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Attending School

Q. Will I get a penalty if I don't go to school?

A. Yes. If you are a parent who is under 18 and you don't work to complete high school or get your GED, your Temporary Assistance benefits will be reduced by about \$369. This penalty lasts until you return to school, earn your diploma, or complete your GED. If you have a good reason for not going to school, talk to your case worker right away.

Fair Hearings

Q. What if I disagree with getting a penalty?

A. If you get a penalty and do not agree with it, you can ask for a Fair Hearing. You may ask for a hearing in person, over the phone or in writing.

You must plan now
for the future,
as well as for your
family's future.

*The State of Alaska supports your efforts
to support your family.*

A variety of resources may be available to you.

These resources, combined with your efforts,

will help you become

independent & self-supporting.



Alaska Division of Public Assistance

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Your Best Bet...

**Avoid the
Penalty**

*Questions & Answers
About Temporary Assistance
Penalties and Benefit Reductions
July 2002*

Alaska Temporary Assistance Program

The Alaska Temporary Assistance Program provides temporary cash assistance and work services to help families find work and become self-sufficient.

Your efforts to gain employment, prepare for work, and get child support show you are helping yourself to reach self-sufficiency.

Penalties can be applied when you choose not to participate or follow program rules.

Temporary Assistance Penalties

Q. What is a Temporary Assistance Penalty?

A. If you choose not to follow your plan for self-sufficiency, look for work or cooperate with child support enforcement rules, a progressive penalty may be applied. This means that the longer you choose not to follow program rules, the more severe the penalty.

- ◆ 1st month: 40% benefit reduction
- ◆ After 4 months: 75% benefit reduction
- ◆ After 8 months: Your Temporary Assistance case may close.

Q. What if I have a good reason?

A. If you have a reason for not following the program's rules, a penalty may be avoided. Some examples may be illness, lack of transportation or child care, or threats to you and your family's safety. Please discuss your situation with your case worker right away.

Sometimes there are good reasons for choosing not to participate or follow program rules that will avoid the penalty. Talk with your case worker and explain what has happened. It's your Best Bet!

Self-Sufficiency Plan & Work Activities

Q. What if I don't complete or follow my Plan, or complete other Work Activity Assignments or Training?

A. Establishing and following your Plan is the best way your family can become independent. If you choose not to create or follow your Plan, or choose not to do your work or training activities, your Temporary Assistance benefits may be reduced or terminated.

You need to talk to your case worker right away whenever you are not able to complete a requirement or assignment.

Q. How long do the Plan and Work Activity penalties last?

A. Plan and work activity penalties last until you again choose to follow program rules. At any penalty level, your family's benefits will be restored when you follow through with your plan, and participate in work or training activities.

The months you are penalized count toward your family's 60 month lifetime limit on Temporary Assistance.

Child Support

Q. What happens if I don't cooperate with the Child Support Enforcement Division (CSED)?

A. Receiving regular and reliable child support payments is an important step toward self-sufficiency. If you choose not to cooperate with CSED in pursuing child support, your family's Temporary Assistance benefit may be reduced or terminated. In addition, the adults in your family may not be eligible for Medicaid.

This penalty lasts until you cooperate with CSED. If you have a good reason for not cooperating with CSED, talk to your case worker right away.

Quitting or Cutting Back Hours

Q. What if I don't take a job offer, quit the job I have, or cut back on my hours?

A. If you choose to quit or refuse work without a good reason, you and your family may not receive any help. The Temporary Assistance Program provides temporary help until you can find work and become self-sufficient. If you choose not to work, your family will not be eligible for Temporary Assistance.

Q. How long do job refusal, quit, or reduction penalties last?

- A.
- ◆ 1st time: No benefits for 1 month
 - ◆ 2nd time: No benefits for 6 months
 - ◆ 3rd time: No benefits for 12 months