

Dave Lyda, TANF Program Manager

Authorized Signature

Number: SS-IM-07-024

Issue Date: 11/02/2007

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 two 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. How often should A&D/MH screenings be offered?

Answer: Screenings for A&D/MH should be offered during Pre-TANF and at any time during the life of a case where a concern is present. A worker can choose to offer a screening yearly at redetermination but is not required to do so.

2. My client who is only working 15 hours a week but is over income (ovi) for TANF. The "Post TANF Briefing Sheet" says, "clients must be working enough hours to meet the federal participation rate. If needed, JOBS core or non-core activities will be offered to help meet the participation hours." If my client is going to school which would be JS (non core) couldn't those hours make up the federal participation hours?

Answer: As in this case, you can go OVI and not be eligible to receive ongoing Post TANF

payments because you are not working or participating enough hours. We should offer her additional JOBS hours to meet participation requirements and get the \$150 PT payment. It's her option on whether she wants to do the extra JOBS hours to receive the \$150 payment.

In your case attending school would count if it qualifies for Vocational Training (VT).

If she has a child under six, her participation requirements are 20 core hours per week (on average). If she has 15 work hours, then we can offer her only core activities or five hours of work experience or vocational training. Note: job search & job readiness activities cannot be used because they have a 12-week limit in a year.

If she has no children under six, her participation requirements are 30 core or non-core hours of which 20 must be core hours. In that case we could offer her:

- 1) at least five hours of WE or VT and 10 hours of JS, AB, ES, or HS
- 2) or 15 hours of VT or WE

3. What is required for documentation of attendance for homework?

Answer: Homework attendance will be documented as follows:

- Study hall, study skills, or study group activities and supervised by DHS, contactor or school staff, volunteer, or official. Participants will be required to have the staff person verify that he/she attended the study session.
- Completion of instructor assigned homework as verified on a state approved education attendance form by the instructor (or other school staff, volunteer, or official).
- Submission of completed homework assignments to the designated DHS or contractor staff.
- Submission of class syllabus with homework requirements and evidence of satisfactory progress in coursework.
- Hours must be reported on at least a weekly basis and turned in to a designated DHS or contractor staff person.

4. What is required for documentation of attendance for homework for distance learning?

Answer: Distance learning or on-line course work must be documented, verified and supervised in the same manner as other educational activities, however school produced computer print outs indicating course and homework will be acceptable. Other educational activities can be documented as follows:

Vocational educational training attendance must be documented weekly. Hours will be documented with one of the following items:

- school attendance records,
- educational provider reporting,

- state approved education attendance form (7861).

And, must contain:

- student's name,
- school's name,
- actual hours of attendance and/or homework,
- name & phone number of person providing the attendance,
- certification that the client was supervised daily (meaning that they were given daily assignments or tasks).

5. Please explain how two-parent families are going to be handled. They are no longer JOBS mandatory under the federal requirements are they? They are not subject to time limits now, so why the 55/50 requirement?

Answer: The federal participation requirement for two-parent families is: 90 percent of all mandatory two-parent families have to participate 55/50 weekly hours, if receiving child care assistance, or 35/30 weekly hours, if not receiving child care assistance. Meeting this 90 percent requirement is unrealistic, so Oregon created a state funded two-parent program. With the state funded two-parent program we do not have to meet the stringent 90 percent federal requirement, however, we still want two-parent families to participate in the JOBS program and become self-sufficient.

6. Can't we make the attendance verification for IJ/JO simpler? A current method used that averages time spent on job contacts (one hour) and workshops (one hour forty-five minutes) averaged to three hours, and attendance documented daily on sign-in sheet and calendar is effective. Clients often turn in forms incomplete. New requirement will be burdensome and challenging.

Answer: Unfortunately, the federal regulations do not allow pre-assigned attendance for the completion of any task, for example one job contact equals one hour job search participation or one hour of class time equals two hours of homework. We are required to record and document only actual time spent on any activity.

7. If a one-six month post-partum adult volunteers for JOBS, is participation credit earned?

Answer: Yes, participation time would count in this case. If an exempt client volunteers and is attending enough hours to meet participation requirements, make sure the case is coded with a JOBS status code of "C" - Exempt, but volunteers.

8. Does every client need to attend all screenings? Or do they just need to be offered? If only offered, what is the process for documenting the offer?

Answer: Clients are not required to attend all screenings. They have a right to decline screenings according to OAR 461-105-0010. Branches are required to offer the screenings

to all clients whose needs are on the grant, or who are required to participate. This must be done within two weeks of the intake, unless there are circumstances beyond the control of the client.

As a reminder, the five minimum screenings are: domestic violence, drug & alcohol, mental health, physical health, and learning needs. Currently, the learning needs, drug and alcohol and mental health screenings are documented in the TRACS testing page.

9. Is it ok to do the screenings after TANF opens?

Answer: It depends. The screenings should be completed within two weeks from the client's intake. "Completed" means that we offered the screenings and

- a. the client accepted and we conducted the screening (and narrated in the TRACS testing page), or
- b. the client declined the screening and we narrated this in the TRACS testing page.

In some instances, TANF opens close to the date of the intake. Pre-TANF policy states the Pre-TANF program can end before the 45 days, especially if the client is unlikely to become employed within 45 days (see OAR 461-135-0475). It is possible for TANF to open before two weeks has passed since the client's intake. When this happens, the screening process continues after the TANF grant opens.

10. Can the "up to" 200 percent of the payment standard support service payments continue beyond 45 days – if still pending due to citizenship/identity requirements?

Answer: Remember that citizenship and identity verification requirements apply to the medical programs. TANF does not require verification of citizenship or identity.

The support service payments for basic living expenses are limited to 200 percent of the payment standard for the number in the need group. These payments are also limited to the Pre-TANF time period and do not extend beyond the end of Pre-TANF. Support services are also available to clients after TANF opens. The guidelines for these payments are listed in OAR 461-135-0211.

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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