

Par.1. **Material Transmitted and Purpose** – Transmitted with this Manual Letter are changes to Service Chapter 401-01, Crossroads Program Policies and Procedures.

Par. 2. **Effective Date** – Changes included in this manual letter are effective July 1, 2012

Items that include a change in policy are noted. All other items are corrections or clarifications.

Definitions 401-01-05

1. 400-01-05 –Added the following to this section:
 - A definition of the Child Care Assistance Program.
 - Also added clarification to the definition of the County Crossroads Worker. Since individuals eligible for Crossroads are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program it is recommended the eligibility worker who process the child care assistance also processes the Crossroads. However the decision to who processes the Crossroads case is a county decision.

Definitions 401-01-05

Child Care Assistance Program – A program authorized by the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996, to provide low-income families with the financial resources to find and afford quality child care for their children.

County Crossroads Worker – An employee of the county social service office who is responsible for accepting and processing the Crossroads Program Application and ensuring payment of the child care costs are made through the Child Care Assistance Program.

Note: Individuals eligible for Crossroads are eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program. Because of this, it is recommended the eligibility worker who processes the child care assistance also processes the Crossroads. However the decision to who process the Crossroads case is a county decision.

Crossroads Legal Authority and Program Philosophy 401-01-10

2. 401-01-10-10 – The following clarifications were made to this section:
 - Changed 'age 20 years or under' to 'up to 21 years of age (prior

to the month the parent turns 21 years of age)' to be consistent with the policy.

- Removed the words 'on a regular basis' from the second paragraph, as the requirement is for the parent to attend school. If the parent is not attending school on a regular basis, the Crossroads Case Manager must assist the parent to remove the barriers that are preventing him or her from attending regularly.

Purpose/Philosophy 401-01-10-10

The Crossroads Program provides child care and transportation assistance for eligible parents who are ~~age 20 years or under~~ up to 21 years of age (prior to the month the parent turns 21 years of age) and is pursuing high school, GED or alternative high school education. The goal of the program is to keep young parents in school, complete a high school level education, with the intent that they will become self-supporting in the future.

The parent must be attending school ~~on a regular basis~~. A parent(s) eligible for the Crossroads Program will be referred to a Crossroads Case Manager who will assist them in the areas of decision making, child care selection, family relationships, parenting skills, housing, school attendance, goal setting and planning for the future, or make a referral to another agency, if necessary.

It is intended that there be close collaboration between the parent, Crossroads Case Manager and school staff in order to facilitate the goal of the parent maintaining regular attendance until graduation.

The Crossroads Program is administered by the Public Assistance Division of the Department and is a separate program from Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

Administrative Requirements 401-01-15

3. 401-01-15-25 – Added the following to this section
 - Included a reference to where the transportation calculation can be found in the manual.
 - Added an additional requirement that the Education Plan must include an effective through date. The Crossroads Case Manager determines the period of time the Education Plan is effective, but must have contact the parent on a monthly basis. Each time the

Education Plan is updated a copy must be sent to the State Crossroads Policy Staff

Crossroads Case Manager Role and Responsibilities 401-01-15-25

The Role and Responsibility of the Crossroads Case Manager is to:

1. Contact the parent within five (5) working days from the date of the referral to schedule an appointment for him/her to enroll.
2. Meet with the parent within ten (10) working days from the date of the referral regardless of their geographic location within the service area.

NOTE: Due to the age of the parent, this may require a home or school visit and may require the parent of a minor parent to be in attendance.

3. Complete an assessment during the initial interview to determine the parent's goals and specific needs to attain their goals.
4. Develop an Education Plan with the parent. This may include information received from school personnel. The Education Plan must include:
 - The parent's short and long term goals,
 - Barriers the parent may have that may result in the parent not attaining their goals,
 - An outline of how the parent will attain their goals,
 - Estimated graduation date,
 - The progress the parent has made since the previous Education Plan was developed,
 - The reason for the child care needs (e.g. education, work, education and work parenting classes),
 - A calculation used to determine their transportation assistance.
Note: The calculation for transportation assistance can be found in 'Crossroads Supportive Services 401-01-20-25'.
 - A date the plan will expire must be listed.

