

DC's TANF Program: The Basics

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What Is TANF?

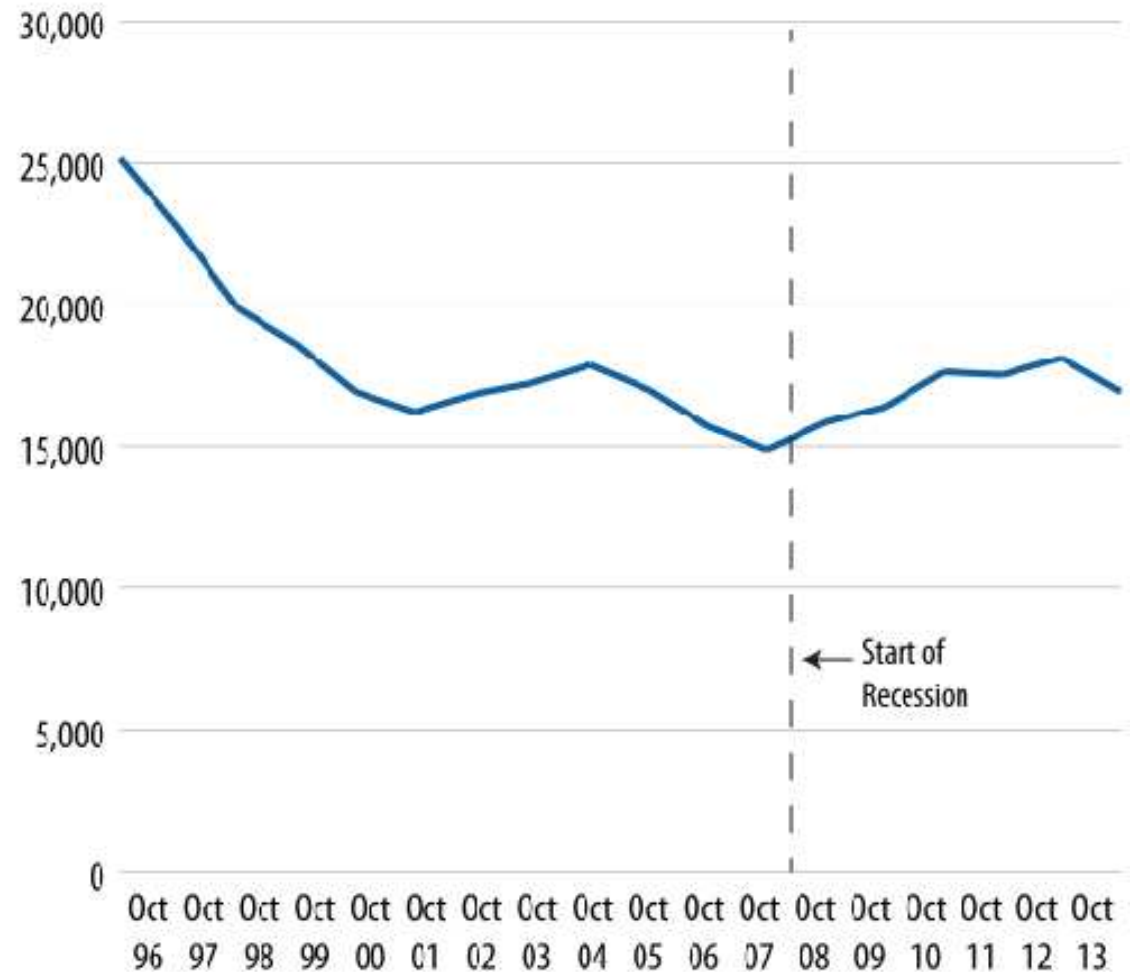
- Federal block grant to provide income assistance, job training, and other services to low-income families with children
- Replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)
- 4 main purposes:
 - assist needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes;
 - reduce dependency by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage;
 - prevent out-of-wedlock pregnancies;
 - encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.
- DC receives \$92 million in federal funds and must spend about \$75 million in local funds, known “maintenance of effort” (MOE)

Who Is Eligible for TANF?

- To qualify, applicants must:
 - Have a minor child;
 - Reside in the District of Columbia;
 - Have limited income and assets.
- Adult TANF recipients must:
 - Work, do job search, or participate in job training or other activities (GED, vocational training, etc.); and
 - Cooperate with the District's efforts to get child support payments from the non-custodial parent.
- TANF recipients automatically receive Medicaid and Food Stamps. TANF recipients also become eligible for a child care voucher.

