POLICY CHANGE ALERT #16-026F

TITLE: STBL CHANGE TO 12 MONTHS **ISSUE DATE: 06/13/2016**

EFFECTIVE DATE: JUNE 30, 2016

Summary
Programs Impacted: CA

This Policy Change Alert is being issued to inform staff of changes to the Cash Assistance (CA) program. Due to recent legislation, the State Benefit Limit (STBL) for CA is changing from 24 months to 12 months.

Revision Details

The FAA Policy Manual will be updated to include the information in this Policy Change Alert.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11 – 12 Month State Benefit Limit (STBL) – Overview

The **12** month limit on receiving CA benefits is known as the CA State Benefit Limit (STBL). Effective June 30, 2016, receipt of CA benefits is limited to budgetary units in which the following have not received **12** countable months for himself, herself, or for a dependent child, in Arizona:

- The PI
- The spouse(g) of the PI
- Another adult in the CA budgetary unit

NOTE The **12** countable months are not required to be consecutive.

The budgetary unit is NOT eligible to receive more than **12** months of CA when ALL of the following conditions occur:

- The PI, their spouse, or another adult in the budgetary unit has received **12** or more countable months of CA for a budgetary unit
- The PI, their spouse, the dependent child or another adult in the budgetary unit are keyed IN, DI, DF, DP, OU or ST in the CA PT field on SEPA

EXCEPTION

The budgetary unit may receive additional months of CA when it is eligible for a CA STBL Hardship Extension.

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AZTECS calculates the **12** countable months during the STBL, beginning with the first countable benefit month on or after October 01, 2002.

EXCEPTION

STBL and STBL hardship extensions do not apply to Tribal TANF Programs and Kinship Foster Care when the child is in the legal custody of the Department of Child Safety (DCS).

Inform the PI during each new and renewal interview of the **12** month STBL requirements and the availability of STBL hardship extensions.

Policy and procedures regarding STBL are outlined as follows:

- Receipt of **12** Countable Months
- Not Countable STBL Months
- STBL Hardship Extension Overview
- STBL Hardship Extension Eligibility

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11A - Receipt of 12 Countable Months during the STBL

Receipt of **12** countable months during the STBL applies ONLY to the following CA participants:

- PI
- Spouse(g) of the PI
- Another adult in the CA budgetary unit who has received benefits for himself, herself, or for a dependent child

NOTE The CA month is countable when the participant (PI, spouse of PI or another adult) has a Participation Code of IN, DI, DF, DP, OU or ST keyed in the PT field on EPA.

Count each month that CA is received, beginning with the benefit month of October 2002, to determine receipt of **12** months of cash benefits.

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AZTECS calculates the **12** countable months during the STBL, beginning with the first month on or after October 01, 2002. Ensure that AZTD displays each countable and each not countable STBL month correctly.

NOTE Months prior to December 2005 are considered to be correct, unless verification is obtained proving the months are incorrect.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11B - Not Countable STBL Months

The following months are NOT COUNTABLE when determining receipt of **12** months of CA:

- Any month before October 01, 2002.
- Any month in which the CA benefits are prorated due solely to being an initial month of eligibility.
- Any month in which the budgetary unit was totally ineligible for CA benefits due to an overpayment. Contact Systems Helpdesk for AZTD correction.
- Any months for which the budgetary unit receives a Grant Diversion payment. This includes all months the payment is intended to cover.
- Any month for which the dependent child was the only participant in the budgetary unit and was in the custody of the State of Arizona. (See Child Only cases(g))
- Any month in which a participant is residing on an Indian Reservation when the unemployment rate is above 49%. (Refer to the Reservation Code Tables in LISTCODE for Tribal unemployment rates)
- Any month in which CA benefits were received in another state.

