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Trends in Caseloads for the DC Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program

DC's TANF program provides cash assistance, job readiness services, and other services to low-income families with children. It is funded by a mix of federal TANF block grant funds and local funds. Adults in TANF families are expected to participate in work activities and to look for employment, unless they qualify for an exemption. The maximum TANF grant for a family of three in DC is \$428 a month or about \$14 a day, which amounts to about 29 percent of the federal poverty line. Families that receive TANF assistance generally receive food stamps, Medicaid, and child care assistance as well.

The number of families receiving TANF assistance has increased in recent months, most likely as a result of the economic downturn. DC's TANF caseload fell modestly from October 2007 to March 2008, but then started to rise. In March 2008, 14,611 DC households received TANF benefits, compared to 16,306 in March 2009 — an increase of 1,695 households, or 11.6 percent. Because TANF caseloads had fallen prior to late 2008, monthly average TANF caseloads in 2008 were actually lower than in 2007, in spite of the recent increases.

DC TANF Caseloads	
Time Period	Households
FY 2007 monthly average	15,171
FY 2008 monthly average	14,892
March 2008	14,611
March 2009	16,306

Source: District's Income Maintenance Administration

