment and workforce services, and coordinated family supports that strengthen families, promote economic mobility, and improve long-term outcomes for children. Administered by the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), Division of Social Services (DSS), Delaware's TANF program is designed to assist eligible families in achieving greater economic independence through employment, education, workforce development, supportive services, and strategic partnerships, consistent with the four statutory purposes of TANF.

Delaware recognizes that families often experience multiple and interconnected barriers that affect their ability to achieve long-term economic stability, including challenges related to employment, education, housing, transportation, child care, financial security, behavioral health, family safety, and access to community resources. Accordingly, the State administers TANF through a coordinated, whole-family approach that emphasizes prevention, early intervention, workforce participation, family stabilization, and long-term economic mobility. Delaware is committed to continuously improving service delivery through innovation, cross-system collaboration, strategic partnerships, and data-informed decision-making to ensure families receive responsive, effective, and coordinated supports that strengthen family well-being and expand opportunity.

Delaware administers TANF through individualized case management, employment and training, supportive services, and coordinated partnerships with public and private organizations to reduce barriers to opportunity, strengthen family stability, and promote long-term economic mobility while maintaining accountability, program integrity, and responsible stewardship of public resources.

This State Plan describes how Delaware administers its TANF program in accordance with Section 402(a) of the Social Security Act. It outlines the State's philosophy, guiding principles, eligibility requirements, work participation strategies, supportive services,

innovative initiatives, and partnerships that advance the statutory purposes of TANF while ensuring effective stewardship of federal and state resources.

Delaware's approved Work Verification Plan, dated April 20, 2009, describes how TANF work activities are defined, verified, and documented and operates in conjunction with this State Plan.

The policy changes reflected in this State Plan are the result of a comprehensive review process that included the development of proposed regulations, distribution of draft regulations to stakeholders and the public, consideration of public comments, and incorporation of appropriate revisions into the final plan.

Public Availability, Review, and Comment

The requirement for public review and comment was satisfied by making the proposed State Plan available through the following methods:

- The State Plan was posted for public comment on the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services website in September 2026.
- Stakeholder organizations, including the Committee on Employment and Social Services and TANF program contractors, were provided copies of the proposed State Plan and invited to submit comments.
- The proposed State Plan was published in the Delaware Register of Regulations from August 15, 2026, through September 30, 2026.

A. General Provisions

I. Conduct a program, designed to serve all political subdivisions in the State (not necessarily in a uniform manner), that provides assistance to needy families with (or expecting) children and provides parents with job preparation, work and support services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient.

Delaware's TANF Program Philosophy and Strategic Approach

Delaware administers the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program in accordance with the four statutory purposes established by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA). The State is committed to strengthening families, promoting economic mobility, supporting child well-being, advancing financial capability, encouraging asset building, and creating pathways to long-term family prosperity through a philosophy of mutual responsibility, personal accountability, and strategic investment in families and communities.

Delaware recognizes that lasting self-sufficiency requires more than employment alone. Families often experience multiple and interconnected challenges, including

housing instability, food insecurity, transportation barriers, limited access to education and training, child care needs, behavioral health concerns, financial insecurity, limited digital access, domestic violence, family safety concerns, and other circumstances that may affect their ability to achieve long-term economic independence. Accordingly, Delaware administers TANF through a comprehensive, whole-family approach that combines employment, supportive services, community partnerships, and coordinated interventions designed to strengthen family stability, reduce barriers to opportunity, and improve long-term outcomes for both parents and children.

Employment remains a cornerstone of Delaware's TANF program. The State strives to assist individuals in obtaining, retaining, and advancing in family-sustaining employment through individualized assessments, employment and training services, education and credential attainment, career pathway development, supportive services, and coordinated case management. Delaware recognizes that successful employment depends upon access to comprehensive work supports—including child care, transportation, housing stabilization, emergency assistance, and other supportive services—that enable families to enter, remain in, and advance within the workforce. Delaware further recognizes that career advancement, workforce development, financial capability, and family stabilization are essential components of long-term economic mobility and may be incorporated into services and initiatives consistent with the purposes of TANF.

Delaware also recognizes that long-term economic security extends beyond immediate employment. Families are best positioned to achieve lasting independence when they have opportunities to strengthen financial capability, build assets, increase household stability, and improve their long-term economic well-being. Accordingly, the State seeks to support strategies that not only address immediate needs but also promote sustainable pathways toward economic mobility and family prosperity.

Consistent with federal law, Delaware may strategically utilize TANF and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) resources to develop, implement, evaluate, and continuously improve programs, services, partnerships, and innovative initiatives that advance one or more of the four statutory purposes of TANF. These investments may include, but are not limited to, employment and workforce development, education and credential attainment, family stabilization, supportive services, housing-related stabilization, transportation assistance, food security, financial capability and asset-building initiatives, two-generation strategies, youth development, responsible fatherhood initiatives, child well-being, family violence prevention and survivor supports, community partnerships, technology and digital access, data-informed program management, continuous quality improvement, and other evidence-based approaches that improve outcomes for eligible families.

Delaware is committed to administering TANF as a flexible, outcome-driven program that responds to the evolving needs of families while maintaining accountability, promoting program integrity, and ensuring responsible stewardship of public resources. The State is also committed to continuously evaluating program

effectiveness, service delivery, and benefit adequacy to ensure TANF resources remain responsive to changing economic conditions and the evolving needs of Delaware families. Through collaboration with state agencies, local governments, employers, educational institutions, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, and other community partners, Delaware seeks to expand opportunity, strengthen families, improve child and family well-being, and promote lasting economic independence for eligible families.

Guiding Principles

Consistent with the four statutory purposes of TANF, Delaware administers its TANF program in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. Employment and meaningful work are fundamental pathways to economic independence, family stability, and long-term self-sufficiency.
2. Families and the State share responsibility for achieving self-sufficiency through mutual accountability, individualized supports, active engagement, and informed decision-making.
3. TANF provides transitional support while families build the education, skills, work experience, and resources necessary to achieve lasting economic mobility and independence.
4. Parents play a central role in supporting, nurturing, protecting, and promoting the health, safety, well-being, and future success of their children.
5. Strong families, healthy child development, and stable family relationships contribute to improved outcomes for children, families, and communities.
6. Innovation, collaboration, continuous improvement, and responsible stewardship strengthen the effectiveness of Delaware's TANF program and improve outcomes for families.
7. Improving family outcomes requires coordinated action across state agencies, local governments, community organizations, employers, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and other partners. Delaware will continue to align funding, services, partnerships, and innovation to maximize available resources, reduce duplication, strengthen service coordination, and improve outcomes for children and families.

Delaware promotes long-term economic mobility by reducing barriers to opportunity, strengthening financial capability, supporting asset development where appropriate, and investing in strategies that improve family stability and create lasting pathways to economic security.

Delaware's Collaborative Approach

Delaware's TANF program builds upon a long history of collaboration among state government, local governments, employers, educational institutions, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, faith-based organizations, advocates, and other stakeholders. Since Delaware first began redesigning its welfare system in 1995, the State has remained committed to engaging partners in the development,

implementation, evaluation, and continuous improvement of policies and services that strengthen families and promote economic independence.

Today, the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services (DHSS), the Delaware Department of Labor (DOL), the Delaware Transit Corporation (DTC), and numerous public and private partners continue to work collaboratively to administer Delaware's TANF program. Recognizing that no single agency can fully address the complex needs of families, Delaware emphasizes coordinated service delivery across multiple systems. The State partners with workforce agencies, educational institutions, housing providers, transportation partners, community-based organizations, domestic violence service providers, food assistance organizations, healthcare providers, employers, and other stakeholders to create an integrated network of supports that advances family stability, workforce participation, child well-being, and long-term economic mobility.

Through the Committee on Employment and Social Services and other stakeholder partnerships, Delaware seeks to strengthen service delivery, improve coordination across systems, expand innovation, and advance evidence-based strategies that support workforce participation, child well-being, and long-term economic mobility, family stability, and self-sufficiency.

Definition of Needy Families

For purposes of Delaware's TANF cash assistance program, a needy family consists of a child or children living with a parent, legal guardian, custodian, or specified relative whose financial circumstances meet the State's eligibility standards for TANF cash assistance. Eligibility for cash assistance is determined in accordance with the financial, technical, and non-financial eligibility requirements established by the State and described throughout this State Plan.

In addition to families receiving TANF cash assistance, Delaware administers a variety of TANF-funded and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funded programs and services designed to accomplish one or more of the four statutory purposes of TANF. These programs recognize that families may benefit from preventive, stabilization, employment, or supportive interventions before circumstances result in long-term dependence on public assistance or family crisis.

Accordingly, Delaware may provide TANF-funded or MOE-funded services to eligible families who are not receiving ongoing TANF cash assistance, but who qualify for specific programs or initiatives authorized under federal and State law. Eligibility for these programs is determined in accordance with the purpose of the individual program, applicable State policy, and available funding. Financial eligibility criteria may vary depending on the nature of the program or service.

Examples of eligible families receiving TANF-funded or MOE-funded services may include, but are not limited to:

- Families participating in two-generation or whole-family initiatives designed to promote economic mobility and family stability;
- Families receiving employment, education, workforce development, or supportive services intended to reduce barriers to self-sufficiency;

- Families receiving housing stabilization, homelessness prevention, transportation assistance, or other family stabilization services;
- Families involved with the Division of Family Services who receive services intended to safely preserve family relationships, strengthen protective factors, or prevent more intensive child welfare involvement;
- Noncustodial parents participating in approved employment or responsible fatherhood initiatives; and
- Other eligible families receiving TANF-funded or MOE-funded services that advance one or more of the four statutory purposes of TANF.

Delaware recognizes that strategic investments in prevention, early intervention, family stabilization, employment, and coordinated community supports strengthen families, improve child well-being, reduce future dependence on public assistance, and promote long-term economic mobility. Accordingly, Delaware administers TANF-funded programs through a whole-family approach that emphasizes opportunity, resilience, and sustainable outcomes for Delaware families.

The following sections describe the financial eligibility standards applicable to TANF cash assistance, as well as the program-specific eligibility requirements governing TANF-funded and MOE-funded services administered by the State.

Income and Resource Rules for Determining Need

Delaware establishes financial eligibility standards to ensure TANF resources are directed to eligible families while recognizing that economic need extends beyond income alone. The State's eligibility methodology balances fiscal stewardship with the goal of supporting family stability, employment, and long-term economic mobility. Resource and income policies are designed to encourage work, promote financial responsibility, and reduce barriers to achieving self-sufficiency while maintaining program integrity.

For purposes of determining need, Delaware will continue to utilize the established income and resource rules of the TANF program.

The following specific features of Delaware's TANF program continue to apply:

- The equity value of real and personal property owned by a family budget group cannot exceed $10,000.00;
- The values of automobiles owned by members of a TANF household are disregarded. An automobile is defined as any motorized vehicle used for transportation via public roadways or to produce income;
- The cash value of a life insurance policy is excluded;
- In addition to the current resource limit, families are allowed to establish special Education and Business Investment Accounts (EBIA) of up to $5,000.00, including interest.
- Families will contribute directly to their EBIAs. Funds in such accounts will not be considered as a resource. Withdrawals from such accounts must be for approved purposes, as defined in TANF regulations. If funds are withdrawn for non-approved purposes, the money will be counted as a resource in the month received. Approved reasons for withdrawal of funds for self-sufficiency needs include, but are not limited to: dependent care expenses, security deposit for

an apartment or house, or vehicle repair costs; Delaware recognizes that opportunities to save for education, employment, housing stability, and small business development contribute to long-term economic mobility. Accordingly, approved savings vehicles are intended to encourage financial capability and asset development while preserving eligibility for temporary assistance.

- Financial assistance received from school grants, scholarships, vocational rehabilitation payments, Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) payments, educational loans, and other loans that are expected to be repaid will not be counted as income for TANF program purposes. Also, other financial assistance received that is intended for books, tuition, or other self-sufficiency expenses will be excluded;
- Earnings of dependent children, regardless of student status, will be disregarded in determining the family's eligibility and the amount of TANF benefits; and
- A one-time bonus payment of $350.00 will be paid from TANF funds to teens who graduate from high school by age 19 and are on the TANF grant. This bonus, which will be paid directly to the high school graduate, will be disregarded as income. This one-time payment is MOE-funded. Families with teens who are eligible for this bonus must be receiving TANF benefits. A family's income must meet the standards described on page 6 (Income Tests to Determine Eligibility – Gross income test/Net income test) for the family to be financially eligible for TANF. DSS staff must verify that the student has graduated from high school before issuing the bonus payment. This incentive supports educational attainment, encourages successful completion of secondary education, and reinforces Delaware's commitment to preparing youth for postsecondary education, workforce participation, and long-term economic independence.

A family's income must be less than 185% of the applicable standard of need for the family to be financially eligible for TANF.

Income Tests to Determine Eligibility

Delaware utilizes two financial eligibility tests to determine eligibility for TANF cash assistance. These tests ensure that assistance is provided to families demonstrating financial need while encouraging employment and supporting earned income.

- Gross income test: Compares the family's income to 185% of the applicable standard of need. Both applicants and recipients must pass this income test; and
- Net income test: Compares a family's income, after applying certain disregards, to the applicable standard.
- For applicants, defined as families who have not received assistance in at least one of the four months immediately preceding the application, the net income is compared to the payment standard.
- For recipients, defined as families who have received assistance in at least one of the four months preceding the application or are current recipients, the net income is compared to the standard of need.
- A family's income must be less than the gross and net income limits for the family to be financially eligible for TANF. Once eligibility is established, the grant

amount is determined.

Whenever permitted under federal and State law, Delaware structures financial eligibility policies to support employment, reduce disincentives to work, and promote economic mobility while maintaining equitable administration of public resources.

- Gross income is the total of the earned and unearned income.
- Wages and self-employment income are examples of earned income.
- Social Security benefits, child support, and stepparent income are examples of unearned income. Stepparent income is included if the child's natural parent lives in the home.

Exhibit 1 contains the calculation steps for TANF **applicants**.

Exhibit 1: Determining Applicant Eligibility for TANF Benefits

1) The gross monthly income is compared to 185% of the applicable TANF standard of need. Assistance is denied if the income exceeds 185% of the applicable TANF standard of need.

2) The standard monthly work deduction ($90.00) and childcare expenses are subtracted from each wage earner's earnings. The applicant's net earned income is added to unearned income to determine the net family income. The net income is compared to the monthly payment standard. Assistance is denied if the income exceeds the payment standard.

3) If the income is less than the payment standard, the standard work deduction ($90.00), childcare, and the $30 plus 1/3 disregard (if applicable) are subtracted from each earner's earned income. This net earned income is added to the unearned income to calculate the family's net income. The net income is subtracted from the applicable standard of need to obtain the deficit. The deficit is multiplied by 50%; the number calculated is the remainder. The grant is either the remainder or the payment standard, whichever is less.

Exhibit 2 provides the calculations for TANF **recipients**.

Exhibit 2: Determining Recipient Eligibility for TANF Benefits
1) The gross income is compared to 185% of the applicable TANF standard of need. Assistance is denied if the income exceeds 185% of the applicable TANF standard of need.
2) The standard work deduction ($90.00), childcare, and the $30 plus 1/3 disregard (if applicable) are subtracted from each earner's monthly earned income. The net earned income is added to unearned income to calculate the family's net income. Assistance is denied if the income exceeds the standard of need.

3) If the income is less than the standard of need, the net income is subtracted from the applicable standard of need; the number calculated is the deficit. The deficit is multiplied by 50%; the number calculated is the remainder. The grant is either the remainder or the payment standard, whichever is less.

The TANF standards apply to all benefits and services provided to needy families except for those listed below, for which Delaware has established separate need standards.

- Emergency Assistance, discussed in the section on Diversion Assistance Program;
- Services for Working Families in Financial Crisis described in the additional targeted support section;
- Childcare, described in the Involvement of Local Governments, the Public, and Private Sector Organizations section, the Eligibility for Assistance under the TANF Program section, and the Supportive Services section; and
- Child Welfare Services.

Fill-the-Gap Budgeting

Delaware's Fill-the-Gap budgeting methodology reflects the State's longstanding commitment to ensuring that employment results in increased household income. By allowing families to retain a greater portion of earned income while gradually reducing assistance, the methodology supports workforce participation, encourages earnings progression, and facilitates a smoother transition toward financial independence.

Fill-the-Gap Budgeting will be used for recipient families to determine continued eligibility and the amount of TANF benefits so that families can retain more of their income. By having a standard of need which is greater than the payment standard, a "gap" is created. The difference between the family's income and the need standard is called the deficit. The state pays a percentage of the deficit up to a maximum benefit level or payment standard.

- Three standards are used in financial eligibility calculations:
- 185% of the standard of need;
- the need standard; and
- the payment standard.

185% of the standard of need will be used in the gross income test. The standard of need used is 75% of the federal poverty level. This includes allowances for food, clothes, utilities, personal items, and household supplies.

Family Size	Payment Standard
1	$241
2	$324
3	$405
4	$488
5	$570
6	$652
7	$734
8	$817
For each additional person add:	$83

Conditions of Eligibility

Eligibility requirements are intended to ensure that TANF assistance reaches families meeting statutory and State eligibility requirements while supporting program integrity, equitable administration, and consistent statewide application of policy.

If the income tests described above are met, a family is eligible to receive TANF assistance subject to the following conditions.

Relationship and Living Arrangements

Children must reside in the home of a parent, legal guardian, custodian, adult acting *in loco parentis*, or other specified relative, consistent with Delaware's TANF eligibility requirements.

Delaware administers the TANF program in a manner that provides equal access to benefits and services consistent with applicable federal and State law. Pursuant to the Delaware Civil Marriage Equality and Religious Freedom Act of 2013, effective July 1,

2013, married spouses are afforded the same rights, responsibilities, obligations, and eligibility determinations regardless of sex. All eligibility, financial, child support cooperation, assistance unit composition, benefit determination, and work participation requirements are applied consistently to married couples in accordance with Delaware law.

When a teen parent is not residing with a parent or legal guardian, the caretaker must demonstrate valid circumstances supporting the living arrangement and agree to participate in the Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR), assuming the same responsibilities required of a parent or caretaker under the TANF program.

Family Cap

Delaware does not impose a family cap on TANF assistance. Eligibility and benefit determinations are made in accordance with current State eligibility requirements and are not reduced or denied based on the birth of an additional child. This policy became effective on May 11, 2023, when the Family Cap provision was removed from the Delaware Division of Social Services Policy Manual.

Children Born to Unmarried Teen Parents

Delaware does not deny TANF eligibility or assistance to children born to unmarried teen parents. Eligibility is determined in accordance with applicable State and federal eligibility requirements. This policy became effective on March 11, 2025, when the provision denying benefits to babies born to and residing with unmarried teen parents was removed from the Delaware Division of Social Services Policy Manual.

Fugitive Felons, Individuals Convicted of Drug Related Felonies

Individuals with prior drug-related felony convictions are not automatically prohibited from receiving TANF benefits. Eligibility is determined in accordance with Delaware law and applicable TANF eligibility requirements. This policy became effective on July 28, 2017, when Delaware eliminated the prohibition on TANF eligibility based solely on a drug-related felony conviction.

Individuals from Another State

Families meeting Delaware's residency and eligibility requirements are eligible to receive TANF benefits regardless of the length of time they have resided in the State. Delaware applies uniform eligibility policies to all applicants consistent with applicable federal and State law.

Computing the Benefit

Delaware uses prospective budgeting to provide families with a predictable level of assistance based on the best available estimate of anticipated income. This approach promotes administrative efficiency while providing families greater certainty as they

transition into or maintain employment.

Eligibility will be determined prospectively. After establishing eligibility, benefits will be computed prospectively. Income per time period will be converted to a monthly income figure by utilizing the following conversion factors:

- Weekly - 4.33
- Bi-weekly - 2.16
- Semi-monthly - 2.00

> *Example:* Given a weekly income of $85, multiply the weekly figure by 4.33 to arrive at a monthly income of $368.05.

The benefit amount is determined by using prospective budgeting and the best estimate of earned and unearned income for the assistance unit. The payment will not be changed until the next eligibility determination, unless the recipient reports a change that

would result in an increase in the benefit or there is a significant change in circumstances as defined below.

A significant change is defined as any of the following:

- Change in household size;
- New source of employment;
- Loss of unsubsidized employment or a change in employment status from full-time to part-time which was beyond the recipient's control;
- An increase of forty (40) hours or more in unsubsidized employment per month;
- Receipt from a new source of unearned income; or
- Increases or decreases in existing sources of unearned income totaling $50.00 or more per month.

The recipient needs to verify all changes in circumstances.

> *Example:* An applicant applies in May. The applicant is employed. The applicant is working 20 hours per week and earns $8.25 per hour. The best estimate of wages is calculated by multiplying 20 hours by $8.25 (= $165.00 per week), then multiplying the weekly figure by 4.33 to determine the monthly income of $714.45.

Delivery of Services Across the State

Delivery of services will be consistent across the State.

Redeterminations

At least one redetermination is required every twelve (12) months. TANF emphasizes work and work-related activity. Mandating face-to-face redeterminations might undermine that goal. Therefore, mail-in redeterminations with a telephone interview are used as an option to encourage recipients to continue participating in employment and training activities or to keep working.

When a redetermination is due, the recipient must complete a new DSS application form or a DSS renewal form. The redetermination could be completing a paper form or participating in an automated interactive interview. A redetermination is complete when all eligibility factors are examined and a decision regarding continuing eligibility is reached.

The assistance case will be closed if a recipient fails, without good cause, to complete the redetermination review. Likewise, the assistance case of a recipient who fails, without good cause, to provide requested information necessary to establish continued eligibility will be closed.

As part of the verification process for continuing eligibility, the person will provide verification that (s)he has carried out the elements of the individual Contract of Mutual Responsibility.

Benefit Delivery: Direct Payments and Vouchers

Currently, Delaware uses check issuance as the payment method for TANF. Delaware continually evaluates opportunities to modernize benefit delivery systems and payment methods to improve customer access, operational efficiency, security, and program integrity, consistent with available technology, operational capacity, and funding. Delaware is currently exploring options including direct deposit, debit cards, and electronic benefit transfer (EBT). As these options are evaluated, Delaware may implement one or more payment methods as they become fiscally, operationally, and technically feasible and consistent with applicable federal and State requirements.

Delaware directly pays for center-based childcare authorized for TANF participants, when the center agrees to accept the Delaware childcare reimbursement rate. Some caretakers, however, receive vouchers to self-arrange and pay for their childcare. Delaware will reimburse these caretakers, up to the rates published in the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) plan, for the cost of childcare provided by licensed and license-exempt childcare providers. Eligible families must be receiving TANF and meet the TANF financial eligibility criteria. A family's income must meet the standards described on page 6 (Income Tests to Determine Eligibility – Gross income test/Net income test) for the family to be financially eligible for TANF.

Statewide

Delaware administers TANF consistently throughout the State by applying uniform eligibility standards, policy requirements, and program administration practices while allowing flexibility where authorized by State or federal law.

Program Type

Delaware recognizes that families experience varying levels of employability and barriers to employment. Accordingly, the State administers both time-limited and non-time-limited TANF programs to provide appropriate levels of assistance while supporting employment, family stability, and long-term economic mobility. Program participation is determined based on each family's circumstances and eligibility under applicable State policy.

Depending on circumstances, families are placed in either the time-limited TANF program or the non-time-limited TANF program.

Delaware's time-limited TANF program has an employment focus. Participants are expected to meet immediate work requirements to receive benefits.

Delaware uses State non-maintenance of effort funds to provide benefits to recipients in a solely state funded two-parent program.

TANF eligible families that include a parent or head-of-household who has presented approved documentation that they are unable to work because of a medical disability will be enrolled in the non-time limited program. These clients may receive benefits through either a solely state funded program or the TANF program. Delaware will use State non-maintenance of effort funds to provide benefits to recipients in the solely state funded medical disability program.

Families with the following status will receive benefits in the non-time-limited TANF program:

- Families that include adults, who the agency has determined are unemployable, either because a parent is too physically or mentally disabled to work in an unsubsidized work setting or because the parent is needed in the home to care for a child or a spouse who is disabled;
- Families headed by a non-needy, non-parent caretaker.;
- Families headed by a non-citizen parent who is not eligible to receive TANF benefits;
- Families where the agency has determined that the adult caretaker is temporarily unemployable; and
- Families in which the adult files a claim or has a claim being adjudicated for SSI or disability insurance under OASDI. In this case, the family must sign an agreement to repay cash benefits received under the non-time-limited TANF program from their SSI/DI benefits.

Contract of Mutual Responsibility requirements and sanctions for noncompliance apply to families in the non-time-limited TANF program. Delaware will provide benefits utilizing solely state funding (SSF) to families that include a head of household or a spouse of a head of household who have exceeded 60 cumulative months of federally

funded TANF assistance and represent more than 20 percent of the TANF caseload.

Time Limits

Delaware's time-limited assistance model reflects the TANF program's emphasis on employment and self-sufficiency while recognizing that some families may require additional time or specialized supports to overcome significant barriers to employment. Extensions are available in limited circumstances consistent with State policy to ensure families are treated fairly when extraordinary situations exist.

Under TANF, cash benefits are time-limited for households headed by employable adults age 18 or older who are included in the grant. Prior to January 1, 2000, Delaware limited receipt of TANF, for families in the time-limited program, to forty-eight (48) cumulative months. During the time-limited period, employable adults received full benefits if they met the requirements of their Contract of Mutual Responsibility, including employment-related activities.

Effective January 1, 2000, the time limit for receipt of TANF cash benefits is thirty-six (36) cumulative months.

During the time-limited period, employable adult recipients receive full cash benefits only as long as they meet the requirements of their CMR, including participation in employment-related activities detailed in their Individual Service Strategy (ISS). The ultimate goal of this time-limited period is to support the employable adult's search for, and placement in, an unsubsidized job.

Individuals found eligible for TANF prior to January 1, 2000 will still have a forty-eight (48) month time limit even if they reapply for benefits on or after January 1, 2000.

DSS will track the time remaining before a family's time limit expires and notify families on a quarterly basis of the time they have remaining before the time limit expires. At least two (2) months prior to the end of the 36 or 48 cumulative months in which a family has received assistance, DSS will remind the family that assistance will end and notify the family of the right to apply for an extension.

Extensions are provided only to those families who can demonstrate that:

- The agency substantially failed to provide the services specified in the individual's Contract of Mutual Responsibility; the related extension will correspond to the time period for which services were not provided; or
- Despite their best efforts to find and keep employment, no suitable unsubsidized employment was available in the local economy to the employable adult caretaker; the maximum extension under such circumstances will be 12 months.

Extensions may also be granted where other unique circumstances exist. Extensions will not be granted if the adult caretaker received and rejected offers of employment, quit a job without good cause, was fired for cause, or if the adult caretaker did not make a good faith effort to comply with the terms of the CMR and the ISS.

After the time limit has been reached, benefits will be provided to families that have been granted an extension only for a maximum period of 12 months. Thus, for time-limited families, the maximum period for receipt of benefits to families enrolled in the time-limited TANF program will be 60 cumulative months for families with a cumulative 48-month time limit and 48-months for families with a 36-month time limit. Delaware will comply with federal regulations regarding families receiving assistance in excess of 60 months of TANF paid through the federal TANF block grant.

