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Authorized Signature

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Issue Date: 10/11/2007

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, 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. Does a client applying for vocational training have to be pursuing one of the high demand, high wage jobs, or can they be pursuing a job that isn't in this category if there is funding from another agency or source?

Answer: If there is funding from another source, vocational training can be in a field outside of the high demand, high wage category. Support services are also available to those who fit in this category.

2. What activity do we code them while we are waiting for VT decision?

Answer: If the applicant is in school while waiting for the VT decision they would be coded JS until approval is granted.

3. Will FS&C provide services to mono-lingual Spanish and Russian cases?

Answer: As with other services provided by DHS, and DHS' contract staff, services for limited-English speaking families must be provided in the language they understand. This may be through FS&C bi-lingual staff or interpretation services as described in Multiple Program Worker Guide #11.

4. For families working with Family Support and Connections who aren't receiving TANF, or have a need that cannot be met by TANF support services, are other funds available?

Answer: Starting October 1 limited, Flexible Funding will be available for FS&C staff to use for families in FS&C when TANF support funds and other community resources are not available. This funding has specific program related guidelines that have been provided to FS&C contracted staff.

5. Do clients on TBA get a notice to recertify for FS after TBA ending and then another notice to provide work hour verification for Post-TANF in the 6th month?

Answer: These notices are being coordinated to be sent out at the same time.

6. Do we have option of having the client withdraw their current application and establish a new DOR so they can participate in the Pre-TANF program 30+ days, rather than a possible shorter time frame based on intakes and rescheduling of appointments?

Answer: No. The ideal is that we see clients as close as possible from their date of request. The Pre-TANF program cannot extend beyond 45 days from the date of request and the branch also has 45 days from the DOR to make an eligibility decision. If you are close to the 45th day and eligibility is cleared, the TANF grant should be opened. We can still conduct the screenings and have the client participate in the appropriate activities with an open grant.

7. In a State-Family Pre-SSI/SSDI HH with two parents, what does the non-SSI/SSD adult do for jobs requirements? Just the mandatory stuff other mandatories do?

Answer: Clients in the SFPSS program are not JOBS mandatory but they do have participation requirements based on the SFPSS program. They have access to all JOBS activities and may have participation requirements based on the clients' individual situation.

Remember, there is no JOBS disqualification in the SFPSS program.

8. Do we need to send a pending notice for the 2 weeks of pay stubs? (The 210 has not changed so if the answer is "yes", would we then check the cash column?)

Answer: There is no application for Post-TANF benefits, so the DHS 210 would not be appropriate. If the case manager codes the case with a PTF case descriptor a notice is sent to the client informing them that they need to provide proof from their employer of their average work hours. It does not specifically say it must be pay stubs, so we do not want to limit the verification to only pay stubs. For new Post-TANF clients, we would suggest that if the client does not initially provide the needed information/proof - we would have a conversation with the client on what is needed and/or send a speedy note explaining again what is needed and narrate the conversation with the client.

9. If a client has had their eligibility determined but hasn't signed a plan, and doesn't show up for their meeting to do the plan, how can we disqualify for lack of participation without their having signed a plan committing to activities? Do we open TANF and then try to re-engage and disqualify at that point if unsuccessful?

Answer: The client should be involved in the development of their plan. If they do not show for the appointment to develop the plan, we should re-engage the client by contacting them and scheduling another appointment. We should begin the re-engagement process if the client is not participating. If the re-engagement process is not complete, we must open TANF and continue the re-engagement process.

10. A client does not participate with their Jobs plan and is brought in for re-engagement and then is offered screenings again, (after previously declining screenings) agrees to screenings and subsequently they are identified as having a learning disability. Do you have to wait until a full assessment is completed in order to apply a disqualification? What if a screening shows a possible drug and alcohol issue? Can a DQ be applied prior to the results of the full assessment?

Answer: DHS is required to review all TANF or Pre-TANF program non-cooperation for known or unknown disability issues prior to applying a disqualification. DHS must determine if the non-cooperation was due to an aspect of the client's disability or limitation. If the Learning Needs screening is conducted during the re-engagement process and it indicates a need for a full learning disability assessment, the LD evaluation should be scheduled through Western Oregon University. A disqualification cannot be imposed if an aspect of the client's disability or limitation was the cause of the non-cooperation.

