

New Mexico's Human Services Department  
Income Support Division  
Training and Development Short Course



TRANSITIONAL BONUS PROGRAM

Developed By Policy and Program Development Bureau  
Training Unit  
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New Mexico's Human Services Department/Income Support Division  
Training and Development Short Course

Short Course Number Two:

## Transition Bonus Program

The Transition Bonus Program (TBP) is an incentive to increase employment retention for existing or previous TANF households. TBP is a voluntary assistance program and families can choose simply to have their TANF converted to TBP without an application.

The application process will be discussed further in this packet.

### TRANSITION BONUS BENEFITS

The TBP provides a limited duration of fixed monthly cash assistance to encourage NM families to leave TANF. The program also provides support services on an ongoing basis.

Method of payment: TB payments are paid by issuing funds into an electronic benefits transfer (EBT) account accessible to the participant.

#### Monthly Benefit

A non-prorated fixed amount of \$200.00 will be given to all TBP participants whose gross income is under 150% of federal poverty guidelines.

- ✓ The benefit can only be reduced to recoup an existing cash assistance overpayment.

**For Current TANF Recipients:** Non-prorated means that if a TANF benefit group chooses to participate in TB, transition will not go into effect until the month after the month the transition took place.

**Example:** A TANF recipient who is receiving \$79 in TANF requests to transition into TB on March 09. ISD determines that the benefit group is eligible for TB on March 17 and makes the change that same month. The benefit group will receive their first payment of \$200 instead of \$79 in April.

**For New Applicants:** The date of application does not affect the \$200 monthly amount.

## Support Services

Eligible participants who qualify and participate in the TBP program may receive:

- ✓ Child care assistance
- ✓ Career counseling
- ✓ Help with work related expenses
- ✓ Job retention services

## Other Benefits for TB Participants:

The TB benefit group may be eligible to receive the following:

- ✓ Layette payment; and
- ✓ Clothing allowances for each school age child 6 and over in the benefit group

The TB benefit group is *categorically eligible* for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). Categorically eligible households are subject to all other food stamp eligibility requirements, including, but not limited to, verification of household composition, if questionable; benefit determination (income and deductions); disqualification for any reason; claims recovery and restored benefits; notices and fair hearings; and all reporting requirements. Since the TB benefit group is categorically eligible there is no resource test applied.

**Important!** Clients currently receiving Transitional SNAP will have to be informed that they will no longer qualify for Transitional SNAP if they choose to go into the TBP.

**What is Transitional SNAP?** Families who were receiving both TANF and SNAP automatically have their SNAP transitioned to TFS when their TANF closes in good standing for whatever reason.

## TRANSITION BONUS ELIGIBILITY

### Initial Eligibility Requirements

The TBP shall be available only to a benefit group that meets all of the following criteria:

- ✓ Does not simultaneously participate in the TANF or other cash assistance program;
- ✓ Has left the TANF cash assistance program;
- ✓ Meets all TBP requirements and voluntarily chooses to participate in the program;
- ✓ Is currently engaged in paid unsubsidized or subsidized employment, except for subsidized employment funded with TANF, for a minimum of 30 hours per week, and averaged over a month;

- ✓ Has gross income that does not exceed 150% of federal poverty guidelines;
- ✓ **Recipient of TANF a minimum of 3 months** – Families considered for TB must have received TANF for at least 3 months during their 60 month lifetime limit;
- ✓ **Received TANF, Wage Subsidy, or On the Job Training (OJT) in one of the last 3 months** – This means that a family can come in, apply and if they meet qualifications, receive TB even if they have not received TANF in the last two months.
- ✓ **Not received more than 18 months of the Transition Bonus or 60 months of TANF** – The TBP has a lifetime limit of 18 months. Families who have used their entire 18 months of TB will no longer be eligible for TBP.
- ✓ Families who have used up their 60 months of TANF lifetime limit will not be able to participate in TB after receiving 60 months of TANF.

### Non Financial Requirements

Non financial requirements for TBP are the same as those for TANF.

Families interested in Transition Bonus have to meet eligibility criteria discussed in this section. Program policy can be accessed by either visiting the NM state website under the Human Services Department at [www.hsd.state.nm.us](http://www.hsd.state.nm.us) or by going directly to the NM Administrative Code (NMAC) official website at <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmac>

**Enumeration 8.102.410.9 NMAC:** The participant, or the specified relative on behalf of a dependent child, must report the participant's social security number (SNN) within 60 days of approval for the cash assistance program. Failure to meet this requirement shall result in ineligibility for the benefit group member without a reported or verified SSN.

