



## Important Information for TANF Recipients



*In October 2011, changes began taking place in the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program. New laws have been passed that limit the time you can receive TANF. Most TANF recipients will only be able to get TANF money for 60 months (5 years).*



### **1. What if I am past 60 months in receiving TANF benefits?**

If you have been receiving TANF benefits for 60 months or longer, your benefits have been reduced by 20%. By October 2015, if you have received TANF for 60 months or longer, all of your TANF cash assistance payments may completely end.

### **2. What are the new TANF requirements?**

You must attend an orientation and complete an assessment/interview when applying for or recertifying for TANF. You must also complete an Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) and work towards fulfillment of your IRP.

### **3. What if I do not attend orientation or complete an assessment/interview?**

If you do not attend an orientation and complete the assessment/interview when required, you will not be eligible to receive TANF benefits.

### **4. What is an Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP)?**

The Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) will list goals and focus on those interests, needs, strengths and challenges that were identified during the assessment/interview. You will work with a case manager to help create your own IRP. You are **REQUIRED** to complete the activities in your IRP (which may include work requirements). The IRP can change, but you need to work with your case manager to do this.

### **5. What if I do not participate in or complete the TANF program requirements?**

If you fail to follow your IRP, you will be subject to a sanction, which is a decrease in your TANF check. Presently, a sanction is about \$70 per case. Failure to comply with your IRP will ultimately result in a complete termination of your cash assistance. A sanction is the action of last resort. If you are having difficulty following your IRP, contact your case manager.

### **6. Can attending school be a part of the work requirements?**

Yes! Attending school for GED classes, Adult Basic Education, Vocational Education, College and Job Skills Training can all be counted towards meeting the goals of your plan.

## 7. Will my TANF benefits decrease when I get a job?

If you work, it means more money in your pocket. Your TANF cash assistance may decrease, but the combination of TANF bonuses\*, your TANF cash assistance and your pay check will always amount to more than your TANF check. Please see the example below:

Example for Family of 3	TANF Check (without job)	Job Paycheck	TANF Check with Job	Paycheck and TANF Check
	\$428	\$600	\$267	\$867

\*You can earn up to \$1,250 a year in bonus funds if you get and keep the job.

## 8. What can I expect from the vendors?

Vendors will provide specialized services. “Work Readiness” vendors will help you to improve your education, job skills and other abilities to get you ready for employment. “Job Placement” vendors will provide services to help you find and keep your job.

## 9. How am I assigned to a vendor?

The results of your assessment/interview will determine which vendor is best to assign you to; the assignment will be made by DHS.

## 10. What if I am already working with a program, can I stay with that program?

Yes, you can stay with the program you are working with, if you choose. You should share this information with the DHS staff member during your assessment/interview, and it will be included in your IRP.

## 11. What if I need a child care voucher?

You will be able to apply for a child care voucher after completing your orientation and assessment/interview. You will be given specific information on where to go at that time. You are only eligible to receive a child care voucher if you participate and meet the goals of your IRP.

## 12. What do I have to do to attend the orientation and complete the assessment/interview?

Please call the Office of Work Opportunity (OWO) at 202-698-1860 to schedule an appointment. You may also visit our website at <http://dhs.dc.gov> for more information.

## 13. Can I just walk in without scheduling an appointment for an assessment?

Yes. However, if you have a scheduled appointment, you will be seen first. Preferred walk-in days are Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays between 3:00 pm – 4:00 pm, or Wednesdays between 3:30 pm – 6:30 pm. OWO is located at 2100 Martin Luther King, Jr., Ave., SE, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor.