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Number: SS-AR-12-010

Issue date: 07/13/2012

Topic: Cash Payments

Due date: Continuous

Subject: Accurate coding of TANF cases

Applies to (check all that apply):

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> County DD Program Managers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> County Mental Health Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Aging and People with Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Health Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Children, Adults and Families | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other (<i>please specify</i>): Office of Self Sufficiency |

Action required:

At initial TANF application and at redetermination, it is important to make sure TANF cases are coded correctly. Correctly coding TANF cases is critical in helping Oregon meet federal TANF work participation requirements and avoid penalty to the TANF block grant. In addition, correctly coding TANF cases helps:

- Ensure cases are funded appropriately;
- Accurately interface case information with DCS for the purpose of administering child support;
- Ensure the client is receiving the right benefit amount;
- Make budgetary decisions, by allowing us to provide accurate caseload data by program type as well as case descriptor and need/resource codes.

Coding tips and errors to avoid miscoding:

The following addresses commonly found errors in TANF coding and provides guidance on how to appropriately code the case:

Single-Parent Households

- Code single-parent households program 2. (Do NOT code single parent households with INC case descriptors. If the client is transitioning from a two-parent household based on incapacity to a single-parent household, remove the INC case descriptor from the parent or the absent parent.)

Two-Parent Households

- Code program 82 when a two-parent household is eligible for cash assistance based on underemployment or unemployment.

If one or both of the adults are stating a disability that may meet two-parent incapacity deprivation but neither is currently getting SSI or SSB disability benefits or has provided medical documentation, you can proceed with program 82 underemployment or unemployment deprivation eligibility decision and code program 82 instead of program 2. When medical documentation is received (or when one of the adults begins getting SSI or SSB disability benefits), change to a program to 2 and be sure to code the parent(s) who meets the incapacity with the INC case descriptor at that time;

- Code program 2 when a two-parent household is eligible for cash assistance based on incapacity. At least one of the parents in the two-parent household must have an INC case descriptor (which indicates there is medical documentation in the file to substantiate the decision that deprivation eligibility is based on incapacity) or at least one parent must be receiving SSI or SSB disability benefits.

If the parent who is incapacitated is also receiving SSI, code the individual with both an INC case descriptor and a SSI case descriptor. Additionally they need an SSI Need/Resource code. To avoid benefit calculation problems, code the income amount as zero;

Non-Needy Caretaker Households

- Code adults in a non-needy (NNCR), no-parent household as 'NO' with program code 2. (Do NOT code as an 82 even if there are two caretaker adults in the household.)
- Code NNI need/resource with the appropriate income amount being used to make the eligibility determination, even if zero;
- Do not code any of the non-needy caretaker's own children as 'CH.' Coding a non-needy caretaker's own children as 'CH' is a coding error that will result not only in the case being pulled into the federal work participation counts inappropriately, but also causes TANF benefit overpayments. (A caretaker relative's own child(ren) should be coded 'CH' only when the caretaker relative is needy.)

Note: *If the case has medical coverage for the children of the non-needy caretaker relative(s), they should be coded 'NO's with medical start dates.*

Other

- When a child on a TANF grant becomes an adult, change the in-grant code from 'CH' to 'RE.' (Do not code the adult child a 'NO.')
- If the child is still receiving medical, set up a separate case for that child;

- Do NOT reuse case numbers for adult children starting their own case. (Reusing case numbers attaches unreimbursed assistance owed by a parent to the case of the now-adult child. This can result in the now-adult child having child support retained inappropriately.)
- Code SSI as a case descriptor and a need/resource for anyone receiving SSI. Code the income for the need/resource as zero.

Reason for action: Oregon is currently in a corrective compliance action year because the state did not meet federally-mandated TANF work participation rate requirements. Oregon has until September 30, 2012, to correct or discontinue the work participation rate violation.

Oregon implemented the Job Participation Incentive (JPI) in October 2011 which has improved the work participation rate. Oregon must demonstrate every effort in accomplishing the goal of meeting federal TANF work participation rate requirements. Accurately coding TANF cases is a critical component in accomplishing this goal.

Workers taking steps to ensure TANF single-parent, two-parent and non-needy cases are correctly coded at application and redetermination is key to ensuring these cases are appropriately reported in the federal TANF work participation rates and that Oregon is able to maximize TANF recipients' hours of work participation.

Field/stake holder review: Yes No
If yes, reviewed by:

If you have any questions about this action request, contact:

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