

Department of Social and Health Services
Olympia, Washington
EAZ Manual

Revision 1183
Category TANF/SFA Time Limits
Issued February 2, 2022
Revision Author: Melissa Kenney
Division CSD
Mail Stop 45440
Phone (360) 764-3272
Email Melissa.Kenney@dshs.wa.gov

Summary

See below for edited text:

TANF/SFA Time Limits

Created on: Sep 08 2016

Revised on: ~~May 11, 2017~~ February 1, 2022

Purpose:

State and federal law limit the time an adult can receive TANF and SFA benefits to a total of sixty months in a lifetime. This section includes the rules to determine what types of assistance count toward the 60-month limit, who the limits apply to, and when months of assistance don't count toward the limit.

This category contains the following sections:

[WAC 388-484-0005](#) There is a five-year (sixty-month) time limit for TANF, SFA and GA-S cash assistance.

- [Clarifying Information](#) and [Worker Responsibilities](#)

WAC 388-484-0006 TANF/SFA limit extensions.

- [Clarifying Information](#)

WAC 388-484-0010 How does the five-year (sixty-month time limit for TANF and SFA cash assistance apply to adults living in Indian Country?

- [Clarifying Information](#) and [Worker Responsibilities](#)

Clarifying Information - WAC 388-484-0005

1. Start Date for TANF Time Limits

TANF time limits started in Washington State on August 1, 1997. Since we started time limits on this date, we don't count TANF benefits a client received in another state before August 1997 toward the client's 60-month limit, even if the other state started TANF time limits at an earlier date.

State law applies the 60-month time limit to ineligible parents and counts months, back to August 1, 1997, when the ineligible parent receives TANF/SFA for their child.

ACES 3G tracks each adult recipient's and ineligible parent's 60-month limit, lists each countable month as an adult recipient or ineligible parent month and indicates when the case is closed or extended under adult recipient or ineligible parent 60-month limit.

See [WorkFirst Handbook 3.7.1.2](#), ~~What is the difference between the adult recipient and ineligible parent time limit~~, for more information.

These differences include:

1. An *adult recipient* is an adult receiving assistance in a TANF/SFA assistance unit. The adult recipient may be the parent or another type of non-parental kinship caregiver such as a sibling, aunt, uncle or grandparent.
 - a. Any month an adult recipient receives TANF/SFA counts as an *adult recipient month*.
 - b. The *adult recipient time limit* applies when an adult recipient has at least 60 countable adult recipient months.
2. An *ineligible parent* is a non-recipient parent who is receiving a TANF/SFA grant for their child(ren).
 - a. Any month an ineligible parent receives TANF/SFA for their child counts as an *ineligible parent month*.
 - b. The *ineligible parent time limit* applies when a current or former ineligible parent has at least 60 total countable months, once we combine their adult recipient and ineligible parent months.

Note: Adults who qualify for state-funded cash assistance as *Survivors of Certain Crimes* are considered recipients, though may be undocumented. They receive cash assistance in a solely state-funded, SFA assistance unit. This population increments **ineligible parent months** in ACES. For more information on this population, see *EA-Z Manual: Citizenship and Immigration Status Requirements Specific to Program – Benefits for Survivors of Certain Crimes*.

2. Benefits that Don't Count Toward the Time Limit

Don't count a month toward a client's sixty-month limit if they didn't get TANF/SFA cash benefits unless they are an ineligible parent. Types of assistance that don't count toward the client's limit include:

1. Diversion Cash Assistance;
2. WorkFirst support services;
3. Medical assistance; and
4. Food assistance.

3. Extending TANF/SFA Due to Hardship (20% Extension)

Federal and state law allows us to extend up to 20% of the TANF caseload beyond sixty months due to hardship. We don't extend a client's benefits until they reach their 60-month limit.

4. Automated Adjustments of TANF/SFA Months

ACES 3G credits back repaid TANF/SFS months of total ineligibility and L&I reimbursements.

