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Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children Consolidated Report

January 2026

Massachusetts Department of Transitional Assistance

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE
TRANSITIONAL AID TO FAMILIES WITH DEPENDENT CHILDREN
CONSOLIDATED REPORT
January 2026

OVERVIEW

The Department of Transitional Assistance (DTA) submits this report on the status of the Transitional Aid to Families with Dependent Children (TAFDC) program, as required by sections 2(B) and 5 of Chapter 18 and section 3C(d) of Chapter 118 of the Massachusetts General Laws. This report covers program updates through calendar year 2025.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE MISSION

DTA's mission is to assist and empower low-income individuals and families to meet their basic needs, improve their quality of life, and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency. DTA offers a comprehensive system of programs and supports to help individuals and families achieve greater economic self-sufficiency, including food and nutritional assistance, economic assistance, and employment support

TAFDC PROGRAM OVERVIEW

TAFDC is a state and federally funded program that provides cash assistance and employment supports to families with children and pregnant women with little or no income. TAFDC is operated under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) block grant.

In recent years, DTA has emphasized removing barriers to economic mobility, helping families find paths to success. Through policy innovations, the Department has continued to reduce barriers, enhance the Department's employment support programming, and explore new approaches to meaningfully engage with families who receive TAFDC benefits.

CASELOAD & BENEFITS INFORMATION

The TAFDC caseload has started to decline since its peak in 2024. This is due in part to families gaining employment. See **Table 1** for current program payment and eligibility levels.

Table 1 - TAFDC Payment and Eligibility Levels

Household Size	Public or Subsidized Housing	Private Housing
1	$564	$604
2	$713	$753
3	$861	$901
4	$1,003	$1,043
5	$1,150	$1,190
6	$1,301	$1,341
7	$1,448	$1,488
8	$1,593	$1,633
9	$1,738	$1,788
10	$1,885	$1,925
Each additional household member	+$153	+$153

Figure 1 below depicts the TAFDC caseload over time. As of November 2025, the TAFDC caseload was 39,866 households, 29% over the program's pre-pandemic caseload.

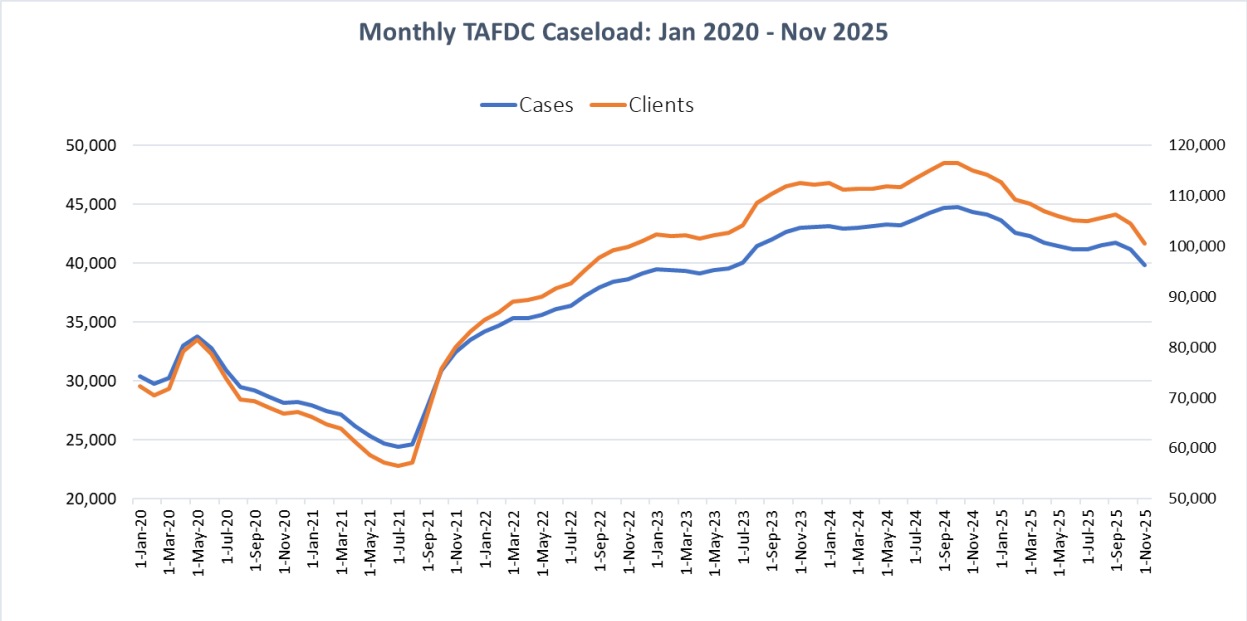

Figure 1. Monthly TAFDC Caseload (January 2020 through November 2025)

IMPROVING PROGRAM ACCESS

The agency continues to broaden its digital services to increase access for clients to all programs administered by the Department. Our clients are often in some of the most vulnerable populations and it is our goal to provide them with the resources they need to improve their quality of life and achieve long-term economic self-sufficiency.

DTA Connect, our client-facing web-portal, is now also available in Haitian Creole in addition to English, Spanish, Vietnamese, Portuguese (Brazilian), and Simplified Chinese. Through DTA Connect clients can reschedule their appointments with DTA staff as well as update certain personal information. Some notices are also available in large print in these languages as well. The Department continues to work to make all notices available in large print. Virtual meetings are now an option for TAFDC clients who want or need a face-to-face interaction but are not able to come into an office. This has increased the accessible options for DTA so clients, especially clients who rely on closed captions or when the meeting includes multiple people.

