**Temporary Assistance Orientation**

Welcome to the Department of Social Services’ Family Support Division’s Temporary Assistance Orientation.  The Family Support Division, which is referred to as FSD, handles the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program in Missouri. The FSD can also help you with Food Stamps, Child Care and MO HealthNet medical coverage.

Missouri Work Assistance, also referred to as MWA, is FSD’s partner. MWA provides employment and training services for Temporary Assistance recipients.  MWA has locations all over the state.  To get a list of MWA locations and hours go to the location listing in Section 40 of the Temporary Assistance application, or go to [mwalocations.mo.gov](http://mwalocations.mo.gov).

**Temporary Assistance Purpose**

Temporary Assistance gives low-income families with children a monthly cash payment. Only parents, relatives or legal guardians taking care of children qualify for Temporary Assistance. This Orientation will explain how the Temporary Assistance program works. Your eligibility will be determined by FSD. Eligibility requirements are subject to change.

**Temporary Assistance Lifetime Limits**

You can get Temporary Assistance benefits for 60 months in your lifetime.  Below are situations where benefits are extended past 60 months:

* Receiving treatment or services for domestic violence or substance abuse
* Diagnosed and receiving treatment for mental health needs
* Cooperating with the Children’s Division open treatment plan and MWA program
* A temporary family crisis, such as a home fire, crime victim, company layoff, or serious injury

The following reasons will not extend benefits past 60 months:

* You can’t find a job or you don’t want to work
* Your unemployment benefits ran out
* You don’t have a car

**Work and Training**

If you are approved for Temporary Assistance, the Missouri Work Assistance Program will help you transition from Temporary Assistance to a job by helping you set goals and get the skills you need to find a job and support your family

Your MWA case manager will explain the federal employment and training requirements and report the time you have spent in activities to FSD.

You may be exempt from work or training activities if you are:

* A single parent of child under 12 months
* Permanently disabled or you are taking care of a disabled person who lives in your home
* Age 60 and older
* In an emergency situation, including domestic violence

Even if you are exempt, you can still participate in work and training activities through MWA.

**Individual Employment Plan**

If you are approved for Temporary Assistance and not exempt, you will get a letter with a meeting date, time and place to meet with a MWA case manager to develop an Individual Employment Plan.

The Individual Employment Plan:

* Helps you list things that keep you from working or going to school such as no access to childcare or transportation.  Then, your case manager will help you work on a plan to solve these.
* Lists the activities you will participate in, such as a job and training.
* When you sign this plan you agree to take part in the activities for the required hours.
* If you need to make changes to this agreement, you must contact your MWA case manager right away.

**Non-Participation in Work and Training Activities**

After you and your case manager have agreed on your Individual Employment Plan, you must start participating in work and training activities **OR** your benefits can be lowered by half and then your case can be closed.

If you do not come to the meetings with your MWA case manager, your benefits will also be affected.

Your MWA case manager will explain this process more in depth. You must keep all appointments with your MWA case manager, or call before or within the same week of your appointment to reschedule.

**Support Services**

To help you take part in work and training activities, the MWA offers a variety of support services including:

* Help with transportation to work or school, and
* Help with some work related expenses, like uniforms or emergency car repairs

If you need child care to go to work and training activities, you should complete a child care application now to get help with the cost.  You can find this application at: <http://dss.mo.gov/cd/childcare/pdf/ccapplication.pdf>, or go to a FSD Resource Center listed in Section 40 of the Temporary Assistance application, or you can call 855-373-4636.

**Drug Screening**

Missouri law requires the FSD to ask Temporary Assistance applicants questions about illegal drug use. If you are approved for Temporary Assistance and you refused to answer these questions or go to substance abuse treatment, you are ineligible for Temporary Assistance yourself for three years.

If at any time while receiving Temporary Assistance you are arrested, charged, or convicted for a drug related offense, you will automatically be required to take a drug test. If you test positive for illegal drugs, you are ineligible for benefits for yourself for three years.

During those three years, the children’s money will be paid to someone else, called a Protective Payee, who must use the money for the children’s needs.

If you are approved for Temporary Assistance and you are taking illegal drugs and you want help, FSD will find a substance abuse center for you to receive treatment.

**Child Support**

If you are approved for Temporary Assistance and the children have a parent who lives outside your home, the FSD will automatically work to establish or collect child support for you. If you do not help FSD in either establishing or collecting child support, your Temporary Assistance will be cut by 25%. If you are afraid this action would result in emotional or physical harm to you or the children, please indicate this concern in your application and you may not have to give information for FSD to collect child support.

**Temporary Assistance Payment Methods**

Temporary Assistance money is paid through an Electronic Benefits Transfer, or EBT card, or by direct deposit into your bank account. If you use your EBT card in any way that does not benefit the children, such as use your card at a liquor store, casino, or adult entertainment business, you must pay the money back to FSD.

Orientation Conclusion

When you apply for or receive Temporary Assistance:

* You must tell the truth, provide proof and cooperate
* You have rights as outlined in the application

This ends the orientation for the Temporary Assistance program. If you have questions:

* Call the FSD at 1-855-373-4636 or visit a Family Support Division Resource Center which are listed in Section 39 of the Temporary Assistance application

If you want to apply for Temporary Assistance, fill out the Temporary Assistance application and send it to the FSD, or stop by your local FSD office.