

**OPEGA Report on
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families**

**Responses to GOC Follow Up Questions from Report Presentation
Provided by OPEGA & DHHS/OFI**

1. Have the types of hardship extensions allowed changed over time?

No. They are statutorily driven and statute has not changed since 2011.

2. If an assistance group is closed due to non-compliance or 60-month lifetime limit, do children in the assistance group continue to receive TANF basic assistance?

No. In both cases, the entire assistance group (parents/children) becomes ineligible and loses TANF benefits.

In cases where the child is not living with the parent, they would be eligible for a child-only assistance group. This is considered to be a child-only exemption, in which the child is exempt from the 60-month lifetime limit. Cases of this type generally consist of a relative (not the parent) who is applying for the child. Child-only cases have a reduced benefit amount.

3. How have the amounts of basic assistance benefits changed over time?

The basic benefit amount did not change from 2001-2016. It increased by 20% in October 2017. It will increase on average 2% in October 2018 and each year thereafter based on the Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA). DHHS notes that the increases are dependent on their being enough TANF funds to cover the cost.

The Special Needs Housing Allowance was increased:

\$50-\$100 in July of 2008
\$100-\$200 in Oct 2013
\$200-\$300 in Oct 2017

4. Who determines the amount of the basic assistance?

Maine DHHS sets the amount of basic assistance in the State Plan, which is reviewed by the Federal ACF.

Assistance group determinations are based on the demographic and financial information in the ACES system which is entered by DHHS/OFI eligibility workers.

5. What are the work participation rates for FFY15 and FFY16 without the Worker Supplement Benefit?

	FFY2016	FFY2015
With WSB		
All family rate	86.8%	71.3%
Two parent rate	97.7%	28.6%
Without WSB		
All family rate	15.05%	15%*
Two parent rate	9.68%	9-10%*

*These percentages are estimates, due to the data available for FFY15. According to DHHS, percentages were relatively comparable to FY16.

6. What were Maine’s unemployment rates for FFY15 and FFY16?

Beginning of FFY15 (October 2014): 5.3%
 Beginning of FFY16 (October 2015): 4.0%
 Beginning of FFY17 (October 2016): 3.7%

Source: Maine Department of Labor

7. Graph of Basic Assistance Closures by Calendar Year for Assistance Groups and Individuals Captured within Those Assistance Groups

