

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
June 1, 2017**

IM 5303

TO: County Social Service Directors
Economic Assistance Policy Regional Representatives
Economic Assistance Policy Quality Control Reviewers

FROM: Carol Cartledge, Director, Economic Assistance

SUBJECT: TANF Electronic Payment Card

PROGRAMS: TANF

EFFECTIVE: June 1, 2017

RETENTION: Until superseded

SECTIONS

AFFECTED: 400-19-120-25, Unrestricted Payment of TANF Benefits

As indicated in FYI 17-012, on June 1, 2017 TANF recipients will begin receiving their benefit funds on a Way2Go Card Debit MasterCard issued through Conduent. Based on the change in vendor, the following revisions have been made to TANF policy at 400-19-120-25, Unrestricted Payment of TANF Benefits:

Unrestricted Payment of TANF Benefits 400-19-120-25

The unrestricted money payment is the basic method for providing assistance to eligible households. Money payments are payments made to the primary individual (PI) through electronic funds transfer or by check through a protective payee, and are issued at regular intervals with no restrictions as to the use of the funds.

Note: The Primary Individual must have a Social Security Number (SSN) in order for TANF benefits to be issued through use of the electronic funds transfer. For households where the PI does not have an SSN, payment of the TANF benefits must be issued through the protective payee process until the PI receives their SSN.

Once the SSN is received, enter the SSN and remove the

Protective Payee data. That information will then be sent to the electronic card payment vendor who will set up an account and issue the household a TANF electronic payment card.

Electronic Payment Card

The North Dakota Department of Human Services has determined that issuing ~~Visa-branded~~ prepaid debit cards enhances self-sufficiency by expanding TANF clients' knowledge of banking systems, avoidance of check loss, and promoting cost-effectiveness as compared to the cost of printing checks. Debit cards provide a fast, secure, and efficient method of distributing TANF benefits while ensuring recipients a convenient and safe way to access their money.

The electronic payment card is a prepaid debit card that replaced the TANF check process. The exception to the prepaid debit card is protective payee situations. Protective payee cases will continue to receive TANF benefits by check.

Upon authorization of a TANF initial or supplemental benefit or an underpayment, two processes occur.

1. A demographic file of each new recipient is transmitted to the electronic card payment vendor in the evening of each work day. Upon receipt of the demographic file, the electronic card payment vendor prints and ~~sends a Visa~~ mails the prepaid debit card ~~to be delivered within 3 to 5 U.S. Mail days from the date the case is authorized (for new cases) or when a new card is requested by the payee. The total time frame, for a new applicant's card or a requested card replacement to be received is 7 to 10 calendar days from transmission of card account information or request for a replacement card to receipt of card by recipient averages 5 business (U.S. Mail) calendar days.~~
2. A benefit file of each recipient who is due benefits is transmitted to the Bank of North Dakota. The following day, the Bank of North Dakota sends the funds to the electronic card payment vendor electronically and the electronic card payment vendor deposits the funds to the debit card. Funds are transferred into accounts on all days except Saturdays, Sundays, and federal holidays. Funds will be available to the recipient approximately 24 hours after the electronic card payment vendor receives them.

Upon authorization of a TANF benefit for ongoing cases for regular issuance, funds are transferred the second to the last working day of the month and are available the first working day of each month.

Electronic payment cards will contain the name of the primary individual in the household. To distinguish the card from other program cards, the TANF card displays a ~~wagon wheel~~ field with a tree.

Closing a TANF case does not invalidate the electronic payment card and the funds remain available.

TANF households receive information on the use of the card, fees related to the card and privacy information upon receipt of the card from the electronic card payment vendor.

Payment Corrections

When a TANF household returns a TANF benefit or the family received a child support payment that should have been retained, the following steps must be completed to correct the payment:

1. The card holder cashes out the Electronic Payment Card.
2. The card holder returns the funds to the county social service office by cash, check, or money order.
3. The TANF Eligibility Worker establishes an overpayment for the months the TANF household is returning the benefit received.

Note: If the case remains open, State TANF Policy must be contacted prior to setting up a recoupment plan.

4. The county social service office will complete SFN 827, Credit Form, and send a check or money order to the North Dakota Department of Human Services Fiscal Administration for processing.
5. The North Dakota Department of Human Services Fiscal Administration will apply the funds to the overpayment.

Note: A TANF month established as an overpayment remains a TANF count month for the lifetime limit.

Returning a TANF benefit does not guarantee the family will receive child support payments.