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Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan (WDASOM)
Policy Issuance (PI): 11-06

Date: September 29, 2011

To: Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) Directors

From: Gary Clark, Director, Office of Talent Development Services
(SIGNED)

Subject: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Time Limits

Programs Affected: Jobs, Education, and Training (JET)

References: Reauthorization of the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program; Final Rule, 45 CFR Parts 261, 262, 263, and 265

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PWRORA) of 1996

State of Michigan, Department of Human Services (DHS) Temporary State Emergency Relief (SER) Housing Assistance Fact Sheet

Rescissions: None

Background: The PRWORA of 1996, established a five-year lifetime limit on receipt of Federal TANF assistance for adult-headed families. The time limit was central to establishing the temporary nature of aid and communicating the program's goal moving recipients quickly into work and off of assistance. Michigan's Family Independence Program (FIP) is to support a family's movement to self-sufficiency. Families receiving FIP are to engage in JET activities that will help them gain financial independence.



Workforce Development Agency, State of Michigan

Victor Office Center | 201 North Washington Square, 5th Floor | Lansing, Michigan 48913
michigan.gov/bwt | 517.335.5858 | TTY 888.605.6722

The WDASOM is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids, services and other reasonable accommodations are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Effective October 1, 2011, Michigan will begin implementing stricter enforcement of the federal 60-month time limit, as well as executing the state's 48-month lifetime limit. The Federal time limit began on October 1, 1996, and the State limit began on October 1, 1997. An adult receives a count of one month for each month the participant receives FIP. Any participant case that has received FIP for 60 months or more, including cash assistance received in another state, will close effective October 1, 2011.

Policy: Effective October 1, 2011, the JET Program will no longer serve any TANF recipient whose case closes due to the participant reaching either the federal or state lifetime limit. Affected participants' cases will receive a Case Closure due to "Other" from Bridges on the One-Stop Management Information System (OSMIS). However, participants that are involved in a training or employment activity will need to have their JET participation terminated **manually** on the OSMIS. When OSMIS receives a case closure for a participant who has exceeded the 48 or 60 month time limit, the MWA can continue to pay for supportive services until the end of the calendar month.

Households that have reached their federal or state time limit maximum may be eligible for housing assistance from DHS for up to three months following the month of their FIP closure. In order to be eligible for housing assistance (see Attachment D, Temporary SER Housing Assistance Fact Sheet), participants must attend an initial orientation and utilize the services of the local Michigan Works! at least once per week during the three month period.

MWAs are required to provide an initial group orientation (where necessary) which should include the requirements set by DHS for approving housing assistance and job search training for those participants affected by the October 1, 2011, effective date. TANF recipients whose cases are closed due to the time limit will be treated as Employment Services customers at the Michigan Works! One-Stops with eligibility for other services and programs determined by Michigan Works! MWAs will provide each eligible individual a ticket [Attachment A] which is verification of their attendance at an orientation and [Attachment B] which is verification that they utilized services at Michigan Works! The MWA **must issue a different colored date stamped ticket** for the different weeks of issue (should be no more than four different colors).

Action: MWAs must comply with the implementation of the October 1, 2011, time limits on welfare TANF assistance, as detailed in this policy issuance.

Inquiries: Questions regarding this policy issuance should be directed to your Welfare Reform state coordinator at (517) 335-5858. The information contained in this policy issuance will be made available in alternative format (large type, audio tape, etc.) upon request to this office.

Expiration Date: Ongoing

GC:YH:pv
Attachments

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Temporary Housing Assistance - Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Q: What is the requirement for the rental assistance payment?

A: The requirement is the same for each case reaching their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) time limit. Each adult must attend the general orientation and utilize the Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) at least once per week to receive their ticket required for eligibility. For the initial month of eligibility each adult must attend the orientation and receive two weekly tickets to be eligible for rental assistance. For subsequent months, each adult must provide weekly four tickets - one for each week.

