



**POLICY
NUMBER 024**

Administrative Policy

| | | | |
|-------------------|--|-----------------|------------------|
| Title: | Cash Assistance Severance Benefit | | |
| Program: | Welfare Transition | | |
| Effective: | 1/21/2004 | Revised: | 5/24/2019 |

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) guidance on providing Cash Assistance Severance Benefits to eligible Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) recipients.

II. BACKGROUND

During the 2000 legislative session, eligibility criteria was established and codified in Section 445.026, Florida Statutes, (F.S.), for providing a Cash Assistance Severance Benefit to eligible TCA recipients. The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan provides further clarification for eligibility requirements and the provision of Cash Assistance Severance Benefit which was implemented as an effort to reduce TCA.

III. AUTHORITIES

[Florida Statutes, Section 445.026](#)

[TANF State Plan](#)

IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

The Cash Assistance Severance Benefit was implemented to reduce a Welfare Transition recipient's dependence on TCA, which is time limited. Any month a recipient receives any amount of TCA is counted towards his or her lifetime eligibility limit. The lifetime eligibility limit in Florida is 48 months. The Cash Assistance Severance Benefit allows the

recipient to take a break from receiving TCA and conserves month(s) of eligibility. The LWDB must inform the TCA recipient who becomes or is employed and receives earnings that he or she has two options regarding the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit which are as follows:

1. The TCA recipient who is employed and receiving earnings can choose to accept a one-time lump sum payment of \$1,000 instead of receiving on-going TCA, which will allow the participant to preserve TCA eligibility months. The Cash Assistance Severance Benefit must be requested prior to receiving the last month of TCA and it counts towards the participant's lifetime limit, for the month in which the payment is made in lieu of cash assistance. The participant must be terminated from TCA, but remains eligible for Medicaid, food assistance and transitional services subject to program eligibility; or
2. The TCA recipient who is employed and receiving earnings can choose not to receive the one-time lump sum payment of \$1,000. The recipient is not penalized for opting not to receive the one-time payment. The individual may continue to receive TCA and transitional services, subject to program eligibility.

A. Transitional Services and Benefits

The LWDB must provide information about all available transitional services to the eligible individual who chooses to receive the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit. Transitional services may be available up to two years and include education and training, transportation services and childcare, depending on priorities and resources of the LWDB. The LWDB must inform the individual that he or she may be eligible for Medicaid and/or food stamps if he or she meets the eligibility requirements for the programs.

The participant must be eligible for on-going TCA for the month in which the payment is issued. The request must not be backdated to a month the participant was eligible for ongoing TCA. If the individual is no longer receiving TCA or eligible for TCA in the month of the payment request, even if they have met all the other cash severability eligibility criteria, the Department of Children and Families (DCF) will not authorize a cash severance payment nor approve payment if the application is backdated. Participants who opt to receive a Cash Assistance Severance Benefit must report earnings to the LWDB.

B. Applying for TCA Due to An Emergency

The LWDB must inform the TCA recipient that he or she must sign a [Cash Severance Benefit Agreement, form DEO-WTP-2286](#), agreeing not to apply for or accept cash assistance for six months after receipt of the one-time payment unless an emergency can be demonstrated.

After receipt of the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit, an individual may need to reapply to DCF for TCA prior to the end of six months due to an emergency situation. DCF will review the request and subsequently refer the individual to the LWDB to determine whether there is an acceptable emergency. Acceptable emergencies include the following:

1. Hospitalization or illness documented by a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459, F.S., resulting in significant loss of income or loss of employment;
2. Loss of earned income for reasons other than resignation without good cause or termination for cause;
3. Natural disaster that is responsible for destruction of the family's major property;
4. Loss of housing;
5. Automobile repairs;
6. Catching up on shelter payments to prevent eviction;
7. Catching up on utility bills, except cable television and long-distance telephone charges, to prevent interruption of services;
8. Emergency child care while seeking permanent child care;
9. Other situations of similar nature affecting the individual's employment; and
10. Domestic violence.

The LWDB must evaluate whether the participant meets the emergency criteria using the [Diversion Services Emergency Criteria, form DEO 0001](#). If the participant meets the emergency criteria, the LWDB must inform DCF that the participant can reapply for TCA before the six-month timeframe expires.

If the individual reapplies for TCA and is determined eligible, the participant must repay the \$1,000 cash severance benefit payment. The \$1,000 shall be deducted from the monthly TCA payments issued to the individual or family. This deduction will be prorated over an eight-month period (\$1,000 divided by eight = \$125 per month). If the participant does not have eight months left on his or her time limit for TCA, the deduction will be applied to the remaining months.

C. Local Operating Procedures

Local operating procedures (LOP) guide how the LWDB will operationalize policies related to cash assistance severance benefit. The LWDB must develop LOPs as follows:

1. Outline the documents that will be accepted from the TCA recipient to verify income from employment.

2. Develop a process to inform the TCA recipient of the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit and receipt of the [Opportunities and Obligations Acknowledgement, form DEO-WTP-0008](#) that initially notifies the participant of benefits and services including the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit and the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit Agreement, form DEO-WTP-2286, that provides the eligibility criteria for receipt of the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit. In the event of an emergency, the agreement provides for an exception to this restriction, provided that the one-time payment must be deducted from any TCA for which the family is subsequently approved. The deduction may be prorated over an eight-month period. The original forms must be maintained in the participant's case file and a copy of each form is given to the participant. A copy of form DEO-WTP-2286 must be provided to DCF for completion of Section C if appropriate. Section IV of this policy includes links to the referenced forms in this section.
3. Outline a process to follow up with the former TCA recipient to ensure he or she remains employed for at least six months after receiving the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit.

D. State and Local Monitoring

Services and activities provided under the Welfare Transition program must be monitored annually for compliance with programmatic requirements by the Department of Economic Opportunity (DEO). DEO will monitor requirements outlined in this policy and local operating procedures. Additionally, LWDBs must establish local monitoring policies and procedures that include, at a minimum:

1. The roles of the recipient and the LWDB staff.
2. Local monitoring procedures for the provision of the Cash Assistance Severance Benefit to ensure that all parties are and remain in compliance.

V. DEFINITIONS

Good Cause – The temporary inability to participate in work or alternative requirement activities due to circumstances beyond the participant's control.

VI. REVISION HISTORY

This administrative policy updates and replaces AWI FG 024, Cash Assistance Severance Benefit, dated January 21, 2004.

VII. ATTACHMENTS

[Cash Severance Benefit Agreement, form DEO-WTP-2286](#)

[Diversion Services Emergency Criteria, form DEO 0001](#)

[Opportunities and Obligations Acknowledgement, form DEO-WTP-0008](#)