



Together,
we're making
our families
stronger.



If you have questions about information presented in this booklet or other questions about the TEA program, please contact your county office.

If you need this information in a different format, please contact your county office. Si necesita este formulario en Español, llame 1-855-372-1084 y pida la version en Español.

TTD/TTY Voice 1-800-285-1121
TDD 1-800-285-1131

“Equal Opportunity Employer/Program”
“Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.”



Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)



Helping needy families
with children under 18
become less dependent
on public assistance





What is Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA)?

The Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) program helps needy families with children become more responsible for their own support and less dependent on public assistance. The purpose of the TEA program is to help needy families become economically self-sufficient by providing opportunities to obtain and retain employment sufficient to sustain the family. Central to this purpose is helping adults and minor parents reduce out-of-wedlock births and promoting family unity. Employment improves the quality of life for parents and children by increasing family income, assets and by improving self-esteem.

Coordination With Other Programs

Your family may need and be eligible for other programs and services such as:

Medicaid to help with medical costs;

Family Planning services available through the local Health Department or local physicians;

Child Health Services Early Periodic Screening Diagnosis and Treatment, which is no cost health services provided to individuals under the age of 21 (including parents under the age of 21);

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (i.e., food stamps) to help purchase food;

Voter Registration information, which gives you the opportunity to register to vote if you are not a registered voter;

Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which is a special tax benefit for people who work full or part-time; and

Assistance for TANF applicants and potential TANF applicants who are victims of sexual harassment and survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, or stalking.

Your case manager will discuss these programs and services with you.



Penalties

If you fail to participate in your work activities, your TEA case manager will determine if you have a good reason and whether you are getting all the support services you need. If you do not have a good reason for not participating, your cash payment may be reduced or case closed until you do participate.

Fraud

Fraud consists of giving false information or withholding information for the purpose of receiving assistance a person is not entitled to under the program rules and regulations.

Intentional Program Violation

An Intentional Program Violation (IPV) in the TEA Program occurs when a person gives incorrect information for the purpose of falsely maintaining the family's eligibility for TEA. If you are found guilty of an IPV you cannot participate in the program for:

- (a) the first offense, one (1) year.
- (b) the second offense, two (2) years.
- (c) more than two offenses, permanently.

Electronic Benefits Card (EBT)

A federal law passed in 2012 prohibits the use of Transitional Employment Assistance (TEA) electronic benefit transfer (EBT) cards at certain businesses. These businesses include any liquor store; casino, gambling casino or gaming establishment, or any retail establishment where performers undress or entertain in an unclothed state. TEA participants cannot use their TEA EBT card to make purchases at the counter or use their card at an ATM machine located on the premises of these businesses. Any TEA participant who utilizes their TEA EBT card at any of these businesses will be subject to penalties which include the repayment of funds.

Benefits may include cash payments, child care assistance, help with transportation and other work-related expenses.

Diversion assistance is a one-time payment to a family to help them through a hard time so the parent can keep or accept a job. The amount of the diversion assistance payment is the amount needed to solve the problem up to a certain maximum. The case manager will decide whether the amount allowed will help solve the problem.

During the first interview, your case manager will review with you the questions that you have answered on the application and ask questions about your family's circumstances. This will help to determine what services your family needs and your eligibility for them.

You may be asked to complete a skills assessment form. This form asks questions about your education, training background, and your work history. If you are job ready and you have child care and transportation available to you, you will be required to look for a job while your application is being processed.

Personal Responsibility Agreement

The Personal Responsibility Agreement (PRA) is an agreement stating what you will have to do in order for us to help you. You must comply with Child Support Enforcement unless you have good cause, work requirements and certain responsibilities to your family. You must make sure your school age child is going to school and that your pre-schooler receives his/her immunizations (shots). Your case manager will go over these responsibilities with you. If you fail to comply with these conditions, it may cause a decrease in or loss of your cash assistance payment.

Employment Plan

If you are approved for cash assistance, you and your case manager will develop an Employment Plan. The plan will outline steps that you and DHS will take to help you get and keep a job. You and your case manager will work as a team in developing this plan.

When you sign the plan, you are stating that you will follow the steps outlined in the plan. When your case manager signs, he or she is committing State resources that will help you get a job and keep it.

