DHHS FY 16/17 Budget Initiative:
End State-Funded TANF for Non-Citizens

Background
Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) was designed to provide temporary cash assistance to low-income families to help meet their basic necessities. Federal law prohibits non-citizens from receiving federally-funded TANF benefits for five years, from their date of entry. These non-citizens include, but are not limited to: legal permanent residents and illegal aliens.

In 1997, the Maine Legislature decided to get around federal law by providing entirely state-funded TANF benefits to non-citizens.

Maine is one of 19 States that provide state-funded TANF to non-citizens. Each state’s program covers a variation of non-citizens.

In 2011, the Maine Legislature limited state-funded TANF to non-citizens already on the program or who met certain exceptions, such as asylum seekers waiting for work papers.

The current average benefit is $707 per household per month. There are 35 households receiving this benefit.

Initiative
This initiative achieves savings by aligning state policy with federal policy and discontinuing the awarding of state-funded TANF benefits to non-citizens beyond the level of support the federal government provides.

Savings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Savings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SFY 16</td>
<td>($139,986)</td>
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<tr>
<td>SFY 17</td>
<td>($186,647)</td>
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</tbody>
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Impact
Currently, 112 non-citizens who are not eligible for TANF benefits under federal law are receiving TANF assistance from the state, and would lose their state-funded TANF assistance. They reside primarily in Androscoggin and Cumberland counties.