

A. Program Intent and Overview

1. Program intent

The Pre-TANF Program provides initial screening, case management and cash assistance to families applying for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program. The program intent is to:

- Look at the needs of the family, including the needs of children and family stability factors, as part of a holistic assessment;
- Provide an opportunity for individuals to assess their own strengths, needs and goals;
- Offer screenings to identify applicant strengths, needs and barriers to self-sufficiency;
- Assess individual's employment potential in the labor market, if appropriate, and help determine the intensity of services needed to enhance their employability;
- Help individuals recognize their own strengths and find employment or other alternatives so they can be independent from ongoing TANF benefits;
- Meet maintenance needs concurrent with case planning and services for employment and self-sufficiency.

The Pre-TANF Program is not intended to delay the opening of TANF Program benefits.

2. Program overview

The Pre-TANF Program is open for no more than 30 days from the filing date for TANF Program benefits. Pre-TANF Program eligibility requirements are the same as TANF, since it is the same program. However, applicants can receive Pre-TANF Program benefits based on their declaration of meeting eligibility factors without providing written verifications.

Before Pre-TANF Program services begin, an assessment of the immediate unmet needs and strengths of the whole family is completed, eligibility is determined for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program and TANF-related medical benefits and TANF eligibility is reviewed. If the applicant is not eligible for TANF based on their declaration, they are not eligible for the Pre-TANF Program, Pre-TANF Program payments or TANF-related medical benefits.



SEE SECTION A OF THE EMPLOYMENT SERVICES CHAPTER ([ES-A](#)) FOR SUPPORT SERVICES PAYMENT PROCEDURE.

Examples of appropriate activities and services in the Pre-TANF Program include:

- (A) *Orientation*: Applicants are provided with an orientation and written information about the program and services available.
- (B) *Self-Assessment*: Applicants are given the opportunity to assess their own needs, strengths and goals. The *Self Assessment Tool* ([DHS 7823B](#)) tool is the official applicant assessment tool used statewide.
- (C) *Screenings*:
 - Applicants whose needs are included in the grant may be offered screenings for physical health, domestic violence, mental health, substance abuse and learning disabilities during the Pre-TANF period;
 - Tools to provide screening will be consistent across the state and include the *Application for Services* ([DHS 415F](#)), the “*Learning Needs*” *Screening* ([DHS 421](#)), the [DHS 7823A](#) and [DHS 7823B](#), and the Oregon Gain-SS (administered by contracted MH/A&D staff):
 - *Learning Disability Screening*: By using a nationally verified [DHS 421](#), staff will determine which applicants would benefit from a referral for diagnostic testing. Results of the testing will identify whether or not specific learning disabilities are present and assist case managers and job developers to assure that accommodations are provided at the agency services level, on the job, in the educational setting and included in case plans;
 - *DV Screening*: The Department of Human Services (DHS) will continue to make DV screening and safety planning a top priority for TANF applicants and applicants for other programs. Questions on the application help to identify domestic violence issues. The *Safety Assessment* ([DHS 7802](#)) is an additional optional-use screening tool that can be used to identify safety concerns related to domestic violence. Follow up by offering *Temporary Assistance for Domestic Violence Survivors* (TA-DVS) and/or a referral to a domestic violence service provider for safety planning when domestic violence is identified;
 - *Physical Health Screening*: Questions on the application and the [DHS 7823A](#) are used to identify physical health issues that will potentially impact employability. Review any verifications that may be available at the initial interview; following up after the interview using

formal screening tools and requesting information from physician reports if more verification is needed;

- *Alcohol & Drug Screening (A&D) and Mental Health Screening:* Although the [DHS 7823A](#) includes questions related to A&D and MH issues, the Oregon Gain-SS is the official tool used to screen for A&D/MH;
- *Family Stability Issues/Family Supports and Connections:* The application and [DHS 7823A](#) and [DHS 7823B](#) are used to screen for family stability issues. If a referral is indicated, complete the *Family Support and Connections Referral Staffing Form* ([DHS 235](#)) and follow branch protocols for referral.

(D) *Individualized Case Plans.* When appropriate case plans should be developed: Case plans should be individualized, strength based and developed in partnership with the individual. Appropriateness of activities should be informed by information obtained during screenings; from the applicant’s assessment of their strengths, goals and needs; and in collaboration with other agencies/partners the applicant may be working with.

(E) *The Labor Market Test:* When appropriate, applicants should participate in a labor market test.

- The labor market test should include looking at previous job history, employment skills and strengths and criminal history, as well as identifying and addressing factors that contributed to previous job losses:
 - The evaluation can include information from the WAGE screen and other screening tools, such as the [DHS 7823](#) and [DHS 7823B](#) forms;
 - Work skills inventories performed by contractors during Pre-TANF may be used as a tool to identify employment strengths and skills.
- Job search, preparation to seek or obtain employment, improving skills in finding employment, or completing for employment (i.e., job interviews) are activities that can be included in the Labor Market Test:
 - Districts can employ formal work readiness/work skills testing tools to identify “soft skills” and retention issues. These tools are generally administered by contractors;
 - Tools such as CASAS can be used to identify basic skill issues related to employment.

- The labor market test can last no more than 30 days from the filing date for TANF:
 - However, applicants should not have to enter into or remain in the labor market test for 30 days if it is apparent that the applicant will not benefit from it;
 - (a) This is particularly true if the applicant has been through the Pre-TANF Program before; or
 - (b) The applicant is in crisis or is experiencing hardships that make it unlikely that they will be able to access employment within the 30 days;
 - The labor market test should be monitored closely and may include a worksite assessment for applicants who are repeating the Pre-TANF Program.

(F) *Pre-TANF Program Activity Options in conjunction with the labor market test.*

- Other activities and referrals, such as family stability activities, domestic violence services, alcohol and drug (A&D) treatment, mental health (MH) treatment, vocational rehabilitation services, housing referrals, etc., can be offered during Pre-TANF to address concerns affecting the family when participation in both the labor market test and the other activity/referral does not cause undue hardship for the family.

(G) *Development of Transition and Ongoing Case Plans:* Staff must place a heavy emphasis on the development of transitional case plans with applicants who find employment during the Pre-TANF Program and ongoing case plans for those who go to ongoing TANF. These case plans should be developed with the applicant by the time the Pre-TANF Program ends so there is no gap in services, especially for those going to TANF.

(H) *Support Services and basic living expenses:* These support services may be available to support the applicant's case plan and help maintain family stability.

Specific Requirements; Pre-TANF Program Rule

[461-135-0475](#) — Specific Requirements; Pre-TANF Program

Requirement to Complete an Employability Screening and Overview of the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program; TANF Rule

[461-135-0485](#) — Requirement to Complete an Employability Screening and Overview of the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program; TANF Program

Case Plan Activities and Standards for Support Service Payments; JOBS, Post-TANF, REF, SFPSS, TA-DVS, TANF Rule

[461-190-0211](#) — Case Plan Activities and Standards for Support Service Payments; JOBS, Post-TANF, REF, SFPSS, TA-DVS, TANF

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