Domestic Violence
and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)

TANF is a program that provides financial assistance to very low income families. Assistance levels for TANF vary depending on the number of people in the family or household. A family of four is eligible for a maximum of $617.00.

How Domestic Violence is defined in the TANF and TA-DVS programs:

Domestic violence is the occurrence of one or more of the following acts between family members, intimate partners or household members:
1. Attempting to cause or intentionally, knowingly or recklessly causing physical injury or emotional, mental or verbal abuse.
2. Intentionally, knowingly or recklessly placing another in fear of imminent serious physical injury.
3. Committing sexual abuse in any degree as defined in Chapter 163 of the Oregon Revised Statutes.
4. Using coercive or controlling behavior.

TANF staff work with domestic violence issues in ways that:

• Keep victims safe.
• Remove domestic violence as a welfare-to-work barrier as early as possible.
• Identify client situations of potential or actual domestic violence early in the application/assessment process.
• Will help in the design of a case plan to ensure the safety of the applicant/client and his/her children.
• Will help determine whether the client should be excused from certain program requirements as long as danger exists
• Will help persons fleeing domestic violence.

Expectations in working victims:

• Clients have the right to be informed of the options for protection from domestic violence.
• All clients have the right to apply for aid from CHS and participate in self-sufficiency activities without fear of actual or threatened violence from
• a domestic partner.
• Clients are accountable for their own actions and choices, but are not responsible for creating the abusive situation.
• CHS will support the opportunity for clients to achieve a life without domestic violence by using methods of identification, education, protection and prevention.
• Domestic violence education is available to all CHS staff.
• TANF eligibility requirements should not prevent individuals from escaping, or put them at further risk of, domestic violence.
• Domestic violence service providers will be involved, with the client's permission, in assessing needs and resources necessary to intervene in domestic violence situations.

TANF Guidelines when there is domestic violence:

• Identify, as early as possible, the occurrence (past or present) or threat of domestic violence.
• Develop self-sufficiency plans that reflect that the client is a victim of domestic violence.
• Refer clients to the appropriate counseling resources.
• Provide education resources to clients about domestic violence.
• Accept the client's statement of domestic violence, without requiring additional verification.
• Ensure clients of their right to confidentiality, particularly in cases when disclosure of information could raise the risk of harm.
• Provide referrals to community resources for prevention and protection.
• Collaborate and consult with community partners in assessing, developing and monitoring case plans with domestic violence victims.

Staff in the Self Sufficiency office should:

• Provide case management
• Make a plan, with client and community-partner involvement, that addresses the safety of the family members. This may include home visits, protective service referrals or other community resource involvement including counseling.

Waiving TANF requirements in cases with domestic violence:
Waiver or modification of TANF requirements is not intended to be automatically granted to every identified victim of domestic violence. The intent of the policy is to give case managers more latitude in helping people escape domestic violence, to move toward safety and self-sufficiency.

The case manager may decide, on an individual basis, to waive or modify TANF eligibility requirements that put a person at risk of harm by domestic violence. The decision to waive any requirement does not mean automatically waiving all of them. The waiver or modification of program requirements is intended to be temporary, to help victims of domestic violence to move forward with their self-sufficiency plan and to meet program requirements when safe. The decision to waive or modify eligibility requirements should be re-evaluated regularly.

Though the Food Stamp Program and Medical Assistance Programs, like the Oregon Health Plan, have some flexibility in working with victims around safety issues, the ability to waive requirements applies only to TANF funded programs.