

Department of Social and Health Services
Olympia, Washington

E A-Z Manual

Revision # 814

Category: DIVERSION CASH ASSISTANCE

<http://www.dshs.wa.gov/manuals/eaz/sections/DiversionAssist>

Issued: March 29, 2012

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Summary

Clarifying Information for WAC 388-432-0005, *Can I get help from DSHS for a family emergency without receiving monthly cash assistance?* **Has been updated to explain that if an adult is ineligible for TANF due to being over time limit and not meeting time limit extension criteria he/she are also not eligible to receive Diversion Cash Assistance (DCA).**

Diversion Cash Assistance

Revised March 29, 2012

Purpose: This category describes an emergency cash benefit available to families that meet the eligibility criteria for TANF or SFA but do not need ongoing monthly cash assistance. Assistance under this program is limited to one 30-day period every 12 months.

[WAC 388-432-0005](#) Can I get help from DSHS for a family emergency without receiving monthly cash assistance?

WAC 388-432-0005 [hide]

Effective July 1, 2011

WAC 388-432-0005 Can I get help from DSHS for a family emergency without receiving monthly cash assistance?

DSHS has a program called diversion cash assistance (DCA). If your family needs an emergency cash payment but does not need ongoing monthly cash assistance, you may be eligible for this program.

1. To get DCA, you must:
 - a. Meet all the eligibility rules for temporary assistance for needy families (TANF)/state family assistance (SFA) except:
 - i. You do not have to participate in WorkFirst requirements as defined in chapter [388-310](#) WAC; and
 - ii. You do not have to assign child support rights or cooperate with division of child support as defined in [WAC 388-422-0005](#).
 - b. Have a current bona fide or approved need for living expenses;
 - c. Provide proof that your need exists; and
 - d. Have or expect to get enough income or resources to support yourselves for at least twelve months.
2. You may get DCA to help pay for one or more of the following needs:
 - a. Child care;
 - b. Housing;
 - c. Transportation;
 - d. Expenses to get or keep a job;
 - e. Food costs, but not if an adult member of your family has been disqualified for food stamps; or
 - f. Medical costs, except when an adult member of your family is not eligible because of failure to provide third party liability (TPL) information as defined in [WAC 388-505-0540](#).
3. DCA payments are limited to:
 - a. One thousand two hundred fifty dollars once in a twelve-month period which starts with the month the DCA benefits begin; and
 - b. The cost of your need.
4. We do not budget your income or make you use your resources to lower the amount of DCA payments you can receive.

5. DCA payments can be paid:
 - a. All at once; or
 - b. As separate payments over a thirty-day period. The thirty-day period starts with the date of your first DCA payment.
6. When it is possible, we pay your DCA benefit directly to the service provider.
7. You are not eligible for DCA if:
 - a. Any adult member of your assistance unit got DCA within the last twelve months;
 - b. Any adult member of your assistance unit gets TANF/SFA;
 - c. Any adult member of your assistance unit is not eligible for cash assistance for any reason unless one parent in a two-parent-assistance unit is receiving SSI; or
 - d. Your assistance unit does not have a needy adult (such as when you do not receive TANF/SFA payment for yourself but receive it for the children only).
8. If you apply for DCA after your TANF/SFA grant has been terminated, we consider you an applicant for DCA.
9. If you apply for TANF/SFA and you received DCA less than twelve months ago:
 - a. We set up a DCA loan.
 - i. The amount of the loan is one-twelfth of the total DCA benefit times the number of months that are left in the twelve-month period.
 - ii. The first month begins with the month DCA benefits began.
 - b. We collect the loan only by reducing your grant. We take five percent of your TANF/SFA grant each month.
10. If you stop getting TANF/SFA before you have repaid the loan, we stop collecting the loan unless you get back on TANF/SFA.

This is a reprint of the official rule as published by the [Office of the Code Reviser](#). If there are previous versions of this rule, they can be found using the [Legislative Search page](#).

CLARIFYING INFORMATION

1. **TANF / SFA eligibility:**

In order to be eligible for DCA, the assistance unit must meet all of the eligibility requirements for TANF / SFA except WorkFirst requirements and assignment of child support rights. See [PROGRAM SUMMARY](#) for the eligibility requirements of each program. The eligibility requirements include the limits for earned income, unearned income and resources.

2. **Ineligible for cash assistance:**

- a. Reasons why an adult member of a family may not be eligible for DCA include but are not limited to:

- i. Immigration status;
 - ii. Conviction in a state or federal court for unlawful practices in getting TANF/SFA;
 - iii. Conviction in a state or federal court of misrepresenting residence in order to get public assistance in two or more states;
 - iv. Disqualification because of being a fleeing felon;
 - v. TANF/SFA was closed because of an NCS (non-compliance sanction);
 - vi. TANF/SFA was closed while in WorkFirst sanction on or after July 1, 2010; or
 - vii. A member of the household is in non-compliance with the division of child support; or
 - viii. **An adult in the AU is over the TANF time limit, and no adults in the household qualify for a time limit extension.**
- b. Child only cases (with non-needy relative caretaker) are not eligible for DCA.

3. Effect of DCA on food assistance:

- a. If DCA payment is made directly to the client:
 - i. It is considered a non-recurring lump sum payment and not counted as income.
 - ii. It is counted as a resource in the month received.
 - b. If DCA payment is made directly to the vendor:
 - i. It is considered a vendor payment for emergency and special assistance and not counted as income.
 - ii. It is not counted as a resource.
4. In determining the need for DCA, utilities are considered part of the housing costs.

WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1. An application is always required (WAC 388-406-0010).
- 2. When a family requests TANF/SFA:
 - a. Screen the application ACES for TANF,
 - b. Review the application for DCA to see if the family has income that would meet the family needs for at least 12 months.
 - c. If the family decides to apply for DCA, add the DCA program in ACES before you withdraw the TANF ACES using closing code 550. (This can be done at screening if the family is there or during the interview)

3. Determine if the family meets all eligibility criteria for TANF/SFA other than WorkFirst requirements and assignment of child support.

EXAMPLE

A two-person AU (mom and child) applies for TANF. Mom has earned income that appears to meet the ongoing needs of the family. DCA is screened into ACES and then the TANF is denied as a withdrawal. At the interview, Mom's gross income is confirmed to be \$1000 a month and this is entered in ACES. The AU is not eligible for DCA since they do not meet the maximum gross earned income standard of \$906 a month. ACES will deny the AU for over the gross earned income standard. Have ACES send out the denial letter. Follow up to see if the family would like to apply for food and medical assistance and determine eligibility if family is interested.

NOTE: All DCA denials need to be in writing. Make sure you have ACES letter 04-01 Cash Denial for AU sent out.

3. Decide if the family has a bona fide need such as the ones listed in [WAC 388-432-0005](#) (2). The family must provide proof of this need. Issue a denial letter when the family does not have a need or does not provide proof of the need.

EXAMPLE

A four-person AU (mom and three children) applies for TANF and opts for DCA. Mom's gross earned income for the AU is \$1200. No other source of income is available for the AU. Family is requesting \$800 to fix their car. Mom needs the car for transportation to and from her job. However, mom does not have proof of the amount needed to fix the car. The AU will need to provide proof that \$800 is needed to repair car (i.e. telephone number and name of repair garage, invoice from garage showing estimated costs for car repairs). If mom does not provide proof, enter the ACES 586 code (Ineligible for DA) for the AU and have ACES send out denial notice. Follow up to see if the family would like to apply for food and TANF/SFA cash assistance and determine eligibility if the family is interested.

4. Decide if the family has enough or is expected to have enough income or resources to keep them off of TANF / SFA for 12 months.
 - a. Use these guidelines to help determine a family's ability to remain off TANF / SFA. Other factors may also be considered but must be documented in the case file:
 - i. Is there a current or potential income source? (e.g. Earned Income, Unemployment, Child Support, or other regular source)
 - ii. Is this enough income to enable the family to stay self-sufficient? (Will it cover the rent,

utilities, and other bills?)

- iii. Does the applicant's history indicate an ability to remain self-sufficient? (Review the case record to see if the family cycles on and off TANF.)
 - iv. Is the applicant highly motivated to stay off TANF / SFA?
- b. If there is little chance that the family could be self-sufficient, issue a denial letter for DCA benefits. Help the family consider applying for ongoing assistance or referrals to community resources.
5. Review whether the family has received DCA payment in the past 12-month period or if the family is currently receiving TANF / SFA. If the family received DCA in the last 12 months or if the family is currently receiving TANF / SFA, issue a denial letter.

EXAMPLE

Three-person AU (mom, dad and child) requests DCA in September. Currently, they receive no assistance. They last received DCA in May of the same year. Since 12 months have not passed since the last time the AU has received DCA, enter in ACES 586 closing code (Ineligible for DA) and have ACES send out the denial notice.

6. Decide how much the family needs to meet their bona fide needs (up to \$1250). Do not pay more than the need. Make the payment directly to the vendor whenever possible.

EXAMPLE

A two-person household (dad and child) requests DCA. The only source of income for the AU is L&I benefits of \$400 a month. Since the AU has Section 8 housing, their rent is \$57 a month. Dad's L&I benefits will end but he expects to go back to work in four weeks based on doctor's statement. The AU requests DCA to pay for car repair bills. Dad needs the car to return back to work. He provided an invoice from the garage to verify the estimated cost to repair his car at \$900. Send a 02-07 DCA approval letter. Make the payment to the car repair garage. Open F04 medical for the family.

Two weeks later, AU applies for additional DCA and requests \$50 for overdue utility bill. He provides proof of this need. The AU is eligible to receive this second payment since it is within the 30-day period. Send additional DCA request status ACES 75-01 letter and make the payment to the utility company.

NOTE: All families found eligible for DCA cash are also eligible for F04 family medical. If the request for help is greater than the \$1250 then an ETR can be done.

7. Refer the family for any other benefits and resources that can help them to be self-sufficient. Encourage clients to use Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) to help pay for childcare expenses.
 8. **TANF / SFA eligibility within the DCA 12-month period:** If you approve TANF / SFA within 12 months of the family's DCA begin date, establish the DCA loan.
 - a. The amount of the loan depends on how many months the client remained off TANF / SFA before they start receiving TANF / SFA. Calculate the loan amount by using these steps:
 - i. Starting with the month DCA benefits were authorized count the number of months before the month TANF / SFA benefits started.
 - ii. Subtract those months from 12 to determine the number of remaining months.
 - iii. The number of remaining months is multiplied by one-twelfth of the total DCA payment to calculate the amount that must be repaid.
 - b. DCA assistance units remain open in ACES for 12 months but do not receive monthly payments.
 - c. You must close the DCA assistance unit with the ACES closing code 585 (DA Adult Eligible for TANF) in order to open TANF / SFA for months in the 12-month period.
 - d. ACES will create the necessary Benefit Error Group (BEG) for any closed months in the 12-month period.
 - e. Send the client a 0045-04 DCA Loan letter and update the BEG to finalize the loan and initiate a repayment process.
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ACES PROCEDURES

See [Diversion Cash Assistance \(DCA\)](#)

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Modification Date: March 29, 2012