

DTA also looks at whether:

- 6) appropriate job opportunities exist in your area. A job opportunity is appropriate when you meet the minimum requirements for the job.
- 7) suitable child care is available. Child care is suitable when it meets state standards and it is available during your work hours and commuting time.

**I am in a training program. Can I get an extension?**

If you are participating in an approved education or training program at the end of your 24-month period and ask for an extension, you will be given a three-month extension to complete the activity. If needed, DTA may give you a second three-month extension to finish the activity.

**I am working. Will DTA give me an extension?**

You must be eligible for TAFDC. If you are working full-time, DTA will give you an extension. Full time means at least 35 hours per week.

**What if I don't ask for an extension now but need one later?**

You can ask for an extension at any time during the period you can't get TAFDC because of the time limit.

**Is there any other way I can get TAFDC when my benefits stop because of the time limit?**

Yes. You must be eligible for TAFDC. Even if your benefits stopped because of your time limit, you can get TAFDC if you meet a TAFDC exemption rule. Your case manager can explain exemptions to you.

**Are there waivers of the time limit rules?**

Yes. If you are a victim of Domestic Violence, you may request a waiver of the time limit. Your case manager can explain the Domestic Violence waiver rules to you. If you want a waiver, you must meet with a DTA Domestic Violence Specialist.

# Requesting TAFDC Beyond the 24-Month Limit on Benefits



Massachusetts law limits the amount of time a family can get TAFDC if the family is **non-exempt**. Families who are nonexempt get TAFDC for a total of 24 months within a 60-month period. If your benefits stop because of this rule, all members of your family lose benefits.

This rule applies to each parent in a two-parent family. If one of the parents has used 24 months, then the entire family loses TAFDC.

### **How Do I Request an Extension of TAFDC?**

You must be eligible for TAFDC to get an extension.

If you used 22 months of benefits but believe you need to continue getting benefits beyond month 24, you may ask to have your benefits continue. This is called an **extension**. To ask for an extension, you must tell DTA why you need it. Your case manager can help you fill out the forms to ask for an extension.

If you ask for an extension, you will continue to get TAFDC benefits until a decision is made on your extension request.

Important things you should know:

- If you do not ask for an extension in either month 23 or 24, your benefits will stop at month 25.
- Each extension is usually only for two or three months.

There is no limit to the number of extensions you may request.

### **Who Decides Whether I Get an Extension?**

DTA's Commissioner or designee will decide if you get an extension. The rules DTA uses to decide whether you get an extension are found in this brochure.

We will look at what you are doing to find a full-time job. We will also look to see if you have cooperated with the Department in work-related activities.

Work-related activities are those which will lead to full-time employment. They include but are not limited to:

- employment ready (job search);
- a job; and/or
- education or training program.

If you do not do these activities without good cause, the Department may deny your extension request.

Good cause includes:

- lack of appropriate and available child care;
- lack of affordable and reliable transportation;
- lack of an available community service site identified by DTA;
- a temporary disability or illness; or
- other reasons we approve (including a family crisis, emergency or other compelling circumstances).

### **What are the factors DTA uses in deciding to extend a family's benefits?**

The DTA Commissioner or designee looks to see if you:

- 1) cooperated, and continue to cooperate, with the DTA in work-related activities;
- 2) are working towards self-sufficiency;
- 3) rejected job offers, reduced your hours, or quit a job without good cause.
- 4) got fired for a good reason; and,
- 5) you have been sanctioned or not cooperated with DTA's rules and regulations.