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POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11C - Hardship Extension of 12 Month STBL – Overview

In order for the participant to qualify for an STBL hardship(g) extension, the hardship must prevent any of the following participants from supporting the budgetary unit independent of CA:

- The PI
- Their spouse(g)
- Another adult who is living in the home and is financially responsible for the dependent child

The CA budgetary unit may be eligible for an STBL hardship extension when ALL of the following apply:

- The budgetary unit has received **12** or more countable months of CA
- The PI or their spouse requests an extension verbally or in writing
- The PI, their spouse, or another adult who is living in the home and is financially responsible for the dependent child establishes an STBL hardship extension reason
- The PI, their spouse, and any other adult when the adult is in the budgetary unit, are currently in compliance with the following requirements:

  DCSS

  Immunization

  Jobs Program

  School attendance

After a budgetary unit receives **12** countable months of CA in Arizona, an STBL hardship extension may be approved **when** one of the following STBL hardship extension reasons **apply**:

- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home is a nonparent specified relative(g) (NPSR) who is 60 years old or older. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see NPSR Hardship Extension Eligibility.

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- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child has a:

  Temporary disability

  Permanent disability

  For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Disability Hardship Extension Eligibility.

- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child is needed as a full time caretaker of their disabled adult or minor child, parent, spouse, or domestic partner(g), and there is no other caretaker available. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Caretaker Hardship Extension Eligibility.

- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child is a victim of crime, domestic violence, or other violence. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Victim of Violence Hardship Extension Eligibility.

- A participant is homeless(g).

  For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Homeless Hardship Extension Eligibility.

- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child is unable to complete their educational or training program without CA. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Training Hardship Extension Eligibility.

- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child cannot find or afford childcare, preventing them from working or engaging in work activities. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Child Care Hardship Extension Eligibility.

- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child does not have readily available or affordable transportation in their area preventing them from working or engaging in work activities. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Transportation Hardship Extension Eligibility.

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- The PI, spouse of the PI, or other adult in the home who is financially responsible for the dependent child has another STBL hardship extension reason that prevents the participant from working or engaging in work activities. For additional hardship eligibility requirements, see Other Hardship Extension Eligibility.

EXCEPTION

A claim of hardship based solely on the inability to be legally employed in the United States due to federal immigration status requirements is not a valid hardship.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11F.01 - STBL Hardship Extension Procedures – New Application

When a new application(g) is received by the local office and the AZ CNTR AF field on WERE displays **10** months or more, review the application for STBL Hardship Extension Eligibility.

Inform the PI during each new application interview of the **12** Month STBL requirements and the availability of STBL hardship extensions.

When eligibility for an STBL Hardship Extension is determined, see STBL Hardship Extension Keying Procedures.

NOTE The budgetary unit must meet all other CA eligibility requirements to be eligible for an STBL hardship extension.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11F.02 - STBL Hardship Extension Procedures – Renewal Applications

When a renewal application is received by the local office and the AZ CNTR AF field on WERE displays 10 months or more, review the application for STBL Hardship Extension Eligibility.

Inform the PI during each renewal interview of the **12** Month STBL requirements and the availability of STBL hardship extensions.

When eligibility for an STBL Hardship Extension is determined, see STBL Hardship Extension Keying Procedures.

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NOTE The budgetary unit must meet all other CA eligibility requirements to be eligible for an STBL hardship extension. The reason the participant requests an STBL hardship extension may change at each renewal period.

A budgetary unit may receive an extension at each renewal when the budgetary unit meets all eligibility requirements for the hard ship extension.

The first STBL hardship extension period expires on the current CA renewal date. The STBL hardship extension periods are for six months. All subsequent approved STBL hardship extensions are for six months.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11F.03 - STBL Hardship Extension Procedures – X080, X081, or Other LIBL Hardship Extension Requests

When the AZ CNTR AF field on WERE displays **10th** month or more, and the CA case is in open status and in the current system month, AZTECS sends the X080 notice to the PI. The X080 informs the PI of all of the following:

- The participant has reached the 10th month of their STBL.
- To continue to receive CA, the PI or the spouse(g) of the PI must request an STBL hardship extension.
- The hardship extension reasons for STBL.
- The date the request for an STBL hardship extension must be received by the local office.

When the AZ CNTR AF field on WERE displays **12** months or more and the CA case is in open status and in the current system month, AZTECS sends the X081 notice to the PI. The X081 informs the PI of all of the following:

- The participant has reached the **12**th month of their STBL.
- To continue to receive CA, the PI or the spouse of the PI must request an STBL hardship extension.
- The STBL hardship extension reasons for STBL.

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- The date the request for an STBL hardship extension must be received by the local office.
- Fair Hearing rights.

The X080 and X081 provide the participant with a section to complete the request for STBL hardship extension.

