



Jim Martin, Commissioner

Georgia Department of Human Resources • Division of Family and Children Services, Juanita Blount-Clark, Director
Two Peachtree Street, NW Suite 19.490 • Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142 • Phone: (404) 651-8409 • Fax: (404) 657-5105

May 1, 2002

ECONOMIC SUPPORT SERVICES POLICY MANUAL TRANSMITTAL NO. 1

TO: County Departments of Family and Children Services
Field Directors
State Staff

FROM: Juanita Blount-Clark
Director

RE: New Economic Support Services Policy Manual

PURPOSE

The purpose of this transmittal is to introduce the revised *Economic Support Services Policy Manual*. This manual supercedes the Economic Support Services Manual issued in 1992 and updated through MT 52. It incorporates all TANF, Medicaid, and Food Stamp policy which remains current from the previous manual, and all policy for these programs issued since enactment of the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA) in 1996.

DISCUSSION

Passage of the PRWORA legislation in 1996 resulted in major revisions to the three major programs administered by DFCS through the Economic Support Services (ESS) Section. Although the focus of welfare reform was a complete revamping of the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) program, the Medicaid and Food Stamp programs were also highly impacted by the legislative changes.

Since 1996, regulations affecting TANF, Medicaid, and Food Stamps have been released sporadically, and have been subject to many often varying interpretations. As a result, regulations and clarifications were released to County Departments in memoranda, county letter, and email formats. This manual pulls together the information contained in those various formats, and sets forth the policies for the ESS programs in one uniform format.

When the first ESS Policy Manual was released in 1992, program policies were integrated according to specific topics. Since that time, the many revisions and changes to the regulations in all of the ESS programs made it increasingly difficult to preserve the integrated manual format and assure the integrity and consistency of the material. As a result, this manual is divided into three volumes, by program areas, to facilitate the location of specific policy details for each individual program. Each of the volumes is organized in a similar format, to facilitate the location of policy specifics among the programs.

This manual is the product of many months of work by both state and county staff. We gratefully acknowledge their input and dedication to this major undertaking. We particularly thank members of the Eligibility Quality Task Force (QTF) for their assistance in the review of the manual material for each of the programs, and for their comments and suggestions. We also wish to thank the county management staffs who allowed their staff members to participate in this project.

This transmittal represents Phase One of the revised *ESS Policy Manual*. Phase Two, to be completed by December 31, 2002 will add the following sections to the manual:

Appendix A—Income charts

Appendix B—Hearings

Appendix C—Medicaid Issuance

Appendix D—Case Record Organization, Case Record Retention, Documentation Standards, and Automated Documentation Tools (ADTs)

Appendix E—Glossary and Acronyms

Appendix F—Forms

Appendix G—Disaster Food Stamp Program

Volume IV, *Claims*, will be released in the near future.

MANUAL ORGANIZATION AND POLICY UPDATES

The extensive reorganization and revision to each of the program volumes made it difficult to utilize the normal page lining process to delineate new or changed policy or procedures. As a result, users should review each volume carefully, first to gain a sense of the overall organization of the material, and then to become familiar with revised topics and formats. Listed below, by program, are highlights of revised and new material which should be carefully reviewed.

Volume I (TANF)

TANF policy is now contained in Volume I of the *Economic Support Services Policy Manual*. The following policy changes appear in this volume. Review with all TANF staff.

CHAPTER COMMENTS

- 1300 **Basic Eligibility Criteria**
Section 1310, Citizenship, has been reorganized and includes a number of policy corrections regarding alien eligibility.
Section 1315, Deprivation, now includes paternity information.
Section 1325, Enumeration, includes a change in policy that monitoring a good cause determination is now required at 90 days and monthly thereafter.
Section 1351, Sanctions, includes the requirement that a manual notice must be sent to the AU when a case is closed for failure of the AU to cooperate with the conciliation process.
Sections 1390, TANF Lifetime Limit, and 1392, Hardship Waiver, are new to the manual and must be read in their entirety. Policy in these sections was issued previously via memorandum and some changes have been made.
- 1500 **Financial Eligibility Criteria**
Section 1510, Treatment of Resources by Resource Type, includes the change that all livestock are now excluded, and removes some of the income-producing requirements for excluding personal property.
Section 1515, Vehicles, includes the change that the \$4650 exclusion from the equity value of a vehicle may now be given to two vehicles in a two-parent AU if both vehicles are used to either seek, accept, or continue employment, or to attend training or school in preparation for employment.
Section 1520, Real Property, expands the exemption of home place property which is temporarily unoccupied to include domestic violence as a reason.
Section 1530, Treatment of Income by Income Type, includes a change in the treatment of charitable contributions. All charitable contributions, regardless of the funding source of the charitable organization, are now excluded as income.
- 1600 **Budgeting**
Budgeting procedures for a TANF AU member in a nursing home have been eliminated. If an individual remains eligible for TANF while in a nursing home on a temporary basis, special budgeting procedures are no longer required. The budget is completed as though the individual lived in the home with the other members of the AU.
- 1700 **Case Management**
Section 1705, Notification, expands the list of those case actions which require manual notification to the AU.
Sections 1720, Changes, and 1730, Financial Changes, include a change in income verification requirements. All financial changes, including changes in income, resources or deductions, must now be verified.

