

Department of Social and Health Services

Olympia, Washington

EAZ Manual

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Summary

Updating language about optional AU members

Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-408-0025](#)

1. Parent or caretaker relative of a child that gets SSI:

In order to decide if an AU member is eligible for TANF, count a child who gets SSI as an "eligible child" even though the child isn't eligible for TANF. Don't include the SSI child's income, resources, or needs when you determine the AU's eligibility and grant amount. If the parent of an SSI child asks for assistance as a needy caretaker relative, don't include the parent's spouse or other children in the AU unless the parent wants assistance for them.

2. Relatives who are not the child's parent:

- a. If a relative who isn't a parent chooses to get TANF instead of foster care payments they can choose whether or not to be in the AU based on their needs.
- b. If a relative who isn't a parent chooses to get foster care payments for a child in their care and the relative needs financial assistance, count the child a "dependent child" to make the relative eligible for TANF or SFA. Don't include the foster child's

income, resources, or needs when you determine the AU's eligibility and grant amounts.

- c. If a couple is married and applying as a needy relative for a child that is not their child, only one of the relatives can be a recipient on the grant. The non-parental caregiver and their spouse cannot both be on the grant.
- d. If a relative who isn't a parent chooses to get TANF for multiple siblings in their care, they can choose to not count one or more of the siblings as a "recipient" if that sibling has income or including that sibling would cause the entire AU to be ineligible for TANF

EXAMPLE A grandmother is the caretaker for her two grandchildren who have different mothers, making them half-siblings. One of the children is receiving Social Security Survivors Benefits from their mother's Social Security claim. The grandmother can choose not to include that sibling in the AU and not count them in the needs.

EXAMPLE A child is living with their half-sibling and the half-siblings mother. The mother is not the parent of this child and has no financial responsibility for this child. She is working and has income. She can choose to apply for non-needy TANF for the child that is not hers, and not include her child in the needs, since including her child would require her to be part of the TANF AU and her income would cause the AU to be over income for TANF.

3. **Child in common of unmarried parents:**

Unmarried parents that live together may choose to exclude their common child if one of the parents is a TANF or SFA **recipient**. The excluded child in common may be eligible for medical.

EXAMPLE A mother and her two children get TANF and live with the mother's boyfriend, who is not the father of the children. The mother gives birth to her boyfriend's child. The mother can choose whether or not to include the baby in the AU. If we include the baby, we must include the boyfriend. If the boyfriend has income or resources, it may be the best for the client to not include the common child.

EXAMPLE Two unrelated TANF AUs get assistance and live together. (AU#1 is a woman and her two children. AU#2 is a man and his two children.) The woman and man have a child in common and want to exclude the child in common from being on assistance. Because both parents are recipients of assistance, then neither parent is able to financially support the child in common. Therefore, they do not have the option to exclude the child from the AU. They will need to become one TANF household (one AU) as required under [WAC 388-408-0030](#).

EXAMPLE AU contains a woman, her boyfriend, his child, and their common child. Nobody gets TANF or SFA. The boyfriend applies for TANF for himself and his child only. He doesn't want to include the common child because the mom gets UC and can provide for their child. As an applicant, the boyfriend doesn't have the choice to exclude the common child. All four people are in the AU since we can't exclude the common child for a reason other than need.

NOTE: In the example above, if the AU is eligible when we include the woman's income, the AU can then exclude the common child because it is now a **recipient** AU. If the family is eligible in the

month of application, you can consider them as recipients and exclude the child before you issue benefits for the AU.

EXAMPLE Susan applies for assistance for herself and her two children from a previous marriage. She lives with her husband Doug and his child from a previous marriage - Timmy. The couple doesn't have a child in common. She doesn't want assistance for Doug or Timmy because he works and gets child support. Even though we can exclude Timmy from the AU because he is the other children's stepbrother, we must include Doug because he is the stepfather of Susan's two children. If we exclude Timmy, we would allocate some of Doug's earned income to Timmy. See [INCOME - Allocation and Deeming](#).

4. What happens when a TANF AU with an optional household member has a change in circumstances?

Families can always change the status of optional TANF AU members. In some cases, removing the optional AU member from the TANF AU may increase the benefits to the family.

EXAMPLE Anita has no income and is unable to work. She is getting a 3-person, needy-TANF grant for herself and her two nephews. Anita is later approved for SSA disability benefits of \$1,080 a month.

- If Anita remains on the AU as needy, the TANF closes for the entire household due to excess countable income.
- However, Aunt Anita is an optional AU member so we can opt her off the TANF grant. Her income would not be counted and she can continue to get a non-needy TANF grant for her two nephews.

EXAMPLE Grandma Irma is receiving a non-needy TANF grant for her daughter's two kids; Cassie and Jayden. Cassie's dad passes away and she starts to receive \$425 per month in SSA survivor benefits. Rather than recalculating benefits, ACES creates a 412 alert. If we keep Cassie on the TANF AU, the 2-person TANF grant would be reduced by \$425.

- Since Cassie isn't financially responsible for Jayden we can opt Cassie off the TANF grant. Grandma Irma can continue to receive a 1-person TANF grant for Jayden.

EXAMPLE 20-year-old Sally is getting a non-needy TANF grant for her minor sibling Kelly after their parents pass away. After a few months, Kelly starts receiving \$1,200 in SSA survivor benefits.

- Kelly is not an optional AU member so we budget the SSA benefits when determining TANF eligibility, his family would be over the income limit for TANF.

EXAMPLE Alonso is receiving a non-needy TANF for his 17-year-old niece Grace. Grace turns 18 years old in May. Her demographics screen indicates she is scheduled to graduate high school in June of the same year. We must determine if Grace will complete high school in June:

- Grace is not an optional AU member. Send a request for information letter requesting verification that Grace is still attending full time high school and making satisfactory progress.

- If Grace is no longer in school, she is no longer eligible for TANF, with no eligible minors in the AU, the TANF would terminate.