



Department of Human Resources
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FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

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**TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS AND CASE MANAGERS**

FROM: ROSEMARY MALONE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

**RE: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE (TCA) WORK REQUIREMENTS
FOR CUSTOMERS WHO ARE HOMELESS**

PROGRAM AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE

ORIGINATING OFFICE: BUREAU OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

BACKGROUND

The Bureau of Policy and Research received an inquiry regarding what is considered good cause for the Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) and Food Supplement Program (FSP) work requirements for customers who report being homeless. Additionally, there was a request for current policy that defines homelessness for FIA programs. This AT provides a definition of homeless and guidelines for TCA work requirements. A separate AT 16-18 provides guidance on homelessness in the Food Supplement Program (FSP).

SUMMARY

Definition of Homeless

There are two categories of homelessness for TCA purposes. Case managers will determine whether a customer meets one of these definitions. The two categories of homelessness are defined below:

- I. **Category 1:** Applies when an individual or family lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence. Category 1 includes **one** of the following conditions:
 - a. The individual or family is spending the night in a place, private or public, not intended for human habitation.
 - b. The individual or family is living in a publicly or privately operated shelter designated to provide temporary living arrangements (including congregate

- shelters, transitional housing and/or hotels or motels paid for by charitable organizations or by federal, state and local government programs).
- c. The individual or family who is exiting an institution where he/she has resided for the last 90 days or less and whose prior immediate residence was a shelter or a place not meant for human habitation.

If a TCA applicant/recipient meets the **Category 1** definition, assess the applicant or recipient for good cause for not participating in a work activity. Good cause must be re-evaluated no later than 30 days.

II. **Category 2:** Applies when a household meets all of the following conditions:

- a. The place of residence will be lost within 14 days of the application for assistance
- b. No subsequent residence can be identified; and,
- c. The individual or family lacks the resources or support networks needed to obtain other permanent housing.

Case managers are encouraged to incorporate time spent securing safe housing as a **job readiness** activity in tandem with other relevant job search/job readiness activities for Category 2 applicants/recipients.

If the household meets the definition for **Category 1 homelessness**, allow the mandatory TCA customer good cause for no more than 30 days.

- o Provide the customer with return appointment dates and times to monitor the housing situation.
- o Code the customer OTF in WORKS
- o Include the housing search in the family's Independence Plan.

When allowing good cause, the case manager should provide the customer with assistance and instructions in removing the housing barrier. The Independence Plan should include but is not limited to the following activities:

- o Search for shelter arrangements
- o Secure temporary or permanent shelter arrangements
- o Search for and secure appropriate referrals for housing needs such as subsidized housing
- o Utilize referral services to move from nightly shelters to, at minimum, reserved bed shelters

At the end of the 30-day good cause period, the case manager must assess the customer's progress in removing the housing barrier. The LDSS may choose to allow an additional 30 days of good cause or move the customer into Category 2 and incorporate

additional housing activities into a Job Readiness activity.

When a customer screens for **Category 2**, incorporate allowable activities into their job readiness plan as housing is maintained.

Such activities can include, but are not limited to, time spent on the following;

- o Documented calls made to shelters to inquire about bed availability
- o Intake appointments with shelter staff and/or coordinated access staff to get into shelter
- o Group or other activities required by the shelter for client to maintain their shelter placement
- o Housing applications
- o Housing subsidy applications
- o Meetings with housing coordinators
- o Meetings with legal aid related to housing barriers
- o Job readiness classes completed at shelters

The case manager can verify hours spent on housing barrier-removal activities by creating a weekly schedule based on customers scheduled activities for the week. Each activity should be allotted ample time to be completed, and can be coupled with other job search/job readiness activities, if needed. Such activities can be verified via shelter staff, by phone call, email or shelter and/or housing staff signatures on the customer's weekly timesheets.

ACTION DUE: Upon Receipt.

INQUIRIES: Please direct TCA policy questions to Lauren Atwell at 410-767-7116 or lauren.atwell@maryland.gov. For TCA WORK programs contact Shomare Braxton at 410-767-7940 or shomare.braxton@maryland.gov.