



# Applications

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### North Carolina

#### 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 statute

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

The statewide application is a joint application for:

Food Stamps  
Medicaid

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:

- Sign personal responsibility contract
- Submit to drug screening
- Register with First Stop Employment Assistance program

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
- Both parents in "two-parent" families
- Non-parent caretaker not receiving assistance

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
- Participation in life skills or parenting classes
- Drug or alcohol provisions
- Teen parent living arrangement

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 must sign an employability plan, i.e. a plan that covers only work requirements, at county discretion.

An individual develops an employability plan with:

- TANF eligibility worker at the TANF office
- Another worker at the TANF office

The following people must sign an employability plan:

- Head of household
- Both parents in "two-parent" families

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

- Individual with a child under age 12 months
- Non-parent caretaker not receiving assistance

Employability plans include a state or county agreement to provide services, and the services are listed.

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.

## Formal Diversion Programs

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The state operates a formal diversion program.

Current cash assistance recipients may not participate in the diversion program.

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

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

If a family that has received a diversion payment later receives ongoing cash assistance, the family must repay the 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
- Case management services
- Employment services
- Referrals to child support enforcement and other agency and county resources

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

- Less than 10 percent

## 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

One-time payment of up to \$300 per year may be provided for any of the above reasons or other reasons.

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

One-time payment of up to \$300 per year may be provided for any of the above reasons or other reasons.

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.*