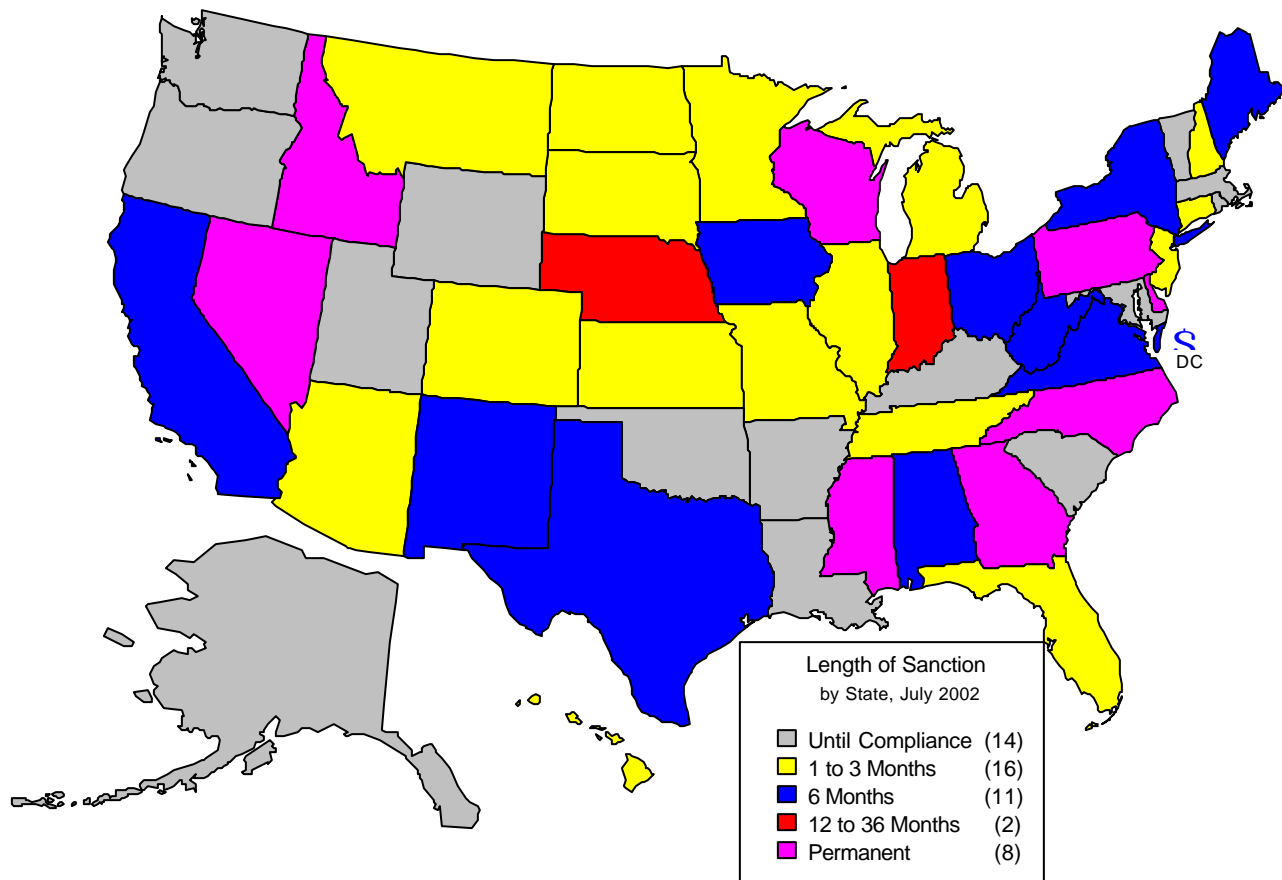




# Fast Facts

## Worst Case Sanctions



State sanction policies for failure to comply with work-related requirements reduce or eliminate the amount of a family's benefit. Often, states increase the severity of the sanction based on the number of times and/or the amount of time the individual is non-compliant. Six months was the standard length of the worst-case sanction before TANF. As of July 2002, 14 states enforce the worst-case sanction until compliance with the program requirement. Sixteen states maintain the sanction for 1 to 3 months, 11 states for 6 months, and 2 states for 12 to 36 months. In 8 states, the worst-case sanction is permanent.

Sanctions also vary in the amount of the cash benefit they eliminate. As of July 2002, the worst-case sanction in 39 states is elimination of the entire benefit or closure of the TANF case. In 6 states – California, District of Columbia, Indiana, Maine, New York and Texas – the worst-case sanction is removal of the adult portion of the family benefit. In 3 states – Minnesota, Missouri and New Hampshire – a flat percentage reduction is applied to the family benefit, ranging from 25% to 66%. Rhode Island and Washington have policies that combine a percentage reduction and a loss of the adult portion. Vermont's worst-case sanction is a flat dollar amount reduction (\$225) in the family grant.

Source: [The Welfare Rules Database](#), 2002.

The Welfare Rules Database (WRD) provides a longitudinal account of the changes in welfare rules in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. The WRD organizes the detailed information on welfare rules across states, time, and geographic areas within states as well as across different types of assistance units. Caseworker manuals and state regulations provide the data from 1997 to the present, while AFDC State Plans and Waiver Terms and Conditions provide the data for years prior to 1997.