



Immigrant Eligibility for TANF

What is TANF?

TANF stands for **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**. TANF provides cash help to families **with children** living at home. TANF can help some immigrants pay for basic needs like housing, heat, and other things you may need like diapers and soap.

Can I get TANF?

You must have children living with you and have very low income to get TANF.

Some immigrants with low income may be eligible based on immigration status:

- Refugees and Asylees may get TANF.
- People with Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) status for more than 5 years may get TANF; and
- Some immigrants with special status may get TANF.

Even if you are here lawfully, you may not be able to get TANF if:

1. You are a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) in your first 5 years with that legal status (and you are **not** a Refugee or Asylee);
2. You applied for Asylum or another change in immigrant status with the federal immigration authorities but have not gotten a decision yet; or
3. You have another less common legal status.

If you are in one of these three groups, you may be able to get help from TANF if:

- You are **elderly or disabled**;
- You have been a victim of **domestic violence**;
- You are **waiting for work documentation**;
- You got work documentation, but you are **not employed**; or
- You got Food Assistance or had an application pending as of **May 1, 2012**.

If you have children born in the United States, they may be eligible for TANF even if you are not eligible based on your immigration status.

For questions about public programs, contact:

Maine Equal Justice (MEJ)
Phone number 207-626-7058, extension 205, or go to
maineequaljustice.org/about-us/contact-us/ and leave a message online

For questions about immigrant status you can contact:

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project (ILAP)
Phone number 207-780-1593 or toll-free at 1-800-497-8505
Email address: ilap@ilapmaine.org