5. Encourage the parent to enroll and attend parenting classes, if available.
6. Make appropriate referrals as needed.

7. Closely monitor participation in education activities and intervene if a participant reduces participation or needs further assistance such as tutoring, transportation, etc. 'Closely monitor' is defined as meeting with the parent at least once per calendar month at a minimum.
8. ~~Share~~ Provide a copy of each the Education Plan and other pertinent information ~~with~~ to the State Crossroads Policy Staff.
9. Notify the State Crossroads Policy Staff within five (5) days, when an individual stops participation in education and/or employment.
10. Complete the evaluations of the parent's progress toward program goals at the end of each semester. Evaluations will be completed for each client utilizing the program in that semester, whether or not they attended school throughout the semester.

NOTE: These evaluations may be completed jointly with school personnel.

Evaluations must be forwarded to the Public Assistance Division of the Department within fifteen (15) days after the end of the semester being evaluated.

4. 401-01-15-30 – A new section was added to specify the duties of the State Crossroads Policy staff. This section shows how the State Crossroads Policy Staff works with the Crossroads Case Managers and the County Crossroads Workers.

State Crossroads Policy Staff Role and Responsibilities 401-01-15-30

The Role and Responsibility of the State Crossroads Policy Staff is to:

1. Approve or deny Crossroads applications that are received from the County Crossroads Worker.
2. Send an approval or denial letter to the Crossroads parent and a copy to the County Crossroads Worker.

3. If the application is approved, State Crossroads Policy Staff will complete the case management referral to the appropriate Crossroads Case Manager. (Community Options, Job Service, Turtle Mountain Employment and Training)
4. Review all submitted education plans and provide a copy to the County Crossroads Worker when needed.
5. Process and issue transportation assistance utilizing the vendor payment process.
6. Send a case closure notice when reason for a closure has been received. A copy of the closure letter will be sent to the Crossroads Parent, County Crossroads Worker and Crossroads Case Manager.

Application and Eligibility 401-01-20

5. 401-01-20-10 – Made the following clarifications to this section:
 - Added to the eligibility criteria list that it is a requirement to be a North Dakota resident.
 - The last bullet in the list was removed and made into a paragraph.
 - Added a new paragraph that indicates the child must be living with the parent in order to be eligible.
 - Included in the fourth paragraph a reference to the CCAP policy for clarification on requirements for the child care provider.
 - Added the words 'child care' for clarification of what costs can be paid.
 - Added clarification that if the parent lives with the other child's parent, the parent remains eligible without regard to the other parent's income or activities, regardless if they are married or not.
 - Added clarification that as long as the parent remains in their allowable activity during a break from school, a new application does not need to be completed.
 - Changed the wording in the examples from 'mom' to 'parent' as the mother or father of the child may be eligible for Crossroads.
 - Added an example to explain what happens when a parent has a break from school and is attending parenting classes.

Eligibility Criteria 401-01-20-10

The Crossroads Program is designed to assist with child care and transportation costs for individuals who are:

- Parents up to 21 years of age (prior to the month the parent turns 21 years of age),
- Parents who are male or female,
- Parents who are married or unmarried,
- Parents who have the primary responsibility for the care of their child,
- Parents who are pursuing high school, GED, or alternative high school,
- Parents must be a resident of North Dakota.

In order to be eligible under the Crossroads Program the child and the parent must reside in the same home. If at any time the parent and child do not reside together, the Crossroads case must close.

Eligibility under Crossroads begins the first day of the month in which the signed Crossroads Program Application is and received in the local county social service agency.

Parents must apply for or be in receipt of assistance through the Child Care Assistance Program in order to be eligible for the Crossroads Program.

The child care provider must be licensed, registered, self-declared or an approved relative with the state of North Dakota. (Refer to the Child Care Assistance Program Manual, ['Provider Requirements and Information 400-28-105'](#).)

The Crossroads Program does not consider assets or income when determining eligibility.

Eligibility for assistance with payment of child care expenses must be determined using the eligibility criteria defined in the Child Care Assistance Policy manual at 400-28-40, Crossroads Families Eligibility.

A copy of the Crossroads approval letter must be received by the county, which will verify the parent(s) is eligible for Crossroads. The approval letter shows the period of time the parent is eligible for Crossroads.

The only allowable child care costs that can be paid for individuals eligible for Crossroads are the costs associated with class attendance, employment, and attendance at parenting classes.

