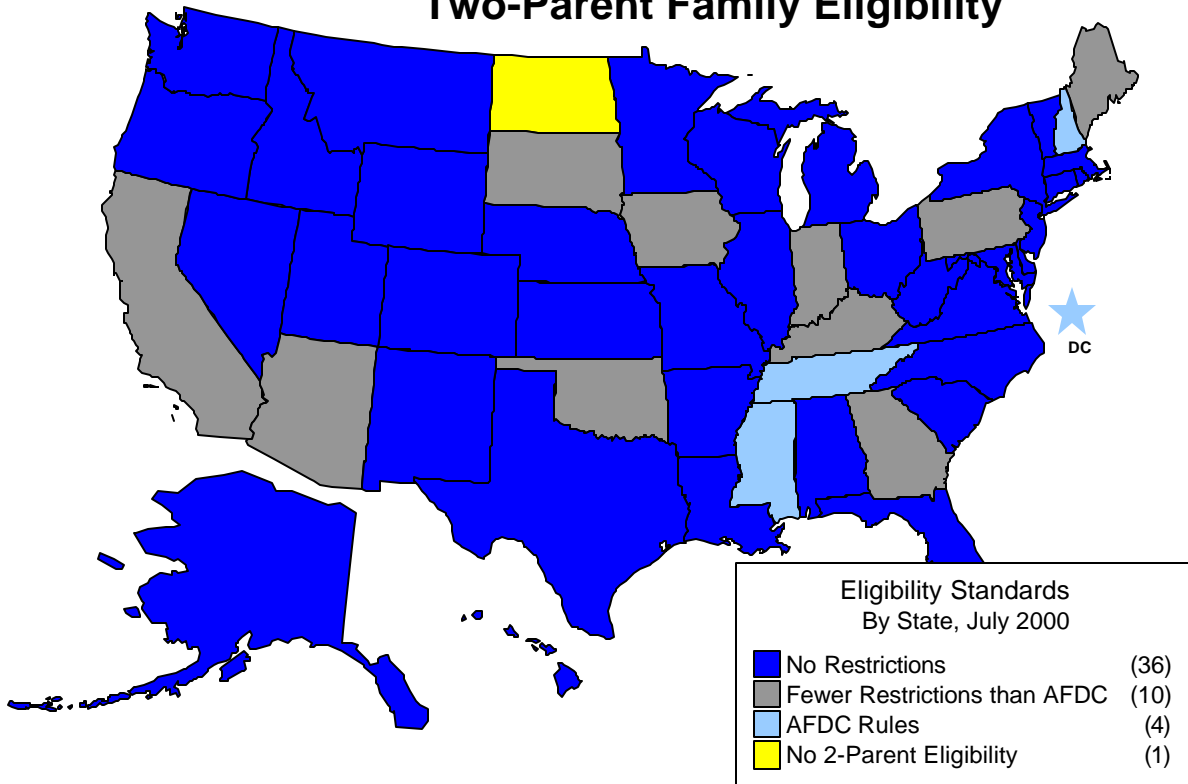




Fast Facts on Welfare Policy

Two-Parent Family Eligibility



TANF permits states to rescind provisions in their eligibility rules which penalize marriage. As of July 2000, only four states applied the standard AFDC restrictions (the 100-hour rule for applicants and recipients, the work history test, and the waiting period) in determining the initial eligibility of two-parent, non-disabled families. Ten states removed or liberalized at least one of the standard AFDC restrictions and 36 states removed all of the standard AFDC restrictions on the eligibility of two-parent families. North Dakota, moving in the opposite direction, chose to provide no cash benefits to two-parent non-disabled families.

The work-history test denies eligibility to two-parent families in which the principal wage earner has been unemployed for a long time, as well as families with very young parents who have no work history. The “100-hour rule” denies eligibility to families where the principal earner works more than 25 hours per week but earns a low hourly wage. The story is complicated by the fact that most of the states with restrictions on a two-parent family’s initial eligibility have fewer special restrictions (or no restrictions) on a two-parent family’s continued eligibility once the family is receiving aid. For instance, in three states, a two-parent family can work no more than 100 hours per month to begin receiving benefits, but faces no limit on hours of work once the family is on the rolls.

Source: [The Welfare Rules Database](#) The Urban Institute’s *Assessing the New Federalism* project. 2000.

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