

TANF/JOBS Program Re-Engagement Review – September 2009

Background

The Department of Human Services conducts re-engagement reviews every six months in accordance with ORS 412.009 (6).

The “re-engagement” process is performed to ensure the following:

- Individual case plans were created in partnership with clients
- Activities on the case plan were appropriate
- Clients are aware of their rights and responsibilities
- Screenings and possible evaluations for barriers have been offered/completed and documented
- A team review of the family’s situation before potential sanction – which includes a discussion of child safety issues – was conducted.

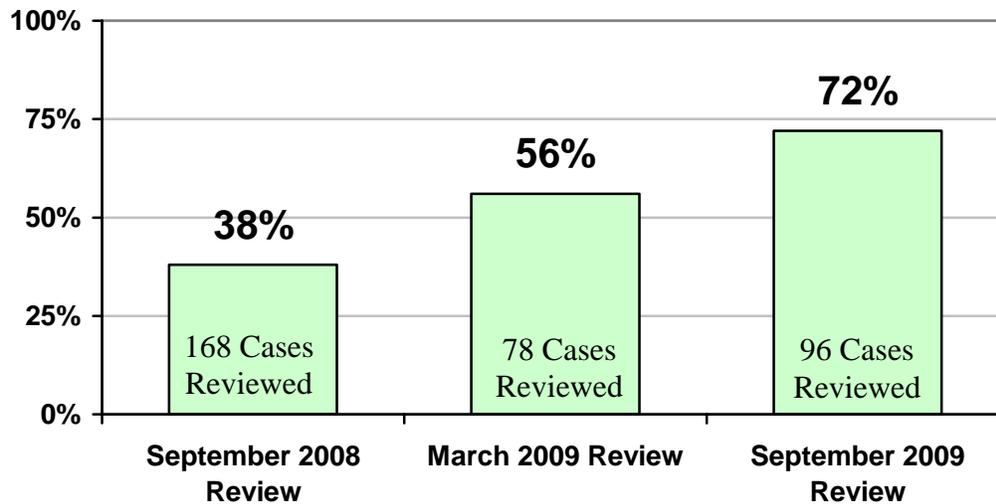
The goal of these efforts is to identify early potential barriers to client success in the program and ensure necessary steps are taken to address those barriers.

Results of the Review

The biannual review of all TANF cases with an active disqualification was conducted in September 2009. A total of 96 cases were reviewed. This was an increase of 18 cases from the March 2009 review.

The graph below displays the percentage of cases where a disqualification was appropriately applied. This includes documenting the re-engagement process. Approximately 72 percent (69 out of 96) of the cases reviewed had the disqualification applied correctly. This percentage represents an increase of 16 percentage points over the March 2009 review and a 36 percent increase over the September 2008 review.

Percent of cases with Correct Process



Positive Outcome

- The re-engagement process has improved over the past year.
- These improved processes provide better opportunities for TANF program staff to discover barriers affecting the client’s ability to meet program requirements.
- Fewer clients are being impacted by errors in the re-engagement process.
- When a disqualification is applied, the majority (72 percent) were applied correctly.

Removing Disqualifications

There were numerous reasons why disqualifications were removed. The table below displays the reasons, which resulted in disqualification removals during the March and September 2009 review.

Reason for Removal¹	March 2009		September 2009	
	34 cases	Percent	26 cases	Percent
Accommodations (No record of a needed accommodation being offered)	4	11%	2	7%
Assessment/Evaluation (No record of required assessment/evaluation being offered)	4	11%	5	18%
Child Safety review (no record of child safety review with Child Welfare)	17	49%	10	37%
Client re-engaged (client re-engaged and was cooperating with plan)	3	9%	0	0%
Disabilities (No record of disability issues being considered)	7	20%	3	11%
Domestic Violence (No record of domestic violence being considered)	1	3%	1	4%
DQ4² Requirements (No record of DQ4 requirement being met)	7	40%	1	4%
New DQ Instance: Local Team Staffing (No record of review team staffing)	10	29%	5	18%
Continuing DQ: Local Team Staffing (No record of review team staffing on continuing non-cooperation)	16	46%	15	56%
Required notices (No record of required notices being sent)	3	9%	1	4%
Rights and Responsibilities form (DHS 7819 not located)	0	0%	0	0%

¹ The percentages represent the percent of cases with a disqualification removed in which this particular reason for the removal was discovered. A single case may have had multiple reasons for removal and any single reason would have resulted in the disqualification being removed.