**Citizenship 8.102.410.10 NMAC:** Participation in the TANF cash assistance program is limited to a U.S. citizen, a naturalized citizen or a non-citizen U.S. national.

- ✓ A non-citizen, other than a non-citizen U.S. national, must be both qualified and eligible in order to participate in TANF federal cash assistance program.
- ✓ A non-citizen alien who is qualified but is not eligible will be included in the household and coded as a member but will receive state funded cash assistance. Identifying who is both a qualified and eligible and who are only qualified is vital in ensuring that coding is entered correctly on the ISD2 system. An example of a qualified alien is a Lawful Permanent Resident (LPR) who has not been in the United States for 5 years or more.
- ✓ A non-citizen alien who does not meet the definition of a qualified and eligible, or qualified/not eligible will not be able to participate in either state or federal funded TANF program.

-The exception to the rule: Aliens identified as a **victim of severe form of trafficking**, regardless of immigration status, who have been certified by the U.S. department of health and Human services (DHHS), office of refugee resettlement (ORR), is eligible to the same extent as a refugee (qualified/eligible).

**NM residency 8.102.410.11 NMAC:** In order to participate in the TB program the family has to be living in NM or demonstrates their intention to stay and live in NM. Some of the ways a family can show their intent to say would be:

- ✓ Renting a home/apartment
- ✓ Getting a P.O. Box
- ✓ Having their school age child(ren) enrolled in school.
- ✓ Getting a NM drivers license
- ✓ Becoming a member of a church or organization

**Non-concurrent receipt of benefits: 8.102.410.12 NMAC:**

- ✓ The family cannot already be receiving TANF from another state
- ✓ Cannot receive TANF or other type of cash assistance such as Education Works and TB simultaneously

### Financial Eligibility Requirements

- ✓ At least one qualifying adult in the benefit group has to be working at least 30 or more hours per week.
  - Can be averaged over the month
  - Two parents can split the 30 hours between themselves
- ✓ Household's gross income has to be less than 150% of the Federal Poverty Limit (FPL)

**Note:** There are no deductions from the earned income. There are no child care deductions available to the family.

**No Resources!** – Families applying for and receiving TBP will not be subjected to a resource limit in order to qualify.

### LIFETIME LIMITS

**18**

Participation Months

**18**

A family, who meets eligibility requirements for TBP and chooses to participate in the program, can only do so for a maximum of 18 months.

A benefit group shall be *ineligible* if the group contains at least one adult, minor head of household or spouse of the minor head of household who has already participated in the TPB for 18 months.

### 30 TANF Months or Less

- ✓ 1-30 months of TANF = Families who have received 1 and 30 months of federally funded TANF (will count against 60 month lifetime limit) and wish to participate in TBP will have their TB benefits count against the TANF 60 month life time term limit until they reach month 31.

### 31 or More TANF Months

- ✓ 31-59 months of TANF = State funded TANF that is not countable against TANF 60 month lifetime term limit. **(TANF 60 month clock stops while on Transition Bonus!)**

## APPLICATION PROCESS

**Active TANF Case:** Active TANF benefit groups that meet initial eligibility requirements for the TBP shall be eligible without an application.

- No interview is required;
- No application is needed;
- Eligibility determination can occur during a TANF/NMW certification period and at the time of recertification.

**TANF Case Closed:** Applications will be required if the TANF case is closed.

- The application form number is **FAP 105 Issued 07/01/08;**
- Must meet initial TBP eligibility;
- Interview is required;
- Additional verification may be required such as income

**ISD2 Coding:** Active TB cases are indicated by a code “R” in the “002 Type” field on the ISD2 system. The code “R” will be used to place recipients/applicants into the TBP on the FACL screen

UPDATE  
MNTH: 0409 \* \* \* C A S E P A R T I C I P A N T S \* \* \* LIST

CASE-ID: 942657513 CAT: 002 TYPE: R GEO: 01 ADMIN: 01 SUPV: 99 EW: 03  
2-PARENT: N MA-BEGIN-DATE: MA-END-DATE:  
STATUS: A REASONS: STATUS-DATE: 030209 APPEAL-IND:  
APPL-DATE: 030109 START-DATE: 030209 END-DATE: LOCK-OUT:  
RELATED-CASES:

SSN	FIRST LAST	REL	HH	STIN	RSN	STATUS	APPL	START	END	TANF
942657513	TIM BUR	A Y	M	A		030209	030109	030209		00 00
942657514	THOMAS BUR	S Y	M	A		030209	030109	030209		00 00
942657515	THERES BUR	D Y	M	A		030209	030109	030209		00 00

VERIF-REMARKS: TIM BUR 030209

"ENTER" KEY = CONTINUE "PF3" = CANCEL  
"PF4" = SKIP/HOLD "PF5" = PAGE BACKWARD END

ONLINE 1,74

A type code "R" is used to indicate that the client is receiving Transition Bonus

On the PFPS screen, the correct coding under the work program status is "G" – employed 30 hours.

