

# WORKFIRST TANF TIME LIMITS

IPAC Children's Administration Subcommittee Meeting: December 8, 2010

## BACKGROUND

Under WorkFirst time limit changes, starting February 1, 2011, a family's TANF cash assistance will end when an adult on the grant has received at least 60 months of TANF cash assistance unless the adult qualifies for a new set of time limit extensions. Up to 5,000 to 7,000 families may lose TANF cash aid.

Under the new time limit rules, an adult may qualify for an extension when they have received 60 months of TANF cash assistance and meet one or more of the following criteria:

- Already exempt from WorkFirst participation due to age, disability or because the adult must stay home to care for a disabled family member.
- Required to apply for SSI on his or her Individual Responsibility Plan.
- Following a plan to address family violence developed by a person trained in family violence.
- Involved in an open child welfare case with a state or tribal government and this is the first time the adult has had any child in dependency.
- Working an average of 32 hours or more each week in unsubsidized employment.

## PROJECTED IMPACTS

The attached demographic profile is based on data we pulled in August for adults who would probably lose cash aid under the proposed time limit extension rules. Please note that 3.7% of the adults in this cohort were American Indian/Alaska Native, which is slightly lower than the 4% found in the overall TANF caseload.

## PROPOSED SCHEDULE

- We have sent a mass mailing to all WorkFirst clients on October 19 to give them general information about the proposed TANF time limit changes. (See attached)
- Each region is discussing the upcoming changes and making joint plans with their local planning areas and tribal governments to look at how many people may lose TANF (estimated at between 5,000 to 7,000 families) and what resources are available to them.
- We expect to interview in excess of 5,000 clients between November 22 and January 31 to make decisions about who will qualify for a time limit extension under the new rules.
- We will send out client notices of approved time limit extensions or case closures in mid-January and close cases as of February 1, 2011.

## INDIAN COUNTRY DISREGARD

The state's automated systems are programmed to stop the WorkFirst clock while an adult is living in Indian Country with high not employed rates. Tribal TANF programs determine whether to stop the clock for their clients. If the adult moves from Tribal TANF to WorkFirst, our staff will ask the Tribe for countable and not countable months and code the Tribal TANF program's month count into our automated systems.

## RESOURCES

During the time limit interviews the WorkFirst Program Specialist or Social Worker will work with the family to develop the best possible transition plan. This will include a discussion of how the family will be supported when TANF/SFA is terminated and what services or assistance may be available including:

- Transitional food and medical assistance
- Child Support
- Available Community Resources
- Emergency cash assistance (Consolidated Emergency Assistance Payment) that is available once per year.
- Disability Lifeline for pregnant women until the baby is born.

When the adult doesn't attend his or her time limit interview, the department will mail them information, including a list of available community resources.

## STATE/TRIBAL TANF COORDINATION

- CSOs and Tribal TANF programs are encouraged to modify their operating agreements, as needed, to track cases that no longer qualify for WorkFirst under the new time limit policy.
- CSOs can provide contact persons for each Tribe to field questions.

## KINSHIP CAREGIVERS

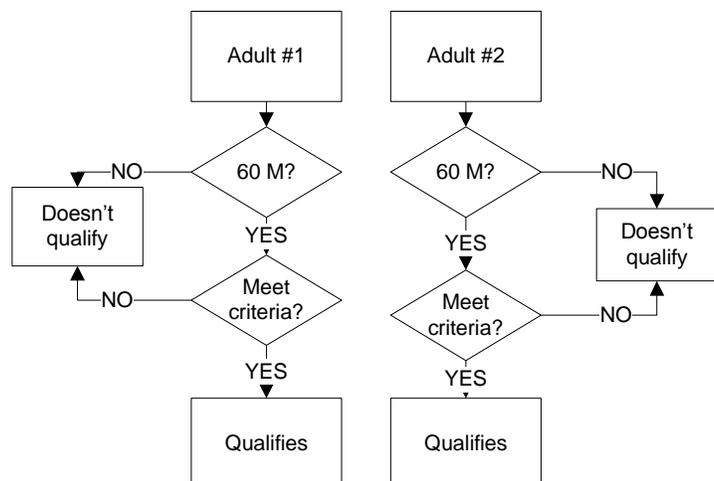
- Grandparents or other family members who are caring for the children will qualify for a time limit extension if they are 55 years of age or older.
- If the kinship caregiver is younger than age 55, they can take themselves off of the grant and receive a TANF grant for the children only.