11. If worker uses different language, as was suggested in the training, to offer an Learning Needs Screening without saying 'Learning Needs Screening', can the worker say an 'LD Screening' was refused if the client declines?

Answer: In the Pre-TANF session of the summits, the use of different language in order to "sell" the screenings as something the client can benefit from was encouraged. We talked about using language such as "we will ask you some questions to find out how you learn" in order to eliminate some of the stigma associated with learning disabilities. We also discussed reading the statement on the DHS 0421 – Learning Needs Screening.

We think your question is relates to a situation where if the client declines the learning needs screening, can we say we offered a “Learning Needs screening” although we never used the term “learning needs”? Effective 10/1/07, staff have another tool: the DHS 7826 – DHS TANF/JOBS Program Client Rights – Screenings and Evaluations is now available on the forms server. This form explains why the screenings are helpful and it also informs clients of their right to decline a screening. The form lists every screening by name so the client will be informed of the specific screening they are declining.

The DHS 7826 is available in English now but soon it will also be available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Russian and Somali.

12. What is the actual definition of “Indian Country”?

Answer: Indian Country, as defined in 18 U.S.C. 1151, means:

- (a) all land within the limits of any Indian reservation under the jurisdiction of the United States Government, notwithstanding the issuance of any patent, and, including rights-of-way running through the reservation,
- (b) all dependent Indian communities within the borders of the United States whether within the original or subsequently acquired territory thereof, and whether within or without the limits of a state, and
- (c) All Indian allotments, the Indian titles to which have not been extinguished, including rights-of-way running through the same.

A list of “Oregon Indian Country” locations has been requested from the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

13. Does the “clock” remain active and continue running while a client is participating in a JOBS Plus work site?

Answer: No. The months that client is participating in a JOBS Plus work site does not count towards the 60 months time limit.

14. Does a worker need to get a “new” 7819 (rights and responsibilities) signed when a client is going through the Re-engagement process? Is a new 7819 required when a change is made to a client’s plan? How often do you need a client to sign a 7819?

Answer: No; the worker does not need to get a new DHS 7819 signed when a client is re-engaged. However, the case manager should check to see that there is a current DHS 7819 in the file. “Current” means that it was signed at the initial application for new clients or at re-determination for ongoing clients.

A new DHS 7819 should be completed if:

- A current DHS 7819 is not in the file, and
- There is no narration in TRACS specifying that the worker reviewed the DHS 7819 with the client and the client declined to sign

Remember that we cannot proceed with a disqualification if a “current” DHS 7819 is not in the file or narrated as specified above.

15. If a client is disqualified and chooses to re-engage, but after the plan is written and signed they do not participate, do you need to start the whole re-engagement process over? If not, what is required?

Answer: You would not need to re-start the re-engagement process in this situation. However, we would want to contact the client to determine why they did not participate in their plan. OAR 461-130-0335 was revised to say that when a client chooses to re-engage, they should be assigned a two-week cooperation period. The penalty will not be lifted until the client cooperates with their individualized plan developed for a two-week cooperation period. If the client does not participate, then the penalty is not lifted. The client could choose to re-engage at a later point and at that time, another two-week cooperation period should be assigned.

16. If a client on a current DQ1 in January attempts to re-engage at the end of February and their two-week period extends into March, can they get the DQ2 that automatically occurred February 1st removed as well as have their benefits restored? What about the DQ3 that automatically occurred on March 1st?

Answer: No, the DQ2 would not be removed. However, the DQ3 would be removed. OAR 461-130-0335 says that “For a client who completes the two-week cooperation period, the disqualification ends and only one month of the penalty imposed counts as a disqualification”. Therefore, cash would be restored effective the date that the client requested to re-engage and the DQ2 coding would remain on the case descriptor.

17. I thought we could project attendance for the Post-TANF WO activity in TRACS, but the system won't let me do it. Are we going to be able to do this? If so, when?

Answer: Projected attendance is a feature that will be included in the next TRACS release scheduled for early spring '08. This feature is limited to Post-TANF WO activities. In order to release the other aspects of the TRACS changes supporting TANF reauthorization timely, this feature had to be delayed until the next release.

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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