

# TANF Secondary School Diploma or its Recognized Equivalent Attainment Rate Instructions

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The TANF Work Outcomes Measures [interim final rule](#) includes three new reporting requirements:

- Work Outcomes of TANF Exiters Report
- Secondary School Diploma or its Recognized Equivalent Attainment Rate
- Supplemental Work Outcomes Report

## General Instructions

This document includes instructions for states to submit their annual Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Secondary School Diploma or its Recognized Equivalent Attainment Rate (Secondary School Attainment Measure) as required by 45 CFR part 265: the percentage of individuals who have not attained 24 years of age, are attending high school or enrolled in an equivalency program, and are work-eligible individuals or were work-eligible individuals as of the time of exit from the program, who obtain a high school degree or its recognized equivalent while receiving assistance under the state program funded under this part or within one year after the individual's exit from the program.

Each state must file the report within 45 days following the end of the fiscal year.

Territories and the District of Columbia are referred to as "states." Note: Tribes are not required to report.

## INSTRUCTIONS AND DEFINITIONS

The state agency should collect and report data for each item. The data must be complete and accurate. The report must include the numerator and denominator used to calculate the rate and attach a description of the data sources.

In accordance with 45 CFR 265.2 (c) and (e)(1) and (2), for purposes of the Secondary School Attainment Measure:

**Work-Eligible Individual (WEI)** as defined in 45 CFR Part 261.2(n) applies to the Secondary School Attainment Measure.

**Exit:** the date that a family with a work-eligible individual ceases to receive assistance from the TANF program. The last day of assistance cannot be determined until 90 days or three months have elapsed since the participant last received assistance.

In pay-for-performance states, “ceases to receive” may be interpreted as “last eligible to receive”. The 90 days or three months would be counted from the period the work-eligible individual last satisfied the state’s performance requirement, not from the date of the benefit issuance.

Some states may move individuals out of the TANF program and into separate state programs (funded by maintenance-of-effort funds) or solely state-funded programs (not reported as maintenance-of-effort). For some states, these may be distinctly different programs, while for other states the difference may just be the funding source. The statute clearly states “with respect to a State program funded under this part” which refers only to the TANF program, and not separate state programs or solely state-funded programs. Therefore, when considering who exited TANF for this data collection, states should include as exiters those work-eligible individuals who were moved to separate state programs or solely-state funded programs and have not received TANF-funded assistance in at least 90 days or three months.

A work-eligible individual will be included as an exiter in these measures only when their *family* ceases to receive assistance, and will not meet the definition of an exiter when the needs of the work-eligible individual are removed from the assistance payment but the family continues to receive assistance and the individual remains work-eligible. An individual in the family must have been “a work-eligible individual,” as defined in 45 CFR 261.2(n)(1), in their last month of assistance.

For reporting purposes, a **family** means: (a) all individuals receiving assistance as part of a family under the state’s TANF program; and (b) the following additional persons living in the family, if not included under (a) above: (1) Parent or caretaker relative of any minor child; (2) A minor child; and (3) Any person whose income or resources are counted in determining the family’s eligibility for or amount of assistance. This is the same definition used for reporting on the TANF Data Report (ACF-199) (page 4).

**Eligibility:** An individual is **eligible** for the measure in a given federal fiscal year if, in at least one reporting month, they simultaneously meet all of the following criteria:

- Less than 24 years of age,
- Enrollment in a secondary school or recognized equivalent program,
- Work-eligible individual status, as defined in 45 CFR Part 261.2(n) applies to the Secondary School Attainment Measure.

[For the purposes of the Secondary School Measure, states have the flexibility to determine how to calculate an individual's age and whether someone meets the “less than 24 years of age” criterion based on their caseload management systems.](#)

**Secondary school diploma:** a “regular high school diploma” as defined in 21 U.S.C. 7801(43), the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).

**Recognized equivalent to a secondary school diploma:** a certification recognized by a state that signifies that a student has completed the state’s requirements for a high school education.

**Reporting period:** the period of time covering one federal fiscal year, from October 1<sup>st</sup> of a given calendar year through September 30<sup>th</sup> of the following calendar year, during which period data relevant to this measure are recorded.

## Methodology:

Individuals are included in the **denominator** for a given federal fiscal year if they meet the definition of eligibility. Individuals who do not meet the eligibility criteria in a given federal fiscal year are not included in the denominator.

Individuals in the denominator are included in the **numerator** for a given federal fiscal year if:

1. They attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent while receiving TANF assistance in a year they met the criteria for eligibility,

**OR**

2. They exit TANF in a federal fiscal year in which they were eligible and they attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent within 1 year of their exit.

Attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent is always counted towards the most recent federal fiscal year in which the participant achieved eligibility.

## Submission Instructions:

1. Reporting period: Enter the two-digit month (MM) and four-digit year (YYYY) codes (MM/YYYY) for the period for which the data are being reported.
2. Current recipient – denominator: Enter the total number of individuals who met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the denominator for the reporting period and did not exit TANF during the reporting period.
3. Exiter – denominator: Enter the total number of individuals who met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the denominator for the reporting period and exited TANF during the reporting period.

4. Current recipient – numerator: Enter the total number of individuals who met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the denominator for the reporting period, did not exit TANF, and attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent within the reporting period.
5. Exiter – numerator: Enter the total number of individuals who met the eligibility criteria for inclusion in the denominator for the reporting period, exited TANF, and attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent within one year of exit.
6. Current recipient – calculated rate: Current recipient numerator (#4) divided by current recipient denominator (#2).
7. Exiter – calculated rate: Exiter numerator (#5) divided by exiter denominator (#3).
8. Total calculated rate: Combined numerator (#4 + #5) divided by the combined denominator (#2 + #3).
9. Data Sources: Attach a description of the data sources used to calculate the above rate.