

Department of Social and Health Services  
Olympia, Washington  
**EAZ Manual**

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Category Certification Periods - Basic Food  
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**Summary**

Updated clarifying information and worker responsibilities under WAC388-416-0005 [Certification Periods - Basic Food](#) to address updated ESAP certification periods. Also made minor cosmetic changes (e.g., correcting numbers and spacing).

Updated January 31, 2024

See below for new text:



# Certification Periods - Basic Food

Revised January 31, 2024

## Purpose:

This section explains: What a certification period is for Basic Food, the longest certification period allowed based on their assistance unit's (AUs) situation, and when ACES sets a certification period to match the review end date of other programs.

## WAC 388-416-0005 How long can I get Basic Food?

### Clarifying Information

**NOTE:** Basic Food certification periods are extended under emergency rule WAC 388-434-0015 for the following periods:

- November 2020 is extended two months, to January 2021;
- December 2020 is extended two months, to February 2021;
- January 2021 is extended 4 months, to May 2021;
- February 2021 is extended 4 months, to June 2021.

### Clarifying Information - WAC 388-416-0005

#### 1. How long can I get Basic Food Certified?

Basic Food certifications are certified for up to 12 months unless:

- The client is receiving WASHCAP or ESAP with a 36 month certification, or
- The certification period is extended to allow for Transitional Food Assistance (TFA).

#### 2. Start date of a certification period:

Certification periods begin according to the date people's benefits start under WAC 388-406-0055, even if the AU won't receive initial benefits for the first month prorated to zero they are eligible.

**EXAMPLE** David applies for Basic Food on October 31, 2023, and is eligible for \$4. David does not receive benefits for October because his benefits in the first month are less than \$16. His 12-month certification period starts October 31, 2023, and ends on September 30, 2024.

#### 3. Certification period defaults:

ACES sets certification periods based on the AU circumstances of the AU and what other benefits the household receives from us. The table below shows the certification periods set by the system if not matching a review period to another program.

AU Circumstances / Other Programs	Default Certification
All non-WASHCAP or non-ESAP Basic Food AUs	12 months
WASHCAP or ESAP	36 months
Transitional Food Assistance	5 months

[ESAP eligibility may only be determined at application and recertification. ACES is programmed with the ESAP requirements and will change a Basic Food Certification to ESAP when the assistance unit qualifies. See: \*Elderly Simplified Application Project \(ESAP\)\*](#)

#### 4. Matching cash review periods and Basic Food certification periods:

When possible, ACES will automatically match the cash review periods and Basic Food certification periods to minimize the number of reviews as described below:

##### a. Basic Food approved first:

- If there are at least six months left in the Basic Food certification period, ACES sets the mid-certification review and eligibility review end dates for the new cash benefit to match dates for Basic Food.
- If there are **less than six months left** in the Basic Food certification period, the system *will not change* the certification period end date for Basic Food. ACES sets a 12-month review period with the mid-certification review due at six months for the new cash benefit.

**NOTE:** When the system ~~does not~~[doesn't](#) automatically match the mid-certification review and review end dates because there are less than six months in the certification period, staff can match these dates by initiating a review for Basic Food.

- If we ~~do not~~[don't](#) initiate a review to manually match the certification / review periods, *these mid-certification reviews and eligibility review periods will not match* and will result in the household receiving more than one mid-certification review.
- The system initiates a review for associated cases at the next ER or recertification. When we complete the review, the end dates and mid-certification review due date will match.

##### ~~a.~~[b.](#) Cash approved first:

- ACES extends the current cash / medical review periods to match the certification period end date for Basic Food.
- ACES sends the mid-certification review for all programs that require a report in month five of the certification/review period. This mid-certification review is due in month six.

**EXAMPLE:** The Adams family receives TANF benefits only. TANF review period expires in February. In January, they apply for Basic Food benefits. The Basic Food case will be assigned a certification period of January through December. ACES will adjust both the TANF review period and mid-certification review due date to match the newly opened Basic Food benefits.

[For changes related to ESAP cases, See: \*Elderly Simplified Application Project \(ESAP\)\*](#)

## Worker Responsibilities - WAC 388-416-0005\_

### 1. Close Basic Food benefits when:

- a. When you have proof of a change that make an AU ineligible; or
- b. You receive information that suggests that the household may be ineligible; **and**
- c. The household doesn't clarify their circumstances.

**EXAMPLE:** You receive a call from an anonymous source ~~that reporting~~ Stan is working and has income over the gross income standard. ~~You s~~Send Stan a written request for ~~him to give us~~ proof of his income or ~~to~~ deny the claim that he is employed. If Stan doesn't respond within ten days, close his case with advance and adequate notice.

**EXAMPLE:** Dee calls to report that she is working. The income she reports is over the net income limit for TANF but is just short of the income limit for Basic Food. Dee's TANF terminated while she was in sanction for failing to cooperate with DCS. The household ~~is not is n't~~ eligible for TFA. Because ~~we don't know~~ Dee's ~~worker is unsure of her~~ eligibility for Basic Food, ~~he~~ adjusts the income in ACES to close TANF and asks for proof of her income to decide if she is still eligible for Basic Food. If the proof shows that Dee is over income for Basic Food, ~~her worker~~ closes the case with advance and adequate notice.

2. See **Eligibility Reviews/Recertifications - Requirements for Food, Cash, and Medical Programs** to process Basic Food benefits after certification period has ended.