



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

December 1, 2021

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Manual

Transmittal # 73

This transmittal includes annual changes to the program calculations for the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) Program and the Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW) Program. The purpose of this transmittal is to provide new, clarified and revised guidance for both the TANF and VIEW Programs.

Unless otherwise stated, the provisions included in this transmittal are effective for all TANF eligibility determinations and VIEW Program assessments and reassessments completed on or after December 1, 2021.

This transmittal and manual are available on the Intranet through FUSION at <https://fusion.dss.virginia.gov/bp/BP-Home/TANF-and-VIEW/Guidance> and on the Internet at <http://www.dss.virginia.gov/benefit/tanf/index.cgi>.

Significant changes to the manual are as follows:

Page(s) Changed	Significant Changes
Section 201, Appendix, page 3	At Item C., we updated the list of documents that can be used to verify the identity of non-citizens or eligible aliens.

Section 503.1, page 1	<p>For clarity purposes, a note was added that expands the definition of TANF payments when determining improper payments.</p> <p>TANF payments also include Emergency Assistance payments, Diversionary Assistance payments, VIEW Transitional Payments, and VIEW payments and services when a VIEW participant is found to have committed an IPV for receiving a payment or purchase on his behalf which is an amount greater than what he is eligible for or for which he is ineligible.</p>
Section 503.8, page 3	<p>At Item A, the word “SPARK” was removed and replaced with “Fusion”.</p> <p>At Item B, a calcifying statement was added regarding recoupments and withholdings. Recoupments and withholdings must not be applied to Emergency Assistance payments and Diversionary Assistance payments.</p>
Chapter 900, Table of Contents	<p>We added a new Section 900.15, Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) Individual.</p>
Section 901.15, pages 16-16b	<p>During the 2021 General Assembly session, House Bill 1800, the TANF block grant was appropriated funding to establish individual development accounts for TANF eligible individuals.</p> <p>The Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) is a VDSS managed Individual Development Account (IDA) designed to support TANF recipients, participating in VIEW, with saving money to purchase an allowable asset [homeownership, transportation, the pursuit of post-secondary education (participant or child), small business ownership or to achieve self-sufficiency] through matched savings and training.</p> <p>We added guidance to clarify the RISE program details.</p>

Chapter 1000, Table of Contents	We added a new Section 1000.30, Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE).
Chapter 1000, VIEW Definitions	We added the RISE definition.
Section 1000.30, pages 99-101	We added guidance to clarify the RISE program details.

Questions about this transmittal should be directed to regional program consultants or Mark Golden, TANF Program Manager, at (804) 726-7385, or mark.golden@dss.virginia.gov.

S. Duke Storen
Commissioner

DRAFT

C. Documentation of identity only for individuals who are not U.S. citizens. Important: These documents are used to establish identity of the parent prior to establishing relationship to the child. **The agency must accept any of the documents listed below as proof of identity, provided such document has a photograph or other identifying information including, but not limited to, name, age, sex, race, height, weight, eye color, or address. The agency must accept any documents that reasonably establish the applicant's identity. Households do not have to provide a specific type of verification.** They are used only for individuals who are not citizens or eligible aliens. These documents do not establish citizenship or alien status.

- U.S. Military ID card (active, reserve, retired)
- U.S. Military draft record
- U.S. Military dependent ID card
- U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card
- **School or work identification card**
- **Driver's License issued by a State or Territory**
- **Identity documents listed 8 CFR 274a.2(b)(1)(v)(B)(I)**

- Identification card issued by the Federal, State, or local government that includes the individual's name and address, and incorporates a photo as an integral part of the card.

- Three or more corroborating documents such as employer identification cards, high school or college diplomas, including GEDs, from accredited institutions, marriage certificates, divorce decrees, **voter registration card, birth certificate**, or property deeds/titles that together reasonably corroborate the identity of the individual. The agency must first ensure that no other evidence of identity is available to the individual prior to accepting such documents.

- Written affidavit attesting to identity. (Note: A written affidavit, **signed under penalty of perjury**, is only acceptable if absolutely no other proof of identity can be provided.) The affidavit must be signed by at least two individuals, at least one of whom is not related to the applicant, who have personal knowledge of the individual's identity. Examples of such individuals might include landlords, relatives or friends. The individuals signing the affidavit must both have proof of their own identities. The applicant must provide a separate affidavit explaining why proof of identity does not exist or cannot be obtained.

Client statement cannot be used to establish identity.

