

Department of Social and Health Services  
Olympia, Washington  
**EAZ Manual**

Revision  
Category TANF/SFA Temporary Absence  
Issued February 10, 2023  
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**Summary**

See below for edited text:

This section has been updated to reflect suggested revisions as part of an agency workgroup to refresh policy and procedures specific to Coordinated and Concurrent TANF benefits.

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## TANF/SFA Temporary Absence

**Created on:**

Jul 11 2017

**Revised** ~~November xx, 2022~~ ~~July 11, 2020~~

### Purpose:

This category explains the requirements for a child to live with a relative, guardian, or custodian to be eligible for TANF or SFA.

WAC 388-454-0015 Temporary absence from the home.

- Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities

## WAC 388-454-0020 Temporary absence to attend school or training.

- [Clarifying Information and Worker Responsibilities](#)

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### Clarifying Information - WAC 388-454-0015

1. **Definition of temporary absence:** a separation from the child and their parent/caregiver that is no more than 180 days. The 180-day period starts the day the child/ren actually left the home. The parent/caregiver has to report within five days of learning the child's absence will exceed this period.
  - a. **Recipients:** A temporary absence can't exceed 180 days unless the parent/caregiver is receiving care in a hospital, substance abuse treatment facility, or other medical institution. See [Processing Alternatives](#) for ACES coding. See [Worker Responsibilities #6](#) below for more information on CPI when the temporary absence exceeds 180 days.
  - b. **Applicants:**
    - Open assistance if the [Department of Children, Youth, and Families Child Welfare Programs Division \(CWPDDCYF\)](#) verifies and sends a completed 15-362 that the child(/ren) are anticipated to return to the parent/caregiver within 180 days.
    - Open assistance up to 30 days in advance of a child's return home if the child has already been out of the home for more than 180 days at the time of application for benefits **and** [CWPDDCYF](#) verifies and sends a completed 15-362 that the child will return home within 30 days of application.

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Notes: (1) The definition of "placed by [CWPDDCYF](#)" includes when the placement is court-ordered or voluntary. [CWPDDCYF](#) may place children for several months with a protective custody order but without a formal dependency court order. (2) Temporary absence also applies to TANF households ~~that is~~ receiving assistance (pregnancy or another child in the home). In this situation, the child returning home is the "applicant" and the 30-day rule would apply.

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**[NOTE: Please also see Living with a Relative or Guardian \(known as Kinship Care\)](#)**

- c. **Adding a Child to an Existing TANF/SFA AU:** Add a child to an existing AU if the child is out of the home temporarily due to hospitalization and meets all other eligibility criteria.

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**EXAMPLE:** Susie is pregnant and receiving a one-person TANF grant ~~and~~. ~~She~~ delivers ~~the~~ baby early. The hospital verifies that the baby will remain hospitalized for up to 3 months. If ~~the mother~~ Susie provides the needed verification, add the baby to the AU.

**2. Care and Control:** In temporary absence situations, other than those due to involvement with ~~the Children’s Administration (CA) / Division of Children and Family Services (DCFS), child welfare agencies,~~ the primary caregiver maintains overall responsibility of the child. Someone else, however, provides day-to-day care of the child. These situations may include working away from the home, military deployments, hospitalizations/treatments, and attending school/training per WAC 388-454-0020.

An Exception to Rule (ETR) for concurrent benefits may be requested if a child is temporarily absent from the home for reasons other than child welfare placements and is expected to return to the home within 180 days. CSD headquarter staff will base the determination for concurrent benefits on whether the individual situation promotes family reunification and meets all other ETR requirements.

**2.3. Concurrent/~~Continued~~ Coordinated Benefits:** When CWPDDCYF places a child in temporary ~~unlicensed~~ care and expects the child(ren) to return home within 180 days, concurrent/~~continued~~ coordinated benefits are allowable. The parent/primary caregiver can continue to receive TANF/SFA when the child is placed in ~~unlicensed~~ any foster care (i.e. a relative placement or an “in loco parentis” situation), even if the temporary caregiver applies and receives TANF/SFA for the child. A child placed in licensed foster care ~~who will~~ receives foster care payments and can’t receive TANF benefits with a temporary caregiver at the same time.