MWAs will issue different colored tickets each week and the week covered by that particular color will be pre-printed on the ticket. Lost tickets are not replaced and can only be regained if the participant visits a MWA another time during that same week.

Three eligible months will be consecutive immediately following the Family Independence Program (FIP) closure due to time limits.*

Q: What is the requirement for clients who are deferred (for any employment code other than IN) when their FIP closes for TANF time limits?

A: The requirements for deferred clients are the same as those that were not deferred. Each adult must attend the general orientation and utilize the MWA at least once per week to receive their ticket required for eligibility.

Q: Will clients closing with current NC (Needed to care for a disable child) or NS (Needed to care for a disabled spouse) deferral code be expected to participate in employment services?

A: Yes.

Q: What are the requirements for MWAs to verify a "personal appearance"? What constitutes utilizing services before we can issue a "ticket"?

A: A customer's physical presence at a Michigan Works! office requesting a ticket constitutes 'utilizing services'.

Q: Is this Orientation different than the one that we have scheduled to accommodate those leaving welfare? What type of documentation is needed to verify the person(s) attended Orientation.

A: This Orientation is the same as the one Michigan Works! has scheduled to accommodate those leaving welfare. The Orientation should provide customers with an introduction to Michigan Works! services, including: overviews of One-Stops, Michigan Talent Bank usage instructions, and Resource Room availability.

Q: What is the verification process?

A: The type of documentation needed to verify that a customer attended the Orientation is the dated ticket stating "Possessor of this ticket has been in attendance at a Michigan Works! orientation". The documentation needed to verify a customer utilized services of Michigan Works! is a dated ticket stating "Possessor of this ticket has utilized the services

of Michigan Works! during the week of". The customer is responsible for requesting tickets from MWA staff at the time of their weekly visit.

Q: What if an individual loses a ticket?

A: Individuals are responsible for requesting and retaining their own tickets. Lost tickets should only be provided during the week the MWA services were utilized. Replacement tickets for previous weeks are not available.

Q: Is the MWA required to keep a log in sheet?

A: MWAs are not required to keep a log-in sheet.

Q: Will these clients receive a higher level of service at the MWA?

A: No, they will receive the same service as any person receiving employment services through the MWA.

Q: How will the MWA know when a customer is eligible for the rental subsidy? There is no indicator that shows a customer's countable month limitation on OSMIS or Family Self Sufficiency Plan?

A: MWAs are not responsible for determining a customer's rental subsidy eligibility. Requests have been made for an indicator showing a customer's countable months on OSMIS.

Q: What if the client missed a month? Are they eligible for the month?

A: This is a resource where eligibility is only during the 3 consecutive months immediately following the month of closure due to exceeding 48/60 months' time limits. The household may receive assistance for month 1 and 3 only or month 2 only. Eligibility factors must be met for each month.

Q: Is this program statewide and how long will it last?

A: This will run statewide through Fiscal Year (FY) 2012; recipients will be eligible for up to three consecutive months immediately following the month of closure due to TANF time limits.

Q: Will the clients need to be registered at the MWA?

A: No. There is no referral needed for MWA employment services.

Q: Is the Department of Human Services (DHS) able to provide bus passes/tokens for customers who reached their 48/60 month limitation and need to attend a Michigan Works! service center for rental subsidy support?

A: There are Department of Social Service (DSS) services that these clients may be eligible for if they meet the criteria for DSS as outlined in BEM 232. However, this is not an entitlement program, and local offices may not have funding for this.

Q: Will the Job Navigators be the only resource to assist clients?

A: Job Navigators are volunteers under the supervision of the MWA and only utilized to supplement current employment services for the program. The client will ultimately be responsible for self-directed job search.

Q: Will a list for FIP closures for November be issued?

A: Yes, more information will be forthcoming. Following October, the ongoing closures will average around 300 cases per month statewide.

Q: Can this housing assistance be used to pay late payment?