503.1 DEFINITION OF IMPROPER PAYMENT – A TANF payment made by a local department is improper when the payment is incorrect because: (1) the assistance unit does not meet eligibility requirements in the category (payment received in error/payment to an ineligible case); or (2) payment is in an amount greater than the amount to which the assistance unit is entitled under established guidance (overpayment); or (3) payment is in an amount less than the amount to which the assistance unit is entitled under established guidance (underpayment); or (4) a VIEW participant is found to have committed an IPV for receiving a payment or purchase on his behalf which is in an amount greater than what he is eligible for or for which he is ineligible.*

Note: TANF payments also include Emergency Assistance payments, Diversionary Assistance payments, VIEW Transitional Payments, and VIEW payments and services when a VIEW participant is found to have committed an IPV for receiving a payment or purchase on his behalf which is an amount greater than what he is eligible for or for which he is ineligible.

Improper payments may occur as a result of overdue reviews or other agency errors or because of erroneous or incomplete information supplied by the client. Improper payments may be revealed by several sources, not necessarily limited to the following: Local Agency Reviews, Federal Program Reviews, Fair Hearings, or earnings reports furnished by the Virginia Employment Commission.

503.2

503.2 STATUTORY PROVISIONS FOR REFUND OF OVERPAYMENTS AND PAYMENTS – If a payment or overpayment is made to an individual who is ineligible, the amount of such overpayment shall be returned to the Virginia Department of Social Services by the locality. Repayments will not be required if the Department determines that the payments or overpayments are the result of vague or conflicting regulations issued by the Department, or the failure of the Department to make statutes, rules, regulations, and guidance decisions available to the locality in a timely manner. Repayments will not be required in situations in which the locality exercised due diligence, yet received incomplete or incorrect information from the client which caused the overpayment. If a locality fails to return an overpayment as required, the Department of Social Services shall withhold an equal amount from the next disbursement made by the Department to the locality.*

The criteria used for determining if a locality exercised due diligence are as follows:

- A. A redetermination was not outstanding (overdue) in the case in question because the agency has received permission from the State to suspend reviews.
- B. The error had not occurred at the time of the completion of a scheduled review.
- C. It can be shown that the error was the result of the client willfully withholding information which would not have been discovered by verifications required at the time of the review.
- D. The error was not the result of an anticipated change that was overlooked.
- E. The error was not the result of the client reporting a change that the agency failed to follow-up on.
- F. The error was not the result of failure to use available management tools. The case record must be thoroughly documented regarding efforts to obtain all necessary information.

* 2002, Acts of Assembly, Chapter 899, Item 362 (Budget Bill, HB30.)

503.8 NOTIFICATION, RECOUPMENT AND RECOVERY OF OVERPAYMENTS - The local department must promptly recoup or recover any overpayments including overpayments resulting from assistance paid pending hearing decisions. Repayment by either a former or current recipient of the overpayment can occur through recoupment or recovery or both. The agency should discuss voluntary repayment with the client prior to initiating a recoupment.

- A. Notification to the assistance unit must be given before recoupment or recovery of an overpayment begins. After calculating the total amount of the overpayment, the local department of social services must send the Request for Repayment of TANF Payments and/or Payments for VIEW Services' form. The form is available in the Forms Drawer on the **Fusion** page. The first page of the form displays the period over which the overpayment occurred and the total amount of the overpayment. The second page allows the individual to select the method of repayment.

A copy of the form must be sent to the TANF recipient or payee or previous TANF recipient or payee and a signed copy filed in the case record. The signed form must remain in the case record until the overpayment has been satisfied. Note: If the recipient or payee fails to sign the form, the unsigned copy must be retained in the case record.

When the signed form is not returned, if 30 days have passed since the initial demand letter was sent on an active TANF case or on a case receiving a VIEW Transitional Payment (VTP), recoupment should begin the following month. When the TANF case closes prior to the month in which recoupment was scheduled to begin and the recipient or payee later reapplies for TANF assistance, she will be advised that recoupment will begin in the first month that the case is eligible for assistance.

- B. Recoupment consists of withholding all or part of the assistance payment. An overpayment made to a current recipient or payee must be recouped by reducing the amount of any future assistance payable to any assistance unit of which the individual is a member or payee. **Recoupments and withholdings must not be applied to Emergency Assistance payments and Diversionary Assistance payments.**

1. When the recipient or payee has no cash reserve or countable income (payment equals the Standard of Assistance for the AU), 10% of the assistance payment may be recouped until the overpayment has been repaid. Under the Repayment Agreement Section on the Claim Information Screen, enter the amount that equals 10% in the "Amount Agreed To Pay" field or the percentage amount in the percentage field.