Worker Responsibility - WAC 388-484-0005

1. When a Client Received TANF In Another State or From a Tribal TANF Program

- a. Contact the other state's TANF agency or tribal TANF program to verify:
 - i. The period of time the adult client(s) received TANF since August 1, 1997; and
 - ii. How many months count toward the federal TANF 60-month time limit. Reasons why a state/tribe may not count months toward the federal 60-month time limit include:
 - A. The client meets the state's Indian Country disregard;
 - B. The state has a waiver; or
 - C. The client was exempt from time limits (the clock was stopped) because assistance received by the client was 100% state funded.
- b. Don't count any months of TANF the client received before August 1997, even if the other state started time limits before this date.
- c. Don't count any out of state or Tribal TANF ineligible parent months.

- d. Enter the beginning and end dates of TANF from other states or Tribal TANF, then select the appropriate reason. If Tribal TANF is counted, use the Tribal TANF (TT) code.
 - e. Document the contact you make with the other state agency in the remarks section of the adult client's Time Clock Page. Include the following information:
 - . Name, title, and phone number of the agency representative;
 - i. The periods of time the adult client(s) received TANF since August 1, 1997;
 - ii. How many months of countable TANF assistance the client(s) received; and
 - iii. The reason we don't count the assistance if any months aren't countable.
2. **Time Limit Extension Denial that Result in a Program Change**

When TANF/SFA recipients reach their 60-month time limit and have been approved for PWA/HEN by a disability specialist, process the change of programs without a new application or ER form. The WFPS will:

1. Update the TLE denial and finalize the TANF/SFA AU.
2. Screen in the appropriate cash AU.
3. Manually change the Review End Date on the Eligibility Details screen when there is no other active AU by calculating the remaining months of the AU that closed. Note: If the Review Date is less than 60 days, follow Application and Eligibility Reviews procedures.
4. Deny the first month (and ongoing month when applicable) with Reason Code 559, *Client Already Received Assistance in Another AU for this Benefit Month*, and issue benefits for the new cash AU beginning the 1st of the following month after the previous cash AU closes.
5. Document the correct certification period in the Narrative.

Clarifying Information - [WAC 388-484-0006](#)

1. **Time Limit Extensions**

- o Time limit extensions are additional months of TANF/SFA cash assistance when a client meets extension criteria.

2. **Time Limit Extension Criteria and Process**

- o Please see [WorkFirst Handbook 3.7.1](#).

3. **Benefits during Time Limit Extensions**

- o Benefits, services, and supports won't change based on the time limit extension, but may change based on eligibility rules and changes reported.
- o During the time limit extension period, recipients must continue to meet all TANF/SFA eligibility requirements; otherwise, benefits should end.

4. **Time Limit Extension Periods**

- o The review periods for time limit extensions depend on the criteria the client meets. Please see the [Time Limit Hardship Extension Chart](#) for more information.

Clarifying Information - [WAC 388-484-0010](#)

1. Federal welfare reform law requires states to exempt adults who live in Indian country from the 60-month TANF time limit. This policy recognizes the ties American Indian and Alaskan Native families have to their land and culture and the difficulty in finding employment on their land. The policy also recognizes that these families shouldn't have to leave their reservations or other areas of Indian Country in order to find employment once they use 60-months of cash assistance.
2. This policy, however, **doesn't** exempt them from participation requirements. Qualifying recipients must still participate in WorkFirst activities even though a month of cash assistance doesn't count toward their 60-month clock.
3. Months don't count when the parent/caregiver receives TANF and meets all of the following conditions:
 - a. The parent, co-parent, spouse or adult relative caretaker lives in "Indian Country." "Indian Country" includes all lands within the limits of any reservation, allotment (also known as "trust" land), and dependent Indian communities. Living near reservation areas, or in areas next to reservations, are **not** considered Indian Country, unless they are also allotted land or within a dependent Indian community. There are no dependent Indian communities in Washington at this time. (Note: These recipients may have different mailing and residential addresses.)
 - b. The percentage of Indian adults in the area of Indian Country that are not employed is at least 50 percent or greater. (See the [Not Employed Rates Table](#) below.)
 - Example - The adult lives in a qualifying area of Indian Country but has a mailing address outside of Indian Country. Can the adult still receive the Indian Country exemption? Yes. The requirement only applies to where they are living. The exemption is not affected by the mailing address. ACES 3G will read the residential address only.
 - Example - The adult lives outside of the qualifying area of Indian Country but has a mailing address on the reservation. Can the adult still receive the Indian Country exemption? No. The adult must live in a qualifying area of Indian Country in order to get the exemption.
4. Automated tracking of adults living in Indian Country:
 - ACES 3G automatically tracks the process of not counting the months of cash assistance for adults living in qualifying Indian country.
5. When State and Tribal offices have different counts of months on assistance:
 - Accept the combined count of both State and Tribal TANF months without duplicating months. If a family exhausted their Tribal TANF months and no extensions are available under that program, the family may still be eligible for a time limit extension under the State TANF program.

Worker Responsibilities - [WAC 388-484-0010](#)

Ask clients if they are American Indians or Alaskan Natives. We don't require verification papers because each Tribe has different qualifications for membership or enrollment. If clients choose to report a change that they are American Indians or Alaskan Natives, accept their declaration.

NOTE:

Accept the client's self-reported Indian heritage without proof.

1. Enter the Race and Native American Tribe fields on the ACES 3G Client Page.
2. ACES 3G won't be able to tell if some clients live in Indian country when the address isn't standard (can't be found), the client is homeless, used a post office box / rural route address and didn't have a residential address, or is in the [Address Confidentiality Program](#). For these clients either:
 - a. Ask the client whether they live in Indian country and enter the Indian Country code. ACES 3G will disregard future months until the client moves.
 - b. Standardize the address. ACES 3G will disregard future months until the client moves.

The ZIP Codes Which Contain Some Indian Country As Of October 1, 2016

98002	98022	98023	98092	98108	98221	98223
98226	98232	98241	98244	98247	98248	98257
98264	98270	98271	98273	98284	98292	98331
98342	98346	98350	98357	98363	98370	98371
98381	98382	98391	98392	98404	98421	98422
98424	98443	98513	98526	98548	98552	98568
98579	98584	98587	98591	98613	98619	98620
98635	98672	98673	98812	98813	98831	98840
98841	98903	98920	98932	98933	98935	98948
98951	98952	99001	99013	99040	99109	99116
99119	99122	99124	99129	99138	99140	99155
99166	99180					

NOTE:

- These are the only zip codes which contain Indian Country.
- If the zip code is not on the list, then it does not contain Indian Country.

- Not all land in the listed zip codes is Indian Country. Many zip codes contain a mix of Indian and non-Indian Country.

2013 Not Employed Rates- Automated In ACES 3G - Provided For Information Only

"Not employed" rates for Washington Tribes 2013 BIA Labor Force Report Indian country disregard for TANF time limits			
COVERS THE PERIOD FROM OCTOBER 2016 UNTIL THE NEXT BIA REPORT IS AVAILABLE			
Tribe	% Age 16 and Up Not Employed	Tribe	% Age 16 and Up Not Employed
Puyallup*	61.2	Snoqualmie	45.9
Nisqually*	65.4	Jamestown 'Klallam	52.9
Spokane*	68.5	Port Gamble 'Klallam*	56.5
Hoh	59.2**	Lummi*	59.6
Nooksack*	57.1	Muckleshoot	60.1
Shoalwater Bay	70.6	Squaxin Island *	74.0
Skokomish *	64.7	Kalispel	80.9
Upper Skagit*	68.5	Swinomish	73.4
Lower Elwha Klallam*	61.1	Tulalip*	59.8
Sauk-Suiattle	60.5**	Makah	57.5
Suquamish	52.3	Chehalis	45.9
Quinault*	62.9	Colville*	56.1
Yakama	62.7	Cowlitz	59.9
Stillaguamish	44.3	Quileute*	62.9
Samish	50.9		

**"Not employed" rates for Washington Tribes 2013 BIA Labor Force Report
Indian country disregard for TANF time limits**

Source: Bureau of Indian Affairs, 2013 Indian Population and Labor Force Report.

* Tribe operating a Tribal TANF program or participating in a Tribal TANF program consortium, such as the Tribal TANF program operated by the South Puget Intertribal Planning Agency (SPIPA). The Tribe will determine when to apply the Indian Country disregard while an adult is receiving benefits from their Tribal TANF program.

** Tribe unemployment rates determined by ESD, not the 2013 BIA employment rate report.

ACES Procedures

See [TICA - Time Clock Adjustment](#).