Contract of Mutual Responsibility and Individual Service Strategy

The Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR) serves as the foundation of Delaware's partnership with participating families. The CMR establishes shared expectations by identifying the responsibilities of both the participant and the State while supporting individualized planning, employment, family stability, and progress toward long-term economic mobility. Through the CMR, Delaware works collaboratively with families to identify strengths, address barriers, and connect participants with the services and supports necessary to achieve sustainable self-sufficiency. The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) complements the CMR by providing a personalized roadmap of employment, education, training, and supportive service activities designed to help participants achieve their employment and family goals.

The caretaker of children in the TANF program enters into a Contract of Mutual Responsibility with the Division of Social Services. Applicants and participants complete an intake interview during which Division of Social Services staff explain the Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR), review program expectations, identify family strengths and barriers, and discuss the services and supports available to assist the family in achieving its goals. The CMR is individualized to reflect each family's unique circumstances and responsibilities.

The CMR establishes the mutual responsibilities of both the participant and the State. Participant responsibilities may include employment-related activities, educational participation, school attendance requirements for children, parenting responsibilities, family well-being activities, and other individualized requirements. State responsibilities include connecting families with employment services, supportive services, child care, transportation assistance, Medicaid, case management, and other resources identified through the assessment process.
Delaware is committed to coordinating the services identified through the CMR whenever practicable and ensuring that families have access to appropriate supports necessary to pursue employment, strengthen family stability, and address barriers to long-term economic mobility.

Because every family has different strengths, needs, and goals, each CMR is individualized. The agreement may be modified as family circumstances change to ensure that services and responsibilities remain appropriate, relevant, and responsive to the family's evolving needs.

Delaware makes reasonable efforts to ensure that services identified in the CMR are available. When a required service is temporarily unavailable or cannot reasonably be accessed, the participant will not be sanctioned solely because that service could not be provided. In such cases, the CMR may be modified to reflect available resources and appropriate alternative activities.

Contract of Mutual Responsibility Participation

Participation in the Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR) is required for all applicable caretakers participating in Delaware's TANF program. Contracts are completed for families in both the time-limited and non-time-limited TANF programs, as well as for teen parents. Both caretakers included in an assistance unit and non-needy caretaker payees are required to develop and comply with the provisions of the CMR. Other family members within the assistance unit may also be required to comply with specific provisions of the CMR and may be subject to sanction for noncompliance, as applicable under State policy.

If the caretaker is a non-needy caretaker, the individual is not required to participate in employment-related activities but is required to participate in other applicable activities identified in the Contract of Mutual Responsibility.

If a caretaker objects to specific provisions of the CMR, those concerns should be discussed at the time the initial CMR is developed. When good cause is demonstrated, the CMR may be amended, as appropriate, to address the caretaker's individual circumstances while maintaining the objectives of the TANF program.

When Division staff determine that a family requires additional services or supports to obtain employment, increase work hours or wages, or address barriers to self-sufficiency, those services will be identified and incorporated into the CMR. Needed services will also be reflected, as appropriate, in the participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS) developed by TANF WORKS contractors. Delaware is committed to coordinating services and supports that promote employment, strengthen family stability, and assist participants in achieving long-term economic mobility.

The fiscal sanction for failure to cooperate, without good cause, in the development of the CMR is an initial $50.00 reduction in benefits. The sanction increases by $50.00 each month until the participant complies with the CMR requirements or the case is closed. The sanction ends upon demonstrated compliance. Sanctions for failure to participate in activities identified in the CMR or ISS are described in the following sections.

Parental Responsibility

Adults and minor parents participating in the TANF program are expected to fulfill the parenting responsibilities outlined in the Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR). These responsibilities are intended to promote child well-being, strengthen family functioning, and support positive outcomes for children while reinforcing the shared commitment between participating families and the State to achieve long-term family stability and self-sufficiency.

Failure to Comply with the Contract of Mutual Responsibility and the Imposition of Sanctions

Delaware's TANF program emphasizes participant engagement, individualized case management, and supportive interventions to promote successful participation in employment and family stabilization activities. Whenever practicable, the Division works collaboratively with participants to identify and address barriers to compliance before sanctions are imposed. When a participant fails to comply with the requirements of the Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) without good cause, sanctions may be imposed in accordance with State policy and applicable federal law.

CMR encompasses three broad categories of requirements: 1) enhanced family functioning; 2) self-sufficiency; and 3) teen responsibility requirements. In addition, caretakers required to participate in work activities create an ISS with their employment and training program that details their expected weekly work activities.

1. Enhanced family functioning requirements of the CMR include but are not limited to: acquiring family planning information, attending parenting education sessions, ensuring that children are immunized, and cooperation with specialized programming designed to assist parents with documented disabilities that impede or prevent employment. Sanction for non-compliance with these requirements is an initial $50, which will increase by $50 every month until there is compliance with the requirement. The initial $50 reduction is imposed whether the family fails to comply with one, or more than one requirement. Clients must comply with all requirements before the sanction can end.

2. Employment and self-sufficiency requirements of the CMR are employment and training, work-related activities, and ensuring school attendance requirements for dependent children under age 16.

    a. The sanction for non-compliance with employment and work-related activity requirements is, subject to adequate and timely notice, closure of the case due to imposition of an immediate full-family sanction;
    b. Recipients, whose cases closed for failure to participate, must participate in work related activities for four (4) consecutive weeks at the required hours per week for their case to be re-opened. Payments are retroactive;
    c. The sanction for individuals who quit their jobs without good cause is an immediate full family sanction. The sanction will last at least one (1) month. Recipients must participate in work-related activities for four (4) consecutive weeks at the required number of hours per week for their grant to be re-opened. Payments are retroactive; and
    d. For dependent children under the age of 16: if the child does not maintain satisfactory school attendance, an initial $50 sanction is imposed. The sanction will increase by $50 every month until there is compliance. The sanction is not imposed if the parent of the child is working with school officials or other agencies to remediate the situation.

3. Teen responsibility requirements for dependent teens 16 and older include maintaining satisfactory school attendance or participation in alternative activities, such as training or employment. The sanction for non-compliance with these requirements is the removal of the teen from the TANF grant. The teen is removed from the TANF grant for at least one (1) month. To cure the sanction, the teen must participate in employment and training activities under the supervision of a TANF WORKS program for four (4) consecutive weeks, return to school, or work full-time.

    Failing to comply with both the enhanced family functioning and self-sufficiency requirements will result in combined penalties. For example, both a $50 reduction and a full family sanction could be assessed for failures to comply in two areas. Demonstrated compliance will not excuse penalties for the period of noncompliance. Sanctions will be imposed for the full period of noncompliance.

Non-Citizen Households

Families that include legal documented aliens participate in Delaware's TANF program. While these qualified aliens do not receive federal funded assistance, Delaware supports these families in attaining self-sufficiency thus enabling the family to no longer require assistance. Delaware provides State funded medical assistance for these families as well as employment and training assistance. These interventions, in addition to supporting self-sufficiency, have additionally been found to reduce the likelihood of out of wedlock and teen pregnancies.

Low Income Households

Eligible families who owe Delaware state income taxes may claim the state Earned Income Credit. Eligible taxpayers may be forgiven up to an amount that equals 20 percent of the federal EITC. The state credit, unlike the federal credit, is non-refundable meaning the credit can only be applied to the extent of the state taxes due.

Solely State Funded Programming

Delaware places select groups of TANF eligible families in solely state funded programs. Funding the services these families receive in this way allows the State to provide services that are individualized to the needs of these families and does not subject the family to limitations imposed by federal TANF funding. For example, families in which the parent is unable to work due to a disabling condition are placed in a solely state funded program. This allows the state to waive the TANF time limit requirements and place the parent in employment and training activities which are determined based solely on the needs and abilities of the parent as opposed to federally mandated activities which may be inappropriate for the parent. Delaware will continue to explore the opportunities afforded through solely state funded programs and may move all or sub-populations of families with a work eligible adult into solely state funded programs.

- A pandemic is a disease outbreak that spreads across countries or continents. Delaware may medically exempt TANF clients and place them in a solely state funded program. During a pandemic state of emergency, Delaware may instate the following initiatives:
- A 6-month renewal extension maybe implemented. Households are NOT required to return a TANF renewal form or complete a renewal interview during the extension;
- Households with open TANF cases may receive an emergency cash benefit. The emergency benefit will increase a household's current TANF benefit amount up to the maximum benefit amount for their TANF household size. The emergency benefit will be issued as a check to TANF households on the last day of the month. If a client owes an overpayment, the monthly overpayment recoupment will continue to come out of the client's regular cash benefit;

- Work mandatory TANF clients may be temporarily exempt from TANF Employment and Training (E&T) requirements until the pandemic state of emergency has ended. DSS considers all TANF clients unable to work due to the medical pandemic outbreak;
- TANF time-limit rules may be temporarily suspended. TANF benefits may not expire and TANF months may not count until the pandemic state of emergency has ended. These cases receive TANF benefits that are solely state funded.
- All TANF clocks may be stopped from ticking during the pandemic state of emergency;
- TANF interviews may be completed by telephone whenever possible until Delaware's State of Emergency is lifted;
- TANF sanction rules may be temporarily suspended until the pandemic state of emergency has ended.
- Case workers may NOT apply Contract of Mutual Responsibility (CMR) or E&T sanctions during the pandemic state of emergency; and
- TANF clients must continue to cooperate with Child Support during the State of Emergency period.

Assessment of Barriers Related to Mental Health, Substance Use, and Domestic Violence

A standardized screening tool is used by Delaware to identify possible issues related to mental health, substance abuse, and domestic violence. Participants who complete the screening answer questions designed to reveal potential issues related to domestic violence, behavioral health issues, anxiety, substance use disorders, PTSD, and thoughts of self-harm.

Screening occurs during the TANF intake and at redetermination. Additional screening occurs once a client begins participating with the employment and training programs. This process of multiple screenings allows clients the opportunity to reveal difficulties when they are most ready to do so.

DSS workers report that the screening frequently reveals significant domestic issues that participants are encouraged to resolve. By utilizing the screening tools, workers are able to refer participants for assistance. Further efforts to assist individuals to resolve abuse situations are described in the section, Statutory Rape Prevention.

Protecting Current Workers from Displacement

DSS conforms to Section (a)(5) of the Federal Unemployment Tax Act which requires that a job offered cannot be available as a result of a strike or labor dispute, that the job cannot require the employee to join or prohibit the employee from joining a labor organization, and that program participants are not used to displace regular workers.

In addition, DSS ensures that no participants, including but not limited to those placed in a work experience placement, displace regular paid employees of any of the organizations providing the work experience placement. Such assurance complies with State law contained in 31 Delaware Code, Chapter 9, Section 905(b). This assurance

also complies with Section 407(f) of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA), which requires that DSS will not use federal funds under TANF to place individuals in a work activity when:

- Any individual is on a layoff from the same or an equivalent job; or
- The employer has terminated any regular employee or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction of its workforce in order to fill the vacancy created with an adult receiving TANF benefits.

In addition, DSS has established a grievance procedure, in conformance with Section 407(f)(3) of PRWORA, for resolving complaints for any alleged violation of non-displacement requirements. Employees or their representatives who believe that their jobs are being displaced or infringed upon shall present their complaint to the employment contractor with authority over the placement. If the contractor is unable to resolve the problem within 15 days, the employee or representative may file a formal grievance in writing to the DSS Director's Office, who will hear a formal grievance. The employee will have an opportunity to: present his or her grievance on the record; present evidence; bring witnesses and cross-examine witnesses; be represented by counsel; and receive a written decision.

Grievance hearings will be scheduled within 30 calendar days of receipt of the formal grievance, and a written decision will be issued

within 30 days of the hearing. If either party is dissatisfied with the State's written decision, they may appeal the decision to the U.S. Department of Labor within 20 days of receipt of the written decision. The procedures for appeal, which must be sent to the Office of Administrative Law Judges, in the U.S. Department of Labor, will be provided in writing with the decision.

Addressing Child Poverty

In 2017, the Family Services Cabinet Council was reestablished to help coordinate critical services for needy families across Delaware. These services include workforce and job-related services, social service delivery, and programs to improve public safety that will benefit families receiving TANF.

i. Require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance under the program to engage in work (as defined by the State) once the State determines the parent or caretaker is ready to engage in work, or once the parent or caretaker has received assistance under the program for 24 months (whether or not consecutive), whichever is earlier, consistent with section 407(e)(2).

Goals for Work

Delaware's TANF program is designed to provide temporary assistance while helping recipients become self-sufficient through employment. The program’s main goal is to

support individuals in finding and maintaining meaningful jobs by offering the resources and services they need, rather than encouraging long-term dependence on cash assistance.

To assist families in obtaining and maintaining employment, the State will engage the efforts of the Delaware Departments of Health and Social Services, Labor, Economic Development, and Delaware's private sector to provide job readiness and placement opportunities, health care, childcare, and family services. In turn, TANF recipients who have the capacity to work will be required to accept work, to keep their children in school, to cooperate with child support, and to leave TANF after a defined time period.

State Agencies Involved

Delaware Departments of Health and Social Services and Labor have a unique partnership. The two agencies are responsible for moving T A N F clients to work.

The Delaware Transit Corporation in the Department of Transportation has joined the TANF collaborative team and has assisted in developing a statewide transportation system plan for TANF, using vans and other vehicle sources.

These three agencies have collaborated in developing and implementing Delaware's TANF program and continue to collaborate in managing the initiative.

Involvement of Community, Education, Business, Religious, Local Government, and Non-Profit Organizations to Provide Work

As noted in the Introduction section, each sector has been actively involved in the development of Delaware's TANF program and continues to be involved.

