
**DEPARTMENT
POLICY**

On Oct. 1, 1996, Michigan began the Family Independence Program.

The Family Independence Program (FIP) is not an entitlement.

FIP requires an individual to meet all eligibility criteria required for the receipt of federal or state funds or determined necessary by the department to accomplish the goals of the program.

Time limits are essential to establishing the temporary nature of aid as well as communicating the FIP philosophy to support a family's movement to self-sufficiency. The message that FIP is temporary is an important part of how Michigan helps parents take advantage of the opportunities for work as well as self-sufficiency and independence. Families receiving FIP are to engage in activities that will help them gain financial independence and increase self-sufficiency.

Michigan operates a single Family Independence Program whose budgeting and accounting methods use both federal and state funds. To execute the most efficient, fair and cost-effective administration of the program, the proportion of federal and state funding associated with a case is dependent upon the group composition and/or individual characteristics on a case by case basis, as determined by the department.

On Oct. 1, 1996, Michigan law reduced the cumulative total of FIP to 48 months during an individual's lifetime. As of April 1, 2025, changes in Michigan law increased the allowable cumulative total of FIP to 60 months during an individual's lifetime.

The previous 48 month state time limit will apply when all of the following are met:

- Cash applications filed before March 22, 2025.
- The cash EDG was certified as denied/closed before March 22, 2025 due to meeting the 48-month state limit.

Under the Family Independence Program, a family is not eligible for assistance beyond 60 consecutive or non-consecutive federally funded months. Federally funded countable months began to accrue for FIP on Oct. 1, 1996. Counts accrued for every month a

family received FIP, including months that met hardship criteria. As of Oct. 1, 1996, no hardship criteria exists in Michigan.

FEDERAL TIME LIMIT

Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) is the federal grant that funds the overwhelming majority of FIP assistance issued by the Department. The Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) established a five-year (60month) lifetime limit on assistance for adult-headed families. The begin date for the federal time limit counter is Oct. 1, 1996. In line with the goals of the Family Independence Program, any group that includes an individual who has received 60 months or more of FIP is not eligible for the FIP program.

Federal Countable Month

Each month an individual receives federally funded FIP, the individual receives a count of one month. A family is ineligible when a mandatory member of the FIP group reaches the 60 TANF-funded month federal time limit.

Federal Time Limit Exception

Michigan will provide an exception to the federal 60 month time limit eligibility criteria and state fund the FIP eligibility determination group (EDG) for individuals that met the following criteria on Jan. 9, 2013:

- An approved/active ongoing FIP EDG **and**
 - Who was exempt from participation in the Partnership. Accountability. Training. Hope. (PATH) program for:Domestic violence.
 - Age 65 or older.
 - Establishing incapacity.
 - Incapacitated more than 90 days.
 - Care of a spouse with disabilities.
 - Care of a child with disabilities.

The exception continues as long as:

- The individual's ongoing FIP EDG reaches 60 TANF federal months **and** the individual remains one of the above

employment deferral reasons. In these instances, the FIP EDG will become state funded after the 60th month.

- The individual, at application, is approved as **any** of the above employment deferral reasons. In these instances, the FIP EDG will be state funded.

The exception ends once one of the above individuals **no** longer qualifies for one of the above employment deferral reasons or they **no** longer meet other standard eligibility criteria for FIP. The FIP EDG will close or the application will be denied.

Bridges will identify the above clients on the *Michigan/Federal Time Limits Search Summary* screen.

State Funded FIP

Any month that an individual's FIP assistance is state funded is **not** a countable month toward the federal time limit count. To meet the goals of the Family Independence Program, in a limited number of cases, the department has determined to state fund cases with one or more of the following characteristics:

- Two parent households.

Note: Months prior to Oct. 1, 2006 were federally funded.

Exception: If a parent in a two-parent household receives SSI, the group is considered a single-parent household and is federally funded.

- A FIP group that has a parent deferred from PATH due to a verified disability or long-term incapacity lasting longer than 90 days; see BEM 230A. This includes individuals deferred from PATH with a *Deferral/Participation* reason in Bridges of *Establishing Incapacity*.

Note: Months prior to Oct. 1, 2006 were federally funded.

- Court-ordered, unrelated caregivers receiving FIP for a child placed in the home by Children's Protective Services; see BEM 210.
- The only dependent child in the FIP group is 19 years old and attending high school full-time. This applies to months **before** Oct. 1, 2011.

- A FIP group with no dependent child(ren). This applies only when the legal parent(s) and/or stepparent receives FIP when their dependent child(ren) is in an out-of-home foster care placement due to abuse and/or neglect when there is a plan to return the child(ren) to the parent's home; see BEM 210.
- A FIP group that includes an adult who has accumulated more than 60 months on their federal time limit counter but meets the federal time limit exception criteria.

STATE TIME LIMIT

The state time limit reflects the number of remaining months an individual may receive FIP in the state of Michigan. Michigan has a 60 month lifetime limit.

