



# Applications

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### Montana

#### 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 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 does not impose requirements (other than verification of information concerning eligibility) that a family must meet in order for its cash assistance application to be processed and approved.

**Personal  
Responsibility  
Contracts**

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

Applicants must sign a personal responsibility contract:  
After eligibility is determined

The personal responsibility contract is:

A standard form listing obligations  
The product of individualized assessment or worker discretion

The contract identifies specific employment activities.

The following people must sign the contract:

Head of household  
Both parents in "two-parent" families  
Minor parent who is not head of household  
Individual age 16 or older who is not in school, (whether or not s/he is a minor parent)

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

Non-parent caretaker not receiving assistance

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  
Participation in life skills or parenting classes  
Drug or alcohol provisions  
Teen parent living arrangement  
Employment-related or family-strengthening activities allowable under Community Operating Plan

The contract includes a state or county agreement to provide services, and lists the services.

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

The sanction lasts until compliance.

**Employability Plans**

Applicants and recipients are not required to sign an employability plan, i.e. a plan that covers only work requirements.

## Formal Diversion Programs

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The state operates a formal diversion program.

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

Pathways recipients losing eligibility due to prospective earnings may qualify for a diversion payment. Job Supplement Program recipients may qualify for a diversion payment and continue to be eligible for JSP.

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:

- Objective written criteria
- Caseworker discretion
- Participant request

A family that receives a diversion payment:

- Is ineligible for ongoing cash assistance for two times the number of months for which diversion payment is made; permanently ineligible for another diversion payment

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 not assigned to the state.

Families that receive diversion payments are eligible to receive:

- Child care services:
  - If eligible for CCDF child care assistance

- Case management services:
  - Some through FAIM coordinator and/or WORC case manager

## Emergency Assistance

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

- Eviction prevention
- Short-term rental assistance
- Prevent utility shutoff or restore service
- Emergency housing assistance
- Temporary shelter for homeless families
- Basic needs such as food, clothing, personal care items; temporary transportation if essential to retain employment; replacement or repair of necessary family-owned appliances and household furnishings; and other items or services necessary to overcome the emergency situation

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

- Eviction prevention
- Short-term rental assistance
- Prevent utility shutoff or restore service
- Emergency housing assistance
- Temporary shelter for homeless families
- Basic needs such as food, clothing, personal care items; temporary transportation if essential to retain employment; replacement or repair of necessary family-owned appliances and household furnishings; and other items or services necessary to overcome the emergency situation

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

- Eviction prevention
- Short-term rental assistance
- Prevent utility shutoff or restore service
- Emergency housing assistance
- Temporary shelter for homeless families
- Basic needs such as food, clothing, personal care items; temporary transportation if essential to retain employment; replacement or repair of necessary family-owned appliances and household furnishings; and other items or services necessary to overcome the emergency situation

*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.*