A: The Housing Assistance can be used to pay up to the cap for arrearages when behind, but will only pay the maximum based on the number of individuals in the FIP household.

Q: Are clients eligible for regular State Emergency Relief (SER) and Temporary SER Housing Assistance at the same time?

A: Yes, as long as eligibility requirements are met for both programs (court ordered eviction, affordability, and copay verifications must be met for regular SER). Payment should not exceed the client's legal obligation amount.

Q: How will payments be made?

A: Payments must be made directly to the landlord through the provider management process. The landlord must be enrolled and instructions are included in the Housing Assistance memo.

Q: Why are we requiring a lease or rental agreement only and not allowing collateral contact or a DHS-3688?

A: The DHS-3688 and collateral contact were excluded to assure verification of the legal obligation to pay. Clients must have a valid lease that shows a legal obligation to pay.

Q: What is considered to be a "Current rental agreement"?

A: This would be an agreement that includes a time period with the application date. A rental agreement usually covers a period of months. For example, client Z applies for SER housing on 10-15-11 and provides a rental agreement that is in effect from August 1, 2011 – January 31, 2012.

Q: Are both families eligible with Shared Leases?

A: Both families would be considered one SER household. We would not pay the same landlord twice- only one payment per lease with legal obligation.

Q: Will the transfer of the case to an Employer Service (ES) be auto or stay with Family Independent Specialist (FIS)/Case Manager?

A: Bridges will hold a closed FIP case with the case manager (JET worker) for 60 days and then will auto-transfer to an eligibility specialist. By the second month of closure in the case of housing assistance being requested, the client should be formulating a plan for future goals and living situation management.

Q: Are clients eligible for child care benefits while attending the orientation and utilizing Michigan Works! services?

A: Time spent attending these activities should be categorized as an approved activity and any related Child Day Care authorizations should be limited to 16 biweekly need hours for a maximum of three months. Documentation of the client's participation in the Temporary Housing Assistance Pilot program per FOA Memo 2011-24 must be entered in Bridges case comments and the ticket provided to the client by Michigan Works! shall be filed in the case record as verification of attendance.

Q: How are hearing requests to be handled for this program?

A: In the same manner all other hearing requests are for each particular local office.

Temporary SER Housing Assistance Fact Sheet

Households that have reached their federal or state Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Family Independence Program (FIP) time limit maximums may qualify for housing assistance for up to three months following the month of their FIP closure.

****Three eligible months will be immediately following the month of FIP closure due to time limits****

- You must not have been disqualified or sanctioned at the time of your FIP closure.
- **Month 1:** Each adult must attend a general orientation and use the local Michigan Works! at least once per week. A ticket will be issued by the Michigan Works! office at the time of your participation. A ticket for orientation and two weekly tickets are required in order to qualify for your first request. You will need to submit a completed State Emergency Relief (SER) application to your local office to have your eligibility determined.
- **Month 2 & 3:** Each adult must provide weekly four MWA participation tickets - one for each week. Tickets will be issued by the local Michigan Works! at the time of your visit. The Temporary Housing Assistance Pilot Program Supplemental SER Application may be submitted to your local Department of Human Service (DHS) office for the 2nd and 3rd months.
- Lost tickets are not replaced and can only be regained if the participant visits Michigan Works! another time during that same week. Individuals are responsible for requesting and retaining their own tickets. Replacement tickets for previous weeks are not available.
- You must provide a current rental or lease agreement, mortgage statement, Section 8, or other housing verification to determine the cost of your legal housing obligation.
- Payments will be made directly to your landlord/housing provider for your actual housing obligation amount. The payment amount cannot exceed the SER relocation amount for the FIP group size.
- You may be eligible for child care benefits while attending the orientation and utilizing Michigan Works! services. Time spent attending these activities are limited to 16 hours every two weeks, for a maximum of three months.

- DHS **may** be able to provide bus passes/tokens in order for you to attend a Michigan Works! service center, please discuss with your DHS case worker if you do not have other transportation available.