Time Limits

A family who meets all the eligibility requirements may receive TEA cash payments for up to 12 months. The 12 months do not have to be in a row. If you are a grandparent receiving benefits for your grandchild(ren), time limits do not apply to you. Benefits will be available for a longer period of time. Your case manager will be able to explain this in more detail.



Extended Support Services (ESS)

Extended Support Services, such as child care, Medicaid, job retention, and case management, are offered to employed families who are no longer eligible for TEA due to earnings. No application for these services is needed.

ESS child care is available for a lifetime limit of 24 months, after your TEA case closes due to employment. To receive ESS child care at no cost for the first 12 months, you must be working a minimum of 20 hours a week. To receive ESS child care for the second year, you must work 25 hours a week.

You may have to pay a portion of your child care costs the second year. The cost will be based on a sliding fee scale. TEA will pay part and you will pay the rest.

To be eligible for child care after the 24 months, you must be working 30 hours a week and meet other conditions set by the Office of Early Childhood.

Transitional Medicaid (an Extended Support Service) is available to certain families for up to 1 year after your TEA case closes due to a job. In some situations, health care through the ARKIDS program will be available to the children even if the parent is not covered.

ESS case management services are offered to you for up to 12 months after your case closes due to going to work. This includes making sure that you have the support services needed to keep your job and that you receive counseling, coaching, and any other services you might need.

Your case manager will be able to discuss these services with you.

Your Rights

To have your application processed timely

To be advised in writing of your work requirements

To be advised in writing of any changes in your benefit amount

To be treated courteously and with respect

To appeal any adverse action taken on your case and receive an Administrative Hearing

Your Responsibilities

Attend all interviews your case manager schedules for you.

Fulfill all the requirements of your Personal Responsibility Agreement and Employment Plan.

Contact your case manager when asked to do so.

Tell your case manager within 10 days of any changes that affect your participation.

Work toward achieving self-sufficiency before your time-limited assistance ends.

General Eligibility Requirements

In order for your family to get cash assistance, you must meet the following conditions. Your case manager will explain more in detail.

- You must have a child under 18 years of age who is related and living with you. Relationship and date of birth must be verified by birth certificate, hospital certificate or other documents.
- You must have a Social Security number for all family members or apply for them.
- Parents under the age of 18 must live in their parent's home or in an adult-supervised home, except under limited conditions, and must attend high school, get a GED, or go to Vo-Tech school.
- A person must be either an United States citizen or an alien lawfully admitted under certain criteria.
- The family must currently live in Arkansas with the intent to remain in Arkansas.
- You can receive assistance for up to 12 months. There is no time limit if you are getting cash assistance for someone else's child(ren), like a grandchild.
- You can have some income, including earnings, and still be eligible to receive assistance. The family's total countable income must be less than the state's income standard.
- If a parent is absent from the home, or paternity needs to be established, you will be referred to the Office of Child Support Enforcement unless you have "good cause." If you are referred, you must help locate the absent parent and obtain child support or establish paternity. Your case manager will explain "good cause" in more detail.
- Resources include cash on hand, savings accounts, property not used as a home, or other liquid assets. A person may own any of these things or any combination of these so long as the total value does not exceed \$3000. The family's home and one motor vehicle are not counted.

Work Participation Activities

TEA parents must engage in work activities as described in their Employment Plans for a minimum number of hours per week.

Allowable activities are:

- Unsubsidized Employment
- Subsidized Employment (Private & Public)
- On-the-Job Training
- Job Search and Job Readiness
- Work Experience
- Community Service
- Career and Technical Education
- Providing Childcare Services for a Community Service Participant
- Education Directly Related to Employment
- Job Skills Training
- Attendance at Secondary School

Your case manager will explain each activity and the participation requirements to you.

Supportive Services

The State of Arkansas understands that it may take more than just training, education, and counseling to help you find a job.

We know you may be concerned about who will take care of your children while you are engaged in TEA activities.

If necessary, we will help you pay for child care and other expenses you may have when you go to work or engage in work activities.

If personal or family problems are keeping you from going to work, your case manager may be able to refer you to an agency that may be able to help you.

Processing Time Frames

Your TEA application will be processed as quickly as possible but not later than 30 days from the date your application was received in the office.

If you are found eligible for TEA, your cash payments will begin with the month your application is approved.

