

**United Way of Central Maryland's  
RFP for Lobbyist for Homelessness Prevention Program  
April 17, 2020**

**Answers to Questions Submitted**

Questions submitted by potential applicants and responses to those questions are provided below. Please note, the period to submit questions is now closed.

**Q1. The RFP narrative states that in 2016 Maryland only spent 24% of its TANF funds. What approximately is the State's total eligibility for TANF funding in a typical year? How much of that funding has gone to support homeless services?**

Federal law permits states to reserve unused funds without a time limit. This permits flexibility in timing of the use of TANF funds, including the ability to “save” funds for unexpected occurrences that might increase costs (such as recessions or natural disasters). At the end of FY2018, a total of \$5.1 billion of federal TANF funding remained neither transferred nor spent nationwide. However, some of these unspent funds represent monies that states had already committed to spend later. At the end of FY2018, states had made such commitments to spend—that is, had obligated—a total of \$1.4 billion. At the end of FY2018, states had \$3.7 billion of “unobligated balances.” These funds are available to states to make new spending commitments.<sup>1</sup>

Additionally, states have broad flexibility over the use of state and federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds. Many have used that flexibility to divert funds away from income support for families and toward other state budget areas often unrelated to TANF's goals. In 2018, states spent only about a fifth of the funds on basic assistance to meet essential needs of families with children. Investments in cash assistance can improve academic, health, and economic outcomes for children in families in poverty, research shows.<sup>2</sup>

In 2018, Maryland spent about \$500 million in federal and state funds under the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. It spent 22 percent of these funds on basic assistance, generally as cash assistance to TANF families. More details can be found at this link:  
[https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf\\_spending\\_md.pdf](https://www.cbpp.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/tanf_spending_md.pdf)

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<sup>1</sup> *The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Block Grant: Responses to Frequently Asked Questions*, Congressional Research Service, December 30, 2019

<sup>2</sup> *State Fact Sheets: How States Spend Funds Under the TANF Block Grant*, Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, February 25, 2020

**Q2. In the opinion of UW and other advocates/partners, what are the impediments for why the State underutilizes TANF funds when there is clearly a need to support needy families?**

United Way of Central Maryland does not have an opinion on the specific impediments at this time. The policy brief found at this link provides some information on the flexibilities afforded to states, that allows them to divert available funds for other budgetary priorities:

<https://www.cbpp.org/research/family-income-support/states-should-invest-more-of-their-tanf-dollars-in-basic-assistance>

**Q3. The State Dept of Human Services uses the term TCA (Temporary Cash Assistance). For clarity, is it correct to assume that TANF and TCA are used interchangeably?**

They are the same thing. Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) was renamed Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) in 1996 by the federal government. The state of Maryland chooses to call the program Maryland Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA).

**Q4. How will proposals be evaluated? For example will points be awarded for specific areas and if so what will be the key areas that will be evaluated?**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:

- Applicant's demonstrated understanding of the TANF regulations and broader landscape of state funding for low-income families.
- Strength of the applicant's plan for conducting activities and achieving the goals and strategic objectives outlined within the RFP.
- Budget alignment with applicant's plan.
- Applicant's demonstrated relative experience and track record of success, including information provided through client references.