



THE TANF FAMILY VIOLENCE OPTION

Many people, regardless of who they are, where they are, or how they live their lives, experience domestic or sexual violence. People who receive TANF and are unable to work because they are victims of this type of violence (past, present, or at-risk) may be able to get an exclusion from some of the TANF program rules.

Stops the 60-month clock.

Exempt from 30 hours/week of work, training, or educational activity requirement.

If not cooperating with Child Support Services due to non-custodial parents' actions, good cause is presumed.

Exempt from any requirement that endangers, unfairly penalizes, or makes it harder for them to escape the violence.



Domestic violence is when someone uses verbal or physical violence to try to scare or control you.

- Swearing or screaming at you
- Threatening to hurt you or others you care about
- Calling you names
- Not letting you leave your house
- Blaming you for everything that goes wrong
- Forcing you to have sex
- Choking, grabbing, punching, or kicking you
- Smashing or breaking things
- Stalking, whether by a stranger or someone they know

You may not be able to work because either you or a member of your family is:

- recovering from physical or psychological injuries;
- seeking or receiving medical attention, including counseling;
- seeking or receiving services from a victim's organization;
- participating in safety planning or implementing a safety plan, including relocation;
- seeking or receiving legal assistance.
- being stalked or harassed
- at increased risk due to the location of the work or training site.



What is TANF?

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families is a cash benefits program for pregnant women and families with one or more dependent children.

Benefits can be used to pay for food, shelter, utilities, and other basic, necessary (non-medical) expenses.

Each adult can only receive TANF benefits for 60 months in their lifetime.

If a person who applies for TANF can't provide verification because of past, present, or risk of future violence, the caseworker must presume they are eligible. (PM 17-02-01-b)

If you have questions, contact Alison Stevens: astevensihc@gmail.com; 312-629-9580.

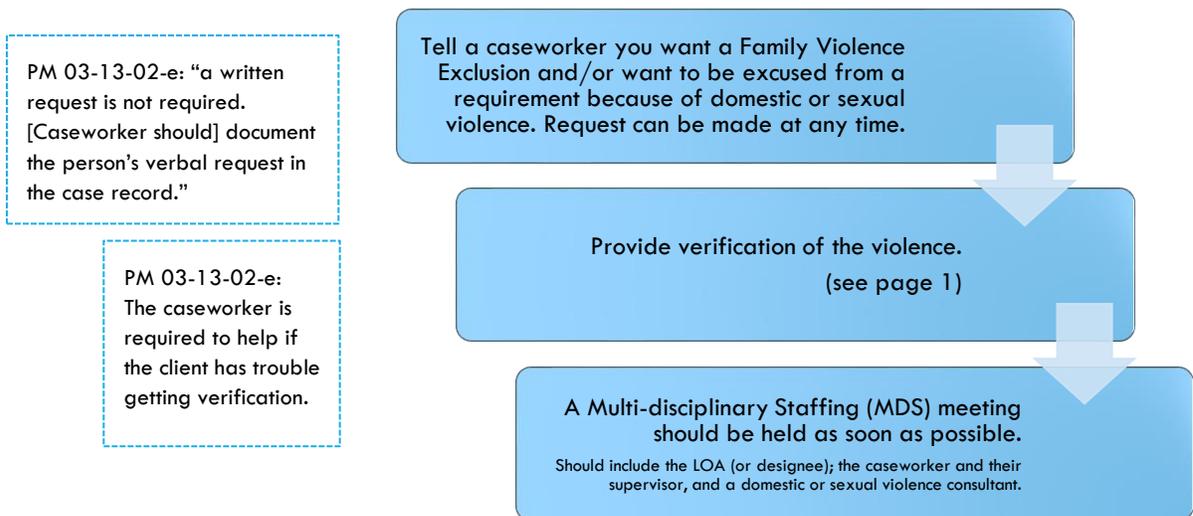
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VERIFYING THE ABUSE:

While medical records, police reports, court or agency records, and photos of injuries or property damage work for verification, they are not necessary. The applicant only needs to provide a written statement from someone who has knowledge of the circumstances, such as a neighbor, family member, clergy, nurse, social worker, or other provider.

The applicant does NOT have to attend counseling, get an order for protection, or receive domestic or sexual violence services.

GETTING THE EXEMPTION:



The purpose of the MDS is to look at all the available information about the client and:

1. identify what services they need and referrals that can be made;
2. develop options for the Responsibility and Service Plan (RSP);
3. decide if the person is eligible for a Family Violence Exclusion; and
4. if eligible, how often case management contact should be.

The MDS will decide how often the family's eligibility for the Exclusion should be reviewed – the maximum approval period is 6 months. There is no limit to how many times it can be renewed.

The Responsibility and Service Plan

Each TANF recipient works with their caseworker to make a plan that is intended to deal with the abuse and get them to the point where they can participate in work, training, or educational activities.

- o *The first priority should be ensuring the safety of the family.*
- o *The plan can only include work and training activities if it doesn't endanger any member of the family.*
- o *A sexual or domestic violence provider/advocate should be involved in designing the RSP.*

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