

**TANF Analyst Hour**  
**02/20/24**  
**Topic – Support Services**

**Q: What is DACA?**

Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) temporarily delays the deportation of people without documentation who came to the U.S. as children. Renewal is not automatic. More information can be located at: <https://www.usa.gov/daca>

**Q: Are work authorized individuals eligible for support services?**

Individuals who are JOBS eligible are potentially eligible for support services, this includes those that are not in the TANF benefit group but are legally eligible to work in the US. Examples could be Compact of Free Association (COFA) citizens. ONE has system safeguards to check JOBS status of individuals requesting support services upon click of “evaluate” and will return a denial if the individual is not JOBS eligible or JOBS volunteer.

**Q: What are best practices for working with individuals who demonstrate a history of developing a plan, then getting the support services and then not contacting ODHS again until they need support services, does that qualify for support services?**

Each family’s situation is unique, each outcome is based on their individual situation. TANF Policy can’t provide blanket response that would fit all situations. As these situations arise, we would encourage family coaches to staff with their peers and engagement specialist, managers to determine if repeat payments support individuals long term goals.

**Q: Is there a difference between pets and service animals?**

Payments related to animals are not allowable under support service rules.

Under Title II and Title III of the ADA, a service animal means any dog that is individually trained to do work or perform tasks for the benefit of an individual with a disability, including a physical, sensory, psychiatric, intellectual, or other mental disability. Under OAR [461-190-0211](#) (5.q.A) these types of payments would be considered medical services and not allowable payments.

Individuals with service animals may be eligible for additional supports under their medical coverage. A family coach would work with the individual in contacting their CCO to see what resources may be available.

Companion and emotional support animals are considered pets per [461-190-0211 \(5.q.J\)](https://www.legis.ga.gov/legis63/2021/bills/senate/sb_0101-0200/sb_0101-0200_bill_0190_0211_bill_20210101_enr.htm) these payments are not allowable. Family coaches would work with Individuals needing assistance for non-service animals needs by reaching out to local food pantries, free veterinary services, pet rescues, and other community resources that may have resources for pet related needs.

**Q: Can we purchase a bicycle?**

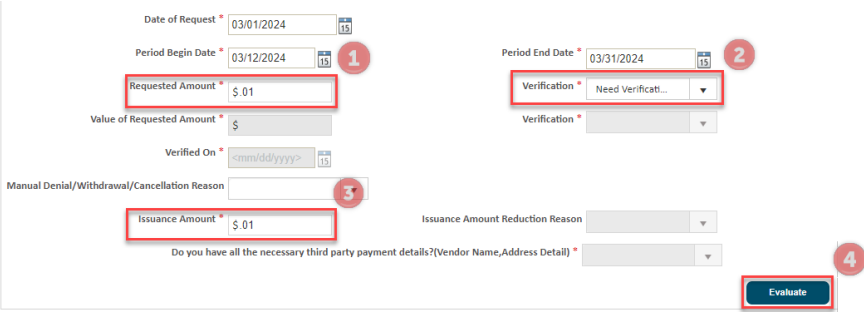
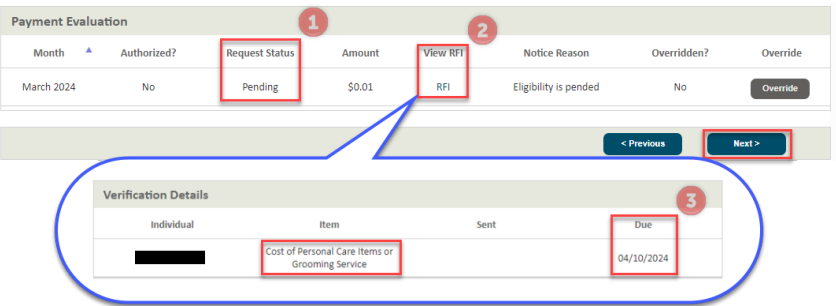
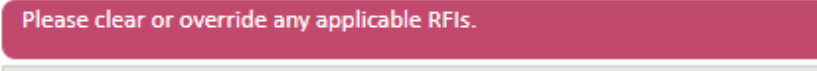
Possibly, if based on the individuals need and ongoing case plan a bicycle may be reasonable method of transportation. Purchase of a bicycle would be subject to all other provisions in OAR including lower cost alternatives.