1800 Employment Services
 The separate Employment Services manual is now obsolete. Employment services policy is incorporated into the TANF manual as Chapter 1800. Retain Appendices A and B of the Employment Services manual with Chapter 2800, Forms, until the new forms appendix is issued.
 Section 1820, Work Activities, includes a definition of “deemed meeting.”
 Subsidized Employment has been moved from Basic Eligibility to the Employment Services chapter as Section 1825.

Chapter 2400 is now obsolete and may be removed.

Volume II (Medicaid)

Medicaid policy is now contained in Volume II of the *Economic Support Services Policy Manual*. ABD Medicaid and Family Medicaid (formerly known as ARM) have been incorporated into one volume of the manual. Policy that applies to ABD-only or to Family Medicaid-only are clearly indicated. References to "Medicaid" (without an ABD or FM prefix) apply to all classes of assistance. Review the Table of Contents, as new sections have been added and others have been moved to more appropriate locations in the manual.

CHAPTER COMMENTS

2000	General Information This chapter contains new sections. Review the Table of Contents
2050	Application Processing New terminology introduced: “personal representative” (PR) replaces “responsible party” (RP). PR refers to anyone acting on behalf of an applicant (family member, attorney, cost recovery agency, social worker, etc.). Note the last paragraph on 2050-1 regarding situations in which the PR wishes to act on behalf of the client without the involvement of the client. Sections 2053, 2060 and 2065 contain policy/procedure clarifications
2100	Classes of Assistance Overviews are located in Section 2101(ABD) and 2160 (Family) New Classes of Assistance are located in Sections 2194 and 2198. Section 2116, page 2 Special Considerations contains a continued eligibility policy change Section 2133 contains clarification of eligibility determination procedures EMA is now located in Chapter 2050, Application Processing
2200	Basic Eligibility Criteria Section 2215 includes instructions on how to determine 40 qualifying quarters Section 2230 includes new TPL reporting procedures for trust documents New terminology introduced: “non-custodial parent” (NCP) replaces “absent parent” (AP)

- 2300 Resources
This chapter contains separate ABD and Family Medicaid Overviews. Treatment of Resources Chart (Section 2399) was expanded to incorporate both ABD and Family Medicaid.
- 2400 Income
This chapter contains a combined ABD and Family Medicaid Overview. Treatment of Income Chart (Section 2499) was expanded to incorporate both ABD and Family Medicaid.
- 2500 ABD Financial Responsibility and Budgeting
Format change – Review the Table of Contents
- 2550 Patient Liability/Cost Share
2575 Nursing Home Vendor Payment
2600 Family Medicaid AUs/BGs
Format changes – Review the Tables of Contents
- 2650 Family Medicaid Budgeting
This chapter contains significant format changes. Review the entire chapter and Table of Contents for overall content/format.
- 2700 Case Management
Format change – Review the Table of Contents
- 2800 Assistance to Children in Placement
New chapter – incorporates all classes of assistance pertaining to children in placement situations.
- 2900 Referrals
New chapter

The Medicaid Unit recognizes Leona Benkoski, Clarke County DFCS, and Jocelyn Brownlow, Barrow County DFCS, for their invaluable assistance in the development of the Medicaid Volume of the *ESS Policy Manual*.

Volume III (Food Stamps)

Food Stamp policy is now contained in Volume III of the *Economic Support Services Policy Manual*. There are new sections added, some chapters have been moved to different locations, and some sections have been reformatted. New policy is noted below. Review the Table of Contents to become familiar with the location of policy areas, and review new policy with all Food Stamp staff. A summary of the changed or re-formatted policy follows.

