

Bills in the News: Drug Testing and Public Assistance Programs

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Bills in the News

In this occasional post, we will feature topics receiving widespread media coverage, tips for finding bills filed during the 83rd legislative session, and related resources.

Bills in the News: Drug Testing and Public Assistance Programs

Public assistance programs, like the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families [TANF] program, act as temporary safety nets for people and families in need of financial help. Many states have recently enacted or proposed legislation that calls for drug testing of people seeking public assistance benefits.

Bill search

To find bills filed during the 83rd Legislature about drug testing applicants and recipients of public assistance, visit the [Texas Legislature Online](#), and select "[Bill Search](#)" under the Search tab. Click on "select subject criteria" and select Human Services--Direct Assistance (10900) and DRUG & ALCOHOL TESTING (S0010) from the subject list to find bills.

You can also try looking directly under the subjects [TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES \(S0401\)](#) or [WELFARE \(S2341\)](#) to find bills related to public assistance programs.

Resources

Local news articles have discussed proposed legislation in Texas that calls for drug testing those who apply for or receive public assistance:

- "[Top officials tout drug testing for welfare, unemployment applicants](#)," *Austin American-Statesman*, November 13, 2012.
- "[Texas plan to drug-test jobless seeking aid stirs debate](#)," *Houston Chronicle*,

November 23, 2012.

Governor Perry has [spoken](#) recently about drug screening for those receiving public assistance benefits.

The National Conference of State Legislatures provides a [state-by-state map and chart of state laws](#) related to drug testing and public assistance programs.

Information about the [TANF program in Texas](#) is available via the Texas Health and Human Services Commission. At the federal level, [information about TANF](#) is available via the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services.