

# How Can I Meet the TAFDC Work Requirement?

**How many hours of activity do I need each week if I am under the work requirement?** It depends on the age of the youngest child in your home who is not under the Family Cap. (See other side for information about exemptions from the work requirement.)

- If the youngest child who is not under the Family Cap is **age 9 or older**, you have to work or be in a program for **30 hours per week**.
- If the youngest child who is not under the Family Cap is **age 6 through 8**, you have to work or be in a program for **24 hours per week**.
  - *DTA is planning to increase this requirement to 30 hours per week, starting on February 1, 2010. Call GBLs for the latest information, especially if you feel that you cannot increase your hours!*
- If the youngest child who is not under the Family Cap is **age 2 through 5**, you have to work or be in a program for **20 hours per week**.
- If the only child in the family is under the Family Cap, the work requirement hours will be based on the age of that child, except that you have to work or be in a program for 20 hours per week starting when the child is 3 months old instead of when the child is 2 years old.

## What kind of things count to meet the work requirement?

- **Education and training** – Any hours you spend attending an approved school program that will help you get a job count toward meeting your work requirement for up to a total of 12 months. Post-secondary education, such as an Associate's or Bachelor's degree program, also counts if the program is at least half-time. Any time you spend in school while you have an "exemption" (when the work requirement does not apply to you) does not count against this 12 month limit.
  - For each hour of school (or credit hour, if in college), you can count an additional hour of homework/study time as well. For example, you only need to spend 15 hours per week in class in order to meet a work requirement of 30 hours per week.
- **Housing search** – If you are homeless and living in a shelter, then doing housing search (no matter how many hours) counts as meeting your work requirement. If you are doing the number of hours of housing search that is in your shelter plan, then DTA has to treat you as meeting the TAFDC work requirement.
- **Internship** – Any hours you spend in a paid or unpaid internship that is connected with education, training or job preparation counts toward meeting your work requirement.
- **Community service** – Any hours you spend doing unpaid community service at a non-profit organization or government agency count toward meeting your work requirement, as long as you get DTA's form signed and turn in monthly proof of attendance. You can find a placement yourself, or DTA can give you one. Until and unless DTA can find a placement for you, then DTA must treat you as "in compliance" with the work requirement, even though you are not working or doing an activity.

- **Paid employment** – Any hours you work in a paid job or in a program through DTA like Supported Work count toward meeting your work requirement.
- **Job Readiness/Job Search** program – Any hours you spend under a DTA-approved program doing job readiness activities (such as preparing a resume) or job search counts toward meeting your work requirement.
- **Combination of activities** – You can combine hours in two or more of these activities in order to meet your work requirement.

### **What if I am unable to work or participate in a program for the required hours?**

The work requirement does not apply to you if you obtain an “exemption” for one of the following reasons:

- You have a physical or mental health problem
- You are caring for a family member with a health problem
- You are in your third trimester of pregnancy
- Your youngest child *who is not under the “Family Cap”* is under two years old
- You have a baby who is less than three months old
- You are sixty or older
- You are a relative of the child (not the parent) and have chosen not to be in the TAFDC grant

If you are in one of these situations, ask your worker for an “exemption.” An “exemption” means the work requirement and the TAFDC time limit do not apply to you. To read more about this, see our flyer called “Exemptions and Waivers of the TAFDC Time Limit and Work Requirement.”

If you can not work because of current or past domestic violence, you can ask for a “domestic violence waiver” of the work requirement, but if the domestic violence resulted in a physical or mental health problem, it is better to ask for an exemption. To read more about this, see our flyer called “Exemptions and Waivers of the TAFDC Time Limit and Work Requirement.”

If you do not qualify for an exemption but have other good reasons, such as lack of child care, for not starting to work or participate in a program, or for not being able to do all the hours required every week, ask for “Good Cause.” To read more about this, see our flyer called “Problems Meeting the TAFDC Work Requirement or Employment Development Plan?”

If domestic or other violence resulted in the birth of a child under the Family Cap, ask for a Family Cap exception based on rape or sexual assault. If you get a family cap exception for a child who is currently under age 2, you become exempt from the work requirement and the time limit. You may need legal representation for this. Call GBLS for more information.

**Greater Boston Legal Services**  
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