The Welfare Employment Committee, consisted of representatives of both the public and private sector, assists in placing TANF recipients in unsubsidized jobs and provides advice on direction, policy, and implementation of welfare-to-work efforts. This committee was established through HB 251. The Social Services Advisory Council was established by Executive Order. The Governor appointed council members to advise the directors of both the Division of Social Services and the Division of Child Support Services (DCSS) on matters related to public assistance and child support. Council members represented the community, advocates, non-profit providers, educators, and interested citizens.

The Committee on Employment and Social Services was established in Title 31 of the Delaware Code through legislative action, signed by the Honorable John C. Carney on August 10, 2018. This legislative action consolidated both the Social Services Advisory Council and the Welfare Employment Committee, effectively merging the two into the Committee on Employment and Social Services. "The mission of the Committee on Employment and Social Services is to facilitate the process through which Delaware's citizens gain and maintain employment at a livable wage. This includes advising and recommending to relevant state agencies strategies on matters

affecting employment, training, and program service delivery. The committee also examines program effectiveness in state government with an emphasis on reducing poverty and encouraging self-sufficiency."

DSS, DCSS, DOL, and DelDOT management regularly meet with the Committee on Employment and Social Services to discuss TANF and other social services and child support programs.

To further promote employer interest in hiring TANF recipients, the Departments of Labor and Economic Development meet with members of the business community at regularly scheduled events such as monthly Chamber of Commerce meetings and at special events.

Role of Public and Private Contractors in Delivery of Services

Delaware has contracted with private for-profit and non-profit providers and the local community college network to provide job readiness, job placement, and retention services to welfare clients since 1986. These contractual arrangements continue under TANF. Contractors include community and faith-based social services agencies and organizations offering specialized services.

A number of community providers across the State provide academic remediation to TANF recipients.

i. Ensure that parents and caretakers receiving assistance under the program engage in work activities in accordance with section 407

Who Must Participate

All adult caretakers and other adults in the time-limited assistance unit who are not exempt must participate in TANF employment and training related activities.

The three exemptions are:

1. A single custodial parent caring for a child under 12 months of age is limited to 12 months in a parent's lifetime per 45 CFR§261.22(c)(1) and (c)(2);
2. An individual determined unemployable by a health care professional; and
3. A parent caring for his or her child or spouse who is disabled.

Services to Move Families to Work

Delaware's goal is to place the adult recipient into unsubsidized employment as quickly as possible. To accomplish this goal, the current menu of potential services includes all the federally acceptable categories of work activities, as shown below. In addition, Delaware offers ongoing case management, work retention, and job enhancement services provided by our TANF WORKS contractors. Services include:

- Unsubsidized employment;
- Subsidized private sector employment;
- Subsidized public sector employment;
- On-the-job training;
- Job search and job readiness assistance;
- Work experience;
- Community service programs;
- Vocational educational training;
- Childcare for an individual participating in a community service program;
- Job skills training directly related to employment;
- Education directly related to employment for recipients who have not completed secondary school or received a GED; and
- Satisfactory attendance at secondary school or in a GED program for recipients who have not completed secondary school or received a GED.

Non-exempt TANF participants will participate in the job search program, consisting of job readiness classes and supervised job search activity. Unsuccessful job search participants can be placed in another job search sequence or another work-related activity such as work experience, community service, on-the-job training, or a skills training program.

Clients must keep appointments with the employment and training programs, cooperate in the development of the employment activities included in their CMR and ISS, and participate in employment and training activities. Individuals who are not in compliance with any of the above client responsibilities will be subject to sanctions as described in "Sanctions: Failure to Comply with the Contract and Imposition of Sanctions" described in a subsequent section of the State Plan.

The State implemented an Employment and Training Management Information System (ETMIS) in July 2005. ETMIS was incorporated into the existing ASSIST Worker Web (AWW) system. The ETMIS tracks referrals to employment and training programs, hours of participation, work activities, and sanctions. The ETMIS enhances contractor and participant accountability. Additionally, it is a valuable tool for the collection and dissemination of statewide program data used for determining program effectiveness and making program design changes. The system was updated to a web-based system in 2015.

Employment and Training Hours and Work Activities

Families are required to participate in a minimum number of hours of approved employment and training activities each week. The chart below specifies the number of hours required each week by family-type. Participation for two (2) consecutive weeks at the required number of hours in either employment or other activities related to finding work is a condition of eligibility for TANF benefits for families with work mandatory individuals. Once this condition and other eligibility requirements are met,

benefits are retroactive to the first day of the two-week up-front participation period.

Family Type	*Required Employment & Training Hours Per Week*
One Parent Home with Child(ren) under 6 years old	20
One Parent Home with Child(ren) 6 years and older	30
Two Parent Home	40

Job search and structured job readiness activities continue for another two (2) weeks for individuals who do not find unsubsidized employment for at least the required hours. Individuals who do not find employment within the first four (4) weeks of job search are assigned to work experience activities, and/or other employment and training activities.

Single parent households that are participating in work experience are required to participate up to 30 (or 20) hours per week. Work experience hours are determined by dividing TANF and Food Supplement benefits by the Delaware minimum wage. If the hours determined by dividing the grants by the minimum wage exceed 30 hours per week, participants are to complete no more than 30 participation hours. If the maximum allowable hours are less than 30 hours per week, participants are to complete the FLSA allowed number of work experience hours but must make up the difference needed to meet their hours of participation requirement with other countable activities.

Two-parent families assigned to work experience must engage in up to 40 hours per week, determined by dividing TANF and Food Supplement benefits by the Delaware minimum wage. If the hours determined by dividing the grants by the minimum wage exceed 40 hours per week, participants are to complete no more than 40 participation hours. If the maximum allowable hours are less than 40 hours per week, participants are to complete the FLSA allowed number of work experience hours but must make up the difference needed to meet the 40-hour participation requirement with other countable activities. TANF benefits to two-parent families are solely state funded.

An individual in a one-parent household enrolled in the TANF time-limited program who, in accordance with the requirements in their Contract of Mutual Responsibility and ISS, participates in unsubsidized employment of at least 30 hours per week is not required to participate in other work-related activities. Two-parent families who, in accordance with the requirements in their Contract of Mutual Responsibility and ISS, participate in unsubsidized employment of at least 40 hours per week are not required to participate in other work-related activities. All families who are meeting their required

hours through unsubsidized employment are required to continue providing their employment and training program with verification of their employment.

Delaware law expands the opportunity for TANF recipients to engage in educational activities beyond the federal limits of countable hours for State participation rate purposes. To take advantage of this State regulation, individuals participating full-time in educational activities, based on the standards established by the institution, must participate in additional work-related activities, to equal twenty (20) actual participation hours. For most recipients their remaining non-core hours are met through homework time. Homework time for federal participation rate purposes is not to exceed the rate of 1 hour of unsupervised homework time per credit hour or class hour if the educational program requires homework.

Recognizing that Delaware's hourly requirements for participation in work and work-related activities are broader than those prescribed by the current TANF legislation, Delaware may provide some benefits through a solely state funded (SSF) program.

Time limits for Delaware's Time-Limited TANF program are described in the section entitled, Time Limits.

i. Take such reasonable steps as the State deems necessary to restrict the use and disclosure of information about individuals and families receiving assistance under the program attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.

Protection of Privacy of Assisted Families

31 Delaware Code, Chapter 11, Section 1101 provides that public assistance information and records may be used only for purposes directly connected with the administration of public assistance programs. Thus, all information gathered regarding individuals for public assistance purposes is considered confidential and will be safeguarded by DSS. By safeguarding public assistance information, DSS protects its clients from being identified as a special group based on financial needs and protects their right to privacy.

General information regarding expenditures, numbers of clients served, and other statistical information is a matter of public record and may be made available to any interested party. Other than the exceptions noted below, DSS will not release any information regarding a particular individual without the individual's written consent.

1. DSS Operations Administrators have the authority to disclose the address of a recipient to a federal, state or local law enforcement officer at the officer's request if the officer furnishes the agency with the name of the recipient and notifies the agency that the recipient:
    a. Is fleeing to avoid prosecution;
    b. Is a fleeing felon (or in the case of New Jersey is fleeing from conviction

of a high misdemeanor);
   c. Is violating a condition of probation or parole;
   d. Has information that is necessary for the officer to conduct his or her official duties; or
   e. The location or apprehension of the recipient is within such official duties.

2. If a law enforcement officer requests information that does not meet the guidelines indicated above, a subpoena from a court of law is required before the information can be released.
3. DSS is required to report to the Division of Family Services (DFS) in situations where it believes a home is unsuitable because of neglect, dependency, abuse, or exploitation of a child.
   a. A Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) is given permission to inspect and/or copy any records relating to the child and his or her family guardian without their consent. The CASA has the authority to interview all parties having significant information relating to the child.
   b. If information is released under the procedures applying to CASA, pertinent details of the reasons for the release must be documented and written notification of this release must be sent to the last known address of the individual to whom the record refers.
4. DSS has the authority to disclose information concerning applicants and recipients provided it pertains to:
   a. An investigation, prosecution, or criminal or civil proceeding conducted in connection with public assistance programs;
   b. The administration of any other federal or federally assisted program that provides assistance, in cash or in kind, or services, directly to individuals on the basis of need. The agency must assure DSS that such information will remain confidential and will be used only to pursue services for the individual. Other means tested programs include the Supplemental Security Income Program, School Lunch and Breakfast Program, the Energy Assistance Program, and the Low-Income Housing Program;
   c. Other agencies (such as Children and Families First, Inc., Catholic Charities, Legal Aid, etc.) must provide written permission from the recipient before public assistance information may be released; and
   d. Other governmental agencies may obtain lists of recipients from DSS if the information will be used to perform services for DSS, and the agency can assure DSS that the lists will remain confidential.

i. Establish goals and take action to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies, with special emphasis on teenage pregnancies, and establish numerical goals for reducing the illegitimacy ratio of the State (as defined in section 403(a)(2)(C)(iii)).

Delaware is targeting youth by providing special services. Through the Department of

Education, Delaware provides a family literacy program which includes parenting skills, training, and other services to teen parents and their children to prevent repeat pregnancies. In addition, wellness centers located in 33 high schools provide medical, health, and counseling services to high school students.

Delaware has undertaken, through the Alliance on Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention (AAPP), a grassroots community and media outreach campaign to reduce the number of teenagers who are sexually active, become pregnant and become teen parents. AAPP works directly with parents in this initiative to improve communication between parents and children around sexuality and pregnancy prevention. In addition, AAPP provides preventive education and distributes information on preventing teen pregnancy, utilizing a number of kinds of interventions. For example, two full-time community educators visit schools, community centers, churches, and camps to provide workshops and training to parents and children around sexuality and teen pregnancy prevention. AAPP serves as a resource for the community.

Delaware's TANF program provides a positive incentive to teenagers to graduate high school by age 19 by awarding a one-time $350 bonus. This one-time payment is MOE-funded. Families with teens who are eligible for this bonus must be receiving TANF benefits. A family's income must meet the standards described on page 6 (Income Tests to Determine Eligibility – Gross income test/Net income test) for the family to be financially eligible for TANF. DSS staff must verify that the student has graduated from high school before issuing the bonus payment. Additionally, TANF requires teenage mothers currently receiving cash assistance to live with their parent(s) or a responsible adult, stay in school, immunize their child(ren), and participate in parenting education. Delaware has expanded its youth employment program provide after school and summer employment.

A family's income must be less than 185% of the applicable standard of need for the family to be financially eligible for TANF.

School-Based Youth Development and Dropout Prevention Services

Delaware uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and/or State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to support school-based youth development services for eligible middle school students from needy families. Eligible participants are members of families receiving Division of Social Services benefits or whose household income does not exceed 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Services include evidence-informed instruction and individualized support designed to improve school engagement, attendance, and academic achievement while developing leadership, life, and employability skills. Participants receive guidance in setting educational and career goals, building decision-making and interpersonal skills, and preparing for future education, training, and employment. The program also provides

age-appropriate education that promotes healthy relationships, responsible decision-making, and positive youth development.

This activity is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, specifically TANF Purpose 1 and TANF Purpose 3.

The services support TANF Purpose 1 by helping needy children remain engaged in school, strengthening protective factors that promote family stability, and improving educational outcomes that contribute to long-term economic security. By reducing school disengagement and dropout, the program helps children remain connected to their families and communities while increasing opportunities for future self-sufficiency.

The services also support TANF Purpose 3 by promoting responsible decision-making, healthy relationships, and future planning through positive youth development activities designed to reduce behaviors associated with out-of-wedlock and teen pregnancies. By encouraging educational attainment and positive life choices, the program helps improve long-term outcomes for low-income youth and their families.

ii. Conduct a program, designed to reach State and local law enforcement officials, the education system, and relevant counseling services, that provides education and training on the problem of statutory rape so that teenage pregnancy prevention programs may be expanded in scope to include men.

Statutory Rape Prevention

The Sexual Predator Act of 1996 imposes more severe criminal sanctions on adult males who are significantly older than their victims and holds them financially accountable when children are born as a result of violations of this law. Each year an administrative notice regarding the Act is published informing DSS staff how to identify instances of statutory rape and how to make appropriate referrals to the Division of Family Services. Along with the administrative notice, the Mandatory Reporting of Child Abuse and Neglect Resource Guide, published by the Office of the Child Advocate is distributed.

The legislation requires a cooperative agreement as part of a multi-faceted effort to combat teenage pregnancy and reform TANF. Specifically, the law requires Delaware's Attorney General's Office, the Department of Health and Social Services, the Department of Services to Children, Youth, and Their Families, the Department of Education, and statewide law enforcement agencies to establish a cooperative agreement specifying the various roles of the agencies involved. As a result of this legislation, the Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Public Instruction conducts programs designed to reach state and local law enforcement officials, the educational system, and relevant counseling services on the problem of

statutory rape.

iii. Implement policies and procedures as necessary to prevent access to assistance provided under the State program funded under this part through any electronic fund transaction in an automated teller machine or point-of-sale device located in a place described in section 408(a)(12), including a plan to ensure that recipients of the assistance have adequate access to their cash assistance.

