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Virginia

Applications

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Filing and Processing Applications

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

Right provided in state statute

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

The statewide application is a joint application for:

- Food Stamps
- Medicaid
- Emergency Assistance
- State "general assistance"
- Auxiliary Grant (state SSI supplement) and several other programs

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 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 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:

 - In some agencies, the employment services worker may be located in a separate office from the TANF agency.

 - In some agencies, the job of the employment services worker may be contracted out.

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 exempt from work requirements

- Individual with a child under age 18 months

- Disabled caretaker

- Non-parent caretaker not receiving assistance

- Individual under age 16 or over age 60; sole caregiver of a disabled household member; woman who is four to nine months pregnant. Note: Exemption for capped child ends at six weeks, not 18 months.

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.

Formal Diversion Programs

The state operates a formal diversion program.

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

The maximum cash payment is four 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
- Eligibility worker must determine that diversionary assistance will "resolve the emergency."

A family that receives a diversion payment is ineligible for another diversion payment for 60 months.

A family that receives a diversion payment:

- Is ineligible for ongoing cash assistance for 1.33 times the number of days for which assistance is granted

A diversion payment uses one month of the 60 month lifetime limit, but does not count toward the state's 24 month limit.

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

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

- About five percent

Emergency Assistance

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
- Food; clothing; and moving, storage or replacement of essential household equipment; emergency assistance limited to a total of \$500 (all of which must be received within 30 days) in a 12 month period. The emergency must result from a natural disaster, fire, or the loss of all earned income during the period from December 1 through March 31.

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
- Food; clothing; and moving, storage or replacement of essential household equipment; emergency assistance limited to a total of \$500 (all of which must be received within 30 days) in a 12 month period. The emergency must result from a natural disaster, fire, or the loss of all earned income during the period from December 1 through March 31.

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
- Food; clothing; and moving, storage or replacement of essential household equipment; emergency assistance limited to a total of \$500 (all of which must be received within 30 days) in a 12 month period. The emergency must result from a natural disaster, fire, or the loss of all earned income during the period from December 1 through March 31.

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.