The dispatch report "HIF77111", produced monthly, lists all active TB clients.

## CERTIFICATION AND INTERIM REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Families participating in the TBP will be **certified for 18 months**

- ✓ Recipients shall be required to file interim reports no later than the tenth day of the sixth month and twelfth month of their certification. There is a new interim report, **form 211 issued 11/01/08**.
- ✓ Information on the report must include the following:
  - Amount of money received from employment by each benefit group member;
  - Amount of unearned income received by each benefit group member;
  - Proof of residence, only if, there has been a change since last certification;
  - Changes in child support; and
  - Changes in alien status for a benefit group member.

- ✓ A benefit group who turns in a report that is not complete or does not have all the required proof attached to the report will be sent a “Return of Incomplete Interim Report” form – **ISD119 revised 11/20/08**.

### **CONTINUED ELIGIBILITY AT INTERIM REPORT**

In order for TB benefit group to continue eligibility, the family has to meet all of the following criteria:

- ✓ Participant engagement in paid employment for 30 or more hours per week; averaged over a month, for 4 of the last 6 months;
- ✓ Benefit group income is less than 150% of FPL; and
- ✓ Benefit group has not reached the 18 month lifetime limit.

The eligibility worker looks at the last 30 consecutive days of income that fall between the month the report is due and the month prior.

**Failure to submit an interim report will result in case closure.**

### **ACTION ON CHANGES REPORTED BETWEEN REPORTING PERIODS**

The department shall not act on reported changes between reporting periods that would result in a decrease in benefits with the following exceptions:

- ✓ A benefit group reports income over 150% of the FPG;
- ✓ The benefit group moved or intends to move out of state;
- ✓ A benefit group requests closure;
- ✓ The department received documented evidence that the head of the benefit group passed away; and
- ✓ Mass changes

A newborn will be added to the benefit group effective the month following the month the report is received. The change has to be reported by either the benefit group or by the hospital the baby was born. No application is needed.

#### **Communication is a must!**

It is expected that if a change occurs within a TB household, whoever receives the report will send out a DWP009 immediately to the other agency. Examples include ...

- TB benefit group reports to ISD caseworker that they are moving out of state and request case closure. Once the caseworker takes action of the case, a DWP009 is sent to the contractor.
- TB benefit group reports new income going over the 150% of the FPL to their CDS. CDS reports to the ISD caseworker using the DWP009.

It is important to stress that just because a client reports a change in circumstance(s) that does not mean that action is required by ISD to alter eligibility (update ISD2). The basic premise is: If the client is employed the CDS should wait until Interim or recertification to update IRP/WPA, unless changes to the client's circumstances require a new WPA/IRP.

Communication between the CDS and ISD is encouraged; however there should be no need to request any information of a client on interim reporting.

## WORK PARTICIPATION

The TB benefit group will be encouraged to participate in work program activities, such as:

- ✓ Assessment,
- ✓ Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP),
- ✓ Work Participation Agreement (WPA),

At the time of approval, ISD will notify the CDS by using the "The NMW Electronic Communication Exchange" form - **DWP009 revised 11/05/08**. The client will then be contacted by the CDS to encourage participation in completing the following activities:

- ✓ Screening and Assessments
- ✓ Employment Counseling
- ✓ Support Service Linkages
- ✓ IRP and WPA development

Participation by each adult group member is encouraged whether the benefit group is considered to be a two-parent or single-parent benefit group.

No TB participant shall be sanctioned for non-cooperation with NMW work requirements.

### Attachments:

1. ISD MR 08-11, November 20, 2008
2. ISD GI 08-30, July 14, 2008
3. ISD MR 08-02, June 30, 2008
4. ISD PC-FA 09-02 TB and Wage Subsidy
5. ISD PC-FA 09-03 Transition Bonus & 2 parent HH
6. Brochure FAP 113
7. ISD 017 Income Eligibility Guidelines