TANF Benefits Issued Via Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT)

Delaware does not issue TANF benefits through electronic benefit transfer (EBT) and therefore has not established policies or procedures to address EBT access and use as they relate to TANF benefits. If in the future, Delaware begins to distribute benefits through EBT, it will establish policies and procedures that ensure compliance with the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of 2012. Prior to implementation of EBT distribution, these policies and procedures will be detailed in a state plan amendment and in a letter sent to the Secretary.

Delaware issues TANF benefits via check. Delaware has an agreement with M&T Bank, which has locations throughout the State, to cash the TANF checks of recipients. Recipients cashing their TANF check at a M&T branch incur no fees for cashing the check. There are also no fees related to electronic fund transfer, since Delaware issues paper checks.

Delaware modified legislation in August 2018 that will allow the electronic issuance of TANF benefit. In September 2020 Delaware began coordinating meetings with appropriate partnering agencies for the potential integration of TANF benefits through EBT. Delaware has not chosen to distribute TANF benefits through EBT at this time.

i. Ensure that recipients of assistance provided under the State program funded under this part have access to using or withdrawing assistance with minimal fees or charges, including an opportunity to access assistance with no fee or charges, and are provided information on applicable fees and surcharges that apply to electronic fund transactions involving the assistance, and that such information is made publicly available.

Delaware does not issue TANF benefits through electronic benefit transfer (EBT) and therefore has not established policies or procedures to address EBT access and use as they relate to TANF benefits. If in the future, Delaware begins to distribute benefits through EBT, it will establish policies and procedures that ensure compliance with the Middle-Class Tax Relief and Job Creation Act of

2012. Prior to implementation of EBT distribution, these policies and procedures will be detailed in a state plan amendment and in a letter sent to the Secretary.

Delaware issues TANF benefits via check. Delaware has an agreement with M&T Bank, which has locations throughout the State, to cash the TANF checks of recipients. Recipients cashing their TANF check at a M&T branch incur no fees for cashing the check. There are also no fees related to electronic fund transfer, since Delaware issues paper checks.

B. Special Provisions

i. The document shall indicate whether the State intends to treat families moving into the State from another State differently than other families under the program, and if so, how the State intends to treat such families under the program.

Individuals from Another State

All families meeting the status eligibility requirements are eligible for TANF benefits using Delaware rules, regardless of how long they have been residents of the State.

Denial of Benefits for Fraudulent Misrepresentation to Obtain Assistance in Two States

Any individual who misrepresents residence to receive TANF, Medicaid, or Food Supplement benefits in two states shall be subject to a ten-year ban if convicted in a state or federal court.

ii. The document shall indicate whether the State intends to provide assistance under the program to individuals who are not citizens of the United States, and if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.

Non-Citizen Households

Qualified aliens who are not exempt from the five-year benefit restriction per federal law, do not receive federal funded assistance. Delaware supports these families in attaining self-sufficiency by providing state funded medical assistance. Qualified aliens who are exempt from the benefit restriction receive federally funded benefits and services, including TANF and employment and training services.

Treatment of Eligible Non-Citizens

Qualified non-citizens who enter the United States before August 22, 1996 are eligible to receive the same benefits and services and are subject to the same conditions and requirements as all other applicants and recipients.

Qualified aliens entering the United States on or after August 22, 1996, who are exempt from benefit restrictions as specified in federal law, are eligible to receive the same benefits and services and are subject to the same conditions and requirements as all other applicants and recipients.

Qualified non-citizens who enter the United States on or after August 22, 1996 are, after five years, eligible to receive the same benefits and services and are subject to the same conditions and requirements as all other applicants and recipients.

i. The document shall set forth objective criteria for the delivery of benefits and the determination of eligibility and for fair and equitable treatment, including an explanation of how the State will provide opportunities for recipients who have been adversely affected to be heard in a State administrative or appeal process.

Nondiscrimination Statement

State of Delaware agencies administering the TANF Block Grant assure equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in their employment practices and service delivery. No person shall on the basis of sex, age, color, national origin, race, or disability status be excluded from participation in, be denied benefits of, or be subjected to unlawful discrimination under any program or activity receiving or benefiting from federal financial assistance and administered by the agencies.

Further, it is the obligation of the agencies to make reasonable accommodations for an applicant or participant so that no limitation - physical, mental or language - prevents his or her complete participation.

Appeals Process

DSS will provide timely and adequate notice for actions taken which affect eligibility or benefit level. Adequate notice means a written notice that includes a statement of what action the agency intends to take, the reasons for the intended agency action, the specific regulations supporting such action, explanation of the individual's right to request a fair hearing, and the circumstances under which assistance may be continued if a hearing is requested.

Timely notice means a notice that is mailed no later than ten (10) days before the date of action (i.e., ten days before the intended change would be effective). When DSS learns of facts indicating that assistance should be discontinued, suspended, terminated, or reduced because of the probable fraud of the recipient and, where possible, such facts have been verified through secondary sources, notice of a grant adjustment is timely if mailed at least five (5) days before the action would become effective.

An opportunity for a hearing will be granted to any applicant who requests a hearing because his or her claim for assistance is denied or is not acted upon with reasonable

promptness and to any applicant or recipient who is aggrieved by any Agency action.

To be considered by the Agency, a request for a hearing must be a clear expression in writing by the appellant or his or her representative to the effect that (s)he wants the opportunity to present his or her case to higher authority. The freedom to make such a request will not be limited or interfered with in any way and the Division will assist the appellant in submitting and processing his or her request. A hearing need not be granted when either state or federal law requires automatic grant adjustments for classes of recipients unless the reason for an individual appeal is incorrect grant computation.

i. Not later than 1 year after the date of enactment of this section, unless the chief executive officer of the State opts out of this provision by notifying the Secretary, a State shall, consistent with the exception provided in section 407(e)(2), require a parent or caretaker receiving assistance under the program who, after receiving such assistance for 2 months is not exempt from work requirements and is not engaged in work, as determined under section 407(c), to participate in community service employment, with minimum hours per week and tasks to be determined by the State.

As permitted by statute, Delaware has opted out of this provision.

ii. The document shall indicate whether the State intends to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment–
iii. providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined under section 2011); or
iv. in other occupations related to elder care determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel, and, if so, shall include an overview of such assistance.

Eldercare Workforce Development

Delaware does not intend at this time to assist individuals to train for, seek, and maintain employment in the following specific activities:

- Providing direct care in a long-term care facility (as such terms are defined in §2011 of the Social Security Act); or
- In other occupations related to elder care determined appropriate by the State for which the State identifies an unmet need for service personnel.

2. Child Support Services Program

Certification that the state will operate a child support enforcement program. – A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that, during the fiscal

year, the State will operate a child support enforcement program under the State plan approved under part D.

Cooperation with the Division of Child Support Services

Participants in TANF must cooperate with DCSS as a condition of eligibility. In addition, all families are required to provide sufficient information to permit Delaware to obtain child support on behalf of the family. Exceptions can be made when the caretaker demonstrates that pursuit of child support would create a danger to the caretaker or the child(ren). It is the responsibility of the client to provide documentation to verify such a good cause claim.

Failure of a caretaker, without good cause, to cooperate with and provide information to DCSS to permit the State to pursue the collection of child support on behalf of dependent children will result in a full family sanction, until compliance. Applicants who fail to provide information so that Delaware may pursue child support collections will be denied or closed. To cure the child

support sanction, the caretaker will provide sufficient information to permit Delaware to pursue child support collections on behalf of the needy children in the family.

When a child lives with both the natural father and the mother, but paternity has not been legally established, the parents will be referred to DCSS for a voluntary acknowledgment of paternity.

When a child lives with the natural father, but paternity has not been legally established, the father will complete a declaration of natural relationship document and will provide acceptable verification of relationship.

When a child lives with a relative of the natural father, but paternity has not been legally established, the relative must complete a declaration of natural relationship document and provide acceptable verification of relationship.

In Delaware, DCSS determines non-cooperation with child support requirements. In addition, effective January 1, 1999, DCSS began making the determination of good faith efforts to comply.

Distribution of Child Support Collections to TANF Recipients

Delaware is a fill-the-gap state. Delaware uses fill-the-gap to make sure that families do not experience a net-loss of income due to the State retaining child support paid by absent parents.

3. Foster Care and Adoption Assistance Program

Certification that the state will operate a foster care and adoption assistance program. – A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that, during the fiscal year, the State will operate a foster care and adoption assistance program under the State plan approved under part E, and that the State will take such actions as are necessary to ensure that children receiving assistance under such part are eligible for medical assistance under the State plan under title XIX.

Delaware certifies it will operate a Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program in accordance with part E and the State Plan and take all necessary actions to ensure that children receiving assistance are eligible for medical assistance.

4. Administration of the Program

Certification of the administration of the program. – A certification by the chief executive officer of the State specifying which State agency or agencies will administer and supervise the program referred to in paragraph (1) for the fiscal year, which shall include assurances that local governments and private sector organizations-

a. ***have been consulted regarding the plan and design of TANF-related services in the State so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and***
b. ***have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.***

Structure of Agency

The Division of Social Services, a division of the State of Delaware Department of Health and Social Services, administers TANF. While DHSS is the lead agency, program administration is accomplished through a partnership between DSS, DOL, and DTC.

The Department of Health and Social Services is the cabinet level agency designated by the State as responsible for Delaware's public assistance programs as allowed under Title IV-A of the Social Security Act. Within the Department, the Division of Social Services administers these programs. (DSS organizational chart included as Appendix.)

State Agencies Involved

The Delaware Department of Health and Social Services and the Department of Labor have a unique partnership. The two agencies are responsible for moving TANF clients to work. The two agencies have collaborated in developing Delaware's TANF program, in public information, in implementation, and continue to collaborate in managing the initiative.

The Delaware Transit Corporation in the Department of Transportation has joined the TANF collaborative team and has assisted in developing a statewide transportation system plan for TANF, using vans and other vehicle sources.

Involvement of Community, Education, Business, Religious, Local Government and Non-Profit Organizations to Provide Work

Every sector has been actively involved in the development of Delaware's TANF program and continues to be involved.

The TANF Employer Committee and The Social Services Advisory council were combined to create the Committee on Employment and Social Services.

The Committee, which consists of representatives from both the public and private sector, local governments, the community, advocates, non-profit providers, educators, and interested citizens, assists in placing TANF recipients in unsubsidized jobs and provides advice on direction, policy, and implementation of workforce transition initiatives. This committee was established through SB 244. The Governor appoints members to advise the directors of both the Division of Social Services and the Division of Child Support Services on matters related to public assistance and child support services. Council members represent local governments, the community, advocates, non-profit providers, educators, and interested citizens.

To further promote employer interest in hiring TANF recipients, the Department of Labor meets with members of the business community at regularly scheduled events like monthly Chamber of Commerce meetings and at special events.

DSS and DCSS management regularly meet with the Committee on Employment and Social Services to discuss TANF and other social services and child support programs.

Role of Public and Private Contractors in Delivery of Services

Delaware has contracted with private for-profit and non-profit providers and the local community college network to provide job readiness, job placement, and retention services to welfare clients since 1986. These contractual arrangements continue under TANF. Contractors include community and faith-based social services agencies and organizations offering specialized services.

A number of community providers across the State provide academic remediation to TANF recipients.

Staff Training

TANF training has been incorporated into the cash grant training which is required for all new financial services staff. Case management training has now been incorporated into interviewing and coaching training, which is required for all new staff. Veteran staff attend trainings, open labs, webinars, and staff meetings, which re-enforce case management, interviewing, and TANF application processing.

Compliance With Participation Rates

Delaware intends to meet the participation rate requirements set forth in the TANF legislation. Recognizing that Delaware's hourly requirements for participation in work and work-related activities are broader than those prescribed by the current TANF legislation, we are prepared to provide some benefits utilizing solely state funding (SSF) if it becomes necessary to continue to meet TANF work participation requirements.

Maintenance of Effort

Delaware is aware of and intends to fully comply with the requirements of the law (P.L. 104-193) to maintain a prescribed level of historic state expenditures. Delaware will ensure that expenditures of state funds for benefits and services ("Qualified State Expenditures" as defined in the law) for TANF participants (either in the Part A federally funded program or non-Part A state funded program) who are TANF eligible will equal or exceed the required annual spending level.

As a 1975 fill-the-gap state, Delaware has opted to continue to use fill-the-gap for the issuance of child support disregards and child support supplemental payments to TANF clients. Delaware considers these payments to be "cash assistance" to eligible families and therefore to be within the definition of "Qualified State Expenditures".

Financial eligibility criteria for MOE-funded and solely state funded assistance or services are the same as for other TANF assistance or services. Other program services may be provided to needy families or needy parents as defined elsewhere in the Plan.

State Maintenance of Effort funded programs are below.

Childcare

Delaware uses a combination of TANF and MOE funds. MOE claimed for childcare under the provisions of 45 CFR Ch. II § 263.3 will follow the financial eligibility criteria below.

Technical eligibility:

- Children must be under the age of 13 or if between age of 13-19 have a special need in which the child is physically and/or mentally incapable of self-care. Be involved with DFS.

- Parents must be employed, participating with a TANF or SNAP Employment/Training vendor, involved with DFS, attend high school, have a special need in which they are unable to care for the child(ren).

Financial Eligibility:

- Initial income eligibility will be 225% FPL with exit income level at 325% FPL. All child care will be authorized for a period of 12 months with parent co-pays not to increase during their initial eligibility.
- At redetermination, cases will be reviewed to determine if the family will continue on with traditional child care, go on to graduated phase out or close. A two-tier income eligibility limit was implemented at redetermination for child care. The first-tier income limit for POC eligibility is at or below 225% of the FPL. The second-tier income limit is 325% of the FPL.
- At redetermination, if a family's income exceeds 225% of the FPL but is at or below 325% of the FPL, the family will be eligible for graduated phase-out to transition off child care.

