



## TANF 1201-1 Emergency Assistance

**Supersedes:** TANF 1201-1 (1/1/18)

**Reference:** ARM 37.78.220, .601 and .602

**Overview:** Emergency Assistance (EA) provides financial assistance in emergent situations.

EA is designed to:

1. Provide immediate resolution of an emergency (not simply delay the emergency);
2. Prevent a child's removal from their home;
3. Expedite a child's return to their home; and
4. Prevent a child from needing protective services.

EA can be provided to the following, if eligible:

1. Families with children under age 21; or
2. Pregnant women in their third trimester who have no children living with them.

EA can be provided when:

1. An unforeseen event, beyond the household's control and which may result in the child becoming destitute arises; or
2. Child and Family Services (CFSD) identifies a situation involving child abuse or neglect that results in an emergency.

EA benefits do not count toward the allowable 60-month TANF time limit.

EA can be received only once in a 12-month period this includes receipt of soft services.

Households eligible for Tribal TANF are not eligible for State TANF EA.

**UNFORESEEN EVENT:**

First, it must be determined what unforeseen event created the emergency situation. It must not have been under the adult's control and they could not have anticipated it would occur.

The event and emergency situation may not immediately follow each other, but the emergency must be directly related to the event.

EA can be requested by the family/pregnant woman or by a department employee on behalf of the family.

**APPLICATION:**

Hard Services: A completed HCS-020 (EA Application) or completed Statement of Facts (SOF) interview must be submitted to the OPA for “hard” services. The application date for “hard” services is the date the OPA receives and date stamps the completed/signed application or completes the SOF interview.

The HCS 020/SOF remains valid for 30 days, and changes to needed items/services as well as requests for additional services may be made within this 30-day period.

Soft Services: CFSD determines the need for EA “soft” services and submits an electronic request through CHIMES.

**ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION TIME LINE:**

All EA applications must be processed within five (5) calendar days of receipt.

If the necessary verification is not received within five (5) calendar days of application, the application must be processed within five (5) calendar days of receiving the verification.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS:**

To qualify for EA Hard Services, the following must be met:

1. The household has not received EA in the previous 12 months;
2. A child under age 21 is living with a specified caretaker relative, or a child under 18 has lived with a specified caretaker relative within the six (6) months immediately preceding the EA application;
  - a. The child must be living in a home maintained by the specified caretaker relative as the child’s home.
3. The applicant is a pregnant woman in her 3rd trimester with no other children living with her;
4. All family members are U.S. citizens or qualified aliens;
5. The child or specified caretaker relative did not, without good cause, refuse to accept or maintain employment or employment training; and
6. The household has exhausted all available means to meet the emergent need.
  - a. Including, but not limited to, all accessible liquid resources and any available benefits or services.

**HARD SERVICES:**

“Hard Services” are items or services necessary to directly overcome the emergency caused by the unforeseen event.

Following are examples of allowable hard services:

1. Basic needs
  - a. Food, clothing, shelter (rent/temporary lodging), utilities or personal care items
  - b. The most recent two (2) months of past due rent and/or utilities bills.
2. Temporary transportation
  - a. Bus pass, taxi service, cost of necessary vehicle repairs (owned by applicant and essential to employment retention). One repair estimate must be received prior to any repairs being started.
3. Replacement/repair of necessary home appliance
  - a. refrigerator, heating/cooling (owned by applicant)
4. Replacement/repair of necessary home furnishings
  - a. bed, bedding
5. Other items/services necessary to overcome the emergency situation.

### **BUDGETING**

Emergency assistance will not necessarily cover the full amount of hard services requested. The amount of assistance provided is determined by adding the net income (all available earned and unearned income) and liquid resources from the last 30 days then subtracting money spent on allowable basic living expenses (food, shelter, utilities, phone, and internet). Assistance can only be provided for the amount of need in excess of available income.

- Hard copy verification must be obtained to verify net income (earned and unearned), resources, and allowable expenses.
- Car payments, credit card payments, fuel and clothing are not considered basic living expenses.
- The amount of household's food budget that can be allowed is the SNAP Thrifty Food Plan (TFP) for the household size minus any SNAP benefits issued to the household for the month.

Refer to TANF Emergency Assistance Processing in the Business Process.

Central office TANF staff must grant approval prior to OPA entering hard services requests totaling more than \$1000.

### **SOFT SERVICES:**

"Soft Services" are determined by CFSD necessary to overcome child abuse/neglect, prevent the child's removal from their home, expedite a child's return to their home or to prevent the need for child protective services. As CFSD determines eligibility for TANF EA Soft Services, additional Policy and process can be found in the Child & Family Services Policy Manual section 405-3.

An unforeseen event is not required for EA soft services to be approved.

CFSD EA applications are always approved unless a household member received EA hard services within the previous 12 months.

**EXCLUDED ITEMS/SERVICES:**

EA cannot be used for the following:

1. Taxes
  - a. Personal or real property
2. Medical services/related expenses
3. Insurance premiums
  - a. Auto, home, life
4. Burials
5. To reimburse the applicant/family for expenses already paid or repay money loaned to them
6. Deposits
  - a. Rental, utility, security
7. Legal fees, fines or penalties
8. To purchase a vehicle
9. To pay late fees
  - a. Rental/mortgage
10. Mortgage payments
11. Bills for services already received
  - a. Including medical, bills more than 30 days past due (with exception of most recent two (2) month's rent or utilities)
12. Travel expenses payable by another source
  - a. Including, but not limited to, Medicaid travel, supportive services or Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) General Assistance
13. To provide ongoing (daily, weekly, monthly) cash payments for basic needs items essential for day-to-day living (food, clothing, shelter) and personal care items
14. As a substitute for other basic needs assistance programs including, but not limited to TANF cash or BIA General Assistance

**Effective Date:** May 01, 2021