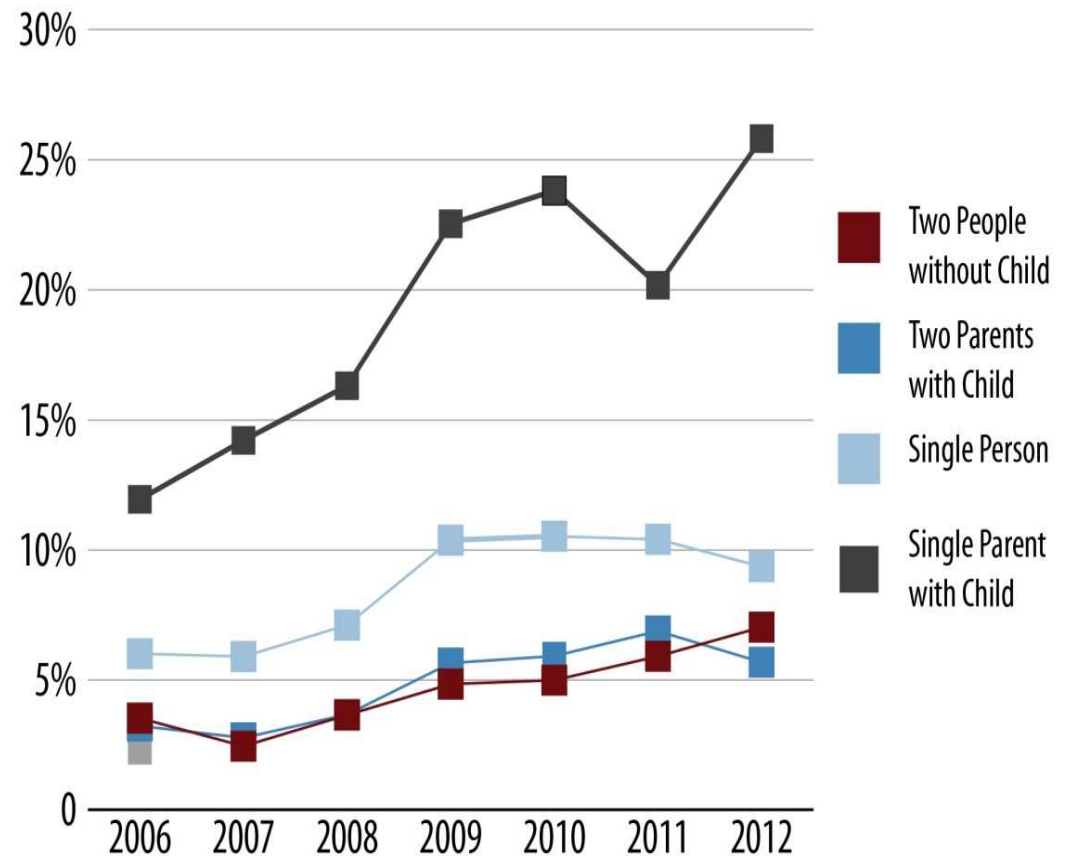
TANF Cases in the District

- The number of TANF families in DC has decreased significantly since the transition from AFDC, from 25,152 to 16,917
- Not surprisingly, the number of TANF families increased when the Recession hit in early 2008
- The caseload continued to increase through the Recession
- Current caseload is nearly 2,050 more families than prior to the Recession



