



# Applications

## Formal Diversion Programs

## Emergency Assistance

### Maryland

#### Applications

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**Filing and Processing 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
- Child care
- Emergency Assistance
- State "general assistance"

State policy sets standards of timeliness for processing applications:

Applications must be acted upon within 30 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:

- Sign personal responsibility contract
- Complete an assessment
- Conduct job search
- Agree to cooperate with child support enforcement
- Cooperate with child support activity:
  - Provide information; meet with child support enforcement worker
- Sign medical release

No applicants are exempt from pending application requirements.

## **Personal Responsibility Contracts**

Applicants and/or recipients are required to sign a personal responsibility contract.

Applicants must sign a personal responsibility contract:  
While the application is pending

The personal responsibility contract is:  
A standard form listing obligations

The following people must sign the contract:

- Head of household

The following applicants and recipients are exempt from developing and signing a contract:

- No exemptions specified

The following obligations can be included in the contract:

- Agreement to participate in work activities
- Participation in specific work activities
- Child school attendance requirements
- Minor parent school attendance requirements
- Immunization or preventative health requirements
- Cooperation with child support enforcement
- Drug or alcohol provisions

The contract does not include a state or county agreement to provide services.

The sanction for refusing to sign a contract is:  
Denial of application or termination of grant

The sanction lasts until re-application.

## Employability Plans

Applicants must sign an employability plan, i.e. a plan that covers only work requirements, as follows:

The state has a two-part work activity agreement. The first part is signed while application is pending, and the second part is signed after eligibility is determined.

An individual develops an employability plan with:

TANF eligibility worker at the TANF office

The following people must sign an employability plan:

Head of household

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

Individual exempt from work requirements

Child under age 16

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

A sanction is imposed if an applicant or recipient refuses to sign employability plan. The sanction for refusing to sign the plan is:

Denial of application or termination of grant

The sanction lasts until compliance.

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## Formal Diversion Programs

The state operates a formal diversion program.

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

Use same criteria as for applicants: job opportunity available, will lead to welfare avoidance, etc.

The maximum cash payment is generally three months' worth of benefits, but payment can be up to 12 months' worth of benefits if there is a compelling need.

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:

- Objective written criteria
- Caseworker discretion

A family that receives a diversion payment:

- Is ineligible for ongoing cash assistance for the number of months' benefit the diversion payment equals

A diversion payment does not count as using up any months of time-limited assistance.

When a family receives a diversion payment, its child support rights are assigned to the state.

Families that receive diversion payments are eligible to receive:

- Child care services:
  - If income eligible after diversion payment

The estimated scale of the diversion program in terms of the proportion of TANF applicants receiving diversion payments is:

1.3 percent

## **Emergency Assistance**

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

- At local discretion; most provide for eviction prevention and assistance to prevent utility shut-off

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

- At local discretion; most provide for eviction prevention and assistance to prevent utility shut-off

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

*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.*