

Community Investments Vol. 9, Issue 2 Welfare Reform at a Glance - What Changed?

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Old Welfare System	New Welfare System
<p>AFDC - The program entitled all needy families and individuals to federal and state assistance. In some cases, there were work requirements attached to the benefits however, there were no time limits on benefits.</p>	<p>TANF* - The program has a lifetime eligibility limit of five years. Assistance cannot be provided to families where an adult has received a total of 60 consecutive or nonconsecutive months of TANF benefits. States have the option to set lower lifetime limits.</p>
<p>The program expense was a shared burden assumed by states and the federal government.</p>	<p>States are allowed to exempt up to 20% of their TANF caseload from the lifetime limit for hardship reasons.</p>
<p>Federal regulations governed the fundamental tenants of the program.</p>	<p>Funded through block grants to the states. Block grants total \$16.4 billion annually for the country, with no funding for job training and job placement efforts.</p>
<p>Food Stamps Entitlement for eligible persons with no time limit on benefits. No work requirements imposed for recipients.</p>	<p>Food Stamps* Entitlement for eligible persons. Total benefits are reduced by 3% for all recipients and imposes work requirements for childless adults. TANF families will remain eligible for Food Stamps even when their TANF</p>

	benefits end.
Legal Immigrants meeting all other eligibility requirements may receive benefits.	Most legal immigrants, and specifically those who arrived in the U.S. after 8/22/96 or those who were not receiving benefits prior to 8/22/96, are not eligible for Food Stamps until they become citizens.
No age-based requirements imposed for eligible adults.	Persons 18-50 years old without children at home who are able to work are entitled to Food Stamps for only 3 months during every 36-month period. The 3-month timetable starts the day official notice is received from the local or state Department of Social Services.
Military personnel distinctions not applicable under the former food stamp program.	Military personnel or veterans who are honorably discharged (and their spouses or unmarried dependent children) are permanently exempt.
<p>Medicaid</p> <p>Families who were eligible for AFDC were automatically eligible for SSI and State-administered medical programs.</p>	<p>Medicaid</p> <p>States can opt to terminate benefits for adult TANF recipients who fail to meet their TANF work requirements. Children are excluded.</p> <p>Families not receiving TANF but who would have been eligible for AFDC are still eligible for State-administered medical programs.</p>
<p>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</p> <p>Children living in families eligible for</p>	<p>Supplemental Security Income (SSI)</p> <p>The children's SSI program will be</p>

<p>AFDC were automatically qualified for Medicaid or State-administered medical programs.</p>	<p>cut by \$8.2 billion. A narrowed definition of disabled for SSI eligibility will end eligibility for or deny eligibility to 315,000 low-income children with disabilities. The Congressional Budget Office estimates that 15% of these children will also lose eligibility for Medicaid.</p>
<p>Immigrants otherwise eligible for SSI were not made ineligible based on immigrant status.</p>	<p>Immigrants are ineligible until citizenship. States must terminate SSI and Food Stamps at first scheduled recertification dates, which are staggered over the next year.</p>

Information taken from Golden Gate University School of Law, the San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation, Family Rights and Dignity, Asian Law Caucus, La Raza Centro legal, Asian and Pacific Islander American Health Forum, and the Northern California Coalition for Immigrants Rights: A Training for Trainers on New Welfare Reform Law, September 26, 1996. To receive a copy of this document please write: San Francisco Neighborhood Legal Assistance Foundation, 225 Bush Street, 7th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94104.

* For additional information on important exceptions to the new Federal regulations, please refer to the resources indicated above.