NOTE: Costs associated with participation in extracurricular activities cannot be paid.

A child in receipt of Supplemental Security Income (SSI) may be eligible for Crossroads provided the parent meets the Crossroads eligibility criteria.

When an individual eligible for Crossroads ~~is married or~~ resides with the parent of the child, the individual may be eligible for Crossroads without regard to the activities or income of the spouse or second parent. This applies whether the individual is married to the other parent or not.

A parent, who participated in Crossroads in the previous school period and who intends to participate in Crossroads for the next school period remains eligible for Crossroads during the break if the break is less than a full calendar month. If the break is more than a full calendar month, the individual will remain eligible for Crossroads coverage during the break if the parent is working or attending parenting classes during the school break. A new application does not need to be completed at the end of the school period as long as the parent remains in their approved activity for the duration of the break from school. At the time it is learned that the individual will not be returning to school, eligibility for Crossroads ends.

Example #1: ~~Mom~~ Parent age 17 has 1 child. ~~Mom~~ The parent is attending high school in December; ~~mom~~ and has a three week break from school due to the holidays. ~~Mom~~ The parent will resume attendance in January after the break. If during the break ~~mom~~ incurs child care costs incur due to employment and parenting classes, ~~mom~~ the parent remains Crossroads eligible and the child care costs can be paid by the Child Care Assistance Program as the ~~mom~~ parent is considered Crossroads eligible throughout the break.

Example #2: ~~Mom~~ Parent age 16 has 1 child. ~~She~~ The parent attends grade 11 in high school and is employed part time. School term ends in May and ~~mom~~ will return to school in August. Since ~~mom~~ the parent will return to school in August, and is working part time, she the parent will

remain eligible for Crossroads and her child care costs, while employed, can be paid under the Child Care Assistance Program as Crossroads.

Example #3: ~~Mom~~ Parent is age 16 and has 1 child. ~~She~~ The parent attends high school and is in the 11th grade. School ends in May and ~~she~~ the parent is not employed and not seeking employment. ~~She~~ The parent plans on returning to school in August. Since ~~mom will not have~~ there will not be a child care need during the summer, ~~her~~ the Crossroads case must be closed at the end of May.

In July, ~~mom~~ the parent reports ~~she~~ obtained employment and needs assistance with ~~her~~ child care costs. ~~Mom~~ The parent will need to complete a new Crossroads Program Application (and the Child Care Assistance Program Application if the case was closed). ~~Her~~ The child care costs can be paid by the Child Care Assistance Program as Crossroads since ~~she~~ the parent will be returning to school in August.

NOTE: If ~~she~~ the parent will not return to school in August, ~~she~~ the parent is not eligible for Crossroads; however, ~~she~~ eligibility may ~~continue to be eligible~~ for the Child Care Assistance Program if all other eligibility criteria for the Child Care Assistance Program are met.

Example #4: Parent age 16 has one child. The parent attends high school and is in the 10th grade. School ends in May and the parent decides to attend parenting classes that begin in June. Since the parent will have an approved activity less than one month after the end of school, the Crossroads case will remain open. The classes end the last week of June and the parent is not employed. The Crossroads case must close at the end of June because the parent will no longer have an approved activity for the rest of the break.

6. 401-01-20-10-05 – This is a new section in the policy titled “Eligibility for Crossroads and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).” This new section was added to clarify when it may be beneficial for a parent to be eligible for Crossroads and TANF at the same time.

Eligibility for Crossroads and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) 401-01-20-10-05

Crossroads and TANF policy allow for an individual to be eligible for Crossroads and TANF for the same period of time. However, in most instances, an individual eligible for TANF will be required to participate in the JOBS program and thus, their child care expenses and transportation allowance will be authorized through JOBS Supportive Services. In this situation, there is no need for the case to remain eligible for Crossroads and the Crossroads case will be closed

Following are situations when it is beneficial for an individual to be eligible for TANF and Crossroads at the same time so the parent's or minor parent's child care costs can continue to be paid at 100% of the allowable costs, up to the maximum amount, without having to participate in the JOBS Program:

1. A minor parent who is not the caretaker (Primary Individual) in a TANF case and is attending high school. The child care costs can be paid under the Crossroads Program.