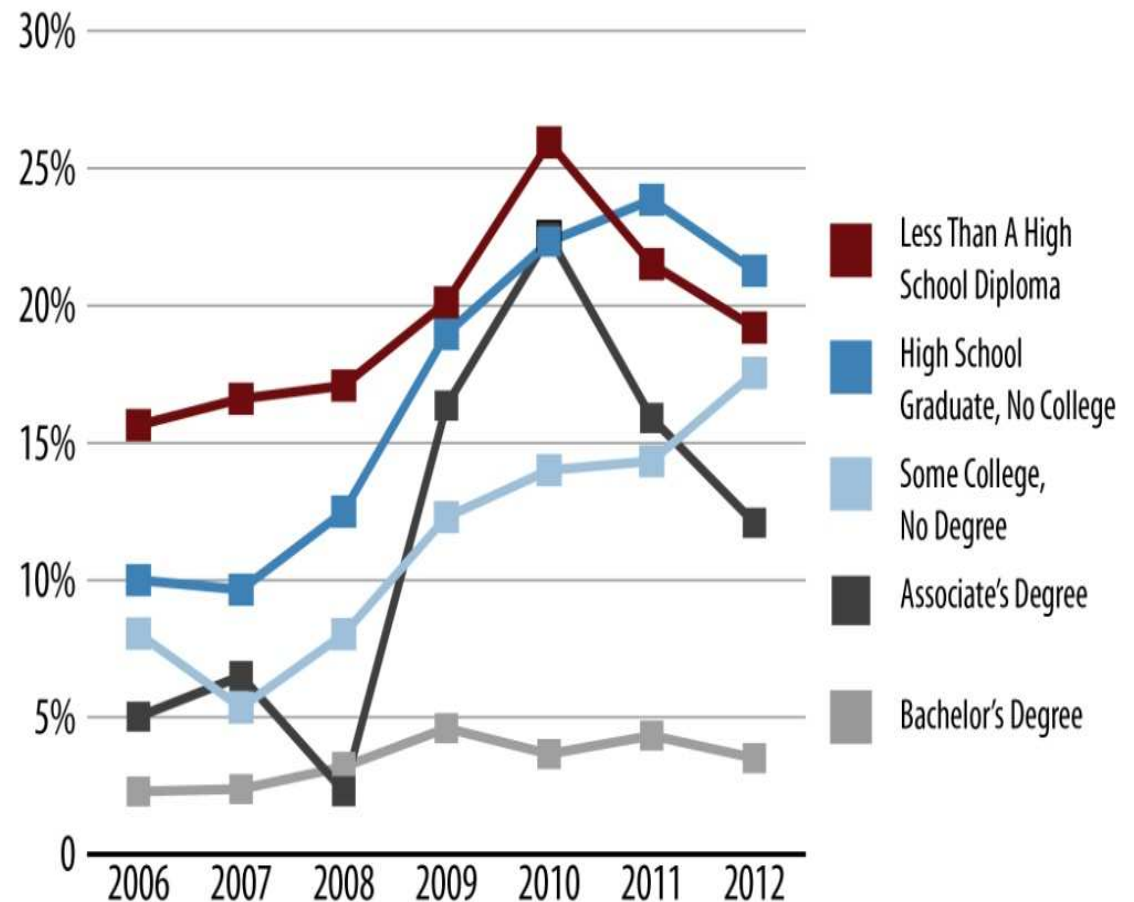
Single Parents Have Not Recovered from the Recession

- In 2012, single parents had an unemployment rate of 23.5% compared to a 8.5% rate for single individuals
- Their unemployment rate prior to the Recession was just 11%



Residents with Less Education Have Not Recovered from the Recession

- In 2012, residents with less than a high school diploma had an unemployment rate of 21% and those with only a HS degree had a rate of 24%
- Their unemployment rates prior to the Recession were just 16% and 10% respectively



Why a TANF Redesign?

- History of problems with TANF program in DC
 - Poor quality of job training: many recipients complained that vendors provided no meaningful training or assistance with finding work
 - DHS & its contracted work vendors did not accurately assess individuals' work readiness and barriers to work
 - DHS & vendors failed to identify when someone may be exempt from work activities
 - Many recipients who likely qualified for an exemption were sanctioned nevertheless

TANF Redesign

- Parents now receive an assessment as first step
- Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) outlines activities they are required to participate in to continue to receive benefits
- Federal government sets hour and activity requirements that may make it more difficult for some parents to get a job
- The District wisely tailors the IRP to the family's individual needs and counts all activities that a family needs to be work-ready, such as substance abuse and mental health treatment

TANF Redesign

- Families with big barriers focus solely on addressing these barriers
- Families who can prepare for and search for employment are referred to TANF Employment Program (TEP) vendors
- 4,500 parents on vendor waitlist—FY 2015 budget increased to reduce wait times
- Vendors operate under performance-based contracts that offer bonuses for each client who:
 - Fulfills IRP requirements
 - Secures a job
 - Secures a high-wage job
 - Retains a job