## TEEN PARENTS

- We don't count months of TANF toward the 60-month time limit for pregnant or parenting teens who are under 18 years of age unless they are married or emancipated.

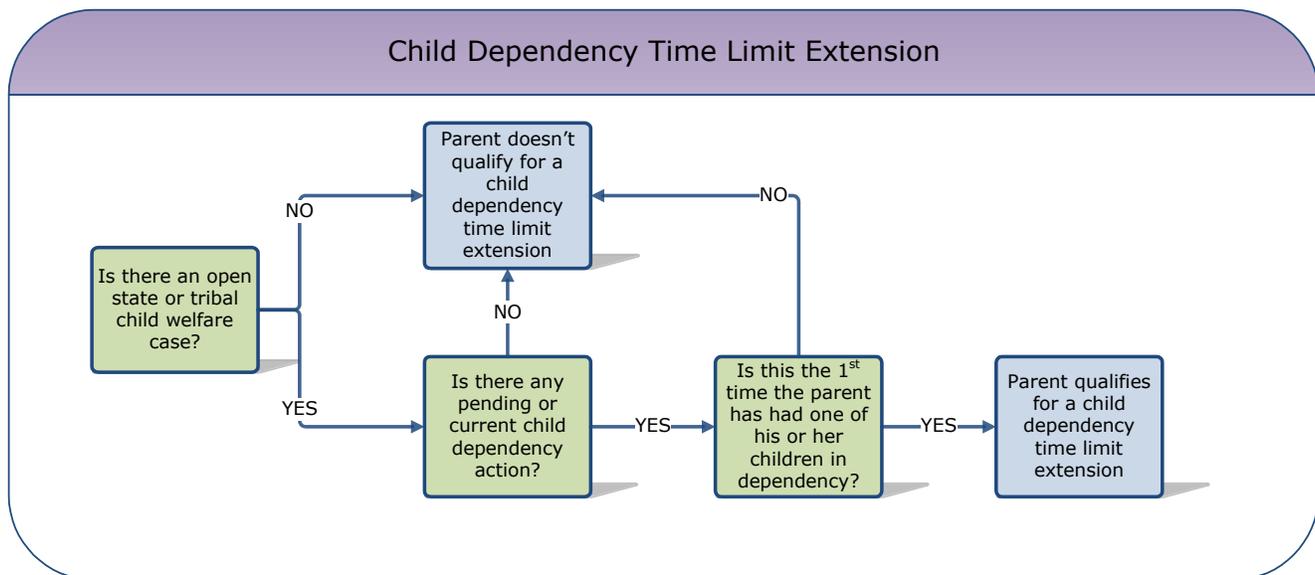
## TWO PARENT FAMILIES

If either adult qualifies for a time limit extension, the family stays on TANF. To qualify, the adult must have 60 months or more on TANF and meet extension criteria.



## CHILD DEPENDENCY

- The time limit extension can be approved regardless of whether it is a state or a tribal child court handling the case
  - The department is asking for guidance on how to confirm child dependency from a tribal court or child welfare system when a parent wants to apply for this type of time limit extension.
- The child dependency extension applies if the adult has never had any of his or her children in child dependency before and a court-ordered child dependency action or consideration is underway.
- We can approve the child dependency time limit extension through the end of any concurrent benefit and six-month follow up period.



## CONCURRENT BENEFITS

*Under a special arrangement between the Economic Services Administration (which administers the TANF grant) and the Children's Administration (which intervenes in cases of abuse or neglect), when Children's removes a child from her parent's home, ESA can continue the original family TANF grant to the parent for up to 180 days, as long as the parent is making progress toward reunification. This policy applies whether the child is temporarily placed with a relative who receives a child-only TANF grant or in foster care. The main purpose of this policy is to enable the parent to procure or maintain housing for her family. In some cases, this support can be extended beyond 180 days if Children's confirms that the parent is continuing to make progress toward reunification but needs a little more time. The Concurrent Benefits/Dual TANF policy is codified in Washington Administrative Code 388-454-0015.*