² DQ4 constitutes full-family sanction. The additional requirements before full-family sanction are that the department attempt a home visit and discuss with the client alternative resources should the TANF grant end.

Reason for Removal ¹	March 2009		September 2009	
	34 cases	Percent	26 cases	Percent
Screening (No record of required screenings being offered or re-offered)	2	6%	7	26%
TANF closed (TANF case closed prior to disqualification)	6	17%	0	0%

Improvements

Improvements were seen in several important areas. They include:

- **Accommodations:** DHS must provide any reasonable accommodation in order for an individual to participate in program requirements. In order to apply a disqualification staff must determine whether or not accommodations are needed. If there are needed accommodations, staff must determine if they were provided and if provided whether they were appropriate.

The percentage of occurrences in this category decreased 4 percent (2 of 27 cases) from the previous review (4 of 34 cases).

- **Child Safety:** Child safety reviews are required prior to each level of disqualification. The review consists of contact with Child Welfare to determine if there is a risk to the child or children in the event a disqualification is applied.

During this review, the percentage of occurrences decreased from 49 percent (17 of 34 cases) in the last review to 37 percent (10 of 27 cases) in this review.

- **Disabilities:** Understanding the barriers a client faces is essential to providing appropriate services. DHS must consider if an aspect of an individuals disability caused the behavior, which lead to the non-cooperation.

The percentage of occurrences decreased 9 percent (3 of 27 cases) from the previous review (7 of 34 cases).

- **DQ4 Requirements (Attempted home visit and discussion of alternate resources):** Prior to applying a DQ4 the staffing must include a discussion of alternate resources in the event of full family sanction. The local team must also attempt a home visit. When a case progresses from a DQ3 to a DQ4 without a review there would be no discussion of alternate resources. In many cases there was no attempted home visit conducted either.

Disqualifications did progress without a review however none progressed to a DQ4. This accounts for the decrease in the percentage of occurrence from 40 percent (7 of 34 cases) in March 2009, to 4 percent (1 of 27 cases) during the current review.

- **New DQ Instance: Local Team Staffing prior to disqualification:** Prior to a disqualification being applied, a local staffing must take place to determine if any barriers were preventing the individual from meeting the program requirements. The local staffing team includes DHS staff, partners, and professionals such as mental health specialist, nurse, etc.

The percentage of occurrences in this category decreased from 29 percent (10 of 34 cases) to 18 percent (5 of 27 cases) in September 2009.

Difficulties

While there have been improvements, three areas saw increases in the number of occurrences, which caused a disqualification to be removed.

- **Assessments:** When a screening, or other indicator, identifies a need for additional assessment or evaluation, the program must offer the assessment or evaluation to the client. The March review found 12 percent (4 of 34 cases) of the removals had issues where an identified assessment was not offered. This review found the percentage increasing to 18 percent (5 of 27 cases).
- **Screening:** Before imposing a disqualification, DHS must ensure all screenings for barriers have been offered. These include alcohol and drug,

learning needs, mental health, physical health, and domestic violence. In the review in March 2009, 6 percent (2 of 34 cases) of the case had issues relating to screenings. This number has increased to 26 percent (7 of 27 cases) during the current review.

- **Continuing DQ: Local Staffing on continuing non-cooperation:** After a disqualification has been determined appropriate and applied, if there are no changes and the client continues not to cooperate, the disqualification will automatically advance to the next level. Prior to the disqualification advancing, there must be a local staffing to determine if the disqualification is still appropriate.

The percentage of occurrences in this category increased from 46 percent (16 of 34 cases) in March 2009 to 56 percent (15 of 27 cases) of the cases in September 2009.

Follow-Up

The number of cases with an active disqualification has increased from the previous review however the number applied in error has significantly decreased. Staff have developed and re-worked local processes based on the findings of past reviews. These efforts have helped to improve outcomes.

Prevent the computer system from automatically rolling a disqualification

In the last report it was described how a system change will help to reduce the number of disqualifications applied incorrectly. The system change, including the technical and case management aspects are still being worked out. Once this change takes effect it will help reduce the number of errors.

Reporting and replicating best processes

There were certain areas of the state, which showed excellent improvement. The processes they are using will be reviewed and shared with other parts of the state in order to improve the outcomes statewide.