TANF Benefit Levels

Family Size	Max Benefit Amount	60 Month Benefit Amount (effective 4/1/11)	60 Month Benefit Amount (effective 10/1/13)	60 Month Benefit Amount (effective 10/1/14)*
1	\$270	\$216	\$162	\$95
2	\$336	\$269	\$202	\$118
3	\$428	\$342	\$257	\$150
4	\$528	\$418	\$317	\$185
5	\$602	\$482	\$361	\$211
6	\$708	\$566	\$425	\$248
7	\$812	\$650	\$487	\$284
8	\$897	\$718	\$538	\$314

*Includes estimated cost of living adjustment (COLA)

TANF Sanction Policy

- If a parent fails to meet IRP requirements without good cause or exemption, the family will be sanctioned
- Sanctions policy has 3 levels:
 - Level 1: Benefit reduced by parents' grant portion.
 - Level 2: Entire family's benefits reduced by 50%
 - Level 3: DHS withholds at least one month of benefits *for entire family*

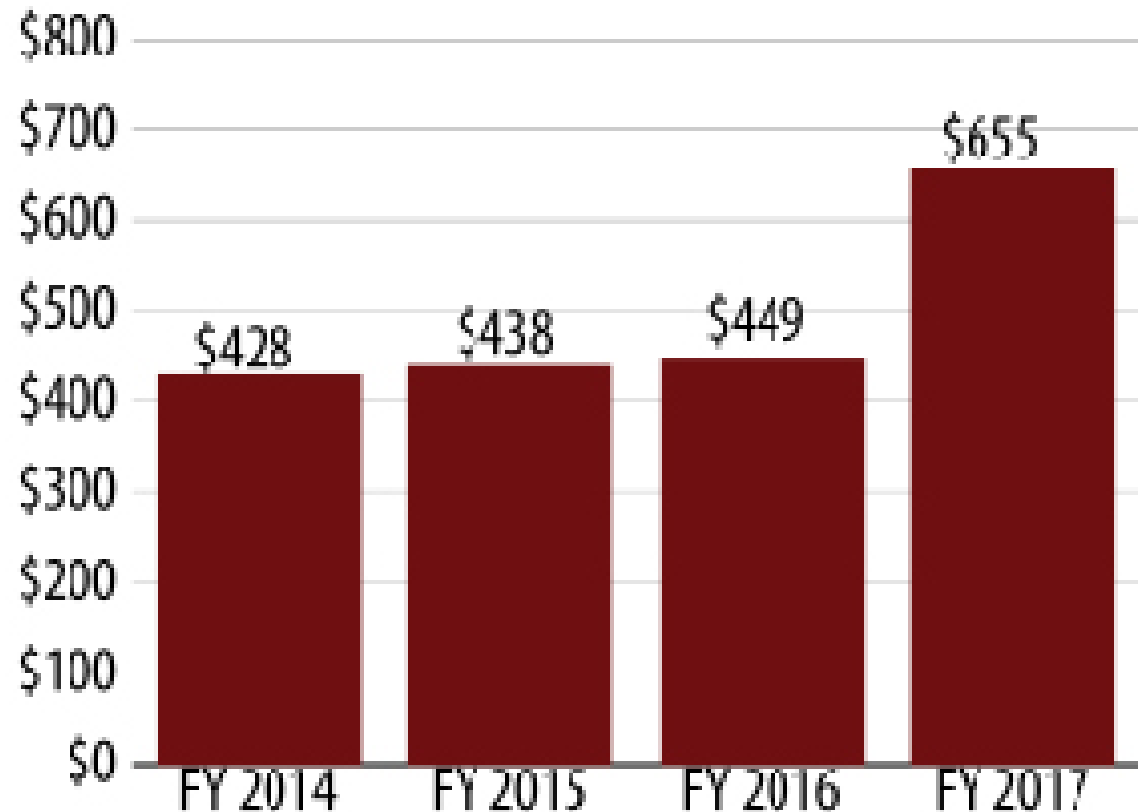
Sanctions: Good Cause & Exemptions

- Exceptions to work requirement
- Good Cause – temporary reason for non-compliance w/program requirements (i.e. sick day or family emergency)
- Exemption – long-term reason for non-compliance from work requirements