Example: Enoch is engaged in their JOBS plan. Enoch attends classes with the contractor Monday and Wednesdays. In Enoch's community there is not access to reliable public transportation. Enoch requests an electric assist bike. Enoch provided a statement from a local bike shop states that a new standard adult bike with helmet and required safely gear is \$250.00 and electric bike is \$500.00. The family coach googles bike prices and finds the prices to be consistent with the information Enoch provided. The family coach approves the support service payment in the amount of \$250.00 payable to the bike shop for the purchase of the standard bike and safety equipment required.

**Q: You said ONE will send a pend for us. cCn you share the steps for this?, We've had to send 210a pend.**

That is correct, if verification of the cost is required, ONE will send an RFI if the Verification field is "needs verification". Currently, the payment request details screen has validation logic that requires a value to be entered in the requested amount along with the issued amount. TANF policy is working on system changes to change screen validation logic when and RFI or denial is being processed on this screen. These changes are not expected until fall of 2024.

In the interim please follow the below steps to send and RFI if the exact amount of a support service cost is required.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. In the “Requested Amount” field enter “.01</li> <li>2. In the “Verification” field select “Needs Verification”</li> <li>3. In the “Issuance Amount” field enter “.01”</li> <li>4. Click “Evaluate”</li> </ol>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The payment evaluation should return a result of “Pending”</li> <li>2. The “RFI” link can be clicked to verify the support service type being pended.</li> <li>3. Due date of RFI</li> </ol>	
<p>Note: The entire support service RFI can be viewed in the correspondence tab</p> <p>ONE will not create a leadership task or allow the payment to be authorized until the “Verification” field is changed to an allowable value.</p>	

**Q: I would like to flesh out a little more when we should say no to support payments. I see in some cases that rent has been paid consistently for over a year with the small break to comply with 3-grand limit and three months. Usually this looks like pay for two months, one month off, and then pay again.**

If an individual is engaged in a case plan and making progress towards long term housing goals support services could be paid if all requirements of OAR are met. These scenarios should always be staffed in a group setting including an engagement specialist, and manager. TANF policy can also help brainstorm ideas and possible resources for the family.

**Q: I would like clarification on not making rent payments for the month after TANF closes.**

Support services, including housing payments, are considered assistance by federal definitions. As “assistance”, such payments are subject to child support assignability and time limits. Assistance is also identified as received during the month of the benefit. Pre-payment of rent is for a future benefit month and thus would be considered assistance for a month the rent is intended to pay for housing cost.

For these reason rent cannot be pre-paid for months where the individual is not eligible for TANF benefits regardless of the reason they are ineligible for TANF.

TANF policy is aware this federal regulation is not always helpful to families; we continue to explore alternative options of supporting all families’ transition from TANF assistance.

Beyond ongoing housing cost, transitioning from TANF can be an adjustment. When individuals gain employment there can be added cost, we want to have conversations with individuals to make sure the department is, when allowable, covering the cost of employment such as clothing, transportation, etc. before TANF closes.

**Q: Are request for childcare (ERDC) registration fees considered a TANF Support Services request?**

No, prior to 7/1/2023, childcare registration fees for approved providers were paid out of TANF support service funding. Once childcare services moved under DELC, these types of payments are covered under ERDC services and are not considered TANF support services. Payment request for childcare provider payment or registration fees should not be entered into the ONE ‘Other Payments module’.

**Q: So, paying a car payment or lease is not considered buying a car?**

No, payment of a single car payment is not considered purchasing a car.

**Q: Can housing and utility payments Under \$3000 can be approved by Engagement Specialist?**

Housing and utility payments under \$3,000 can be approved by anyone with leadership role in ONE allowed to approve support service payments. Local districts and branches determine who has approval roles in ONE. Per OAR payments over \$3,000 have to be approved by a manager.