Example: TANF Payment of \$549; Recoup 10% (\$54.90); amount of recoupment = (\$54.90); New payment amount is \$494.10.

2. In situations where a recipient (but not a payee) has earned income, unearned income, or any combination thereof, in addition to the assistance payment, part or all of the assistance payment may be recouped as long as the assistance unit retains at least 90 percent of the standard of assistance when the total gross income and the amount of the current payment are considered.

To calculate the client's ability to repay the overpayment, the worker will follow steps a - d below:

- a. Determine the amount of the overpayment.

*45 CFR 233.20(a)(13)(i)

*§63.2 - 512

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES (TANF) GUIDANCE MANUAL

Chapter 900 – The Virginia Initiative for Education and Work Program (VIEW)

Participation	901.1
Exemption Criteria	901.2
Responsibilities of the Eligibility Worker	901.3
Responsibilities of the Employment Services Worker	901.4
Participation and Cooperation Requirements	901.5
Sanctions	901.6
VIEW Payment Calculation	901.7
Vehicle Value Limit (Obsolete)	901.8
Twenty-four Month Limit for TANF Eligibility	901.9
Notice and Appeal of the Time Limit	901.10
Period of Ineligibility	901.11
Transfers	901.12
Transitional Benefits	901.13
Full Employment Program	901.14
Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE)	901.15

Appendix I	- TANF VIEW Payment Calculation
Appendix II	- VIEW Payment Calculation
Appendix III	- Federal Poverty Level

901.15 Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) – The 2021 General Assembly appropriated funds for the implementation of an individual development account (IDA)* program. RISE is an IDA administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) designed to support TANF recipients participating in VIEW for the purposes of homeownership, transportation acquisition, pursuing post-secondary education, small business ownership, or achieving self-sufficiency through matched savings and training.

TANF will provide \$8 for every \$1 saved by the participant to purchase an allowable asset (i.e., homeownership, transportation, education, small business ownership, or self-sufficiency). Under the RISE account, the matching funds together with the participant's savings from their employment are available to purchase one or more of the five asset goals. Once the participant meets their savings goal, TANF match funds will be paid to a vendor to purchase the participant's qualifying asset.

A. Participant eligibility requirement includes:

- **Must be a current TANF recipient participating in VIEW;**
- **At least 18 years old;**
- **a U.S. citizen, or legal alien;**
- **a Virginia resident; and**
- **the saver must have earned income from full-time, part-time wages, or self-employment**

B. Recruitment of participants into the RISE program will be the responsibility of the VDSS and the local departments of social services.

- 1. During reassessment, the ESW will explain the RISE eligibility requirements to all VIEW participants. The ESW will provide participants who are interested and meet the RISE requirements with the RISE application to complete and return. Upon the ESW receiving the completed RISE application, the ESW will contact the Intermediary, complete the RISE Referral Form, and schedule an initial appointment for the participant and the Intermediary to begin the RISE program discussion.**

C. An Intermediary is a non-profit agency, accessible throughout the state, that the VDSS has entered into an agreement with who will provide comprehensive engagement with the RISE participant to increase successful saving and training outcomes. The Intermediary will provide ongoing support and monitoring of all aspects of the Saver's RISE program participation. VDSS will provide a list of participating intermediaries per locality.

The Intermediary at a minimum will:

- 1. Conduct monthly appointments with the participant;**
- 2. assist the participant in setting realistic monthly savings goals;**
- 3. monitor monthly savings account balance;**
- 4. identify financial resources;**
- 5. counsel and assist the saver in finding a reputable vendor; and,**

6. review and approve the participant's paperwork and assist in submitting the required documentation to VDSS to complete the asset purchase.
- D. VDSS will notify the participant of their acceptance into the RISE program by letter. Upon acceptance, the participant, hereby known as the Saver, will be required to work with a local Intermediary as identified by the local agency ESW. While working with the Intermediary, the Saver will be required to:
1. Meet monthly with the Intermediary;
 2. Open a RISE savings account with an initial deposit of \$25 (money order);
 - a) Deposit a minimum of \$25 per month
 - b) Set-up direct deposit with their employer
 3. Complete at least eight hours of Financial Management training;
 4. Complete at least six hours of training related to the asset goal; and,
 5. Participate in the RISE program at least six months before requesting withdrawal of match funds to make an asset specific purchase

- E. RISE accounts are custodial accounts that contain only the saver's deposit of earned income. With the exception of tax refunds, no other funds should be deposited in the account. Funds should not be withdrawn without the signatures of the Saver, an Intermediary, and the VDSS program staff member. **Note:** Savers who withdraw funds from their savings accounts outside of the prescribed asset withdrawal process will be terminated from the RISE program.

Upon the Saver's request to make their asset purchase and receive the RISE match funds, the Intermediary will ensure the Saver has met all withdrawal criteria, notify VDSS of the Saver's intent and assist the saver in completing and submitting the required asset-specific backup documentation to the VDSS.

- F. The TANF RISE match funds are held in a central escrow account by VDSS until the Saver is ready to purchase an asset. The Saver never has direct access to the match funds. In a 24-month period, the maximum savings amount deposited by the Saver that will be matched is \$500 with a maximum TANF match vendor payment of \$4,000. The maximum TANF match payment paid to a qualified vendor will be eight times the amount the Saver has deposited into the RISE account, accordingly reflecting the \$8 to \$1 match.

Example 1: Over 10 months, the Saver deposits a total of \$300 into his RISE account. His match total is \$2,400 and all of the RISE program requirements are met, VDSS will remit payment to the vendor in the amount of \$2,400.

- G. Both parents in a TANF-UP household can participate in the RISE program as long as both meet all RISE eligibility requirements.**
- H. As long as all RISE eligibility requirements are met, regardless of the TANF case status (approved, closed, suspended), the Saver will have 24 months from the date of the account establishment to achieve the asset saving goal.**
- I. VDSS will maintain and monitor all RISE program accounts.**
- J. The RISE account is disregarded for the purpose of determining eligibility to receive, or the amount of, any assistance or benefit authorized under SNAP and Medical Assistance during which the person maintains or makes contributions into the account.**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

TRANSFERS	1000.25
APPEALS	1000.26
HEARINGS	1000.27
CONTRACTS	1000.28
Consideration in Contracting	1000.28.A
Services That Can be Contracted	1000.28.B
Selection of Service Providers	1000.28.C
Contract Outcomes	1000.28.D
Payment and Reimbursement	1000.28.E
Contract Duration	1000.28.F
Contract Requirements	1000.28.G
Budget	1000.28.H
Contract Monitoring	1000.28.I
RECORD RETENTION	1000.29
REACHING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH SAVINGS AND EDUCATION (RISE)	1000.30
APPENDIX	
Appendix A – VIEW Forms (Obsolete)	
Appendix B – Contract Development Checklist	
Appendix C – Standard Operating Procedures Guide (Obsolete)	
Appendix D – VIEW Annual Plan	
Appendix E – VIEW Brochures (Removed 7/1/19)	
Appendix F – VIEW Displacement Grievance Form	
Appendix G – Barriers to Employment	
Appendix H – Coding of VIEW Components in ESPAS (Removed 10/1/18)	
Appendix I – Local Agencies Served by Refugee Resettlement Agencies	
Appendix J – Understanding Federal Participation	

Queue - the list of TANF recipients who are referred by the eligibility worker for mandatory participation in the VIEW program.

Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) –an Individual Development Account program administered by the Virginia Department of Social Services (VDSS) designed to support TANF recipients for the purposes of homeownership, transportation acquisition, the pursuit of post-secondary education, small business ownership, or achieving self-sufficiency through matched savings and training.

Reasonable Distance - for VIEW placements, a reasonable distance is considered to be no more than one hour travel time each way from the participant's place of residence to the site of the activity.

Sanction - a suspension of a VIEW participant's TANF payment for non-compliance with program requirements; to suspend a participant's TANF payment for noncompliance.

Satisfactory Participation - participation in a program activity equal to the hours assigned to the activity for a stated time period. For job search assignments, satisfactory participation equals the completion of all required job search contacts, or employment.

Self-Initiated Participant - a participant who has enrolled in post-secondary education or in training activities prior to enrollment into the VIEW program.

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training (SNAPET) - The employment and training program for SNAP recipients.

Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) - a guide developed by the local agency that specifies the procedures to be followed in administering the VIEW program. The SOP is part of the local VIEW Annual Plan.

Subsidized Employment - employment in which government funds are used to directly subsidize the participant's wages. The Full Employment Program (FEP) is considered subsidized employment.

Supportive Services - services such as child care and transportation provided to a VIEW program participant with an open TANF case to enable the participant to take part in program activities or to work.