CHAPTER	COMMENTS
3000	General Program
3100	Application Processing Review for clarifications contained in previous emails or other communications.
3200	Assistance Units Section 3210, Categorically Eligible Assistance Units, has been added to this chapter.
3300	Basic Eligibility Criteria E&T participation requirements and activities have been added to this Chapter.
3400	Financial Eligibility Criteria Review for clarifications contained in previous emails or other communications.
3500	Computer Matches This is a new Chapter. Sections on IRS/BEERS, Prisoner Verficiation, and Death Verification have been added. Review with staff.
3600	Budgeting Review for clarification contained in previous emails or other communications. Note clarifications in Section 3615 related to shelter deductions, the Heating/Cooling Standard Utility Allowance, and the Non-heating/Cooling Standard Utility Allowance.
3700	On-going Case Management New policy is included in the Reviews section (3710). Review with staff.
3800	Issuance Updated with EBT policy and procedures. Review with staff.

IMPLEMENTATION

The *ESS Policy Manual* will become the official source for all TANF, Medicaid, and Food Stamp policy effective upon receipt in county offices, except as noted below. All Economic Support policy County Letters, Memoranda, and emails issued for the TANF, Medicaid, and Food Stamp programs since August, 1996 will be rescinded as of June 1, 2002.

The following Chapters/Sections of the current ESS Manual should be retained until new Chapters and/or Appendices are issued, at which time the individual chapter or section will be rescinded.

Volume 1 (TANF):

- Sections 1801, 1805, 1807, and 1808 from the old manual must be retained and inserted behind the new Chapter 1800 until TANF Issuance is rewritten and issued in Phase II as Chapter 1900.
- All remaining chapters that are not issued in this transmittal must be retained until reissued as appendices.

All Programs

- Retain Chapter 2000, Benefit Recovery, until new material is released as Volume IV
- Retain Chapter 2200, Hearings, until new material is released as an Appendix
- Retain Chapter 2600, Glossary, until new material is released as an Appendix
- Retain Chapter 2800, Forms, until new material is released as an Appendix. See note under Volume I, Chapter 1800, related to retention of TANF Employment Services material with Chapter 2800.

INTERNET ACCESS

The *ESS Policy Manual* will be accessible on the Internet, at the website *DHR Online Directives Information System* (ODIS). The web address is www.odis.dhr.state.ga.us

Instructions to access the manual are as follows:

- On the home page click on Index
- On the Directives Index page click on “Family and Children”
- On the “Family and Children Directives Sub-Index” page click on the policy area you wish to access.

The manual material is in *Word* format. Each chapter can be printed or down-loaded, based on local office needs.

ODIS is updated on the first workday of each month. Release of future manual transmittals will be timed to coincide with these updates as closely as possible.

REVIEW AND COMMENT BY USERS

As with any project of this magnitude, as users become familiar with the manual there may be typographical or other errors, despite continuous proof-reading before release. With new formatting and reorganization of material, and with the inclusion of some new policy, there will be questions. Direct comments and questions to the appropriate program policy HelpDesk (Gomail to TANF.Policy, Medicaid.Policy, or FS.Policy).

DISTRIBUTION

With the availability of the manual online, distribution of hard copies of the manual and of subsequent updates will be more limited than in the past. County offices were asked by ESS field staff late in 2001 to indicate the number of copies needed to assure that all administrative and ESS management staff would have one hard copy of the manual. Additionally, counties were to indicate if there was a need for additional copies for record readers and for training purposes. This count will be used for the hard copy manual distribution and for manual updates.

The initial distribution of hard copies of the manual is reduced from the number ordered through the ESS field staff. Budget constraints prevented printing of the full order of manuals for the initial distribution. Funds have been located for additional copies to complete, as closely as possible, the numbers given to field staff. These additional copies will be distributed to counties in the near future.

MANUAL UPDATES

Manual updates will be issued by program and will be issued as program-specific updates are needed. Update transmittals will identify the program and the transmittal number, e.g., “Medicaid—Volume II—MT2”, “Food Stamps—Volume III—MT3”.

Updates will be documented on the transmittal pages to be found at the front of each Volume of the manual.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR MANUAL MAINTENANCE

Remove all chapters of the current ESS Manual except as noted above, and replace with the TANF, Medicaid, and Food Stamp volumes. Record receipt of the transmittal on the recording sheet at the front of each volume.

Retain a local copy(ies) of the current manual for reference and development of overissuance claims.