



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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Effective Date: Upon Receipt
Issuance Date: July 1, 1998

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

FROM: *Charles E. Harvey for*
LYNDA FOX, DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR PROGRAMS AND LOCAL
OPERATIONS

RE: TWENTY-FOUR MONTH TIME LIMIT WORK REQUIREMENT
CUSTOMER REPORTS

PROGRAM AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS
OFFICE OF WORK OPPORTUNITIES

SUMMARY:

Work requirements under the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 (PRWORA) were outlined in FIA/OPI Action Transmittal (AT) #97-67 dated December 24, 1996. The AT included the actions related to the federal work requirements to be taken by the Local Departments of Social Services (LDSS). Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) time limits are delineated in AT #97-61 dated November 24, 1996.

Under PRWORA, states must require a parent receiving assistance through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) block grant to engage in work, as defined by the state, once the person is determined ready to work, or once the person has received assistance for 24 months (whether consecutive or not), whichever is earlier. There are no exemptions to the 24-month work requirement.

The LDSS's have great flexibility in defining work activities, and are expected to have sufficient work activities for their customers who have received 24 or more months of TANF funded benefits since (and including) January 1997. Expectations may be set in each customer's Family Independence Plan tailored to that customer. If the expectations set forth in the agreement are met, the LDSS has the flexibility to count meeting those expectations as complying with the 24-month work activity to ensure that customers do not lose benefits. Sanction procedures for customers who refuse to cooperate with TCA work requirements were

outlined in AT #97-25 Revised dated November 1, 1996. A customer must be afforded the opportunity to participate in an activity and, only if the customer fails to participate in that activity is the conciliation process completed and the sanction applied. Therefore, if an activity is not available in the LDSS, the customer is not sanctioned.

Several LDSS requested reports to assist in identifying the TCA customers in their jurisdictions affected by the 24-month work requirement. Two reports and mailing labels for customers listed on the reports have been generated and are being sent under separate cover. The reports list the customers in your jurisdiction who have received TCA benefits continuously from January 1997 through May 1998. **The TCA customer groups being moved into a state-funded TCA program are not included in these reports.**

The reports, broken by District Office within each LDSS and by Eligibility Worker ID within the District Office, are as follows:

- The "Customers in State Defined Work Activities" report lists all 17-month customers participating in a work activity as of July 17, 1998, as recorded in the Work Opportunities Management Information System (WO MIS).
- The "Customers not in State Defined Work Activities" report lists all 17-month customers not participating in a work activity (did not have an open activity record in WO MIS) as of July 17, 1998.

These reports will be run regularly to monitor LDSS progress toward ensuring that all appropriate adult customers who reach the 24-month limit are participating in a state defined work activity.

ACTION REQUIRED:

Upon receipt of the reports, the LDSS is to:

1. Carefully review the activity information for each customer listed on each report and determine if the customer is
 - recorded in WO MIS as participating in an activity when the customer is not presently in a work activity,
 - participating in an activity that was never recorded in WO MIS or
 - recorded in WO MIS with activity information different from the customer's current work activity.
2. If the customer is in a work activity and WO MIS data for that activity is correct, no further action on WO MIS is required.

3. Change and/or add to the information on the WO MIS database if the WO MIS information is incorrect. Office of Work Opportunities staff are available to assist with WO MIS issues.
4. Determine which, if any, of the sets of mailing labels it wants to use to notify customers. Some LDSS's may use the first round to reconcile case records to WOMIS. Other LDSS's may want to send letters to all customers or to those not on the WOMIS list. LDSS's may use the mailing labels to send a notice to each customer
 - not participating in a work activity stating the actions required of the customer or the actions of the LDSS for the customer to participate in a work activity. (For your convenience, a sample letter is attached, Attachment A).
 - participating in a work activity, with emphasis on staying in a work activity in order to continue TCA benefits. (A sample letter is attached, Attachment B).

You may use these sample letters or develop your own letters that meet the specific needs of your local department. You must, however, include the reminder notice found at the bottom of the sample letters in the letters sent to your customers.

Upon receipt of these reports, it is recommended that the LDSS work quickly to ensure correct data on WO MIS and to ensure customers are meeting work requirements prior to the 24-month time limit of January 1999.

These reports and labels will be run regularly. Local departments may adapt the use of these tools to their particular circumstances. The goal is to ensure all appropriate adults are participating in a work activity when they hit the 24-month limit.

CARES:

If the case manager determines that a customer is not meeting the 24-month work requirement, follow the conciliation, sanctioning and CARES procedures outlined in AT #97-25 Revised. Monthly reports identifying TCA customers affected by the 24-month work requirement will be generated and distributed to local departments once all necessary programming to produce these reports has been completed.

ACTION DUE

Upon receipt.

INQUIRIES

Please direct policy questions to Edna McAbier at 410 767-8805, Work Opportunities and

WOMIS questions to Fred Schroeder at 410 767-8192 and CARES questions to Patricia Bailey at 410 767-7318.

cc: FIA Management Staff
Constituent Services
DHR Help Desk

ATTACHMENT A

Dear _____,

The goal of the Temporary Cash Assistance program is to help with the needs of your family as your family works toward becoming independent. One of the rules of the program is that by the time you get cash benefits for 24 months, you must be in a work activity or your benefits will stop.

Our records show that you have been getting cash assistance for ____ months and you are not in a work activity. This means that if you are not in a work activity by December of this year, your benefits may stop.

An appointment has been scheduled for you on _____
at _____ a.m./p.m. at _____.
It is very important that you keep this appointment. If you cannot come in on this date and time, please call _____ on _____
and schedule a new appointment.

We are looking forward to helping you and your family become independent so that you will no longer need the cash assistance you now receive. Thank you.

Sincerely,

REMINDER:

WHEN YOU GET A JOB, CONTACT YOUR CASE MANAGER IMMEDIATELY.

- YOU WILL RECEIVE 12 MONTHS OF EXTENDED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.**
- YOU MAY CONTINUE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS AND CHILD CARE.**

ATTACHMENT B

Dear _____,

The goal of the Temporary Cash Assistance program is to help with the needs of your family as your family works toward becoming independent. One of the rules of the program is that by the time you get cash benefits for 24 months, you must be in a work activity or your benefits will stop.

Our records show that you have been getting cash assistance for ___ months and you are currently in a work activity. It is very important that you stay in a work activity to make sure that your benefits do not stop.

We are looking forward to continuing to help you and your family become independent so that you will no longer need the cash assistance you now receive. Thank you.

Sincerely,

REMINDER:

WHEN YOU GET A JOB, CONTACT YOUR CASE MANAGER IMMEDIATELY.

- YOU WILL RECEIVE 12 MONTHS OF EXTENDED MEDICAL ASSISTANCE.
- YOU MAY CONTINUE TO BE ELIGIBLE FOR FOOD STAMPS AND CHILD CARE.