

How Long Do We Keep A WO Step Open?

With the recent focus on participation and maximizing every hour, there has been significant discussion about when to open and close steps. The TANF policy team hopes that the following guidance will clear up some of the more confusing aspects of WO steps.

When converting cases that are going over income, the goal is to allow the family access to stable benefits that will assist in their path to self-sufficiency. It is also important to capture participation whenever possible. For open TANF cases, WO is the activity step to capture participation hours.

- TANF remains open until the family has actually gone over income.
- The participation data is gathered based on a TRACS month and does not align with the grant closure date (example: last TANF issued for April is connected to the TRACS month that ends the first Friday in May).
- Create a planned WO step. Expected start date is the date the job started or is expected to start. Expected end date should be the last day of the TANF certification. Leave the WO step in planned status until one of the following occurs:
 - 1) We have received two-consecutive weeks of work verification and determined the average weekly hours. Add actual start date and at least two weeks of the average hours determined.
 - If the case is going OVI, adjust the WO end date to be the first Friday after the month the TANF grant closes.
 - 2) We gave the family (and DHS) until the end of the TANF certification. *Where the employment is reported but never verified, the WO activity should be ended with "no show" as the reason.*
- When work hours are verified, and the TANF remains open, the WO step should stay open until the job ends. Re-verify work hours at each TANF certification date or every six months, whichever is sooner; adjust the work hours on the WO step as needed, and project new expected end date to match the next certification period.
- Ideally, JPI eligibility will be determined prior to the WO closing so that the family can continue to meet participation.