EXCEPTION

When the case is not in the current system month, AZTECS does not send the X080 or the X081. Send the A080 or A081 notice when the case is rolled into the current system month and both of the following occur:

- The AZ CNTR AF field on WERE displays **10** months or more.
- AZTECS did not send the X080 or X081.

When the participant provides the X080, X081, or any written or verbal request for an STBL hardship extension to the local office, complete the following:

- Set an XX ACTS alert for the case.
- When verification is provided with the request for the STBL hardship extension, complete the STBL Hardship Extension Keying Procedures within ten days.
- When verification is NOT provided with the request for the STBL hardship extension, send the A011 notice requesting verification of the STBL hardship extension reason. Complete the following:

  When the verification requested on the A011 is provided by the participant, complete the STBL Hardship Extension Keying Procedures within ten days of the date the verification is received.

  When the verification requested on the **A011** is NOT provided:

  - Key the PI Denial Closure reason code on AFED for the 13th CA month or the month after the current approved extension expires.
  - Send the A200 notice.

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- Reauthorize benefits for other programs, when appropriate.
- Send the appropriate notices for the other programs.
- Close the XX ACTS alert.

WARNING

When AZTECS has sent the renewal notice, do not authorize the case past the STBL hardship extension approval period. When the case does not automatically close, complete the following in the month after the STBL hardship extension approval period ends.

- Ensure that a renewal notice was sent.
- Remove the STBL Hardship Extension Reason code from the AZ EXT RSN field on WERE.
- Stop CA with the FR Denial or Closure Reason Code.
- Send the A200 notice.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA2.P11F.04 - STBL Hardship Extension Keying Procedures

Complete one of the following when eligibility for an STBL Hardship Extension is determined:

- Approve the extension when the budgetary unit is eligible to receive an STBL hardship extension. Complete all of the following:

  Key the appropriate Extension Reason Code in the AZ EXT RSN field on WERE.

  Authorize the benefits on AFPD.

  Send the A102 notice.

  Document CADO or the CADO Extension Form (CEF) with the STBL hardship extension reason.

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The STBL hardship may not be valid for the entire approval period. Complete the following when the STBL hardship is valid for:

- 30 days or less

  Authorize only the month(s) the STBL hardship is valid.

  Send the A081 notice, requesting any other STBL hardship reason.

- 31 to 60 days

  Authorize only the first and second month of the STBL hardship extension, up to the current system month.

  Send the A081 notice, requesting any other STBL hardship reason.

- More than 60 days

  Authorize the STBL hardship extension up to the current system month.

  Set an EWAL alert for the first day of the month prior to the last month the STBL hardship is valid. On the EWAL due date, send the A081 notice, requesting any other STBL hardship reason.

WARNING

All potential STBL hardship claims of OTHER must be elevated to the Research and Analysis Unit (R&A) prior to taking action.

- Stop CA benefits when the budgetary unit has requested an STBL hardship extension, R&A has determined the participant is NOT eligible to receive an STBL hardship extension, and all other eligibility criteria are met.

  Complete all of the following:

  - Key the TI Denial Closure Reason Code and effective date on AFED.
  - Send the **A215** notice
  - Reauthorize benefits for other programs, when appropriate.

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- Send the appropriate notices for the other programs.
- Document CADO or the CEF with the reason that the STBL hardship extension was not approved.

- Stop CA benefits when all of the following occur:

  No STBL hardship extension reason has been requested.

  AZTECS has sent a NOAA to the PI.

  The AZ CNTR AF field on WERE displays **12** months or more. In this situation, complete all of the following:

  - Key the TI Denial or Closure Reason Code and the effective date on AFED.
  - Send the **A214** notice.
  - Reauthorize benefits for other programs, when appropriate.
  - Send the appropriate notices for the other programs.

POLICY REFERENCE: FAA6.Q01S.20 - State Benefit Limit (STBL)

A **12** month time limit for receiving Cash Assistance (CA) benefits in Arizona that begins with the first full CA payment received on or after October 01, 2002. (See STBL)

Please contact the FAA Policy Support Team by phone at **(602) 774-5523** or by e-mail at **FAAPolicyMgmt@azdes.gov** with any questions or concerns regarding this broadcast.
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