~~An Exception to Rule (ETR) for concurrent benefits may be requested if a child is temporarily absent from the home for reasons other than CWPDDCYF placement and is expected to return to the home within 180 days. CSD headquarter staff will base the determination for concurrent benefits on whether the individual situation promotes family reunification and meets all other ETR requirements.~~

**EXAMPLE:**

A mother and her child get TANF. CWPDDCYF removes the child from the mother’s home on August 15. CWPDDCYF confirms they expect the child to return home within 180 days. The mother continues to receive a 2-person TANF grant. CWPDDCYF places the child with the grandmother who applies for a non-needy, child only TANF grant. Because CWPDDCYF confirmed the plan for the child ~~to will~~ return home in 180 days, the child can receive concurrent TANF benefits. The grandmother is eligible for TANF for the child and the mother is eligible for TANF for herself and the child. (Note: If eligible, the grandmother could receive TANF assistance for herself and the child-).

**Update:** The grandmother is now a licensed foster care placement and is receiving foster care payments. The grandmother is no longer eligible for child only TANF benefits. The mother continues to receive a 2-person TANF grant.

**Update 180 days later:** ~~The mCWPDP determines the plan for the family is no longer reunification. The mother is no longer eligible for TANF benefits, other is still receiving TANF and DCYF provides an update to request an ETR for a 90-day extension of temporary absence, as the primary plan remains for reunification, however, it will not occur in the original 180 days. Request an ETR and continue TANF benefits.~~

**Update 270 days later:** The mother is still receiving TANF and DCYF provides an update to request an ETR for a second 90-day extension of temporary absence, as the primary plan remains for reunification, however, safe reunification will occur after 180 days and the first extension of 90 days. Request an ETR and continue TANF benefits.

**Please note:** The total number of days to extend temporary absence with approved ETR requests may not exceed an additional 180 days (totaling 360 days).

**Does the situation meet temporary absence rules?**

(This table outlines whether a situation meets temporary absence rules and gives examples on whether TANF benefits are allowable to the AU.)

Situation	Recipient	Example	Applicant	Example
<i>Child expected to be out of the AU 180 days or more</i>	NO	Pamela receives TANF for herself and one child and reports that <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> removed the child from her care. <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> confirms the child will be out of Pamela’s care at least 12 months. Pamela can’t continue to receive TANF benefits <i>without an ETR</i> .	NO	Sabrina applies for TANF for herself and her child. Her child has been in unlicensed foster care for 8 months and <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> expects reunification within 60 days. Sabrina can’t receive TANF benefits until the expected reunification is <a href="#">within 30 days</a> .
<i>Child is out of the AU for 180 days or more but <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> verifies child will return within 30 days</i>	NO	Jim receives TANF for himself and his 2 children. <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> removed the children from his home 6 months ago and confirmed the reunification plan was 180 days. The reunification plan extended	YES	1. Jim applies for TANF for himself and his 2 children. <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> removed the children from his home 8 months ago but verified they will return to his care in 3

Situation	Recipient	Example	Applicant	Example
		<p>and <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> confirms they expect the children to return within 6 weeks. Jim can't continue receiving TANF benefits without an ETR. See <a href="#">Worker Responsibilities #3</a>.</p>		<p>weeks. Approve the 3-person TANF grant once he meets all other eligibility criteria.</p> <p>2. Tammy and her child, Kyle, receive TANF. Her older child, Peter hasn't lived with her for 1 year. Tammy is requesting to have Peter added to her TANF. <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> verifies that Peter will return to Tammy's care in 30 days. Add Peter to the TANF AU, once they meet all other eligibility criteria.</p>
<p><i>Child expected to return to AU within 180 days</i></p>	<p><b>YES</b></p>	<p>1. Pamela receives TANF for herself and one child and reports that <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> removed the child from her care. <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> confirms they expect the child to return to Pamela's care within 180 days. Pamela can continue to receive TANF benefits during this reunification period.</p>	<p><b>YES</b></p>	<p>1. Pamela applies for TANF for herself and one child and reports that <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> removed the child from her care 2 months ago. <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> confirms they expect the child to return to Pamela's care within 180 days from the day they removed the child. Pamela can receive TANF benefits during</p>