The minor parent is not subject to the JOBS requirements as the minor parent is attending school and is not the caretaker. Therefore, in order for the child care expenses to be paid while on TANF only, the minor parent would need to volunteer and participate in the JOBS program.

2. A caretaker, age 18 to 21, who is in receipt of TANF may be exempt from the JOBS Program due to personally providing full-time care for a child under the age of 2 months, or may have 'good cause' approved, for non-participation in the JOBS Program. The caretaker may be attending high school and in need of assistance with child care. The child care costs can be paid under the Crossroads Program.

In these two situations, the caretaker, age 18 to 21, is not subject to the JOBS requirements. Therefore, in order for the child care expenses to be paid while on TANF only, the caretaker would need to volunteer and participate in the JOBS program.

7. 401-01-20-25 – Added clarification that the transportation calculation must include the number of miles driven in a day for the approved activity, multiplied by the number of days in the month the activity is approved for, multiplied by \$0.45. This calculation must be included on the parent's Education Plans as well as the SFN 471.

Crossroads Supportive Services 401-01-20-25

Within the limits described in this section, supportive services may be made available to a participant of the Crossroads Program. Supportive services cannot be provided without approval from the Crossroads Case Manager until the individual's TANF case has been approved.

All approved Crossroads supportive services are paid directly to the Crossroads parent or child care provider as applicable.

Following are allowable supportive services:

1. **Child Care Expenses** - Payment of child care expenses for Crossroads participants shall be paid based on policy of the Child Care Assistance Program Manual. (Refer to Section 400-28-40, Crossroads Families Eligibility).
2. **Transportation Assistance** - Transportation assistance not exceeding \$75.00 per month may be paid to a Crossroads parent, provided the parent is participating in the activities listed on the Education Plan.

If transportation assistance is based on mileage, a monthly stipend or flat amount is not allowed. Instead, a mileage calculation must be identified on the Education Plan. Transportation assistance based on mileage is calculated by multiplying the number of actual or estimated miles required per day to support the individual's approved activity by the number of days the individual needs assistance by \$0.45, the current reimbursement rate for travel under the Crossroads Program.

When public transportation or informal transportation arrangements are used, the participant must review their transportation needs and plan with the Crossroads Case Manager. If appropriate, the Crossroads Case Manager will approve the individual's plan.

Payments for Transportation Assistance are issued to the recipients utilizing the Vendor Payment process. State Crossroads Policy Staff are responsible for issuing these payments.

Notice of Program Termination 401-01-25

8. 401-01-25 – Added the following to the section:

- A copy of the closure notice will be sent to the Case Manager as well as the County Crossroads Worker.
- Added that when a Crossroads case closes, it does not guarantee the Child Care Assistance case closes. It is the responsibility of the Child Care county worker to review the case when appropriate and determine if the child care case remains open.

Notice of Program Termination 401-01-25

At the time the Department determines the individual is no longer eligible for the Crossroads Program, the State Crossroads Policy staff must send notification to the parent in writing at least ten (10) working days prior to the date of termination, informing the parent their case will be closed. The notice shall include the reason(s) the service is being terminated. A copy of the notice will be sent to the County Crossroads Worker and the Crossroads Case Manager.

Note: When a Crossroads case is closed, the Child Care Assistance Program case does not automatically close. It is the responsibility of the Child Care Assistance Eligibility Worker to review the case and determine if a case closure is appropriate for the Child Care Assistance Program.

A Crossroads Case must be closed when:

1. The parent has completed their high school education.
2. The parent has not completed their high school education but has stopped attending school.
3. The parent no longer has a child care need for the child.
4. The child no longer resides with the parent.
5. The parent moved out of the state.

6. The mail is returned and there is no forwarding address or has a forwarding address of out of state.
7. The parent requested their case be closed.
8. The parent is no longer eligible for the Child Care Assistance Program.
9. The parent will not be attending school during a full calendar month and is not employed or attending parenting classes. (e.g. School ends in May and the parent does not plan to be employed or attend parenting classes in June.)

Upon receipt of the termination notice, the County Crossroads Worker shall:

- Provide the parent with appropriate referrals to other available assistance programs;
- Assist the parent in finding other resources; and
- Ensure eligibility for the Child Care Assistance Program is reviewed.