

From the Hotline

Q. An employed stepmother came into our office today. She is applying for TAFDC for her stepdaughter and does not want to be a part of the TAFDC AU. Both of the child's natural parents are no longer in the home. Is this applicant required to be a member of the TAFDC AU?

A. No. This stepmother is not required to be included in the TAFDC AU. However, as the stepmother, this applicant *does* meet TAFDC relationship requirements and *may* be included in the TAFDC AU if she requests TAFDC benefits for herself. Refer to 106 CMR: 203.585 (A) and 106 CMR: 204.320 for more details.

(For Food Stamp purposes, this applicant exercises parental control over her stepdaughter by providing financial support and supervision and, therefore, must be included in the food stamp AU. See 106 CMR 361.200(A) for more details.)

Q. If the employed stepmother described in the previous question remains out of the TAFDC AU and continues working, how is her income counted?

A. For TAFDC purposes, the stepmother's income in this situation is not counted because she is not the natural or adoptive parent of the stepdaughter and she has chosen not to become a member of the TAFDC AU.

(For Food Stamp purposes, the stepmother's income is countable.)

In the future, if circumstances change for this stepmother and she decides to become a member of the TAFDC AU, then her income and assets would be counted. Refer to 106 CMR: 204.210 and 106 CMR 204.305 for more information. (Step-parent deeming regulations do not apply in this situation.)

Q. If the father of the stepdaughter described in the first question reconciles with his wife (the stepmother) and returns to the home, how do we treat the stepmother's income?

A. Once the father returns to the home and is included in the TAFDC AU, the stepmother in the AU can no longer be a member of the TAFDC AU, and her income must be deemed.

Refer to 106 CMR: 204.210(D) for information on deeming income.

Q. I have a two-parent family on TAFDC. The father is 62 years of age. The couple have a one-year-old child. Are both parents exempt from time-limited benefits and the reduced need and payment standard?

A. Yes. In two-parent families, there are some restrictions on each parent receiving the exemption from time-limited benefits and the reduced need and payment standard. However, in this situation both parents may be exempt. The father receives the age 60 years or older exemption and the mother receives the exemption for caring for a child under the age of two. For more information on the TAFDC exemptions from time-limited benefits and the reduced need and payment standard, refer to 106 CMR: 203.100.

