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Authorized Signature

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Topic: Other

Subject: TANF Redesign - Weekly Q & A

Applies to (check all that apply):

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| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): All SS Staff Only |

Message:

Here is your weekly Q&A resulting primarily from Day 2 of the Summits. There has been some policy clarification since the early Summits. We will continue to answer questions as we can, focusing on your top 10-20 weekly.

You may submit questions you would like to see answered in this weekly message. We will be considering these questions as we develop future training.

Your Top Questions...

- 1.) If a requirement is that Post-TANF participants must report within 10 days any work hour changes that affect their eligibility will we need to get 2 weeks of pay stubs again?

Answer: **Yes. We would need to receive two more weeks of work verification (pay stubs etc.) to re-establish the new expected hours. If the new information would change the client's eligibility status, the benefits may be discontinued. However, if the work hours are insufficient to meet Post TANF requirements, case managers should offer appropriate core or non-core activities to supplement work hours. Anytime a client starts or re-starts Post-TANF, a minimum of two weeks work verification is required.**

- 2.) What happens to the Post-TANF clients who weren't on MAA for 3 months? Since they won't be eligible for EXT, isn't that a disincentive?

Answer: **They won't be eligible for EXT, however, it is important to review for OHP-OPU**

eligibility; most will be eligible for OHP-OPU.

We agree this is an important issue. Beginning October 1, 2008, the first 3 months of a caretaker relatives new earnings will not count for MAA. If otherwise MAA eligible, they will be on MAA long enough to qualify for EXT.

- 3.) Who makes the decision about a hardship preventing a client from working enough hours to meet federal requirements that would prevent their time counting for the state time limit? Is some documentation of inability to work needed, etc.?

Answer: Time limit coding will be entered in the system by staff based on statewide standards provided by Central office. Central office staff are currently working on guidance for making these decisions.

- 4.) Can JOBS payments be made when a family is beyond the 5 year time limit, does not have a hardship or other exemption, and is cooperating but receiving the grant with the adult's needs removed?

Answer: Yes. Clients will be required to participate, although their needs are removed because of time limits. Support services can be issued as necessary for the client to complete the activities listed on the case plan.

- 5.) How will time limits be handled for ineligible non-citizens? Since usually they are not on the case but just their children are? Will there be any time limit for these no-adult in the HH cases? What if there is one citizen parent and one ineligible parent? How will it work in that situation?

Answer: Time on assistance will not count for child-only cases where the adult or adults on the case are ineligible non-citizens. For a two-parent family where one parent is a citizen and the other is an ineligible non-citizen, time limits may count for the person whose needs are included in the grant.

Remember that there may be other reasons for not counting time on assistance such as hardship exemptions or participation in SFPSS or Post-TANF.

- 6.) If a case has exceeded 5 years, but they are still cooperating and due to not meeting an exception, just receive a grant with the adults needs removed, can they still get Post-TANF?

Answer: Yes. If the client loses TANF eligibility because of employment, they can participate in Post-TANF, provided they meet the requirements of that program. Also, time limits do not count during the time that a client is participating in the Post-TANF program.

- 7.) Will time on TANF in other states after the July, 2003 date count towards our time limits? How will we know how much time they've used in another state?

Answer: Yes. The DHS 415F Application for Services asks about time on assistance in other states. We should verify time on assistance in the other state and narrate it on TRACS. In the future there will be a specific place to code time on assistance in other states.

8.) How do we get screenings done within two weeks if a client comes in and is having surgery and can't work for two weeks?

Answer: The screenings should be completed within two weeks of the client's intake appointment. However, if there are circumstances that prevent that from happening, such as the example you provided, we need to follow-up with the screenings as soon as the client is able to complete them.

9.) Currently, there are many clients who miss the screenings during the Assessment Program and go right into WE or LS. Some have barriers to employment. Usually these are clients returning from maternity leave, lost a job, etc. How do we assure they get screened in the Pre-TANF Program?

Answer: Part of the TANF re-design includes an emphasis on consistency. Branches will need to look at their internal process to accommodate completing screenings within two weeks of intake. Orientations that include partners are a good way to ensure that the screenings are completed.

10.) Should we be offering screenings at every recertification?

Answer: Because alcohol and drug as well as mental health screenings should be offered annually, it is recommended to re-offer these screenings during the recertification period. Recertification is a good time because it is conducted once per year for clients participating in the JOBS program.

11.) Are there time constraints with re-engagement in Pre-TANF when there is a cooperation problem?

Answer: There may be time constraints. If the client is not following through with their case plan during Pre-TANF, the re-engagement (currently conciliation) process must be started to determine whether the client is "willfully non-compliant".

The re-engagement process includes offering the five minimum screenings (if they have not been completed), ensuring that an aspect of the clients disability or limitation was not the reason for non-cooperation, checking for the welfare of the children, conducting a local team review/staffing, and documenting the results on the re-engagement (currently conciliation) page.

The Pre-TANF program cannot extend beyond 45 days from the Date of Request. If the re-engagement process is not complete by the 45th day, TANF should open while the re-engagement process continues – provided eligibility has cleared. Unless the re-engagement process is completed, a TANF case cannot open on an active disqualification.

12.) What if someone is opened on a DQ in Pre-TANF just a few days from the end of the month and wants to cooperate? How will they have enough time to re-engage/cooperate before the next DQ level goes into effect?

Answer: When a TANF case opens on a disqualification, the disqualification is effective the day TANF opens. If a client wants to re-engage, the client will be required to actively participate for a two-week period based on their individualized case plan. It is possible that during the two-week cooperation period the case may advance to the next level of disqualification. If the client cooperates for two weeks, cash is restored back to the date they requested to re-engage. This means that it is possible for cash benefits to be restored for two disqualification periods.

13.) How should case plans be written for the two-week cooperation period when a client is disqualified and wants to re-engage?

Answer: The case plan is individualized and developed in partnership with the client. This is also true during the development of the case plan for the two-week cooperation period. The case manager is instrumental in this process as it is a guided process.

If you have a question you would like to see answered in this weekly message, please send it to linda.weight@state.or.us .

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

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