

Dave Lyda, TANF Program Manager

*Authorized Signature*

**Number:** SS-IM-07-013

**Issue Date:** 09/05/2007

**Topic:** Other

**Subject:** TANF Redesign - Weekly Q & A

**Applies to (check all that apply):**

- |                                     |                               |                                     |                                                     |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------|
| <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, JOBS Partners |

**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.) Are Pre-TANF clients eligible for transitional support services when they get a job?

Answer: Yes. When a client gets a job during Pre-TANF, they are potentially eligible for transitional support services (see OAR 461-190-0241). Effective October 1, clients will also be potentially eligible for Post-TANF, provided they meet all requirements.

2.) Are we just assuming screening for DV and PH (physical health issues) has been done? Or will there be some other expectation of documenting that?

Answer: Central office is working on updating the TRACS testing page to include DV and physical health issues. The DHS 415F, application for services, along with the interview screen for domestic violence. As required by state law, all applicants for services must be screened for DV. The DHS 415F and DHS 7823 (My Self-Assessment) screen for physical

health issues. The results of these screenings must be documented in TRACS.

- 3.) If a client agrees to screening, and it is on a signed case plan, then client does not show to appointment, is this considered an offer and a decline from client?

Answer: No. This is considered a 'no show'. It would need to be documented as such in the TRACS testing page. We should offer the screening again and schedule another appointment.

Clients cannot be disqualified for failure to attend a screening or assessment. However, once it has been determined by a qualified individual that treatment is necessary, clients can be disqualified for failure to attend treatment, provided the re-engagement process has been completed.

- 4.) What defines 'declining' the screenings? If a client is a no show for a scheduled screening does that mean they have declined it? Does a client have to sign a declination form or can they verbally refuse?

Answer: When a worker 'offers' a screening and the client 'declines' the screening, it should be documented on the TRACS testing page as 'declined'. If the client does not show for the screening, it is documented on TRACS as 'no show'.

Central office is working on a 'declination form'.

- 5.) Should we be offering screenings at every recertification?

Answer: While not required at recertification, this may be a good time to review the specifics of the case. Reviewing answers on the 415F may identify possible DV or Physical Health issues that were previously unknown. For A&D and MH, screenings can be offered at recertification depending on the specifics of the case. If there are indicators, screenings should be offered anytime. Learning Needs screenings are usually good for a lifetime but can be offered again if it is necessary and no previous LD assessment was conducted.

We want to clarify that for the purposes of re-engagement, all screenings should be re-offered (especially if previously not offered or client declined) prior to moving forward on a disqualification.

- 6.) What is the process for DQ when the client doesn't want to engage and requests to voluntarily accept the DQ? This happens. Sometimes they say 'just DQ me until the case closes'.

Answer: The case manager should attempt to develop a plan that incorporates the client's goals and ensure that it is a plan both the client and the case manager can support. If this is not possible, and the client has been informed of the consequences, then we can proceed

with the disqualification/re-engagement process. Ultimately, if the client is willfully non-compliant and we have made every attempt to engage, then disqualification should be applied.

7.) Does the 'clock' keep moving even when a client is disqualified?

Answer: No. Time on assistance will count when there is an AD coded on the grant and there is no hardship exemption coded on the CM system. During the time that there is a child only grant (because the adult is disqualified) time on assistance will not count.

8.) Can an adult remove him/her self from the grant in order to avoid having their time count towards the time limit?

Answer: Ultimately, clients do have a right to refuse a service according to OAR 461-105-0010.

It would be a good idea to explain to the client that when clients reach the 5 year time limit the adult is removed from the need group - assuming there are no time limit hardship exemptions or time on assistance doesn't count for another reason.

This would hopefully inform the client that it is really not to their advantage to remove themselves from the need group. Also, clients who remove themselves from the benefit group are still required to participate in the JOBS program if their participation classification is "mandatory" (see 461-130-0310 (3)).

9.) If a two parent HH separates, and she applies but is at the 5 year time limit, does that mean that she can only get a no-parent HH grant? But if the parents reunite, then can they get a full grant again?

Answer: Yes; this is possible. If the client does not have a hardship exemption and time on assistance does not suspend for another reason, she will be removed from the need group if she has exceeded the 5 year time limit.

You are correct that when she reunites with the parent of her child, time on assistance will not count. Program 82 (deprivation based on unemployment/underemployment) cases are not subject to time limits.

10.) Will clients be informed of the exceptions to the time limits?

Answer: Yes. Central office will be sending letters during the month of September and early October to all clients explaining the time limit policy. This communication will include hardship exemptions as well as instances where cases are not subject to time limits.

Also, the DHS 415R was revised to include basic information on time limits. Workers should discuss the new policy on time limits with clients at certification, and enter

appropriate time limit code on case. If an exemption is applied, the exemption should be reviewed every six months.

11.) What if a client scores high on the Learning Needs screening, but refuses an LD evaluation? Can we still count this as an exception for the time limits?

Answer: No. In order for a case to be coded with a hardship exemption, the learning disability would need to be certified by a professional qualified to make such a determination. In this situation, we would encourage talking to the client about the benefits of getting the evaluation, such as finding out about possible accommodations, etc.

12.) Are clients still eligible for aid paid pending if DQ hearing is requested?

Answer: Yes. However, only on-going TANF recipients who get a disqualification (DQ) or a penalty for not cooperating can potentially get aid paid pending the result of a hearing. Pre-TANF clients do not have rights to continuing benefits due to disqualifications or penalties while a hearing is pending (see OAR 461-025-0311, 461-175-0200, and 461-175-0205).

13.) For those clients coming in to re-engage in September, do they get the full grant plus COI?

Answer: Yes. When clients come into the office, meet with a worker, complete the DHS 7823, DHS 7819 and the PDP, that will be considered cooperation and they will get the COI (cooperation incentive).

**If you have a question you would like to see answered in this weekly message, please send it to [linda.weight@state.or.us](mailto:linda.weight@state.or.us)**

*If you have any questions about this information, contact:*

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