

Child Care Protection

The Family Independence Act of South Carolina assures parents that they may not be sanctioned for a work program requirement if appropriate child care is not available.

The following issues will be considered in determining that you are unable to obtain adequate child care:

- Appropriate child care within a reasonable distance from your home or work place is unavailable.
- Informal child care by a relative or other arrangements are unavailable or unsuitable.
- Appropriate and affordable formal child care arrangements are unavailable.

Definitions:

- **Appropriate Child Care:** Child care which, in the opinion of the agency and with the understanding of the parent, is suitable for the development and nurturing needs of the child.
- **Reasonable Distance:** A fair and practical distance to a child care facility that will not prohibit or interrupt TANF Work Program participation.
- **Unsuitability of Informal Child Care:** Informal child care providers that do not comply with health and safety requirements developed by the Department of Social Services (DSS).
- **Affordable Child Care Arrangements:** Arrangements determined affordable by DSS based on market rate survey of child care providers.

TANF

Reporting Requirements and Fraud Penalties

Report changes in your household circumstances within 10 days.

Changes you must report include:

- Household composition.
- Employment status.
- Residence or address.
- Changes in unearned income.

Report this information by either writing a letter, calling DSS Connect at 1-800-616-1309, or by using the Change Report Form (DSS Form 1620).

Failure to report changes as required is considered to be withholding of information, and DSS may recover any benefits paid in error.

TANF Fraud Penalties:

- You may be subject to prosecution for fraud if you knowingly give false, incorrect or incomplete information in order to receive or try to receive or help someone else receive TANF benefits.
- You will be required to pay back all or part of the TANF benefits received improperly for any person.

DSS Brochure 3735 (MAY 21)
Edition of MAY 15 is obsolete.

South Carolina Department of Social Services

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Application Information

Your Key to Economic Independence

The purpose of TANF is to provide financial assistance while removing barriers and providing individuals with the skills and confidence needed to prepare for employment and find jobs.

TANF

Applicant Support Services

The Department of Social Services is committed to providing support services to applicants who appear to be eligible for TANF benefits.

The Applicant Support Services are to assist you in the following ways:

- Conducting the initial job search.
- Obtaining or maintaining employment.

Applicant support services may include child care and work related expenses needed to secure or maintain employment and expenses to ensure family stability while employed.

If you get a job during the application period and the income from this job makes you ineligible for TANF benefits, you could be granted up to four months of Applicant Support Services, with the exception of child care.

You must complete the application interview and provide DSS with information on your income and resources. You must appear to meet the TANF income, resource and time limit eligibility criteria.

Contact any DSS office if you need help with any of these services.

Caution: If you intentionally give false information to be eligible, DSS will ask you to pay back the money.

Child Support Cooperation and Assignment of Rights to Child Support

By applying for, accepting and receiving TANF benefits, you automatically assign to the State any rights you have to child support money and already established spousal support money.

If you receive TANF, you must cooperate with DSS in establishing paternity and obtaining support for your child(ren) unless this action would be against the best interest of the child(ren).

Cooperation in establishing paternity and obtaining support may be against the best interest of the child if at least one of the following circumstances exist:

- The action would bring physical and/or emotional harm to the child or to you.
- Physical or mental incapacity which prevents you from providing required information.
- The child was conceived as a result of incest or rape.
- Legal adoption proceedings are pending in court.
- You are currently being assisted in resolving the issue of whether to keep the child or give him/her up for adoption.

You will need to provide DSS with information to support your “good cause” claim.

Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is battering or subjecting a victim to extreme cruelty by:

- Physical acts that resulted in, or threatened to result in, physical injury to you or a member of your family;
- Sexual abuse;
- Sexual activity involving a dependent child;
- Threats of, or attempts at, physical abuse;
- Mental abuse;
- Neglect or deprivation of medical care.

If you are a victim of domestic violence, you may be exempt from work, child support and/or time limit requirements if it is determined that you are unable to cooperate/participate in such activities, as a result of being subjected to domestic violence.

You don't have to tell DSS that you are a victim of domestic violence unless you choose to do so. However, if you decide to tell your case manager about your situation, you may do so at any time.

Help is available. We can refer you to a local domestic violence counseling agency. The agency will be able to help you plan for the safety of you as well as your family and to provide counseling and other support services. Please contact any DSS office.