

Temporary Assistance Employment Services

What are Temporary Assistance employment services?

Social services districts in New York State offer employment and training services to recipients of Temporary Assistance to help them obtain a job. Recipients who are able to work must be engaged in activities to improve their work readiness and to support job placement. Additionally, social services districts are required to meet federal and State standards to engage a certain percentage of all Temporary Assistance recipients in work activities.

What are work requirements?

Adults receiving Temporary Assistance must participate in assigned work activities, for up to 40 hours per week, to help them prepare for and enter employment. They are required to participate in an employment assessment to:

- Establish employment goals;
- Identify work activities that will help them develop the skills needed to secure employment; and
- Determine what supports, such as child care and transportation assistance, the district should provide to enable the individual to participate in assigned work activities.

Individuals are required to accept offers of employment and engage in work activities as assigned by the social services district, unless the individual is determined to be exempt from work requirements, as defined in State regulations.

The number of hours required for participation is determined by the social services district, and guided by federal and State work participation requirements. Recipients are typically required to participate at least 20 hours per week in a work-based activity, such as paid employment or unpaid work experience.

In general:

- Single adults with a child under six years of age must participate in work activities at least 20 hours a week, and up to 40 hours a week.
- Single adults with one or more dependent child six years of age or older must participate in work activities at least 30 hours a week, and up to 40 hours a week.
- Single adults without any children and adults in two-parent households must participate in work activities at least 35 hours a week, and up to 40 hours a week.
- Recipients who are determined to be unable to work because of a physical or mental health condition may be required to participate in periodic assessments, reasonable medical care, rehabilitation or treatment when a medical professional expects treatment to improve the individual's ability to work.

What are acceptable work activities?

Temporary Assistance recipients may be required to participate in a variety of work activities, including:

- Unsubsidized employment;
- Subsidized employment or on-the-job training;
- Work experience in a public or non-profit organization;
- Job search;
- Job readiness training;
- Community service;
- Vocational education training;
- Childcare for a community service participant;
- Job skills training; and/or
- Education, including attendance at high school, a high school equivalent, or college.

Social services districts are required to provide any child care or transportation needed for an individual to participate in an assigned work activity. They may also provide other supportive services, such as work-related clothing or equipment to help individuals obtain a job.

Who is exempt from work requirements?

Certain individuals are not required to participate in work activities, but may volunteer to do so. Criteria for exemption from participation in work activities are defined in State law and regulations. Individuals may be required to participate in a medical examination by the social services district's medical provider to determine the individual's ability to work. Individuals are exempt from participation in work activities if determined by the social services district to be meeting one or more of the following conditions:

- Ill or injured, including physical and mental health conditions, and unable to work as determined by medical evidence;
- 60 years of age or older;
- Under age 16, or under age 19 and attending a secondary, vocational, or technical school full-time;
- Needed in the home to care for an incapacitated household member;
- Pregnant and within 30 days of medically-verified delivery date; or
- A parent or caretaker relative of a child under three months of age, exemption not to exceed 12 months in the individual's lifetime.

What if someone refuses to participate in assigned work activities?

Anyone able to work who refuses to participate in an assigned work activity without a good reason will have their Temporary Assistance benefits reduced or eliminated. This action is called a sanction.

The length of the sanction is based on State law and depends on the type of household, the act of noncompliance, and the number of times the individual has been previously sanctioned for noncompliance. To end a sanction, the individual must demonstrate compliance with employment requirements. Individuals should provide the district with any information about why they failed or refused to meet the work requirement and respond to notices from the district in a timely manner to avoid a sanction, if possible.

This fact sheet is intended to provide general program information and is not intended for use to determine eligibility or define program requirements for any individual or household.