




STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
UNIFORM POLICY MANUAL



Claudette J. Beaulieu, Deputy Commissioner

October 1, 2009
Effective Date

POLICY TRANSMITTAL NO.: UP-11-06

SUBJECT: Changes to the Safety Net Services Program

This transmits revised policy to the Safety Net Program. Previously, only families who received Temporary Family Assistance (TFA) and were not eligible for an extension of TFA benefits due to a non-compliance with an employment service requirement were eligible for Safety Net program benefits. The Safety Net Program is now expanded to not only include families who are ineligible for an extension due to non-compliance with employment services but also families who are ineligible for an extension due to the exhaustion of time-limited benefits and families identified as having significant employment barriers.

The Department proposed legislation and received authorization to implement this change by Public Act 07-160. The Department began implementing these changes on October 1, 2009.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR UPDATING THE UPM:

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DISPOSITION: This policy transmittal may be recycled once the UPM has been updated.

DISTRIBUTION: UPM list

RESPONSIBLE UNIT: Family Services Unit – Telephone (860) 424-5540

Date Issued: 5-11-11

WH

**CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES
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This chapter describes the requirements to access safety net services for certain families identified as having significant barriers to employment who are receiving TFA but are at risk of losing assistance or, who have exhausted their twenty-one (21) months of time limited assistance and are not eligible for extensions due to receiving two sanctions or not making a good faith effort to seek and maintain employment. It includes a description of general principles, eligibility requirements, and the types of safety net services that may be available to eligible families.

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8545.05 A. General Principles

1. Safety net services are provided by the Department to assist certain families identified as having significant barriers to employment who are at risk of losing benefits under TFA or who are no longer eligible to receive TFA.
2. Safety net services are provided only to the extent that funding is available for such services. Safety net services are not provided through an entitlement program. To the extent the family is eligible for safety net services and the available funds only allow a limited number of eligible families to receive safety net services, the Department exercises its discretion and provides such assistance to those families with the greatest need.

B. Eligibility Requirements

1. In order for a family to be eligible for safety net services, the family shall:
 - a. have applied for TFA, been referred for orientation and have significant barriers to employment as identified by the Department during its initial assessment;
 - b. be receiving TFA and have significant barriers to employment as identified during the first 12 months of employment services by an employment services case manager;
 - c. be receiving TFA and have made a good faith effort to seek and maintain employment but have not been able to do so or is at risk of failing to complete the employment services program;
 - d. have been on TFA and exhausted eligibility for TFA, including all possible extensions; or
 - e. have been on TFA and not eligible for six-month extensions due to:
 - (i) the receipt of two sanctions from the Department during the first 20 months of the 21-month time limit for TFA; or

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8545.05 B. Eligibility Requirements (continued)

(ii) the Department's determination that the family has not made a good-faith effort to seek and maintain employment. Families who are at risk for losing TFA benefits under subparagraph B.1.c. of this section may establish good faith by complying with the requirements under section 8540.10 subsections D. and E.

2. A family that is no longer eligible for TFA, in accordance with subparagraphs B.1.d. or B.1.e., shall:
- a. meet residency requirements as set forth in section 8540.45;
 - b. meet the eligible child requirements, as set forth in section 8540.15; and
 - c. have income below the income payment standard for the appropriate assistance unit, as set forth in section 8562.15.

C. Scope of Safety Net Services

1. Assessment

The Department shall conduct an in-depth family needs assessment for families who have been determined to be eligible for the program. The assessment examines such factors as current employment status, family income, employment history and family risk factors. As part of the assessment, the Department determines the family income necessary to allow the family to become self-sufficient.

2. Service Plan and Plan Components

- a. The service plan describes the safety net services that the Department has determined are necessary for a family. The Department determines which safety net services shall be provided to the family and the duration, frequency and intensity of such services using the results of the in-depth family needs assessment.

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8545.05 C. Scope of Safety Net Services (continued)

- b. Every service plan shall include intense case management services, which includes visits to the family's home.
- c. The service plan is designed to provide these services that are necessary to meet the family's needs as efficiently as possible and to minimize the likelihood of harm to children in the family.
- d. Safety net services in a service plan may include, but are not limited to, the following services or components:
 - (i) eviction prevention or other services that promote stability in the family's housing situation, such as mediation, counseling and referrals to homeless shelters, if appropriate;
 - (ii) continual monitoring for child abuse or neglect;
 - (iii) supportive services to assist individuals to meet employment and job search responsibilities;
 - (iv) linkages to employment services networks;
 - (v) assistance or referrals to solve problems, including, but not limited to, language barriers, substance abuse and budgeting;
 - (vi) identifying and removing barriers to employment;
 - (vii) employment-related activities to be performed by members of the family;
 - (viii) for a family no longer eligible for TFA and for whom assistance through community resources is unavailable, food, shelter and clothing;
 - (ix) for a family on TFA and at risk of losing benefits under TFA, additional screening, assessment or case management services needed to identify and address barriers to work or to compliance with employment services requirements or to document eligibility for an exemption from program requirements (Cross-reference 8530.15); or
 - (x) for families on TFA and at risk of losing benefits, development of independent performance contracts to establish that good faith efforts were being made to seek and maintain employment. (Cross-reference 8540.10)

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8545.05 C. Scope of Safety Net Services (continued)

3. Delivery of Safety Net Services

- a. Safety net services are provided through the existing community service delivery network, with additional resources provided by the Department, as necessary and available, if the services are not available through the existing community service delivery network.
- b. Safety net services are provided in-kind or through vendor or voucher payments.
- c. Safety net services may be provided either directly by the Department or by a contractor.

D. Administrative Review

A person aggrieved by the Department's decisions concerning whether and to what extent discretionary safety net services or benefits are provided shall be given an opportunity to request an informal review.

1. A written request for an informal review shall be made to the Department's agent where the program is locally administered or, if there is no such agent, to the Department. The request shall be made or postmarked no later than ten days from the date of notice of the decision from the Department or its agent.
2. The informal review shall be conducted by any person or persons designated by the Department or its agent, other than a person who recommended or approved the decision under review or a subordinate of such person.

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8545.05 D. Administrative Review (continued)

3. Not later than thirty days from the date of the informal review the Department or its agent shall issue a written report of its findings, which may order a change to the original decision of which review was sought. The Department or its agent shall use information presented with the request to make factual determinations of the circumstances of the applicant or recipient who requested the review. A copy of the result shall be provided promptly to the applicant or recipient who requested the informal review and shall include any documents presented with the request for an informal review.
4. If, following an informal review and report of findings, the original decision is unchanged, the Department shall provide a desk review of the findings, upon written request of the applicant or recipient, to ensure compliance with an agent's contractual obligation. The applicant or recipient shall request such desk review no later than ten days after the decision has been rendered. The Department shall use no new information, which could have been presented at the informal review, for the purposes of such desk review. Requests should be sent to:

Commissioner, Department of Social Services
Family Services Unit
25 Sigourney Street
Hartford, CT 06106
5. The foregoing procedures are exclusive and administrative fair hearings are not available to review the Department's discretionary determinations whether to offer safety net services.