



**State of Florida  
Department of Children and Families**

**Jeb Bush**  
*Governor*

**Lucy D. Hadi**  
*Secretary*

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**MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** September 28, 2006                      **TRANSMITTAL NO.:** I-06-09-0020

**TO:** ACCESS Florida District Operations Managers  
ACCESS Florida Zone Program Offices

**FROM:** Jennifer Lange, Director, ACCESS Florida (**Signature on File**)

**SUBJECT:** TANF Changes Resulting from 2005 Deficit Reduction Act

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This memorandum is to advise staff of changes to the TANF law which will have an impact on the state's Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) Program. Although these changes may not directly impact the current TCA eligibility determination process, staff should be aware of the potential impact to the state for failure to take appropriate and timely case actions.

**Background:**

The Federal PRWORA law requires states to engage at least 50% of work eligible individuals receiving TANF funds in work activities for a minimum of 30 hours per week as a condition of receiving benefits. Furthermore, 90% of two parent households receiving TCA who are subject to work activities must be working a minimum of 55 hours per week, if federally funded child care is provided. The penalty to states failing to meet either of the above standards is a five percent increase in state Maintenance of Effort (MOE). In Florida this would mean an additional state MOE obligation of \$24.5 million.

Prior to the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act, states were allowed to exempt their two parent TCA program from the 90% requirement if the state separately funded their program through use of MOE funds. Additionally, states were allowed to earn caseload reduction credit to reduce their work participation rate for each percentage point they reduced their TANF caseload since 1995. As Florida had reduced its TCA caseload by 77% between 1995 and 2005 the state effectively met its work participation rate through its caseload reduction credit.

**TANF Changes in the 2005 Deficit Reduction Act:**

- The base year for the caseload reduction credit changed from 1995 to 2005.
- The exclusion from participation rate any program funded separately by state MOE funds was eliminated.

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**Impact of TANF changes to the TCA Program:**

The state will no longer be able to rely on these tools to completely offset its required work participation requirements. The Department's most important role in meeting the participation rate continues to be to assure that all adult recipients subject to work participation are properly identified and timely referred for work participation.

The critical few performance measures will be changed so that the all family and two parent participation rates are separate measures, with targets of 50% and 90% respectively. The thresholds for "red or yellow" performance will be set at 37% and 57%, accounting for the anticipated caseload reduction credits for the current federal fiscal year.

**Tips for Eligibility Staff:**

- When talking with potential TCA applicants and those who currently qualify for a temporary exemption explain that the TCA program is a "work program," that seeking and obtaining work is essential in their receipt of benefits, and that cash assistance payments are time-limited. Inform applicants and recipients of the relocation and severance programs as ways to save their months of eligibility.
- When talking with potential TCA applicants subject to work requirements, explain the work registration requirement and the importance of cooperation with the local RWB provider for both initial benefit approval and ongoing receipt of TCA.
- Take timely action to terminate TCA payments when notified of non-compliance by the local workforce board. Do not reauthorize TCA payments for children under age 16 during 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level sanctions unless the recipient requests these payments and designates an appropriate "Protective Payee". Do not restore sanction members' eligibility until compliance or the minimum sanction period is served, whichever time period is longer.
- Review exemptions from participation, such as caring for a child under three months of age, and caring for a disabled family member, as required by policy.
- Identify cases with a disabled parent by coding the disabled parent as either disabled or incapacitated on AIIM and AIDP screens. Disabled/incapacitated adult parents who are not SSI or SSDI recipients are subject to work referral. However, for two parent cases the proper coding of the parent's disability/incapacitation on AIIM and AIDP allows for creation of an ADCI family group. ADCI cases are subject to the same work hours and participation rate as single parent (ADCR) cases (50% and 30 hours per week).
- Ensure that proper work referral codes are entered on AGPI for all TCA members. Any eligible adults improperly exempted from referral will negatively impact the state participation rate.

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- Inquire into closure reasons when clients request TCA closure to see if new or increased employment income has been received. Record any employment reported. Capturing this information will improve the state's participation rate for the month the recipient last received TCA.
- Ensure that "child only" caretaker relative cases are coded as ADCR instead of ADCU. Errors can occur when caretaker relatives with children apply for TCA for relative children only, and the case appears to be a two parent case when it should be a "child only" case and not subject to participation requirements.

If regions/zones have any questions concerning this memorandum please call Gary D. Scott at SUNCOM 293-7427 or (850) 413-7427.

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