Childcare cases will only close at any time for the following reasons:

- Excessive unexplained absences of the child from the childcare site;
- Intentional IPV or substantiated fraud;
- A permanent change in the child's residency;
- Income exceeds 85% of the State Median Income (SMI);
- A written request to close the case or to authorize childcare for a specific length of time; or
- Death of case head or child.

Subsidized Childcare & Childcare for Working Families not on TANF

Delaware uses TANF and MOE funds to subsidize or co-pay childcare for working TANF recipients or those participating in TANF approved work preparation activities. Delaware also uses TANF and MOE funds to provide childcare to working low-earning Delaware families. The purpose is to enable families to pay for childcare while engaged in work preparation and/or employment and to enable low-earning families to pay childcare expenses so they can accept and retain employment.

Diversion Assistance Program

Delaware's Diversion Assistance Program provides short-term, non-recurrent assistance to help families resolve temporary financial crises that threaten employment, family stability, or economic security. By addressing immediate needs before they escalate into long-term hardship, Diversion Assistance supports Delaware's commitment to prevention, employment retention, family preservation, and long-term economic mobility.

Delaware utilizes a combination of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to operate the Diversion Assistance Program. The program is designed to assist families experiencing a temporary financial crisis that jeopardizes current employment or prevents a parent from accepting employment and that, if left unaddressed, could result in the family requiring ongoing TANF cash assistance. Delaware does not use TANF funds for medical expenses not covered by Medicaid. Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds may be used, as appropriate, to cover eligible medical expenses not covered by Medicaid.

Diversion Assistance may be used to address employment-related expenses that create temporary barriers to obtaining or maintaining employment. The Diversion Assistance payment will not exceed $1,500 or the financial need resulting from the crisis, whichever is less. Diversion Assistance, which is available to both applicant and recipient families, is not a supplement to regular assistance but is in place of it.

Diversion Assistance is intended to stabilize families during temporary crises while supporting continued workforce participation and reducing the need for long-term public assistance.

Eligibility requirements for Diversion Assistance are as follows:

- The parent must be living with his or her natural or adopted children;
- The family has not received a Diversion Assistance payment in the past 12 months;
- The Diversion Assistance amount will alleviate the crisis; and
- The parent is currently employed but having a problem which jeopardizes the employment or has been offered a job but needs help in order to accept the job.

Financial Requirements for Diversion Assistance are as follows:

- The family's income would qualify the family for TANF as a recipient household. (When calculating eligibility for Diversion Assistance the family is given the $30 plus 1/3 disregard, if applicable, and the family's net income is compared to the Standard of Need.); and
- The family's resources would qualify for TANF.

The Diversion Assistance payment may be used for items and/or services, such as, but not limited to:

- Transportation, such as vehicle repairs, tires, insurance, driver's license fee, gas;
- Clothing, such as uniforms or other specialized clothing and footwear or other employment-related apparel;
- Tools and equipment
- Medical expenses not covered by Medicaid (e.g., eyeglasses). MOE will be used for this expense;
- Union dues, special fees, licenses or certificates;
- Up-front costs of employment, such as agency fees and testing fees;
- Unpaid childcare expenses which, if they remain unpaid, preclude the provision of future childcare; and
- Relocation expenses for verified employment in another county or state. These expenses may include moving equipment rental, gas, and lodging for the days of the move and the first month's rent, rental and utility deposit.

Diversion Assistance payments are issued directly to third-party vendors whenever appropriate to address the identified need. In exchange for receiving Diversion Assistance, the family agrees to forego TANF cash assistance for the applicable period

identified below.

- 1 month for $0 through $500.99 of Diversion Assistance;
- 2 months for $501 through $1,000.99 of Diversion Assistance; and
- 3 months for $1,001 through $1,500 of Diversion Assistance.

The once-per-year limitation on Diversion Assistance and the associated period of TANF ineligibility may be waived when good cause exists. Good cause includes circumstances beyond the participant's control that create a new or unforeseen need for assistance, such as involuntary job loss, serious illness, or other significant events that prevent continued employment.

The family is eligible for TANF related Medicaid in the month in which the Diversion Assistance payment is made. The family would remain eligible for Section 1931 Medicaid (TANF related Medicaid) until the family's income exceeds the standard of need. If the family's income exceeds the standard of need because of increased earnings or loss of the $30 plus 1/3 disregard and the parent is working, the family may be eligible for Transitional Medicaid.

Diversion Assistance does not count as income in the childcare program. Families receiving Diversion Assistance may also be eligible to receive childcare under Delaware's working poor childcare program if their income does not exceed 200% of the federal poverty level. Receipt of Diversion Assistance would not bar receipt of Food Supplement benefits, and food benefit applications will be actively solicited from individuals requesting Diversion Assistance.

Diversion Assistance does not count against the time limit on receipt of assistance.

The family will not have to assign child support to the State. Child support received by the parent through the Division of Child Support Services, (DCSS), will belong to the family. DCSS will not use child support to offset or reimburse the Diversion Assistance.

Diversion Assistance complements, rather than replaces, Delaware's Emergency Assistance Program and other supportive services. Together, these programs provide a continuum of short-term supports designed to preserve employment, stabilize families, and reduce the likelihood that temporary financial crises will result in long-term dependence on public assistance.

Child Welfare Services to Assist Needy Families in Maintaining Children in the Home of Their Parent(s) or a Relative Caregiver

Delaware recognizes that early intervention, family preservation, and coordinated supportive services are essential to promoting child well-being and preventing family crises. Through a combination of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds, Delaware provides child welfare and family stabilization services designed to strengthen families, reduce risk factors, and help children remain safely in the care of their parents or relative caregivers whenever possible. These services reflect Delaware's whole-family approach by addressing the

circumstances that may place families at risk of child welfare involvement, homelessness, unemployment, or long-term dependence on public assistance.

Delaware utilizes a combination of TANF and MOE funds to provide services when conditions exist that require intervention by the Division of Family Services (DFS). These services are intended to strengthen family functioning, promote child safety and well-being, preserve family relationships, and reduce the need for more intensive child welfare interventions whenever possible. Services or payments for services are provided to address the conditions that resulted in the need for intervention when the child or family is not eligible to receive those services under Title IV-E.

Services identified by the Division of Family Services as necessary to meet the needs of the child and family may include, but are not limited to:

- Investigation;
- Case management;
- Community- and home-based intervention services;
- Foster care maintenance payments for short-term placements of less than 180 days outside the home;
- Foster care maintenance payments for temporary absence placements of up to 365 days;
- Preventive services;
- Court-related activities; and
- Foster care case management services.

For this program, families meeting Delaware's definition of needy who satisfy the program's eligibility requirements, including families whose combined earned and unearned income is at or below 900 percent of the Federal Poverty Level during the year, are eligible to receive TANF-funded or MOE-funded child welfare and family stabilization services.

State MOE funds may be used to pay for these benefits and services while the child remains in the home of a relative or during a period of temporary absence from the home of up to twelve (12) months, provided the child is expected to return home during that period or a good cause extension has been granted.

Delaware partners with the Division of Family Services, community-based organizations, and other public and private providers to coordinate services that strengthen protective factors, improve family functioning, preserve family relationships, and promote positive long-term outcomes for children and families. Whenever appropriate, these services are coordinated with employment, housing, behavioral health, child care, and other supportive services to address the family's immediate needs while promoting long-term family stability and economic mobility.

Family Support Services - Client Assistance Program Services (CAPS)

The **Client Assistance Program Services (CAPS)** program is administered by the Delaware Division of Social Services (DSS), Family Support Services Unit. Effective July 1, 2024, the former Division of State Service Centers (DSSC) was integrated into DSS, creating a unified division that delivers economic assistance, community-based services, and family stabilization supports through a coordinated, whole-family service delivery model.

As part of Delaware's ongoing modernization efforts, the Division is implementing the **ASSIST CAPS Integration System (ACIS)**, a strategic initiative that integrates the legacy CAPS system into the ASSIST eligibility platform. ACIS modernizes service delivery by creating a more seamless and coordinated system for eligibility determination, case management, supportive service coordination, and benefit administration. This integrated approach enhances customer access, strengthens program coordination, improves data quality, increases operational efficiency, and supports more responsive, customer-centered service delivery for Delaware families.

Through CAPS, Delaware utilizes Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to provide emergency and supportive assistance that helps eligible families meet basic needs, maintain family stability, and reduce barriers to employment and economic mobility. Program funding may include:

- Utility Assistance;
- Energy Assistance;
- Kinship Care Assistance;
- Needy Family Fund Assistance; and
- Other emergency and supportive services authorized under applicable State policy.

These services are intended to ensure that eligible families have access to necessities, including food, shelter, utilities, clothing, and other emergency needs that strengthen family stability, support child well-being, and help parents obtain, retain, or advance in employment.

Families Eligible for CAPS Assistance

Families meeting Delaware's definition of needy who satisfy the eligibility requirements of the applicable TANF-funded or MOE-funded CAPS program may receive services in accordance with program requirements.

For CAPS-funded programs, eligible families include:

- Families receiving TANF cash assistance or qualifying Medicaid under Delaware's definition of needy; and

- Families with minor children whose household income does not exceed 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, when specified under the eligibility requirements of the applicable CAPS-funded program.

DSCYF, Division of Family Services (DFS) – Child welfare investigations, assessments, and family support services are provided to ensure the safety, permanency, and well-being of children while connecting families with services designed to strengthen family functioning, address identified risks, and support children remaining safely in their homes whenever possible.

ECAP – Early Childhood Intervention. Delaware's Early Childhood Assistance Program (ECAP) is a state-funded pre-k for disadvantaged children in Delaware. It provides comprehensive child development programs for low-income families with children aged four and eligible for kindergarten the following year. The program is part of the Department of Education's Office of Early Learning, and provides support for statewide partners to build and integrate early childhood service systems that promote the health and well-being of Delaware's young children.

Eligibility for ECAP is determined by individual child or family characteristics in addition to age. ECAP-funded children must meet the federal Head Start eligibility guidelines. Eligibility is determined based on age of child, family income, disability, housing status, parental status, and other individual/family factors. Ten percent of available slots must be provided for children with disabilities. Effective as of the Head Start Act of 2007, 35% of enrollment may be children whose family incomes are between 100% and 130% of the Federal Poverty Level (FPL) after priority is given to children at or below 100% FPL.

ECAP State funding is provided for at least 3.5 hours per day, making all ECAP seats part day. However, ECAP programs can blend and braid other funding sources, including the use of state subsidy (Purchase of Care) dollars, to support the additional service hours needed to provide full day care. Some ECAPs align with school district schedules while others operate for at least nine months but do not necessarily follow school district calendars.

Cash Assistance for Single or Two Parent and Child Only Families

Delaware uses a combination of TANF and MOE funds to provide broad-based support for working families. Delaware was one of the first states to recognize that the special eligibility requirements that applied to two-parent families contributed to both the non-formation and the break-up of two-parent households. The six- quarter work history requirement was particularly responsible for non-marriage of teen parents, who had not yet worked enough to meet this qualification. The denial of benefits to two-parent families if one of the parents was working at least 100 hours a month also contributed to the low work rate of two-parent families that were receiving AFDC.

When Delaware eliminated these special deprivation requirements as part of our welfare reform waiver, the numbers of two-parent families receiving TANF soared, and we believe that, without the TANF change, many of these households would have applied for and been found eligible for benefits as single mother families. These never formed two-parent households would have had profound effects on the ability of the family to exit TANF and on the future success of the children. We have found that the average length of stay on TANF is much lower for two-parent families, reflecting the greater incidence of retained employment when two adults are able to engage in work and share childcare duties.

Delaware has always allowed taxpayers to file separately and applied the progressive rate structure to each spouse's income separately, which avoided most tax increases resulting from marriage. However, a marriage penalty could still result from uneven standard deduction amounts. By increasing the standard deduction amount for married taxpayers to exactly twice the single standard deduction beginning January 1, 2000, enactment of HB 411 has effectively eliminated the income tax "marriage penalty" in the State of Delaware. Delaware uses a combination of TANF and MOE funds. Eligible families must be receiving TANF and meet the TANF financial eligibility criteria. A family's income must meet the standards described on page 6 (Income Tests to Determine Eligibility – Gross income test/Net income test) for the family to be financially eligible for TANF.

Supportive Services

Delaware recognizes that successful employment and long-term economic mobility require more than job placement alone. Families often face multiple and interconnected barriers—including child care needs, transportation challenges, housing instability, behavioral health concerns, domestic violence, limited access to training or education, and other circumstances that may affect their ability to obtain and retain employment. Accordingly, Delaware provides a coordinated system of supportive services designed to reduce barriers to employment, strengthen family stability, improve child well-being, and promote long-term economic mobility consistent with the purposes of the TANF program.

Delaware utilizes a combination of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to provide employment, training, family stabilization, and supportive services that assist eligible families in preparing for, obtaining, retaining, and advancing in employment. These services are intended to reduce barriers to workforce participation, strengthen family functioning, and improve long-term outcomes for children and families. Delaware does not use TANF funds for medical expenses not covered by Medicaid. Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds may be used, as appropriate, to cover eligible medical expenses not covered by Medicaid. Supportive services may include, but are not limited to:

- Support provided by contractors to retain employment for up to one (1) year;
- Health care for Delaware citizens;

- Job search programs and other employment assistance provided through the Delaware Department of Labor;
- Ongoing job retention assistance;
- Child care;
- Eye examinations, corrective lenses, dental expenses, and physicals not covered by Medicaid;
- Transportation expenses;
- Work-related equipment, uniforms, shoes, and supplies; Work-related fees, licensing, credentialing, testing, and training expenses;
- Expungement services;
- Housing stabilization assistance, including services designed to reduce the risk of homelessness, when available and consistent with program requirements;
- Family stabilization services that support employment, child well-being, and long-term family stability;
- Referrals to community-based organizations and partner agencies that provide employment, housing, food security, behavioral health, domestic violence, financial capability, and other supportive services; and Bridge Program.

Delaware coordinates supportive services to reduce barriers to employment, strengthen family stability, and promote long-term economic mobility. Whenever appropriate, participants may also be referred to community partners and other public or private resources that provide additional services to support financial capability, housing stability, behavioral health, family well-being, and successful workforce participation.

Bridge Program – Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH)

Recognizing that untreated behavioral health conditions, substance use disorders, and domestic violence may present significant barriers to employment and family stability, Delaware administers the Bridge Program through the Department of Health and Social Services' Division of Substance Abuse and Mental Health (DSAMH). The Bridge Program provides screening, assessment, case management, service coordination, and referrals to appropriate treatment and supportive services to assist participants in overcoming barriers to employment and achieving long-term family stability and economic mobility.

- The primary role of the Bridge program is to assist clients in accessing appropriate treatment services. The Bridge provider develops a plan with each client that identifies the needed services and develops strategies to ensure compliance with treatment recommendations. The Bridge provider may transport clients to appointments and will coordinate with the employment and training vendors to ensure that the client receives credit for their participation in treatment. In their role as case managers and client advocates, the Bridge provider will often assist clients who are facing homelessness or other emergency events, resolve these situations. All adult TANF recipients suspected of having problems related to substance abuse and/or mental health are referred to the Bridge program. Additionally, Bridge staff screen all adults for problems

related to substance abuse disorders, behavioral health, and domestic violence as a routine process for adults entering the employment and training programs. Case managers from the Bridge program and the TANF WORKS vendors engage in on- going joint case planning and case collaboration. This integration of services ensures a long-term focus on self-sufficiency while being responsive to the need for immediate referral and access to treatment services.

Bridge TANF clients can include:

- Employment and training mandatory adults and caretakers;
- Employment and training exempt adults and caretakers;
- Parents and caretakers with disabilities and medical exemptions;
- Non-needy/payee only caretakers;
- Employment and training mandatory minors; and
- Clients experiencing difficulty engaging and/or complying with E&T vendors.

Families who are eligible for Supportive Services Include:

- Families who are receiving TANF. A family's income must meet the standards described on page 6 (Income Tests to Determine Eligibility – Gross income test/Net income test) for the family to be financially eligible for TANF.
- Families with minor children who are eligible to receive DSS benefits or up to 200% of the federal poverty limit.

Services are provided by voucher or directly. In addition, TANF will, on a case-by-case basis, pay fees to purchase certificates, licenses, or testing needed to obtain employment. DSS will determine when such services are necessary for a TANF recipient to participate.

Services for Working Families in Financial Crisis

Delaware uses a combination of TANF and MOE funds for services for working families in crisis. Due to the ongoing, pressures on the cost of housing, fuel, and food, many families face temporary crises that place them at risk of displacement from their homes and/or at risk of dissolution of their family units. These working families receive a wide range of one-time and on-going supports in an effort to maintain the family unit and avoid episodes of TANF assistance. Working families at or below 600% of the federal poverty level are eligible for supportive services and financial assistance determined to reduce the likelihood of dissolution of the family unit or the need for TANF assistance.

Emergency Assistance Program

Delaware uses a combination of TANF and/or MOE funds for the Emergency assistance program. Delaware will not use TANF funds for medical expenses. MOE will be used to cover medical costs. The purpose of Emergency Assistance is to avoid the destitution of a child or of a needy distressed resident of the State by providing payments which eliminate or alleviate an emergency condition. An emergency is

caused by an unforeseen circumstance or combination of circumstances or the resulting state that calls for immediate action. The program is run through the Division of Social Services, to provide non-assistance non-recurrent short-term benefits and/or Emergency Assistance. These services provide emergency necessities to promote family intact stability, strengthen Delaware's families, increase employment options, and positively impact the general public health. Emergency services provide assistance with appliances, furniture, clothing, emergency or permanent shelter, food, home repairs, medical needs, moving expenses, transportation, and /or utilities and fuel.

Families must be open in TANF or have qualifying Medicaid under the needy definition Delaware has established. Families must meet the standards described on pages 5 through 8 to be eligible.

These services primarily support TANF Purpose 1 by providing assistance to needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. Depending upon the specific service provided, Emergency Assistance may also advance other TANF purposes by promoting family stability and reducing the need for long-term public assistance.

Financial eligibility criteria for emergency assistance is as follows; the family must have a minor child in the home and receive TANF or Medicaid.

Emergency assistance is provided as a one-time assistance payment to alleviate a crisis or provide emergency shelter services that lasts no more than a month.

Administrative Costs

Delaware will comply with federal requirements. Administrative costs for programs are financed by MOE:

- Salary and non-salary costs for staff related to eligibility activities as computed with a cost-allocation plan which differentiates eligibility functions from other functions;
- Cost of the TALX (employment data verification) program; and
- Funding for Department of Labor administrative costs for support they provide.

DSS System Cost

Costs for the development and implementation of the ASSIST Worker Web (AWW) management information system and other DSS systems are financed by MOE.

AWW is a large-scale client server, interactive eligibility determination, and benefit issuance system. AWW automates client registration, application entry, eligibility determination, benefit calculation, benefit issuance, and work programs for more than 100 variations of cash, Medicaid, child care, and food benefit programs administered by the Delaware Division of Social Services. AWW provides automated program support and supports the information needs at the state and local office level. AWW

also incorporates program changes required by P.L. 104-193.

Specialized Training Programs

Delaware will use a combination of TANF and MOE funds to offer specialized training programs for TANF recipients. The primary goal of these programs are to provide clients with the basic skills, education and supportive services needed to acquire and retain jobs with a specific skill set. Delaware partners with agencies and offers short-term (2-26 weeks) training programs that provide certificates or an entry skill at the end of the course. (TANF purposes 2.)

Financial Eligibility Criteria are as follows: families with minor children in the home, meet Delaware's definition of needy, receive TANF or DSS benefits and income is below 200% of poverty.

Community-Based Family Support Services

Delaware uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and/or State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to support community-based family support services for eligible low-income families with minor children. Eligible families meet Delaware's definition of needy, receive Division of Social Services benefits or other qualifying assistance, or have household income at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level.

Services are provided through community-based outreach and engagement and are designed to reduce barriers to family stability and economic self-sufficiency. Assistance includes connecting families with public benefits and community resources, providing case management and trauma-informed support, promoting healthy decision-making and family functioning, addressing barriers associated with violence and substance use, and assisting parents in accessing employment, education, training, and other supportive services. Services are available to both parents and their children to strengthen family functioning and improve long-term outcomes.

This activity is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, specifically TANF Purposes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The services support TANF Purpose 1 by assisting needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes through coordinated supports that strengthen family stability and increase access to essential services.

The services support TANF Purpose 2 by helping parents identify and address barriers to employment, education, job training, and workforce participation, thereby promoting economic self-sufficiency and reducing dependence on public assistance.

The services support TANF Purpose 3 by providing education, mentoring, and family supports that promote healthy decision-making, positive youth development, and

responsible parenting, thereby helping reduce risk factors associated with out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

The services support TANF Purpose 4 by strengthening family relationships, encouraging responsible parenting, and promoting healthy family functioning through community-based services that support safe, stable, and nurturing home environments.

Community-Based Violence Prevention and Family Stabilization Services

Delaware uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and/or State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to support community-based violence prevention and family stabilization services for eligible low-income families with minor children. Eligible families meet Delaware's definition of needy, as described in this State Plan, and satisfy the eligibility requirements of the applicable TANF-funded or MOE-funded program. For this program, eligible families include those receiving Division of Social Services (DSS) benefits or other qualifying assistance, as well as families with household income at or below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level, consistent with program requirements.

Services are designed to strengthen family stability, improve community safety, and reduce barriers that place families at risk of continued poverty, trauma, and involvement with the justice system. Assistance includes trauma-informed case management, violence prevention and intervention services, referrals to behavioral health and substance use treatment, family support services, workforce and employment referrals, benefit navigation, and connections to community-based resources. Services are provided to eligible parents, caregivers, youth, and their children to promote safe, stable family environments and improve long-term family and community outcomes.

This activity is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, specifically TANF Purposes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The services support TANF Purpose 1 by strengthening family stability and helping needy families access coordinated services that enable children to remain safely cared for in their own homes.

The services support TANF Purpose 2 by assisting parents in addressing barriers to employment, education, and workforce participation, including barriers related to violence, trauma, and other adverse circumstances that affect family self-sufficiency.

The services support TANF Purpose 3 by promoting positive youth development, healthy decision-making, mentoring, conflict resolution, and supportive family relationships that reduce risk factors associated with violence, family instability, and out-of-wedlock pregnancies.

The services support TANF Purpose 4 by encouraging responsible parenting, strengthening family relationships, and promoting safe, stable home environments that support the long-term well-being of children and families.

Two-Generation Family Support Services

Delaware uses Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds and/or State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to support two-generation family support services for eligible low-income families with minor children in Wilmington, Delaware. The program provides school-based and community-based services designed to address the needs of both children and parents by strengthening family stability, improving access to supportive resources, and reducing barriers to economic self-sufficiency.

Eligible families include those with minor children in the home who meet Delaware's definition of needy, receive TANF or other Division of Social Services benefits, and/or meet the applicable income eligibility criteria established for the program (below 300% of poverty). Services are provided through a coordinated, family-centered approach that connects parents and children with resources and supports within a central community setting.

The program provides wraparound services that may include family support, case management, assistance accessing DSS benefits and community resources, employment and workforce development supports, educational resources, and other services designed to address barriers that impact family stability and self-sufficiency. By serving parents and children together, the program promotes positive child outcomes while helping parents access opportunities that support employment, education, training, and economic advancement.

This activity is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, specifically TANF Purposes 1, 2, 3, and 4.

The services support TANF Purpose 1 by assisting needy families and strengthening the capacity of parents to provide a safe and stable environment in which children can be cared for in their own homes.

The services support TANF Purpose 2 by helping parents overcome barriers to employment and increasing access to education, training, workforce development, and supportive services that promote economic self-sufficiency.

The services support TANF Purpose 3 by promoting healthy family relationships, positive parenting, responsible decision-making, and improved outcomes for children and families.

The services support TANF Purpose 4 by strengthening family functioning and encouraging the maintenance of healthy parent-child relationships through coordinated supports that address the needs of the entire family.

Through a two-generation approach, the program helps families address immediate needs while building the skills, resources, and stability necessary to achieve long-term self-sufficiency.

Housing Supports

Delaware utilizes a combination of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds to provide housing stabilization services that promote family stability, reduce the risk of homelessness, and enable children to remain safely in their homes whenever possible. Delaware recognizes that stable housing is a critical foundation for employment, child well-being, family preservation, and long-term economic mobility. Accordingly, the Housing Program provides supportive services designed to assist eligible families in obtaining and maintaining safe, stable housing while reducing barriers to employment and self-sufficiency. These services support one or more of the four statutory purposes of TANF, as appropriate.

Housing assistance may include:

- Rental and utility assistance;
- Emergency housing stays;Short-term temporary housing subsidies;
- Rental assistance for up to twelve (12) months, as applicable under program requirements; and
- Case management to identify and address barriers to housing stability, employment, and long-term self-sufficiency.

Families Eligible for Housing Assistance

Housing assistance is available to eligible families in accordance with the requirements of the applicable TANF-funded or MOE-funded housing program. Eligibility varies based on the specific program or service and includes the following categories:

1. Families Meeting Delaware's Definition of Needy

Families with minor children who meet Delaware's definition of needy, as described in this State Plan, and who satisfy the eligibility requirements of the applicable TANF-funded or MOE-funded housing program may receive housing assistance in accordance with program requirements. This includes families receiving TANF cash assistance, as well as other eligible families meeting Delaware's definition of needy for the specific TANF-funded or MOE-funded program or service.

For this housing assistance program, eligible families receiving TANF or other qualifying Division of Social Services (DSS) benefits with household income at or below 200 percent

of the Federal Poverty Level may receive up to four (4) months of rental assistance, consistent with program requirements.

2. TANF Cash Assistance Families

Families who meet the financial and technical eligibility requirements for TANF and receive TANF cash assistance may receive up to twelve (12) months of rental assistance. Housing assistance is provided as a supportive service that promotes participation in employment and training activities, strengthens family stability, and supports long-term economic mobility.

Housing Assistance for Working Families Experiencing Homelessness or Housing Instability

Delaware also utilizes a combination of TANF and MOE funds to assist homeless or housing-insecure TANF families with earned income whose housing instability places the family at risk of crisis, family separation, or long-term dependence on public assistance. Assistance may include child care, rental assistance, and other supportive services designed to preserve the family unit, promote employment, prevent homelessness, and strengthen family stability.

These services primarily support TANF Purpose 1 by enabling children to remain safely with their families while also advancing family stability, employment, and long-term economic self-sufficiency.

Food Security and Emergency Nutrition Assistance

Delaware will use a combination of TANF and MOE funds to support the Food Bank of Delaware, which provides emergency food assistance to the public through their two Healthy Pantry Centers, home delivery service, and mobile pantry. The Food Bank of Delaware uses a secure online system for client intake and tracking. Each month, the Food Bank of Delaware sends a report to DSS of those households with children who receive food assistance through one of Food Bank's emergency food assistance programs the previous month. The report includes the family's unique identifier, the visit date, the number of pounds of food received by the household, and if the family is receiving any categorical eligible program. DSS reimbursement is based on the per pound rate determined by the estimated average fair value of one pound of donated food product found in the Feeding America annual financial report. DSS does not provide reimbursement for families that access Food Bank's emergency food assistance service for longer than four months.

