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## **HHS AWARDS \$200 MILLION IN BONUS PAYMENTS TO STATES FOR LEADERSHIP IN “WELFARE TO WORK”**

HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson today announced the awarding of \$200 million in Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) bonuses to 41 states and the District of Columbia for success in employment and other program achievements during fiscal year 2001.

“TANF has been a tremendous success because of its central focus on helping families find and succeed at work so they can leave welfare dependency behind. I am pleased to award these bonuses for TANF program achievement,” Secretary Thompson said. “While TANF has been very successful, we can do even better. Reauthorization of TANF needs to be completed quickly so states can build even stronger programs that help even more families.”

The welfare reform legislation of 1996 authorized funding for annual performance achievement bonuses within the TANF program, called the High Performance Bonus. States can choose to compete in any or all of the performance bonus categories, but must supply data to HHS in order to be considered for the award.

About 70 percent of the bonuses were awarded for employment achievement among TANF recipient adults -- including job entry, job retention and increased earnings. Bonuses also were awarded for program achievements in helping low-income working families take advantage of available Food Stamps and Medicaid and State Children’s Health Insurance Program coverage; in providing child care; and in increasing the proportion of children living in married couple families. Most of these awards are made for relative performance in the given year and for greatest improvement from the previous year.

“TANF legislation has proven that state flexibility works,” Wade F. Horn, assistant secretary for children and families said. “We are looking forward to working with the states on further improvement.”

Award amounts for each state depend upon the size of each state’s TANF block grant. Under the law, states are limited to receiving bonuses in a given year of no more than five percent of their annual TANF block grant. Nine of the 41 states received their maximum possible bonus.

The states receiving bonuses and the amount of their bonuses are:

Alaska	\$3,180,454
Arkansas	2,836,643
California	6,733,931
Connecticut	11,745,032
Delaware	357,059
District of Columbia	167,022
Florida	28,117,006
Hawaii	178,375
Idaho	1,345,692
Indiana	9,104,087
Iowa	591,291
Kansas	5,096,553
Kentucky	5,979,825
Maine	372,895
Maryland	1,581,788
Massachusetts	2,192,717
Michigan	8,997,878
Mississippi	390,077
Missouri	10,852,587
Montana	1,633,862
Nebraska	2,901,429
Nevada	303,634
New Hampshire	1,580,950
New Jersey	4,253,547
New Mexico	3,288,880
New York	10,982,581
North Dakota	853,586
Oklahoma	6,516,123
Oregon	4,115,730
Pennsylvania	18,964,930
Rhode Island	2,153,419
South Carolina	1,554,819
South Dakota	949,973
Tennessee	9,576,190
Texas	5,119,153
Utah	3,841,461

Vermont	919,053
Virginia	7,914,259
Washington	729,211
West Virginia	1,358,603
Wisconsin	10,288,002
Wyoming	379,696

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Note: All HHS press releases, fact sheets and other press materials are available at <http://www.hhs.gov/news>.