

# Q&A

## Q. Why are there multiple assessments?

**A.** WAC 388-310-1450 states that parents in the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway must participate in an assessment with a Department of Social and Health Services social worker specialist to determine which activities best meet your needs. These assessments will be conducted at different points in the pregnancy (when the department finds out you are pregnant or have a child under one and after birth) to identify any changes in your family circumstances and to be sure that required activities are still appropriate. For instance, your needs during the third trimester may be very different than your needs after your baby is born. We want to ensure that your WorkFirst requirements continue to meet your needs.

## Q. What happens if I don't attend an assessment appointment?

**A.** If you do not attend the assessment, we will proceed with the good cause process to determine whether or not you had good reason for not participating. If you do not have good cause, you will be sanctioned and your WorkFirst cash assistance will be reduced.

## Q. Am I the only one required to participate in the assessments?

**A.** Each parent receiving TANF cash assistance must participate in an assessment to identify family needs. WorkFirst participation requirements will be based on the result of this assessment. If both parents are in the home, either parent (but not both) may take the infant exemption at any given time.

## Q. How will I know if it is time to have an assessment?

**A.** In most cases, your social worker specialist or case manager will send you an appointment letter. If you are unable to come into the office, they may be able to meet at your home or complete the assessment over the phone. Contact your social worker specialist for more information on these options.



WorkFirst Case Manager \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

WorkFirst Social Worker \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_



*Transforming lives*

DSHS 22-1262(X) (Rev. 7/15)

# Pregnancy to Employment Pathway



What can I expect when I am a part of the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway?



## Who is part of the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway?

**Y**ou are part of the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway if you receive TANF (Temporary Assistance to Needy Families) cash assistance and you are pregnant or caring for a child under 12 months of age.

## What are the goals of the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway?

### *Build Healthy Families*

Help families to take part in WorkFirst activities by helping them meet medical and other family needs.

### *Help families to become self-sufficient*

There are several steps in the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway. You may go through them all or only some of them. It will depend on which stage of your pregnancy you are in.

If you are new to the TANF program, your first step will be **the comprehensive evaluation process.**

### *Pregnancy to Employment Assessment*

Your next step is to participate in and complete a Pregnancy to Employment assessment with a WorkFirst social worker specialist.

The assessment will:

- Identify your family's needs, strengths and potential barriers
- Identify services that you may be eligible for while you are in the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway
- Determine your required participation and identify appropriate WorkFirst activities



## WorkFirst participation in the first and second trimesters

If you are in your first or second trimesters (three to six months) of pregnancy, you will be required to participate full-time or as close to full-time as possible in WorkFirst activities. Full-time participation is 32-40 hours per week.

The comprehensive evaluation results and the Pregnancy to Employment assessment will determine how much you have to participate.

## WorkFirst participation in the third trimester

Based on the results of your assessment(s), we will determine whether you are:

- A voluntary WorkFirst participant or
- A mandatory WorkFirst participant or
- Eligible to choose not to participate in WorkFirst activities.



## WorkFirst participation for parents with children from birth to 12 months old

After your baby is born, you must complete a Pregnancy to Employment assessment.

This assessment will determine your level of WorkFirst participation. You may be:

- Considered a voluntary WorkFirst participant
- Considered a mandatory WorkFirst participant
- Able to choose the infant exemption (You may utilize this exemption for up to 365 days, or 12 months in your lifetime, before your child or children's first birthday.)

If you qualify for the infant exemption, you may choose not to participate in WorkFirst activities. To qualify, you must participate in the required assessment.

## WAC 388-310-1450

You may face sanction penalties during any part of your pregnancy or after your child is born if you do not participate in all of the required Pregnancy to Employment assessments or if those assessments determine that you are a mandatory participant in WorkFirst activities and you do not participate.

Our goal is to build healthy families, not sanction them, but you must do your part and participate in the Pregnancy to Employment Pathway as required.