

P-2320 Time Limits- Stopping the Clock(Reach Up Services rule 2363)(24-06)

Participation Requirements

Reach Up's mission is to join families on their journey to overcome obstacles, explore opportunities, improve their finances and reach their goals. Helping participants determine what goals they would like to focus on and how they may accomplish those goals is done using the goal achievement process, specifically GPDR-R and creation of a Family Development Plan. Participants in the Reach Up program are required to work with their Reach Up Case Manager through regular meetings a minimum of monthly and by engagement in the goal setting process. Each participant's service requirements will vary depending on the participant's abilities and needs. Participants should be informed of the service requirements, case management supports, and when appropriate, explore voluntary participation or ACCESS codes to "stop the clock" on countable time limits. See P-2320E for more information on voluntary participation.

Time limits and determining if stopping the clock is appropriate

Federal rules limit families to 60 countable months of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) cash assistance in a lifetime. Vermont continues to offer Reach Up to families beyond 60 countable months, as long as participants are engaged with participation requirements. Certain family and benefit situations determine whether a month "counts" toward this 60-month limit. Once a participant reaches their lifetime limit of 60 countable months on Reach Up, Vermont has slightly different rules for households to continue receiving Reach Up benefits. Given lifetime limits of TANF cash assistance and different rules when reaching 60 countable months, it is important to assess a participant's circumstance to determine if they may benefit from a "stop the clock" code in ACCESS.

Participants who may be facing obstacles to meeting their goals may benefit from a code to stop the clock. Some examples of these obstacles may be a participant needing to care for a family member in the home, a participant needing to address a medical concern, or a participant having a new baby in the home. The Participation Codes desk aide [Reach Up Participation Codes](#) lists the available ACCESS codes that stop the clock for time limits and what documentation is needed.

To explore what may be going on with a participant and how the Reach Up program may work best for their family, use open-ended questions to help the participant identify how they view the obstacle(s) and what activities they feel they can take part in. The following procedures (P-2320A, B, C, D and E) provide

more information on specific ways to stop the clock and what ACCESS code may be the most appropriate.

Codes that stop the clock in ACCESS help collect information about the most common obstacles Reach Up households are facing. Only codes that stop the clock on a participant's countable months will be used.

The following codes stop the clock on a participant's countable months of Reach Up. Procedures P-2320A, B, C, D, and E outline what steps to take when stopping the clock.

Code 11- Needed in the home to care for a family member

Code 30- Primary Caregiver of child < 6 months (only the first 12 months of any combination of code 30 or 45 are not countable towards the 60 month limit)

Code 45- Primary Caregiver of child > 6 months (only the first 12 months of any combination of code 30 or 45 are not countable towards the 60 month limit)

Code 34- Medically exempt

Code 35- Medically exempt – applying for SSI/SSDI

Code 54- Unable to work due to domestic violence

Review Dates

A review date will need to be entered when using a code that stops the clock in ACCESS. This date indicates when the circumstance needs to be reviewed and potentially updated or ended. Review dates should end on the last day of the calendar month whenever possible.

If a review date passes and is not updated, the code will revert back to the able to work "02" code and the clock will begin counting toward the 60-month limit.

Reviewing the need for continuation of stopping the clock beyond review date

At least three weeks before the review date, set up an appointment and send an appointment letter to discuss next steps.

Discuss with the participant if the obstacle(s) to meeting their goal(s) remains and if they are still asking to pursue options to stop the clock.

See the following procedures (P-2320A, B, C, D, and E) for what additional information (updated forms, etc.) is needed if stopping the clock is to continue.