Benefits to Increase for 1st Time in Years

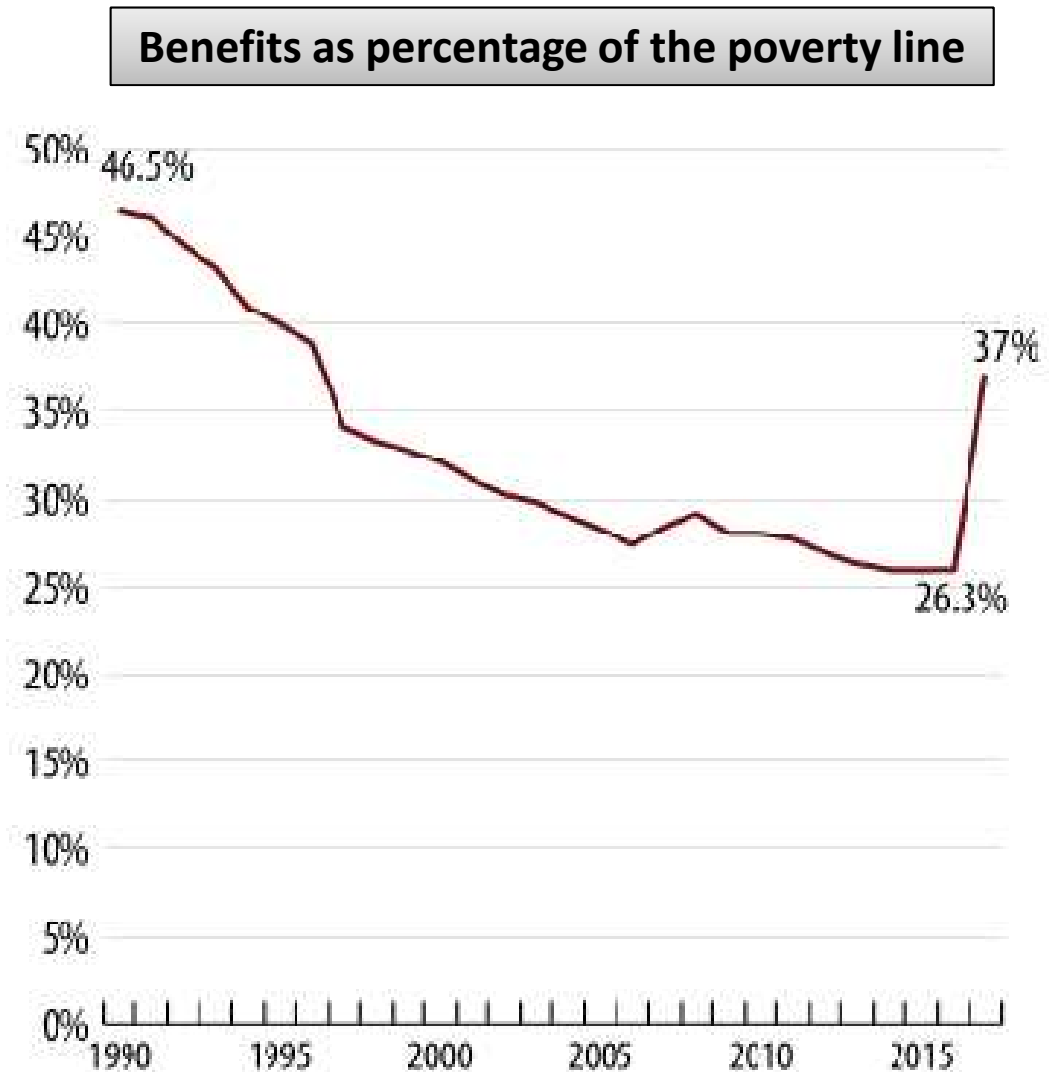
- The FY 2015 budget includes an annual cost of living adjustment except for FY 2017 when benefits will increase by 46%
- First increase in benefits since 2008