Each month an individual receives FIP, regardless of the funding source (federal or state), the individual receives a count of one month. A family is ineligible for FIP when a mandatory group member in the program group reaches the 60 month state time limit.

Exception: Months prior to October 1, 2007 do not count towards the state time limit.

State Time Limit Exemptions

The state time limit allows exemption months in which an individual does not receive a count towards the individual's state time limit. However, the federal time limit continues, unless the exemption is state funded.

Effective Oct. 1, 2011, exemption months are months the individual is deferred from PATH for:

- Domestic violence.
- Age 65 and older.
- A verified disability or long-term incapacity lasting longer than 90 days.

Note: This includes the deferral reason of establishing incapacity.

- A spouse or parent who provides care for a spouse or child with verified disabilities living in the home.

See BEM 230A for eligibility criteria for exemptions.

OUT-OF-STATE CASH ASSISTANCE MONTHS

Cash assistance (TANF) an individual received in other states counts towards the individual's FIP time limit. If an individual reports to the Department that he/she received cash assistance in another state, **do not** certify eligibility for FIP until those months are calculated by central office. Failure to allow central office to include the correct out-of-state months may lead to the individual receiving FIP inappropriately.

Those months that an individual received assistance in another state(s) may be disclosed on the DHS-1171, Assistance Application. Or, if the individual provides an out-of-state driver's license, ask the individual if he/she received cash assistance in that or another state and for what months. Email the following to Policy-Time-Limits@Michigan.gov:

- Individual's name.
- Individual's client id.
- Individual's case number.
- Individual's social security number.
- Individual's date of birth.
- State(s) individual received cash assistance from.
- Months the individual received cash assistance. If received in multiple states, indicate which states, for which months.

Note: If an individual does not remember the months that he/she received cash assistance in another state, provide the state(s) name(s) and the individual's best estimate.

Central office will contact the other state(s) to get the individual's countable months. Central office will notify the specialist that the countable months have been added to the individual's FIP time limits. After the months are verified and recorded by central office, the specialist will need to determine eligibility for FIP.

Note: Member adds need to go through the same process.

Note: Be sure to check old DHS-1171's at redetermination to capture previously reported out-of-state assistance to add to individual FIP time limit counter.

Example: Sarah moves to Michigan and she received 40 months of cash assistance in Ohio. Once central office verifies and records the 40 months, Sarah will have a concurrent federal and state time limit count of 40 months for FIP. However, if Sarah moved to Michigan with 60 months of cash assistance from Ohio, she would not be eligible for FIP assistance.

SANCTIONED MONTHS

Each month an individual serves a sanction period, those months count toward their state time limit. Sanction months should be counted starting Oct. 1, 2007.

Sanctioned reasons that count towards the individual time limit are:

- Employment and training noncompliance.
- Family Automated Screening Tool (FAST) noncompliance.
- Family Self-Sufficiency Plan (FSSP) noncompliance.
- Family Strengthening Activities noncompliance.

Example: Penny has a state time limit of 10 months. Penny must serve a six month employment and training sanction. Once she has completed the sanction, her state time limit count will be 16 months. Her federal time limit will remain at 10 months.

INDIVIDUAL TIME LIMIT

The FIP time limits are applied at an individual level.

Individuals that receive a time limit count are:

- Adults age 18 and older who are eligible in the FIP group or disqualified due to a sanction listed in Sanctioned Months in this item.
- Minor parents who are the head-of-household.

Individuals who do **not** receive a FIP time limit count are:

- Dependent children age 18 and younger who are eligible in the FIP group.
- Ineligible grantees (for example, grandparents, SSI recipients.)

- Dependent children age 19 and in high school full-time who are eligible in the FIP group. (This applies only from Oct. 1, 2007 to Sept. 30, 2011.)

Two parent families will have individual FIP time limit counts. The parent with the highest FIP time limit count is applied to the FIP group's time limit. Once the parent with the highest count reaches the maximum time limit, FIP shall close.

If a two parent family closes due to a parent reaching the maximum FIP time limit and that parent leaves the home, the remaining parent may be eligible for FIP assistance until the remaining parent's maximum FIP time limit is reached.

If it is reported to the Department that the parent who affected the FIP closure is out of the home, and a new DHS-1171 is submitted, the specialist is to request a Front End Eligibility (FEE) investigation from the Office of Inspector General (OIG). A home visit shall be completed to verify the parent is out of the home. Do **not** determine eligibility on the pending FIP application until the FEE agent completes an investigation.

FIP APPLICATION AFTER A TIME LIMIT IS REACHED

Once an individual reaches a FIP time limit and the FIP closes, the individual is not eligible for FIP if the individual reapplies and meets any exemption criteria.

LEGAL BASE

42 USC 608

Michigan TANF State Plan

MCL 400.57 - 57u

MCL 400.6(3) and (4)

2011 P.A. 131 and 2011 P.A. 132, amending MCL 400.57 - 57u.,
MCL 400.6(3) and (4)

2012 P.A. 607

2024 P.A. 138