Situation	Recipient	Example	Applicant	Example
		<p>2. Kimberly receives a one-person TANF grant because she is pregnant. When she delivers the newborn, <del>CWPD</del> <u>DCYF</u> removes the child from her care while she is in the hospital but confirms they expect the infant to return to Kimberly's care within 180 days. Kimberly can continue receiving TANF benefits during the reunification period and can also receive benefits for the newborn provided she takes proper steps to add the child to the TANF AU.</p>		<p>this reunification period.</p> <p>2. Kimberly applies for TANF for herself and her newborn. She reports <del>CWPD</del> <u>DCYF</u> removed the child from her care after the delivery while she was in the hospital. <del>CWPD</del> <u>DCYF</u> confirms they expect the infant to return to Kimberly's care within 180 days. Kimberly can receive TANF benefits for herself and the newborn during this reunification period.</p>
<p><i>Parent/caregiver and child(ren) separated due to fire, flood, court-ordered visit, or temporary caregiver's visit and expected return within 180 days</i></p>	<p><b>YES</b></p>	<p>1. Bill, Jane and their two children receive TANF. Their landlord asks them to vacate for 4 months during repairs from flood damage, resulting in homelessness for the family. The children stay with their neighbors until</p>	<p><b>YES</b></p>	<p>1. Bill applies for TANF for himself, his wife and their two children. Their landlord asks them to vacate for 4 months during repairs from flood damage, resulting in homelessness for the family. The children stay with their</p>

Situation	Recipient	Example	Applicant	Example
		<p>they can return to their family home. The family states they expect the children to be out of their home and daily care 4 months. The family continues to receive TANF, but concurrent benefits aren't allowable due to no <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> involvement.</p> <p>2. Sarah and her child receive TANF. She reports that her child is going to stay with her mother 2 months while she looks for stable housing. Sarah may continue receiving TANF. Sarah's mother isn't eligible for TANF for her granddaughter due to no <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> involvement.</p>		<p>neighbors until they can return to their family home. The family states that they expect the children to be out of their home and daily care 4 months. The family may receive TANF, provided they meet all other eligibility conditions, but concurrent benefits aren't allowable due to no <a href="#">CWPDDCYF</a> involvement.</p> <p>2. Sarah applies for TANF for herself and her child. Her child has been living with Sarah's mom the past 4 months while Sarah looks for stable housing. There is no plan for her child to return home. Sarah isn't eligible for TANF at this time because there is no set timeframe the child will be out of the home.</p>
<i>Parent/caregiver receiving care in a</i>	<b>YES</b>	See <a href="#">Worker Responsibilities #6-Worker</a>	<b>NO</b>	

Situation	Recipient	Example	Applicant	Example
<i>hospital, substance abuse treatment facility or other medical institution</i>		<a href="#">Responsibilities #6</a> below for examples and CPI procedures after care reaches 180 days.		
<i>Parent/caregiver/ child incarcerated for any length of time</i>	NO		NO	
<i>Runaway child when there is no clear expectation of return</i>	NO		NO	

## Worker Responsibilities - WAC 388-454-0015

1. **Length of Temporary Absence:** When [CWPDDCYF](#) confirms a child is expected to return to the parent/caregiver's home within 180 days on the 15-362 form, treat as temporary absence and document this information in the case record. Set the 15-362 form to the 150th day of placement date to confirm the child returns home [or if updated form has been received](#).
2. **Foster Care (Licensed and Unlicensed/Caregiver):** Treat a child in foster care as temporarily absent if [CWPDDCYF](#) states the child will return to the home within 180 days.
  - a. When a child is removed from a Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) / State Family Assistance (SFA) household, you will receive information from ~~the~~ Foster Care ~~Medical Unit and Adoption Support (FCAS)~~ via a DMS tickler [to determine ongoing eligibility for cash and or basic food.](#) ~~The Foster Care Medical Unit will update the child's Relative Placement Code.~~
  - b. You must update the Living Arrangement code to FE on the child's client page. If you have questions [about the child's health care benefits](#), please contact the Health Care Authority (HCA) Foster Care/~~Adoption Support Team Medical Unit or CWPD.~~ ~~The Foster Care Medical Unit can provide you with general information about the absence and the child's health care benefits.~~
  - c. [CWPDDCYF](#) must provide information [for active TANF cases](#) about the absence and placement via the Coordinated Benefits Referral Form ([DCYF 15-362](#)) to the DSHS



Coordinated Benefits mailbox. [CWPDDCYF](#) must confirm if they expect the child to return home within 180 days. Please see Concurrent Benefits Processing Desk Aid.

- d. Continue benefits for a child receiving TANF/SFA if [CWPDDCYF](#) expects the child to return home within 180 days.
  - e. Set a tickle for the 150th day from placement to confirm the child returns home. Request updated [15-362 form information](#) from [CWPDDCYF if not provided](#). **Do not terminate assistance.**
  - f. Take appropriate action based on the information provided on the updated DCYF 15-362 form:
    1. Determine if an extension has been requested and submit an ETR from Barcode.
    2. Terminate assistance for a TANF/SFA recipient child only when [CWPDDCYF](#) confirms the child will not return home within 180 days or within 180 days of approved extensions. *(unless an exception to rule has been requested and approved by CSD HQ).*
- f.g. Authorize assistance to an **applicant** if [CWPDDCYF](#) confirms that the child is expected to return home within 180 days from the ~~original~~ date of placement. **Even if** the child has already been out of the home for 180 days or more, authorize benefits if [CWPDDCYF](#) confirms that the child will return home within 30 days from the date of application.

