



Using TANF for Noncustodial Parent Employment Services

State child support agencies may create partnerships with their Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) state agencies to collaborate on ways to enroll noncustodial parents (NCP) in TANF-funded employment services and job training programs. When pursuing these partnerships, agencies should collaborate with their state TANF programs to develop interagency agreements, develop joint policy or procedure, and incorporate the necessary provisions into the TANF state plan. In some cases, these collaborations might involve the child support and TANF agencies coordinating with state leadership to ensure any needed legislative changes are made.

The preamble to the original TANF regulation noted that states could implement innovative strategies for supporting the critical goals of work and responsibility, such as extending employment services to NCPs. A state may provide various services under the TANF program that do not constitute “assistance” (as defined in regulation), including job readiness, employment placement, and postemployment services to an NCP. When a state uses federal TANF funds to provide services that are not “assistance,” such as employment services to an NCP, we encourage states to target federal TANF funds to the neediest families. In addition, while state maintenance-of-effort (MOE) funds (for example, state cost sharing under TANF) are generally limited to families that meet TANF eligibility criteria, there are some pro-family exceptions that allow states to provide services without regard to financial need or family composition, including employment services to NCPs. ([TANF-ACF-PI-2008-10](#)).

Key elements include:

- TANF agencies are encouraged to allow NCPs to participate in their established employment services and job training programs.
- TANF agencies and child support agencies that collaborate to develop new employment programs exclusively for NCPs should support the partnerships with clear funding arrangements, policies, and procedures. TANF-funded programs and services, even if administered by a different agency, are subject to applicable federal TANF rules and regulations, which include but are not limited to federal TANF reporting requirements and the Income Eligibility Verification System (IEVS). These conditions or requirements should be identified in the interagency agreement.
- The Office of Family Assistance at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services administers the TANF program at the federal level and provides technical assistance to states on TANF state plan provisions and compliance-related matters.
- The federal Office of Child Support Services provides technical assistance to states in the design and development of the child support partnerships with state and local TANF agencies.

Things to consider about this collaboration include:

- States may use TANF to support child support-led employment programs created by their state child support agencies; however, given limited TANF funds, some states may choose to allow NCPs to participate in existing employment and training programs of TANF agencies.
- States must include in their TANF state plan any qualified income and resource criteria (if applicable) that families must meet to be eligible to receive these NCP employment services.
- For TANF purposes, a noncustodial parent is defined as a parent of a minor child who (1) lives in the state; and (2) does not live in the same household as the minor child.
- TANF funding, TANF-funded services, and state MOE expenditures are not eligible for child support federal financial participation.

Read [TANF-ACF-IM-2018-01](#), [TANF-ACF-PI-2008-10](#), and [TANF-ACF-PA-1999-01](#) for published policy guidance on the use of TANF funds to promote employment programs for noncustodial parents.