

# What You Need To Know About Reach First

*Reach First helps families overcome temporary, short-term financial crises and avoid the need for longer-term assistance.*

*Reach First is part of the Reach Up family of programs.*

**Mission:** Reach Up joins families on their journey to overcome obstacles, explore opportunities, improve their finances and reach their goals.

**Vision:** Families will be empowered, connected and thriving.

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## How is Reach First different than Reach Up?

- Reach First is temporary, short term financial assistance for families who have a plan and will not need cash assistance beyond 4 months (e.g., you have a back-to-work date or job offer)
  - The initial Reach First payment is retroactive to the first of the month in which you applied. For example, if we receive your application on 10/18, your benefit will start 10/1.
  - Benefits are paid once a month on the 1<sup>st</sup>, and the benefit amount is equal to what you would receive on Reach Up.
  - You do **not** need to assign your child support rights to the state, however, any child support you do receive must be reported and will reduce your Reach First benefits.
  - If you are not able to return or start work for some reason in 4 months, you can be switched to the Reach Up program and continue to receive a financial benefit.
  - You can be switched to Reach Up at any time during the 4 months if it is determined you will need cash assistance beyond 4 months.
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## What is required of me?

- You will be required to meet regularly with a Reach Up Team member (s). Reach Up Team members work with both Reach First and Reach Up participants.
  - You will identify goals for yourself and your family and create a plan to achieve those goals. Your plan will include activities that will help you get off Reach First within 4 months.
  - If you do not meet with a Reach Up team member or if you do not follow through with your plan and are unwilling to create a new plan, your Reach First benefits will end until you do follow through.
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## What else should I know?

- You may be eligible for financial supports related to the activities in which you are engaged. Some examples include gas money for job search, car repairs, and clothing for a job or job interview. Your Reach Up Team member will work with you on exploring support services you may be eligible for.
- If your Reach First benefits end due to employment, you may be eligible for some financial supports services for 6 months from the closure date.
- Reach First recipients are **not** eligible for the Reach Ahead Pilot program. Reach Ahead is a \$100 food benefit for 6 months, then \$50 for the following 6 months. Reach Ahead also offers cash employment reimbursement payments the months after every 6 months for 24 months consecutive months of eligibility. An adult in the household needs to be working a certain number of hours per week in paid employment to qualify and continue to qualify for this program.



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