



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
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**FAMILY INVESTMENT ADMINISTRATION
INFORMATION MEMO**

Control Number: # 10-35

Issuance Date: June 7, 2010

**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND ELIGIBILITY STAFF**

FROM: KEVIN M. MCGUIRE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE CLOSURES DUE TO THE CHILD
SUPPORT INTERFACE**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE (TCA)

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF PROGRAMS

SUMMARY:

Frequently, the CARES Help Desk receives calls about TCA cases that close when Child Support Fiscal enters child support payments on the TCA case. The payments exceed the TCA grant amount, triggering the closing for the next month. The CARES system is programmed to send the customer an Adverse Action notice, allow 10 days adverse action and close the case. This action allows the customer to receive the child support that was collected. The family is also screened for F05 Medical Assistance (MA). If the family is not eligible for F05, the Assistance Unit's (AU) MA is extended for four months.

This Information Memo provides additional information on the CARES/Child Support system interface that provides Child Support information to the case manager and may trigger a TCA closing.

The Formula for TCA Closures because of Child Support Collections

CARES looks at the information entered on the case regardless of where it came from.

AU Income= (TCA earnings plus unearned plus housing subsidy (\$60) if received + any child support collected.

If the AU's income exceeds the TCA grant the TCA is closed.

The System looks at TCA and Child Support activity for three months (months 'A', 'B' and 'C'). For months 'A' and 'B', TCA is received.

The total AU income in month 'A' added to the child support collected in month 'A' determines whether the TCA will remain open or close in **month 'C'**.

During month 'B', if the combined total of TCA income and child support collected exceeds the TCA benefit, the TCA case is closed and any child support **paid in month 'C'** will be turned over to the TCA family in month 'C'.

Example

TCA = \$300

In month 'A' the family receives TCA. The non-custodial parent (NCP) pays child support of \$350 in month 'A'.

The TCA on-going month is month 'B'.

The family receives TCA in month 'B'. In month 'B' the NCP paid CS of \$350 and the System assumes he/she will continue to pay and closes the TCA for month 'C'. The on-going month 'C' shows a status of closed.

TCA calendar month is 'C';

TCA on-going month is 'D' and both months (C and D) are closed. In 'C' the family will begin to receive the child support collected in the month. The child support continues to go to the family.

Understanding System Programming and Policy

Following the example above:

- Adverse Action time - The non-custodial parent has up to the last day of month 'A' to pay child support and be timely. If the payment (and any combination of TCA countable income) is greater than the TCA grant in month 'A', the family receives their TCA grant for month 'B'. Ten days adverse action is sent and month 'C' is closed.
- During month "C", the NCP has up to the last day of the month to pay his or her child support.
 - If the NCP does not pay his or her child support by the last day of month 'B', the family must reapply for TCA on or after the 1st of the month of month 'C' which is closed .
 - If the TCA case is closed for 30 days or less, it can be reopened. After 30 days the customer must reapply.

- The TCA AU for on-going month 'C' can be reinstated in calendar month 'B' **only if the non-custodial parent:**
 - Died
 - Is incarcerated;
 - Has become disabled; or
 - Became unemployed.

Narrate CARES thoroughly if any of the above situations exist.

The System wants to know for “certain” not to expect any child support in month 'B'. CSEA requires verification of any of the above reported occurrences.

- When the NCP is reported to have died, CSEA verifies it with a death certificate, obituary or on-line.
- CSEA uses an incarceration report to obtain verification of status for an NCP reported as incarcerated.
- A doctor must document an NCP’s disability.
- When a NCP become unemployed, his statement is accepted and the status of his earnings is checked.

In these situations the case manager must reinstate the TCA case; however, the Help Desk may need to complete a data correction. The data correction removes the child support information and allows the on-going month ‘C’ to remain active.

- If the non-custodial parent is paying his or her child support and the amount is less than the TCA grant, the TCA case remains open.
- If the TCA AU has unearned income or someone becomes employed, the income is added to the child support collected and may cause the on-going month 'C' to close. When month 'C' becomes the calendar month, the child support collected is sent to the family.
- This only applies to child support payments that are not Income Tax Intercept (State or Federal). Intercepts are handled differently.
 - Intercepted income taxes are applied to child support arrears first before determining whether any balance should be given to the family.
- Month 'C' child support may not be issued to the family during the first week of month 'C'. The payments are issued depending on when CSEA receives them from the non-custodial parent.
 - CSEA issues the child support money when it is received from the non-custodial parent. The non-custodial parent has until the last day of the month to pay his or her child support. The family may receive the child support at the end of the month.

INQUIRIES: Please direct all TCA inquiries to Marilyn Lorenzo at 410-767-7333 or mlorenzo@dhr.state.md.us or Gretchen Simpson at 410-767-7937 or gsimpson@dhr.state.md.us.

cc: DHR Executive Staff
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