Financial Eligibility Criteria are as follows: families with minor children in the home, meet Delaware's definition of needy, receive TANF or DSS benefits, and income is below 200% of poverty.

This supports TANF Purpose 1 (Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes)

Family Visitation (Access and Visitation) Program

The State of Delaware's Family Visitation (Access and Visitation) Program provides supervised visitation and safe exchange services in a safe, neutral, and child-focused environment for court-ordered or mutually agreed-upon contact between non-custodial parents and their children. Services are provided to families experiencing high-conflict custody disputes, domestic violence, substance use recovery, mental health challenges, incarceration reentry, or other circumstances that may place children at risk during parent-child contact.

This activity is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, specifically TANF Purpose 2 and TANF Purpose 4.

The program supports TANF Purpose 2—to end the dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage—by providing safe, structured visitation and exchange services that promote family stability and reduce barriers to employment and participation in education and job training. For TANF-eligible custodial parents, the availability of supervised visitation and safe exchanges provides a reliable, secure setting for parent-child contact, enabling parents to participate in employment, workforce development, education, job training, and other activities that promote long-term economic mobility and family stability.

The program also supports TANF Purpose 4—to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families, by facilitating safe, appropriate, and consistent parent-child contact, promoting responsible parenting, encouraging compliance with court orders, and supporting constructive co-parenting relationships. By reducing conflict and preserving healthy parent-child relationships whenever consistent with the child's safety and best interests, the program helps strengthen family functioning and promotes long-term family stability.

Through these services, the Family Visitation Program enhances child well-being, supports responsible parental involvement, reduces the need for more intensive interventions, and advances the statutory purposes of the TANF program for eligible families.

Families participating in the Family Visitation Program meet Delaware's definition of needy, as described in this State Plan, and satisfy the eligibility requirements of the applicable TANF-funded or MOE-funded program. Referrals are received from the

Delaware Family Court, the Division of Family Services (DFS), and other authorized referral sources. Services are provided in accordance with court orders, referral criteria, and program requirements, with priority given to promoting child safety, preserving healthy parent-child relationships, and strengthening family stability.

Conduent EBT Services and Deloitte Eligibility System Support for Summer EBT (SUN Bucks)

The State of Delaware uses its Electronic Benefit Transfer (EBT) contractor, Conduent, and its eligibility and benefit administration system, maintained by Deloitte, to administer Summer Electronic Benefit Transfer (Summer EBT/SUN Bucks) benefits to eligible children. These systems support the accurate determination of eligibility, issuance of benefits, customer account management, and other administrative functions necessary to deliver food assistance to eligible households.

The use of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to support a proportionate share of these administrative costs is reasonably calculated to accomplish the purposes of the TANF program. Summer EBT eligibility includes children who are members of households receiving TANF benefits, as well as other children in low-income households meeting income eligibility requirements. Because TANF recipient households are directly served through these shared administrative systems, TANF funding supports the infrastructure necessary to efficiently identify eligible families and deliver benefits.

These administrative activities support TANF Purpose 1 by assisting needy families so that children may be cared for in their own homes through improved access to nutrition assistance during the summer months, when school meals are unavailable. The activities also support TANF Purpose 2 by helping low-income families maintain household stability and reducing food insecurity, thereby enabling parents to participate in employment, education, job training, and other activities that promote self-sufficiency.

TANF funds support families with minor children, who meet Delaware's definition of needy, receive TANF or DSS benefits, and income is below 185% poverty.

Access to Indian Tribes

Certification that the state will provide Indians with equitable access to assistance. – A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that, during the fiscal year, the State will provide 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, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.

Delaware has no federally recognized tribes.

Delaware will provide 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, with equitable access to assistance under Delaware's TANF program attributable to funds provided by the federal government.

Program Fraud and Abuse

Certification of standards and procedures to ensure against program fraud and abuse. – A certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State has established and is enforcing 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.

Delaware is participating in the Income and Eligibility Verification System (IEVS) required by section 1137 of the Social Security Act.

In addition, the State operates a fraud control program and will disqualify individuals found to have committed an intentional program violation based on findings of administrative disqualification hearings and findings of prosecution or court actions. Delaware has adopted the penalties for intentional program violations used by the Food Supplement Program: 12 months for the first offense and 24 months for a second instance. An individual committing a third offense is permanently disqualified.

Domestic Violence Screening

Optional certification of standards and procedures to ensure that the state will screen for and identify domestic violence.-

1. ***In general. – At the option of the State, a certification by the chief executive officer of the State that the State has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to-***
   - ***screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;***
   - ***refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and***
   - ***waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for so long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, in cases where compliance with such requirements would make it more difficult for individuals receiving assistance under this part to escape domestic violence or unfairly penalize such individuals***

who are or have been victimized by such violence, or individuals who are at risk of further domestic violence.

2. Domestic violence defined.—For purposes of this paragraph, the term "domestic violence" has the same meaning as the term "battered or subjected to extreme cruelty", as defined in section 408(a)(7)(C)(iii).

Victims of Domestic Violence

Delaware is committed to identifying, supporting, and protecting individuals and families affected by domestic violence through a trauma-informed, survivor-centered approach. The Division of Social Services collaborates with community-based domestic violence providers, Family Justice Centers, behavioral health partners, legal service organizations, and other community agencies to ensure individuals have timely access to safety planning, advocacy, shelter, counseling, legal assistance, and supportive services.

As required under the optional Certification of Standards and Procedures to Ensure that a State will Screen for and Identify Victims of Domestic Violence, the Division of Social Services (DSS) screens for, identifies, and refers individuals affected by domestic violence to appropriate community-based services and supports. Referrals may include emergency shelter, counseling, Family Justice Centers, legal advocacy, behavioral health services, victim assistance programs, and the Delaware Family Court, as appropriate, to promote participant safety, confidentiality, and family stability.

Under the Protection from Abuse Act (PFA), 10 Delaware Code, Chapter 9, Sections 1041–1048 (Attachment D), the Delaware Family Court has the authority to expeditiously adjudicate matters related to domestic violence, including the issuance of protection orders and decisions regarding custody, property, and financial resources. DSS works collaboratively with the Family Court and community partners to ensure participants are connected to available protections and supportive services.

Delaware is committed to protecting and supporting individuals and families affected by domestic violence through a comprehensive, survivor-centered approach that promotes safety, stability, and access to services. Delaware's Protection from Abuse Act provides important legal protections for victims of domestic violence and serves as a critical component of the State's coordinated response to domestic violence. Through collaboration among the Division of Social Services, the Delaware Family Court, community-based domestic violence providers, Family Justice Centers, and other partner agencies, Delaware works to improve safety, reduce barriers to self-sufficiency, and support long-term family stability.

As part of Delaware's barrier screening process, DSS caseworkers and Bridge case management staff utilize standardized screening tools to identify individuals who may be experiencing domestic violence. Screening is conducted in a manner that promotes participant safety, privacy, confidentiality, and informed decision-making. Staff are trained to recognize the indicators of domestic violence, respond appropriately, and

connect participants with available community resources and supportive services.

DSS maintains trained Domestic Violence Resource Workers throughout the Division to assist participants and staff with accessing domestic violence services, implementing domestic violence waivers when appropriate, and coordinating referrals to community partners. Resource Workers receive specialized training on domestic violence, participate in ongoing professional development, and collaborate regularly with community-based domestic violence providers to strengthen referral networks, improve service coordination, and ensure participants have access to the most current resources available.

DSS maintains trained Domestic Violence Resource Workers throughout the Division to assist participants and staff in accessing domestic violence services, implementing domestic violence waivers when appropriate, and promoting awareness of the unique challenges faced by individuals and families experiencing domestic violence. Resource Workers receive specialized training on domestic violence through an intensive two-day training program and participate in ongoing professional development to remain current on best practices, emerging issues, and available community resources. Resource Workers also participate in regularly scheduled meetings to share information, discuss challenges in accessing services, strengthen coordination across programs, and enhance service delivery. Community-based domestic violence providers, Family Justice Centers, victim advocacy organizations, behavioral health providers, and other community partners participate in these meetings to strengthen collaboration, improve referral networks, and ensure participants have timely access to comprehensive support services. Additional training opportunities and workshops are provided to ensure Resource Workers have access to the most current information and resources available.

Delaware recognizes that early identification, coordinated intervention, trauma-informed services, and timely access to community resources are essential to improving safety, strengthening family stability, and reducing the long-term impact of domestic violence on adults and children. Through collaboration among DSS, the Delaware Family Court, community-based domestic violence providers, and other partner agencies, Delaware is committed to supporting survivors while promoting long-term safety, stability, and economic independence.

Delaware certifies that the Family Development Profile establishes procedures to screen for domestic violence and that, upon a determination of good cause, TANF program requirements may be waived when compliance would make it more difficult for an individual to escape domestic violence or would otherwise place the individual or family at increased risk. Waiver determinations are made on an individualized, case-by-case basis, with careful consideration given to participant safety, the impact of domestic violence on program participation, and the availability of appropriate supportive services.

State of Delaware TANF State Plan

Certifications in Support of Delaware's State Plan for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

The State of Delaware 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; to end dependence of needy parents on government benefits by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage; to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies and establish annual numerical goals for preventing and reducing the incidence of these pregnancies; and to encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

The Executive Officer of the State is Matt Meyer, Governor.

In administering and operating a program that provides Temporary Assistance for Needy Families with minor children under title IV-A of the Social Security Act,

1. I certify that the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services is the agency responsible for administering the program, and the Delaware Division of Social Services is the agency responsible for supervising the program.
2. I assure that local governments and private sector organizations:
    a. have been consulted regarding the plan and design of TANF-related services in Delaware so that services are provided in a manner appropriate to local populations; and
    b. have had at least 45 days to submit comments on the plan and the design of such services.
3. Delaware will operate a Child Support Services program under the State Plan approved under part D.
4. Delaware will operate a Foster Care and Adoption Assistance program in accordance with part E and the State Plan and take all necessary actions to ensure that children receiving assistance are eligible for medical assistance.
5. Delaware will provide 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, with equitable access to assistance under the State program funded under this part attributable to funds provided by the Federal Government.
6. Delaware has established and is enforcing 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.
7. I certify that the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals.

8. I certify that the Delaware Department of Health and Social Services has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to ensure that applicants and potential applicants for TANF are notified of assistance made available by the state to victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
9. I certify that case workers and other agency personnel responsible for administering the TANF program are trained in: the nature and dynamics of sexual harassment and domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking; state standards and procedures relating to the prevention of, and assistance for, individuals who are victims of sexual harassment or survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking; and methods of ascertaining and ensuring the confidentiality of personal information and documentation related to applicants for assistance and their children who have provided notice about their experiences of sexual harassment, domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.
10. Delaware will make available to the public a summary of the State Plan.

Optional Certification:

I also certify that Delaware has established and is enforcing standards and procedures to:

a. Screen and identify individuals receiving assistance under this part with a history of domestic violence sexual assault, or stalking while maintaining the confidentiality of such individuals;
b. Refer such individuals to counseling and supportive services; and
c. Waive, pursuant to a determination of good cause, other program requirements such as time limits (for as long as necessary) for individuals receiving assistance, residency requirements, child support cooperation requirements, and family cap provisions, 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.

As required under the optional Certification of Standards and Procedures to Ensure that a State will screen for and identify domestic violence, DSS will refer identified victims of domestic violence to appropriate services such as shelters and counseling and to Family Court. Under the Protection from Abuse Act (PFA), 10 Delaware Code, Chapter 9, Sections 1041-1048 (Attachment D), Family Court has the power and authority to expeditiously adjudicate all matters related to domestic violence including court ordered restraints, custody, property, and financial resources.

Through this strong domestic violence law, Delaware is clearly committed to assisting victims of domestic violence to overcome circumstances which put them in physical, emotional, and/or financial jeopardy, and to assist them in seeking redress and a safe environment for themselves and their families. The law is a strong deterrent to domestic violence, according to a study by the National Center for State Courts, released on

December 2, 1996. The study reported that 86 percent of those who sought protection under the law, which permits individuals in danger of serious physical abuse to obtain a protection order, were no longer physically abused.

As a part of barrier screening process, DSS caseworkers and Bridge case management staff use standardized instruments to identify victims of domestic violence. Every worker is trained in administering standardized instruments. As part of this training, staff learn how to recognize and assist individuals who are victims of domestic violence. DSS also has trained domestic violence resource workers at every DSS site. The resource workers support the local office by assisting clients and staff in accessing domestic violence services, applying the domestic violence waiver to the TANF case, and promoting understanding and awareness of the challenges faced by clients. The resource worker receives training on domestic violence through an intensive two-day training called Domestic Violence 101. The resource workers also meet as a group at regularly scheduled meetings to learn about community resources and issues in accessing community supports.

Community domestic violence agencies also attend these meetings to foster networking between DSS and the treatment community. Additional resources and workshops are also provided for the resource workers to ensure they have the most relevant and up to date information.

DSS believes that the methodology of resolving domestic violence situations as quickly as possible, as provided for under a strong statute, is the most appropriate and best course of action to assist current victims and to prevent future violence where possible.

Delaware certifies that the Family Development Profile establishes a procedure that screens for domestic violence and that, pursuant to a determination of good cause, program requirements may be waived if it is determined that compliance would make it more difficult for individuals to escape violence. However, decisions to waive compliance with TANF requirements will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis, and will not endorse an individual's failure to behave proactively to ameliorate destructive domestic violence situations.

Certified by the Chief Executive Officer of the State of Delaware

Matt Meyer, Governor

August 20, 2026
Date