

October 2011 – Pre-TANF Examples

Overview

The Legislatively Approved Budget for DHS included changes to the upfront eligibility process and a reduction to the maximum Pre-TANF payment for basic living expenses. The reduction to the Pre-TANF payments took effect on July 1, 2011. The changes to the upfront eligibility process took effect on October 1, 2011.

Pre-TANF Payment Reduction

Pre-TANF payments are covered under OAR 461-135-0475. This rule was amended to reduce the maximum amount of Pre-TANF payments from 200 percent to 100 percent of the TANF payment standard and to restrict what constitutes a “basic living” expense. Effective July 1, the only basic living expense payment allowed is for personal incidentals at no more than 100 percent of the TANF payment standard for the benefit group.

Q&A’s

Question: Must all TANF applicants participate in Pre-TANF?

Answer: No. Pre-TANF is still intended to be available to applicants who are appropriate for Pre-TANF participation. The purposes of Pre-TANF are:

- a. To help individuals find employment or other alternatives;
- b. To assess the employment potential of individuals;
- c. To help individuals determine the service level needed to enhance their employability and their likelihood of becoming self sufficient;
- d. To determine if a needy caretaker relative has or may have a barrier to employment or to family stability.
- e. To develop an individualized case plan, when appropriate, that establishes goals and identifies suitable activities that promote family stability and financial independence.

- f. To provide basic living expenses, as described OAR 461-135-0475(5), immediately to families in need.

Question: What are “personal incidentals”?

Answer: Personal incidentals include items that the client cannot meet with other, immediately available resources. Although this term is not defined in rule; examples may include:

- Hygiene items
- Diapers
- Clothing

Question: What is the difference between Pre-TANF payments and JOBS Support Service payments as of July 1, 2011?

Answer: In general, Pre-TANF payments are limited to personal incidentals. They cannot exceed 100 percent of the TANF payment standard and can be issued during the Pre-TANF period which can last up to 45 days (for more information please refer to OAR 461-135-0475 and link below).

In general, JOBS support services are payments issued to support a client in approved case plan activities. As of July 1, 2011 these payments were also reduced and limited to district capped amounts (for more information please refer to OAR 461-190-0211 and link below).

Question: Can a Pre-TANF client receive JOBS support service payments if they have an approved plan to test the labor market?

Answer: Yes. If appropriate, a client in Pre-TANF may be engaged in a JOBS activity doing work search (JO activity). The client may need assistance with transportation and child care. These support services payments are governed by OAR 461-190-0211; Case Plan Activities and Standards for Support Service Payments. This rule provides information about the district caps on total family support services payments.

Pre-TANF Examples:

Example #1

A TANF applicant, who is presumed eligible for TANF, requests help with paying his past due rent.

Question: Can DHS help him with his rent payment?

Answer: No. The request would be denied because basic living expense payments no longer include assistance with shelter needs. TANF can open when eligibility clears, which includes completion of the new upfront eligibility requirements of an employability screening and an overview of the JOBS Program (see OAR 461-135-0485).

Example #2

A TANF applicant, who is presumed eligible for TANF, has a job lined up but needs help with diapers for her son. She has no other income or resources to pay for this and there are no other lower cost alternatives.

Question: Would DHS be able to help pay for the diapers?

Answer: Yes. This would be considered a personal incidental. She has no other income or resources. Depending on the timing for the first paycheck, TANF may or may not open in this case.

Example #3

A TANF applicant, who is presumed eligible for TANF, has a utility shut-off and no other income or resources. She requests help paying her utility bill.

Question: Is DHS able to help her pay her utility bill?

Answer: No. Paying for utilities, like shelter costs and household items, is no longer permitted. When eligibility clears (including the new upfront eligibility requirements) TANF can open and the grant can be used by the client to pay for the utility bill.

Example #4

A TANF applicant, who is presumed eligible for TANF, is placed in Pre-TANF because she is job ready. The applicant needs help with child care and transportation for limited job search.

Question: Will DHS be able to help her with child care and transportation costs?

Answer: Yes; according to the job search support service limitations, support services can be authorized during Pre-TANF for those costs related to job search (JO activity). These payments are subject to the restrictions of OAR 461-190-0211 and are different than personal incidental payments described in the Pre-TANF rule. These support service payments do not fall under the 100 percent of a TANF payment standard limit. They are limited by the support service rule 461-190-0211 and guidelines on support services provided earlier. Limitations currently include:

- Up to \$50 per month for transportation per family;
- Up to 5 hours maximum per week for child care.
- Other payments are limited to only those necessary to obtain employment

In this example, TANF can open when all eligibility factors clear (including the new upfront eligibility requirements) and assuming the job search was unsuccessful.

References:

OAR 461-135-0475 – Pre-TANF

<http://apps.state.or.us/caf/arm/A/461-135-0475.htm>

OAR 461-135-0485 – Employability Screening and Overview of the JOBS Program

<http://apps.state.or.us/caf/arm/A/461-135-0485.htm>

OAR 461-190-0211 – JOBS Support Service Standards

<http://apps.state.or.us/caf/arm/B/461-190-0211.htm>