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Connecticut

Applications

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Filing and Processing Applications

All persons have a right to file an application for cash assistance.

Right provided for in regulation

The same application for cash assistance is used throughout the state.

The statewide application is a joint application for:

- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- State "general assistance"
- State medical assistance
- State supplement for aged, blind or disabled

State policy sets standards of timeliness for processing applications:

Applications must be acted upon within 45 days.

The agency is required to issue a written decision on applications.

Pre-Application Requirements

The state does not impose requirements that must be met before a family can submit an application for cash assistance.

Pending Application Requirements

The state imposes pending application requirements that a family must meet while its cash assistance application is pending. Failure to meet these requirements results in denial of the application.

The pending application requirements are:

Cooperate with child support activity:

Provide information; assist in court actions; give state direct support payments

Cooperate with finger imaging

No applicants are exempt from pending application requirements.

Personal Responsibility Contracts

Applicants and recipients are not required to sign a personal responsibility contract.

Employability Plans

Applicants must sign an employability plan, i.e. a plan that covers only work requirements for the individual, after eligibility is determined.

An individual develops an employability plan with:

TANF eligibility worker at the TANF office

Another worker at the TANF office

A worker at an office separate from the TANF office:

Department of Social Services, Department of Labor, Regional Workforce Development Board, and/or contractor's office (Community Action Agency or "Safety Net" contractor)

The following people must sign an employability plan:

Head of household

Both parents in "two-parent" families

Minor parent who is not head of household

Disqualified or ineligible parents of children applying for assistance; minor parent if not in school

The following applicants and recipients are exempt from developing and/or signing an employability plan:

Individual exempt from work requirements

Individual with a child under age 12 months

Disabled caretaker

Non-parent caretaker not receiving assistance

Minor parent attending school full-time; caretaker of incapacitated household member. Parent of a child subject to the family cap is NOT exempt.

Employability plans do not include a state or county agreement to provide services.

There is no sanction for refusal to develop or sign an employability plan.

Formal Diversion Programs

The state operates a formal diversion program.

Current cash assistance recipients may participate in the cash diversion program, as follows:

- Diversion could be offered to families reaching the end of 21-month time limited assistance

The maximum cash payment is three months' worth of benefits.

The size of a diversion payment is calculated on a case-by-case basis up to the maximum.

The income and asset limits used to determine diversion program eligibility are the same as those applied to applicants for ongoing cash assistance.

Eligibility for a cash diversion payment is decided based upon:

- Caseworker discretion (caseworker has discretion to offer diversion to households meeting a program profile)

A family that receives a diversion payment is ineligible for another diversion payment for 12 months.

A family that receives a diversion payment is ineligible for ongoing cash assistance for 3 months.

A family that receives a diversion payment:

- Is ineligible for more than three diversion payments in a lifetime

A family can receive cash assistance during the period of ineligibility under the following circumstances:

- If there is "undue hardship" as the result of fire, flood, loss of employment not related to willful misconduct, incapacity, or serious threat to health, safety, or welfare that can only be addressed with cash assistance

A diversion payment uses up 3 months' of time-limited assistance regardless of the amount of the payment.

When a family receives a diversion payment, its child support rights are not assigned to the state.

Families that receive diversion payments are eligible to receive:

Child care services:

Same child care assistance as that provided to cash assistance recipients

Employment services:

Referral to Department of Labor for job search assistance may be made

Other:

Emergency housing assistance, moving and storage expenses, security deposit assistance, and some limited "special needs" assistance

Emergency Assistance

The state provides emergency assistance to families that are receiving TANF cash assistance as follows:

- Eviction prevention
- Short-term rental assistance
- Emergency housing assistance
- Temporary shelter for homeless families
- Moving and storage expenses

The state does not provide emergency assistance to families that are eligible for but not receiving TANF cash assistance.

The state provides emergency assistance to families that are not eligible for TANF cash assistance as follows:

- Eviction prevention
- Short-term rental assistance
- Emergency housing assistance
- Case management; limited funds for vouchers for emergency food; referrals to existing local community services

Note: Information on exemptions from work requirements and sanctions for noncompliance with work requirements will be available in the Work and Sanction Provisions sections later this year.