Benefits for Family of 3



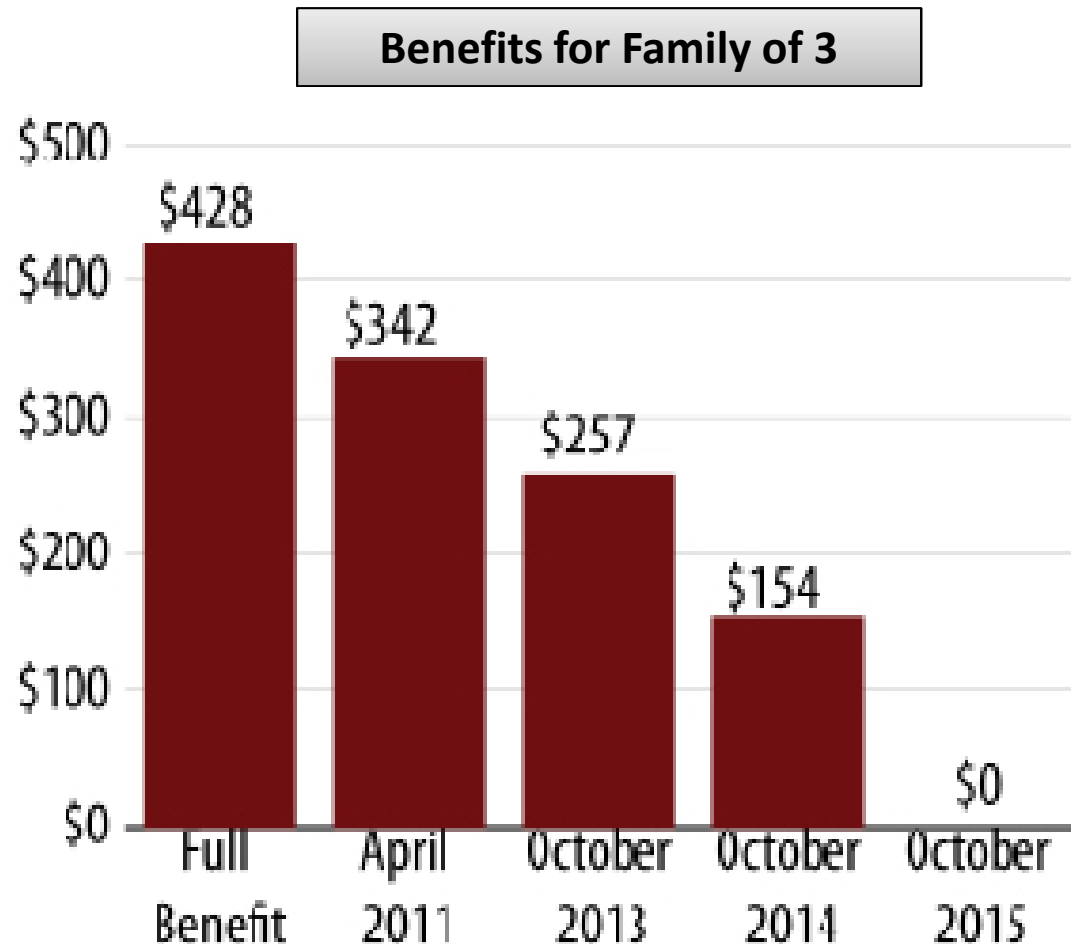
Current Benefits Are Inadequate

- TANF benefits now only 26% of the federal poverty line (FPL)
- Benefits set to rise to 37% of FPL in FY 2017
- Counting SNAP (food stamps) along with TANF, benefits only 59% of FPL



Benefits Continue to Decrease for Long Stayers

- In 2010, Council passed time limit and time limit went into effect in April 2011
- With few exceptions, families limited to 60 months over lifetime
- Unlike other states, DC made time limit retroactive



Which Months Count?

DHS does not count the months in which:

1. A parent who receives Supplemental Security Income (SSI) received TANF for his/her children
2. *A recipient received POWER payments instead of TANF payments*
3. TANF payments are issued only to children living in the home (and not to a mandatory adult)
 - But, if reason mandatory adult does not receive TANF is because he/she is disqualified, then these months DO count.

What Is POWER?

- Program for TANF recipients who cannot work or participate in work requirements
- Months do not count towards time limit
- Families not subject to time-limit benefit cuts
- Parents must comply with a POWER-specific individual responsibility plan (which can include participating in treatment)
- Prior to October 2013, POWER was limited to parents with physical or mental disability

New POWER Categories

Since **October 2013**, DHS has placed parents in POWER who are:

1. caring for family member with a disability
2. a teen enrolled in high school or a GED program
3. a caregiver over 60 years of age
4. experiencing DV (and receiving the work exemption)

Starting **October 2014**, DHS will place families in POWER who are:

1. caring for a child under 6 months of age. Parents can only receive this exemption for 12 months total.

Questions?

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