B. Application, Verification, Eligibility and Participation

1. Application process

The Application for Services (DHS 415F) used to apply for TANF benefits is the form used to determine eligibility for the Pre-TANF Program. Families must meet basic TANF eligibility requirements (including the $2,500 TANF resource limit for applicants) to be eligible for the program. For the Pre-TANF Program, verification of eligibility factors is based on the applicant’s declaration and not on written verification.

Pre-TANF Program services must be offered to all TANF applicants as soon as possible upon submittal of their application but no later than 15 days from the filing date. The filing date for the Pre-TANF Program is the filing date for TANF cash assistance. Do the following as soon as possible when a TANF application is received:

- Gather information about the family to identify emergent needs and determine eligibility for emergency benefits;
- Make referrals to other community-based resources when they are best suited to deal with the family’s issues;
- Screen for TANF eligibility;
- Determine eligibility for expedited and ongoing SNAP benefits, and issue SNAP and emergency benefits using the eligibility and application processing time frame requirements of those programs.

The Pre-TANF Program begins on the date that applicants begin the initial assessment process. Once applicants are presumed eligible for the Pre-TANF Program, changes in circumstances such as lack of participation may not necessarily make them ineligible for other services. A lack of participation without good cause could result in TANF opening with a JOBS disqualification, provided the re-engagement process has been completed.
2. **Who must participate in the Pre-TANF Program initial assessment process**

The Pre-TANF Program begins with the initial assessment process, which includes orientation, intake screening (using the Application for Services (DHS 415F) form) and intake. All applicants applying for TANF must participate in the initial assessment process to determine which benefits and self-sufficiency services the family needs right now. **All** applicants means not only adults applying for benefits for themselves, but also non-needy caretaker relatives, those on SSI or who have disabilities, ineligible noncitizens and children in no-adult households. Based on the results of the initial screening (Employability Screening (DHS 0415A)), further participation in the Pre-TANF Program employment and self sufficiency services will be required of some applicants. See Section C (Case Management) of this chapter (PRT-C) and the applicant assessment process section (CM-B) of the Case Management chapter for what should be included in an initial screening.

SEE SECTION C (PRT-C) OF THIS CHAPTER AND SECTION B (CM-B) OF THE CASE MANAGEMENT CHAPTER FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT.

3. **Who must participate in Pre-TANF Program Employment and Self-Sufficiency services**

After the initial assessment process, engage all applicants presumed to meet TANF eligibility requirements and able to benefit from the program in the Pre-TANF Program services. Use TANF policy to determine eligibility unless indicated otherwise in specific rules. Base eligibility determination for the Pre-TANF Program on the applicant’s declaration.

TANF applicant families with no JOBS-eligible adults in the benefit group are not required to participate in the Pre-TANF Program.

SEE SECTION M (TF-M) OF THE TANF CHAPTER FOR MORE INFORMATION ON WHO IS REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS.

End Pre-TANF Program services early when new information shows the applicant is unable to benefit from the program within the 30-day time period. Domestic violence may be a reason to end the Pre-TANF Program early.
4. **Who is likely to benefit from continued participation in Pre-TANF Program services**

Use the initial assessment process to identify the following types of applicants who could benefit from participation in Pre-TANF Program employment and self-sufficiency services:

- TANF-eligible adults who are employable or who could benefit from the labor market test to assess their employability;

- TANF-eligible adults who seem employable or who could benefit from the labor market test to identify factors affecting employability.

End Pre-TANF Program services early for applicants who seemed able to benefit and who started services, but then were determined not to be likely to benefit based on new information (example: domestic violence, MH or A&D or learning disabilities issues surface that prevent employment now).

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<tr>
<th>Specific Requirements; Pre-TANF Program Rule</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>461-135-0475</strong> — Specific Requirements; Pre-TANF Program</td>
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<th>Requirement to Complete an Employability Screening and Overview of the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program; TANF Rule</th>
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<td><strong>461-135-0485</strong> — Requirement to Complete an Employability Screening and Overview of the Job Opportunity and Basic Skills (JOBS) program; TANF</td>
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5. **Pre-TANF Program duration**

For applicants who are eligible based on their declaration and who are likely to benefit from employment and self-sufficiency activities within the 30-day Pre-TANF program, develop the initial case plan. The Pre-TANF program begins on the filing date. The dates of case plan activities should not exceed the 30-day Pre-TANF program.

End the Pre-TANF Program when one of the following occurs:

- The applicant becomes employed, enters the Post-TANF program or begins a JOBS Plus assignment;

- The applicant is determined unlikely to benefit from continued participation due to the employability of the applicant, the circumstances affecting the family, or other causes;

- The applicant stops cooperating with the Pre-TANF Program case plan and the re-engagement process has ended with a determination that the applicant is willfully noncompliant;
The applicant withdraws their TANF application or is denied; or

Thirty calendar days have elapsed from the filing date for TANF benefits.

Open TANF the day the Pre-TANF Program ends for those who are eligible for TANF.

Verification for TANF eligibility

TANF eligibility is presumed for the Pre-TANF Program. However, to open a TANF grant, verify all eligibility factors within the application processing time frame. To initiate the verification process, list all the factors that need to be verified on the Notice of Pending Status (DHS 210) form.

For applicants who are victims of domestic violence, waive or modify verification requirements if needed to prevent risk of harm to the applicant. For example, no documentation of domestic violence is required to open TANF. See Section I of the TANF chapter (TF-I) for more information about domestic violence guidelines.