Basic Living Expenses for Pre-TANF

How much can we help with?

DHS can issue up to 200% of the TANF payment standard for the filing group, for Pre-TANF applicants when housing or family stability issues are identified. Though we can explore other resources prior to issuing a payment, the payment should not be delayed when an immediate or emergency need exists. For example, when there is a pending eviction or shut-off notice.

What clients are eligible for Basic Living Expenses?

Presumed eligible TANF applicants including those who have case plans for family stability issues are potentially eligible for basic living expenses.

Applicants who are pending an eligibility determination and who do not appear to meet TANF requirements would not be eligible until questionable issues are resolved.

When non-needy caretakers and SSI recipient households volunteer for family stability or employment activities, we will consider their income and resources when determining the need for or amount of any basic living expenses payments.

How do we know there is a need?

The applicant may fill out a Support Service Request (DHS 7822) or make a verbal request. The Support Service request form is being piloted statewide. This form is one option for the client to use to make support payment requests. Clients may continue to maker requests by phone, in person, etc. The form will be made available in branch lobbies.

Additionally, there are three questions on the application that can help you identify the need for basic living expenses. All three questions are located under the "Emergent Need" section on page 1 of the application (415F).

The Questions are:

- Do you need a place to live?
- Do you have an eviction or foreclosure notice?
- Do you have or expect to get a utility shut-off notice?

Questions to help explore resources and need:

- Tell me about any problems you're having related to housing…
- How are you handling those?
- Are you working with other agencies? What services are they providing?
- Are you receiving help from any other sources? (i.e. family or friends) (If yes), What are they helping with and for how long?
- What help do you need to address your housing problems?
- How soon do you need help with these issues?
- Are there any other basic living expenses you need help with? If yes, what are they?

When a Payment is Approved or Denied

All Support Service requests from Pre-TANF participants should be responded to in time to meet the need or as soon as possible. Requests from ongoing TANF recipients must be responded to in time to meet the need and no more than 30 days from the date of request.

Payments for basic living expenses that are approved should be listed in the client's case plan and address how the client will meet future basic living expenses payments.

When the original request for a payment is approved, no notice is required. When a payment other than the original request is approved (for example a lower cost alternative is found) a decision notice must be issued.

Denials of support services must be made in writing. The DHS 456 or the DHS 7822 can be used to provide the written decision.

Support Service Examples

Example #1:

Terry, a Pre-TANF participant, leaves her worker a phone message requesting $450 for rent to prevent an eviction. The worker is able to meet with the client the same day and after staffing the case, agrees to pay the full amount needed to prevent the eviction. The payment is on the client's case plan and it addresses how the client will address subsequent payments. Because the original request is approved, no notice is necessary.

Example #2:

Sandra (with two children) is a Pre-TANF participant who meets with her case manager and requests $700 for rent, $130 for her water bill and $350 for her phone bill. Sandra and her case manager are able to find a lower cost alternative for her phone bill: she will be on a payment plan. The payment for rent and water are approved and are reflected in the client's case plan. Because the original request is **not** approved, a DHS 456 decision notice for the original request is issued to the client.