



Administrative Policies and Procedures: 23.29

Subject Families First Authorization and Case Management

Approved by *Davidelle White Barnes*

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Authority Tenn. Rules & Regs. 1240-01-18,1240-01-19

Application Family Assistance Staff

Policy Statement

Families First caseworkers and or client representatives shall authorize Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) grants for assistance units (AU) appropriate for their determined eligibility status and make changes to existing AUs to ensure the ongoing cash grant amount is correct.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all eligible AUs are approved for, and continue to receive, the correct ongoing cash grant.

Procedures

A. Authorization of Grants

1. Once the AU has been determined to meet all points of eligibility, the Families first grant must be authorized.
2. Once authorized, the cash grant will be made available to the AU on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card the following day, if the AU currently has a card. For AUs that do not have a card, a card with benefits pre-loaded will be mailed to them on the day following cash grant authorization.

B. Differential Grants

1. Certain Families First AUs, with one (1) to five (5) individuals, are eligible for larger Families First grant amounts. These increased grant amounts are called differential grants.
2. The following AUs are eligible to receive differential grants:
 - a. Child only cases: cases in which the non-parental caretaker is not included in the AU and SSI caretaker cases.
 - b. Disabled caretakers as outlined in policy [23.24 Families First Work](#)

and/or Educational Activity.

- i. This does not include caretakers who are exempt from the work and/or educational activity for a temporary incapacity determined by the Medical Evaluation Unit (MEU).
 - c. Caretakers caring for a disabled relative living in the home that have been approved by the MEU as outlined in policy [23.30 MEU Referrals](#).
 - d. Caretakers age sixty-five (65) and older.
3. AUs are not eligible for a differential when the caretaker is:
- a. Not included in the AU because he/she is an ineligible non-citizen.
 - b. A minor parent.

C. Designation of a Protective Payee

- 1. A protective payee will be named for the AU if:
 - a. The customer applying for Families First has a guardian, in which case the guardian will be named payee for the grant.
 - b. A child who has a legal guardian is living in the home with a relative within the specific degree of relationship, in which case the guardian will be named payee for the AU.
 - c. The caretaker is a minor age fourteen (14) or under, or is a minor deemed in need of a protective payee.
 - d. The caretaker has failed to comply with EBT restricted location requirements as outlined in [Policy 23.11 Families First EBT Location Restrictions](#).
 - e. The caretaker has failed to comply with drug testing as outlined in [policy 23.02 Families First Drug Testing](#).
 - f. There is an emergency situation that will not exceed a three (3) month period. When an emergency situation becomes known, the caseworker will:
 - i. Determine the nature of the emergency, the whereabouts of the caretaker and the children, and the name, telephone number, and address of the person reporting the emergency.
 - ii. Secure the name of a protective payee (from the caretaker, if possible).
 - iii. Determine continued eligibility for the AU and make any necessary changes.
 - iv. Review the case within three (3) calendar months to determine the AU's circumstances and determine ongoing eligibility.
- 2. Tennessee Department of Human Services (TDHS) employees cannot be named as a protective payee.
- 3. A business cannot be named as a protective payee.

D. Changes Between Renewals

- 1. Families First customers must report any change in circumstance to TDHS within ten (10) calendar days of the date the change occurs.
 - a. The caseworker or client representative will request verification of all

reported changes in writing.

- b. The request for verification will allow ten (10) calendar days from the date the request is mailed to provide verification of the change.
2. For cases where any individual is being added to an existing AU, the AU must submit a signed [hs-0169 Application for Assistance](#) along with the needed verification of the change.
3. When an AU is moving from one (1) county of residence to another within the state of Tennessee, an application must be filed in the new county of residence within ten (10) calendar days of establishing residence. A renewal interview must be completed within thirty (30) calendar days of the case being transferred to the new county.
4. Caseworkers and/or client representatives must process all changes timely.
 - a. When verification is received, the case must be processed within ten (10) calendar days of receipt of the verification.
 - b. When verification is not received within ten (10) days following the written request, action must be taken to close the case on the eleventh (11th) calendar day.
5. When the ongoing eligibility or ineligibility has been determined, the caseworker and/or client representatives must either deny or reauthorize the case, as appropriate.
6. Anytime there is a change between renewals, the circumstances surrounding the change must be reviewed for a potential underpayment or overpayment as outlined in policy [23.31 Families First Overpayments and Underpayments](#).

E. Bankruptcy

1. Bankruptcy orders may impact a Families First cash grant by ordering that all or part of the grant be paid directly to the bankruptcy court for disbursement.
2. For an AU that has an existing bankruptcy order, all case changes due to changes in circumstance must be made and appropriate action must be taken to increase or decrease the cash grant, or close the case.
3. The cash grant cannot be reduced due to an overpayment.
 - All overpayments must still be processed as outlined in policy [23.31 Families First Overpayments and Underpayments](#).

Forms

[hs-0169 Application for Assistance](#)

Collateral Documents

- [Policy 23.11 Families First EBT Location Restrictions](#)
- [Policy 23.02 Families First Drug Testing](#)
- [Policy 23.30 MEU Referrals](#)
- [Policy 23.31 Families First Overpayments and Underpayments](#)
- [Policy 23.24 Families First Work and/or Educational Activity](#)

Additional Resources [Families First Authorization and Case Management Procedures](#)

Retention of Records Pending

Glossary

Term

Definition

Protective Payee

An individual who has access to the AU's cash benefits. He/she is responsible for and expected to use the cash grant for the benefit of the child(ren) and to act for the caretaker in relation to the child. The protective payee may be related or unrelated and may live in the home or apart from the AU.

Acronyms

Abbreviation

Expansion

AU

Assistance Unit

EBT

Electronic Benefits Transfer

MEU

Medical Evaluation Unit

SSI

Supplemental Security Income

TDHS

Tennessee Department of Human Services

TANF

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Supersedes

- Families First Online Policy Manual chapters 32, 35, and 41
- Families First Handbook pp235-249
- Bulletins:
 - FA-12-09
 - FA-06-17
 - FA-05-17
 - FA-03-12
 - FA-02-19
- Numbered Memoranda:
 - FA-14-06 as it applies to Families First
 - FF-14-03
 - FF-06-11