

Chapter 3

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

3-1. Overview.

a. "Regular" Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF or TANF 200%) helps to pay for the administrative costs of intake, child protective investigation, and protective services. To draw down "regular" TANF funds, staff must complete a Request for TANF Funds/Eligibility Determination in FSFN.

b. As stated in Chapter 1 of this operating procedure, Title IV-A of the Social Security Act provides grants to states to fund TANF programs and services. The Department serves as the designated state agency responsible for administering funding under the Social Security Act.

c. Access to programs and services funded by TANF funds is income based and limited to those meeting eligibility criteria. OCFW uses TANF funds to support activities and services designed to remedy some of the underlying conditions that lead to abuse, neglect, or abandonment of children; and to strengthen families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives. Eligible families must have cases open with child protective investigations or case management.

3-2. Determining Eligibility. An eligibility determination for "regular" TANF funds must be conducted for a child and family if the child is an alleged victim in a child protective investigation or receiving case management services through an in-home or out-of-home case. This does not apply to children residing in Florida through the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children (ICPC).

a. Child Protective Investigations. The investigative TANF Eligibility page in FSFN must be completed for the family when an abuse or neglect intake is generated through the Florida Abuse Hotline and a child protective investigation is initiated, excluding Institutional Investigations and Special Condition Referrals.

(1) The child protective investigator (CPI) or designee must obtain information to complete the investigative TANF eligibility determination based on the circumstance of the family at the initiation of the investigation. For an accurate determination, FSFN shall be updated to reflect the Primary address and Citizenship of the victim child(ren) on their Person Management page and any income (earned or unearned) on the FSFN Assets and Employment page for the parent(s), legal guardian, victim child(ren), siblings, and other household members considered to be residing in the family unit.

(2) The CPI or designee shall ensure responses are completed for each question and the appropriate family household members are selected who shall be included in the Family Size and for which child(ren) the eligibility applies. The investigative TANF shall be marked "Complete" with a Completed Date to record the child(ren)'s eligibility status for "regular" TANF using the 200% of Federal Poverty Level (FPL) standards.

(3) The supervisor or designee approves the investigative TANF as part of the investigation closure process.

b. In-Home Services. The case TANF Eligibility page in FSFN must be completed for an initial TANF eligibility determination for each child in the following situations:

(1) When a child is receiving in-home services, an initial TANF must be approved within 30 calendar days of the case transfer staffing from investigations to case management.

(2) When a child has a break in living arrangement by one day, an initial TANF Eligibility determination must be approved within 30 calendar days of the living arrangement begin date.

(3) When a child is discharged from an out-of-home placement to a living arrangement and an effective TANF Eligibility determination does not exist in FSFN, an initial TANF must be approved within 30 calendar days of the living arrangement begin date.

c. Out-of-Home Services. An initial case TANF Eligibility page must be completed in FSFN for children in a removal episode upon the first occurrence of being placed in relative non-licensed or non-relative non-licensed out-of-home care, or licensed care with a relative if the child is Title IV-E Ineligible. The initial TANF Eligibility determination must be completed within 30 calendar days of placement.

3-3. Eligibility Requirements. The following eligibility requirements must be met in order for the family/child to qualify for “regular” TANF.

a. The child must be under the age of 18 and not emancipated by a court of competent jurisdiction.

b. The child must live with a parent or specified relative.

c. The child must be a United States citizen or qualified noncitizen.

d. The child must reside within the state of Florida.

e. Family/Child income must be below 200% of the FPL for household size.

(1) Income information must be obtained from the family when possible. However, when the family does not provide the income information, it may be obtained from available collateral sources. Self-declaration of income by the parent(s) or specified relative of the child is acceptable.

(a) The source of the income information must be entered in FSFN on the Assets and Employment page. The income is then system derived and populated on the TANF page.

(b) When the source of income cannot be documented, or income information cannot be obtained, the child will be ineligible for TANF.

(2) When the child resides with his or her parent(s) or legal guardian at the time of the initial determination and/or redetermination of TANF Eligibility, the income of the child and family will be counted. The child’s parents and other minor siblings who are living together in the household with the child are considered one economic unit and all must be included in the TANF Eligibility determination. All the income of the child and child’s parents/legal guardian must be counted. When a child is under the jurisdiction of dependency court in out-of-home care or under Permanent Guardianship, the determination shall include the child only, even if supervision is terminated.

(3) When the child resides with a specified relative, other than the parents or legal guardian at the time of initial determination and/or redetermination of TANF Eligibility, only the income of the child is counted. The child will be considered a “family of one,” and only the income of the child is counted.

(4) The federal poverty levels are revised annually effective July 1.

3-4. Ongoing Eligibility.

a. TANF Eligibility is valid for 12 consecutive months. Ongoing TANF eligibility determinations apply to case TANFs, not investigative TANFs.

(1) For a TANF eligible child, TANF Eligibility redeterminations must be completed while the case is open for services and the child is living with a parent/legal guardian, non-licensed relative, or licensed relative if the child is Title IV-E Ineligible. The TANF redetermination must be approved within 10 calendar days from expiration of the current determination.

(2) For a TANF ineligible child, TANF Eligibility redeterminations must be completed when their out-of-home placement changes to a relative or to a parent.

b. When a TANF Eligibility redetermination is required, the child welfare professional or lead agency revenue maximization staff must ensure FSFN reflects the current living arrangement/out-of-home placement, household, and financial information for the child and family.

3-5. FSFN Documentation.

a. The Income and Assets pages must be completed for each parent, legal guardian, and child(ren) included in the TANF determination.

b. Investigation TANFs must be approved for each child protective investigation with the sub-type of 'In-home' or 'Other' when the investigation has been initiated through a face-to-face contact.

c. Case TANFs for initial determinations must be approved in FSFN within 30 calendar days. The Effective From date of the TANF Eligibility date must be equal to the placement/living arrangement begin date.

(1) In-home services – within 30 calendar days from the case transfer staffing from investigations to case management.

(2) Out-of-home services – within 30 calendar days from placement.

d. Case TANFs for redeterminations must be approved in FSFN within 10 calendar days of the expiration of the previous TANF eligibility determination or placement change date. The Effective From date of the TANF Eligibility redetermination shall be no more than one day after the expiration of the prior determination or equal to the placement/living arrangement begin date.

e. The TANF Eligibility Determination Due report in FSFN must be used, at a minimum, every other week to identify cases which require the completion of a TANF Eligibility determination.

(1) For ICPC cases, a Legal Record must be created and a Legal Action Initiated of 'Custody of Other State – Begin' with a Legal Custody Status as 'Custody of Other State'.