



TANF 801-1 Incrementing Time Clock

Supersedes: TANF 801-1 (4/1/18)

Reference: 45 CFR 264.1; ARM 37.78.201, .202, .206 and .216

Overview: Cash assistance may be provided to eligible families for a 60-month lifetime limit. Once an adult or minor parent reaches the maximum state or federal limit, the entire household is ineligible for benefits, unless approved for extended benefits. TANF received in other states or through a Tribal TANF program (without an exclusion) are countable towards the 60-month federal lifetime limit.

Not all states started incrementing the 60-month time clock at the same time. Each state's policy varies. Montana's TANF 60-month time clock began incrementing February 1, 1997 for all new and ongoing cash assistance cases.

Once TANF cash assistance is issued the time clock ticks. Returned TANF cash assistance does not untick the time clock.

TIME CLOCKS:

CHIMES maintains two 60-month time clocks, one state and one federal. Households become ineligible for benefits in Montana when one or both time clocks expire.

1. The Federal time clock will increment for each cash assistance month received by:
 - a. Head-of-household (Primary Individual); or
 - b. Spouse of the head-of-household.

This applies to adults, pregnant minor head-of-household, minor parent head-of-household, or spouse of such a head-of-households.

2. Montana's State time clock will increment for each cash assistance month received by:
 - a. Adult parents, stepparents, pregnant minors, and minor parents regardless of marital status, i.e. time clock ticks for both parents in a two-parent household, even if not married.

CLIENTS NOT SUBJECT TO TIME-LIMITS:

The following individuals are not subject to the time-limits imposed by federal and/or state regulation and rule. The individual will not be eligible if another required filing unit member has exhausted their 60-month time-limit.

1. Minor child(ren) living with a caretaker relative, who are under age 18 or up to age 19 and attending school full time;
2. Teen parents;
3. Adult parent, not head-of-household, unmarried (no Federal time clock, but State time clock ticks);
4. Disqualified parent; and
5. Individuals not required to comply with an Employability/Service Plan.

INDIAN COUNTRY EXCLUSION:

The only exclusion from the Federal and State time clock is any month of receipt by a household while living in Indian Country (within the geographical boundaries of the reservation) or a Native Alaskan Village where at least 50% of the adults are not employed.

For Montana, households living within the geographical boundaries of the following reservations qualify for this exclusion: Blackfeet, Fort Peck, Fort Belknap, Rocky Boy's, Northern Cheyenne and Crow.

Due to the Flathead Reservation's current unemployment rate, there is not a time clock exclusion for households living on the Flathead Reservation.

TEEN PARENT EXEMPTION:

The only exemption from the Federal and State time clock is any month of receipt by a household with a teen parent(s). The exemption is through the month of their 18th birthday.

COUNTABLE TRIBAL TANF MONTHS:

Tribal TANF benefits received must be evaluated to determine if the months must be added to the household's Federal time clock.

Even though some Tribal TANF programs serve families that live both inside and outside the geographical boundaries of the reservation, the Indian Country time clock exclusion only applies to those families that live on the reservation.

COUNTABLE TANF MONTHS:

TANF benefits received from other states must be verified and added to the Federal time clock.

SANCTIONS:

Individuals who are serving a first sanction are considered to be receiving benefits and their State clock will advance during the sanction penalty month if benefits are issued. During the sanction penalty month, the time clock will:

1. not increment for those receiving a time clock exemption; and
2. not increment for those receiving a time clock exclusion.

Effective Date: May 01, 2020