**EXAMPLE:**

Molly is on TANF with her 3 children. [CWPDDCYF](#) removes the children from Molly's home and places them with an unlicensed caregiver. [CWPDDCYF](#) sends a Coordinated Benefits Referral Form (15-362) to the DSHS Coordinated Benefits mailbox indicating that the children's temporary placement and expected return home to Molly is within 180 days. Continue TANF assistance for Molly and her three children. Three weeks later, [CWPDDCYF](#) sends another Referral Form indicating that there is a change in the family reunification plan and the children will **not** return home in 180 days. Terminate the TANF assistance with advance and adequate notice.

3. **-Concurrent Benefits:** If [CWPDDCYF](#) expects a child in kinship care to return home within 180 days, approve concurrent benefits for the child. Please also see Living with a Relative or Guardian.
  - a. When [CWPDDCYF](#) removes a child from a TANF/SFA household and confirms the planned absence is less than 180 days, continue benefits for the primary caregiver and child.
  - o [CWPDDCYF](#) must email the Coordinated Benefits Referral Form (15-362) to the CSD Coordinated Benefits mailbox for all families who receive [TANF/SFA](#) benefits while their children are in temporary placement.

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Note: [CWPDDCYF](#) sends a Coordinated Benefits Referral Form (15-362) to the CSD Coordinated Benefits mailbox to:

- Confirm temporary placement of up to 180 days,
- Update placement location, including return to home,
- Requests for:
  - ETRs for extension beyond original 180 days.
  - Terminating TANF as:
    - Reunification will not occur within 180 days of approved ETR extensions
    - Permanency plan has changed, or case is aggravated and there is no plan for reunification.

- c. The CWPDDCYF social service specialist worker may request to become an Advocate Representative (AREP screen) for the family, for notification of updates made to the household's benefits during the family reunification period. See ACES Manual – Authorized Representatives/Protective Payee or EA-Z manual – Authorized Representative-Food, Cash, and Medical Benefit Issuances for questions regarding authorized representatives.
- d. The CWPDDCYF social service specialist worker may recommend that the CSO review the need for a protective payee. See WAC 388-460-0035 for details on when to use a protective payee.
- e. If the temporary caregiver applies for TANF/SFA and is otherwise eligible, authorize assistance to the temporary caregiver (relative or other unlicensed adult caregiver) and the child. The child may ~~will~~ be on two TANF / SFA AU's at the same time in these situations. Medical assistance (D-series medical) will be available to the child only in the household where the child is physically residing, open in all placement cases.
- f. A CWPDDCYF statement regarding a relative caregiver's relationship to the child is acceptable verification for assistance. See WAC 388-454-0010 #3 regarding the relative's relationship to the child.
- g. Terminate the child's assistance from the primary caregiver's TANF/SFA assistance only if CWPDDCYF notifies ~~the CSODSHS~~ that the child will no longer be returning home within 180 days on the ~~, unless the~~ completed Coordinated Benefits Referral Form (15-362). ~~has been updated with a request for a 60 or 90 day extension.~~

**EXAMPLE:** A grandmother applies for TANF assistance for herself and her grandchild. DCYF removed the child from the mother's home and placed the child temporarily with the grandmother. She is already receivingThe D02 medical narrative for the child verifies placement with grandmother, opened by Foster Care Medical. The grandchild is already receiving TANF assistance with her mother. ~~CWPD removed the child from the mother's home and placed the child temporarily with the grandmother. CWPDDCYF~~ confirms they expect the child to

return to the mother's home within 180 days. If the grandmother and child meet all other eligibility criteria, authorize TANF assistance. The child will be receiving TANF in two AUs. The child is eligible to receive Basic Food ~~or medical assistance~~ with his grandmother's AU.

4. **“Runaway” Children:** A child who runs away doesn't meet the criteria for a temporary absence unless there is a clear expectation of when the child is returning.

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**NOTE:**

Families of runaways may contact the [Division of Children and Family Services \(DCYFS\)](#) for Family Reconciliation Services.