TAFDC WORK PROGRAM

TAFDC recipients are required to participate in work-related activities as a condition of eligibility, unless specifically exempted. DTA provides employment services for TAFDC clients through the Pathways to Work Program. The primary goals of DTA's employment programs are to assist TAFDC clients to prepare for and connect with career pathways and resolve barriers for sustained employment. DTA case

managers connect TAFDC clients to employment and training programs by referring them to appropriate activities based on their skill level and economic mobility goals.

The Pathways to Work program provides access to meaningful, tailored career pathways for families by offering participants more time working with DTA's full engagement workers (FEWs) and providing the supportive services necessary for families to invest in training, education, job readiness activities, and to work on their economic mobility goals. Career pathway programs, when combined with supportive services, make it easier for clients with higher barriers to employment to earn industry-recognized credentials necessary for higher wage jobs; to provide opportunities for more flexible education and training; and to attain market identifiable skills that can transfer into work opportunities that provide for asset retention and economic independence.

DTA's economic assistance case workers and FEWs engage with Pathways to Work-eligible families through new goal-setting and coaching strategies designed to connect participants with opportunities that best match individual career and family goals, and support clients' progress as they position themselves to successfully participate in the Commonwealth's labor market. Participants in work-related activities, including TAFDC Pathways programs and paid employment, are eligible to receive child care and transportation supports. Any TAFDC family who needs child care for employment or to participate in a work activity program is eligible for a referral from DTA.

State law requires TAFDC recipients who meet certain criteria to be exempted from the work program requirement, including if:

- Their youngest child is less than two
- They have a verified disability
- They are in their 33rd week or third trimester of pregnancy
- They are a teen parent attending school full time
- They are over age sixty, or
- They are caring for a disabled household member.

Clients who are exempt from the work program are still encouraged to participate in Pathways to Work programs or other approved employment and training activities, though they do not experience negative consequences if they are not able to participate.

Non-parental relative caregivers, such as grandparents or other extended family members, have the option to receive TAFDC assistance for only the children in their care. In this situation, the relative caregiver is not considered a recipient of assistance and the work program rules are not applicable.

WORKFORCE ENGAGEMENT

As the Commonwealth focuses on addressing the persistent economic impacts from the pandemic, particularly those affecting communities of color, the Department is committed to supporting the state's economic development and meaningful participation in the workforce for all DTA clients, including those with significant barriers to employment, to ensure economic mobility for all.

DTA continues to explore opportunities to expand on existing initiatives and partnerships that address the needs of the whole family, connecting parents and caregivers with career pathways that match their

goals, and providing the necessary supportive services to help families achieve them. All DTA Pathways to Work programs are built on a two-generation approach that helps both parents and their children make progress together and provide interventions that can help break the cycle of multi-generational poverty. In support of the two-generation approach, non-custodial parents are eligible to participate in all Pathways to Work programs.

DTA has partnered with DOR Office of Child Support Services to provide access to Pathways to Work programs for non-custodial parents with an outstanding child support debt. Through a data share agreement between both agencies, DOR OCSS refers non-custodial parents to DTA that have overdue interest and penalties and are at risk of license suspension. DTA staff then conduct outreach and track participation and outcomes. Participation is reported to DOR quarterly and clients are eligible to participate for 12 months, with the possibility of extensions. The goal of this partnership is to support non-custodial parents in finding and maintaining employment, enabling them to fulfill their child support obligation, and increase their economic mobility.

The DTA Works Internship Program includes two sector-based career tracks in IT and education. DTA Works partners with Holyoke Community College, Springfield Public Schools, Springfield Federation of Paraprofessionals, and Springfield WORKS to deliver a paraeducator training track that provides five weeks of job readiness training, two weeks of paraeducator job specific training, and an in-person internship within a participating public school. DTA also partners with Tech Foundry and Per Scholas to deliver the IT track, which includes up to 18 weeks of hybrid training and opportunities to complete internships with the Executive Office of Technology Services and Security (EOTTS) and other employer partners. The goal of these tracks is to provide entry level training for high need/high growth sectors and connect successful participants to employment opportunities. All DTA Works interns receive a mentor and financial coaching to help them plan and achieve their goals and support their successful entry or re-entry into full employment along with a monthly stipend.

DTA remains a key partner in the state's implementation of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) focused on addressing "cliff effects" for families receiving public assistance. DTA is supporting the launch of the *Bridge to Prosperity Pilot,* working in collaboration with Springfield Works, the Economic Development Council of Western MA and the Working Cities Group to develop a pilot program to serve a demographically and geographically representative sample of individuals and families receiving transitional assistance. The program launched in February 2025 and reports enrolling 18 clients and distributing $65,000 in bridge payments.

Other Programs

The table below shows dual participation in the TAFDC program and housing programs under the Executive Office of Housing and Livable Communities (EOHLC) for FY2025. Clients may have received multiple EOHCL programs during the fiscal year.

EOHLC Program	**Unique Count of TAFDC Clients in an EOHLC Program**
Emergency Assistance (EA)	19,024
HomeBase	3,214

Massachusetts Rental Voucher Program (MRVP) Project-Based Voucher	285
MRVP Mobile	1,007
Rental Assistance for Families in Transition (RAFT)	4,737
Exit Vouchers	53