5. **Reporting Temporary Absences:** A parent/caregiver must report within five days of learning that a child will be out of their care for more than 180 days. Disqualify the parent/caregiver from TANF as required under [WAC 388-418-0005](#) and [WAC 388-418-0007](#) when they don't report within 5 days of learning that the child will be out of the home more than 180 days. Don't disqualify the parent/caregiver when they are working with [CWPDDCYF](#) and [CWPDDCYF](#) doesn't notify CSD within 5 days that the family reunification plan changed.

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**EXAMPLE:** Julie and her two children currently receive TANF. Julie reported on 6/10 that one of her children is going to visit her father for the summer and return on 8/28. The worker sets a tickle for 9/1 to confirm that the child has returned to the mother's care. On 9/4 the worker sends a request for information letter to verify if the child returned. On 9/13 Julie calls the CSO and tells the worker that she found out on 8/26 the child plans to stay with her father. The worker won't adjust any benefits for September but will terminate the TANF benefits that child effective 9/30. Since there is still a child in the home, the Julie will receive a two-person grant for the child for the month of October. The worker will reinstates Julie's TANF benefits for November and issue a two-person grant.

**EXAMPLE:** Ben applies for TANF for himself and two children. [CWPDDCYF](#) verifies that his two children, removed by [CWPDDCYF](#) 8 months ago, will return to his home in 3 weeks. The worker approves a 3-person TANF grant since there is [CWPDDCYF](#) verification that the children will return home within 30 days. After 1 1/2 weeks, we learn that there has been a change in the reunification plan and the children will no longer be returning home. The worker must terminate the TANF assistance with advance and adequate notice, because there are no eligible children in the home. An overpayment isn't appropriate in this situation.

6. **Temporary Absence and CPI Amounts:** The assistance payment reduces to the CPI amount, if the cash recipient receives care in a hospital or treatment facility and the stay is

over 180 days. Maintain the case record in the originating office when placement is made outside of the catchment area, if the participant plans on returning to that area.

**EXAMPLE:**

1. Jim and his child receive TANF. Jim enters inpatient chemical dependency treatment anticipating an 8-month stay. The facility accommodates children residing with their parent(s) but confirms the parent will keep primary care and control of their child and must cover their child's needs. When the worker verifies the care exceeds 180 days, Jim's grant will reduce to the CPI amount and the child's grant will remain the same provided there are no other change of circumstances that affect the grant amount.
2. Chloe applies for TANF for herself and her one child. She closed in NCS four months ago and must complete the 28-day cure period prior to TANF approval. She reports that she will be going to inpatient chemical dependency treatment one week from today, and the child will be staying with a friend. This situation meets the criteria for temporary absence, and Chloe may receive TANF assistance for herself and the child. If the treatment exceeds 180 days and it's verified, Chloe's grant must reduce to the CPI amount on the 181st day provided there is adequate 10-day notice.
3. Katie applies for TANF for herself and her newborn. You determine that the AU is eligible for a full TANF grant. During the interview, she explains that she will be going to inpatient chemical dependency treatment in three days and anticipates staying for 9 months. The treatment facility will allow the newborn to stay with Katie, but she must cover the newborn's needs. This situation meets the criteria for temporary absence, and Katie receives the full TANF grant for herself and the child for the first 180 days. When you have verification that the care will exceed 180 days, Katie's grant must reduce to the CPI amount on the 181st day provided there is adequate 10-day notice. The child's grant will remain the same provided there are no other change of circumstances that affect the grant amount.
4. Similar to the example from [Clarifying Information #3](#) above: Susie is pregnant and receiving a full one person TANF grant. She delivers her baby early. Susie submits all verification needed to add the newborn to the TANF AU, but the hospital verifies they expect the baby will remain hospitalized for up to 9 months due to complications. She reports no other change of circumstances. Issue the full two-person TANF grant for the first 180 days. At 181 days, the newborn's grant must reduce to the CPI amount provided there are no other changes of circumstances reported and there is adequate 10-day notice.
5. Jennifer applies for TANF for herself, and she is pregnant with no other children. You determine that she is eligible for a full TANF grant. During the interview, she informs you that she is going to inpatient mental health treatment next week, and she anticipates being there 3 months. Issue the full one-person TANF grant.

a. Update: Two months later, the WorkFirst Program Specialist receives the monthly WorkFirst Participation Verification Form, and Jennifer's counselor states that they are extending her stay in treatment to 7 months. On the 181st days, Jennifer's portion of the TANF grant must be reduced to the CPI amount provided there are no other changes of circumstances reported and there is adequate 10-day notice.

**NOTE:** ~~The Foster Care Medical Team (FCMT) can be reached at 1-800-547-3109.~~