TANF-UP - a two-parent TANF household in which the parents have at least one child in common and in which neither parent is disabled.

Termination - closure of the TANF case for failure of a mandatory VIEW recipient to sign the Agreement of Personal Responsibility.

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) - the cash assistance program for families with children in Virginia, based on the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) as amended by the Deficit Reduction Action (DRA) of 2005.

Time Limitations - limitations on the period of time a family is eligible for TANF assistance based on federal and state statutes

Transitional Services - a category of services available to former VIEW participants once the TANF case is closed. Transitional services include services such as child care, transportation, Transitional Employment and Training services (TET), and the VIEW Transitional Payment (VTP) which may be provided to a VIEW participant whose TANF case has been closed.

Unsubsidized Employment - employment in which the participant is paid at least minimum wage and for which no government funds are used to subsidize the wages earned by a participant.

1000.30 REACHING INDEPENDENCE THROUGH EDUCATION AND SAVINGS (RISE)

The Reaching Independence through Savings and Education (RISE) is a VDSS managed Individual Development Account (IDA) designed to support TANF recipients, participating in VIEW, with saving money to purchase an allowable asset [homeownership, transportation, the pursuit of post-secondary education (participant or child), small business ownership or to achieve self-sufficiency] through matched savings and training.

RISE participation requirements include:

- Must be a current TANF recipient participating in VIEW;
- at least 18 years old;
- a U.S. citizen, or legal alien;
- a Virginia resident; and,
- the saver must have earned income from full-time or part-time wages or self-employment.

Note: Both parents in a TANF-UP household are eligible to participate in the program as long as all RISE eligibility requirements are met.

Once enrolled in the RISE program, regardless of the status of the TANF case (approved, closed, suspended), the RISE participant has 24 months from the date of the RISE account establishment to reach the savings goal to purchase an allowable asset. Clients can save up to \$500 and earn up to \$4,000 of RISE matching funds on those savings, thus an \$8 VDSS match for every \$1 saved. The Saver is limited to a maximum of \$4,000 match payment in a 24 month period. The TANF RISE match funds are held in a central escrow account by the VDSS until the Saver is ready to purchase an asset. The Saver never has direct access to the match payment funds. The maximum TANF match payment paid to a qualified vendor will be eight times the amount the Saver has deposited into the RISE account. Upon meeting the savings goal, TANF match funds will be paid to a vendor to purchase the qualifying asset.

- A. Recruitment of participants into the RISE program will be the responsibility of the VDSS and the local departments of social services ESW.
1. The ESW will explain the RISE eligibility requirements to all VIEW participants meeting the RISE eligibility criteria and provide the participant with the RISE Brochure. The ESW will provide the participant with the RISE application to complete and return. Upon receipt of the completed, signed and dated RISE application, the ESW shall complete the RISE Referral Form, contact the Intermediary to schedule a meeting between the participant and the intermediary. The ESW will document the scheduled meeting in the case file along with the referral date, referral time, the intermediary agency name, and the name of the intermediary agency contact.
 2. Upon acceptance into the RISE program, the participant, hereby known as the Saver, will be required to work with a local intermediary. The Intermediary will provide the Saver with ongoing program support, guidance, and monitoring of the Saver's participation. While working with the Intermediary, the Saver will be required to:

- a. Willingly commit to identifying and reducing debt, and change spending and savings habits;
- b. work with the Intermediary to develop a personalized action plan and timeline to purchase an allowable asset;
- c. meet monthly with the Intermediary;
- d. complete at least eight hours of financial literacy training;
- e. complete at least six hours of asset-specific training;
- f. set up direct deposit with the employer and save at least \$25 per month from earned income (e.g. wages, salaries, income tax refunds, professional fees, and other amounts received as compensation for personal services actually rendered);
- g. work closely with the Intermediary in cases of cash emergencies; and,
- h. work closely with the Intermediary on asset purchases.

If job loss occurs after enrolling in the RISE program, to maintain the RISE account, the Saver is given a five months grace period to find another job. If the saver is unable to secure a job within five months, the RISE account will be closed. Additionally, VDSS will terminate Savers that miss three consecutive monthly deposits or Savers who withdraw money from the RISE savings account without the required approval. Matched funds are forfeited if an account is closed at the discretion of the enrolled saver before the completion of the RISE program. Failure to participate in the RISE program will not affect the VIEW participation and no sanction is to be imposed.

Personal savings and VDSS matched funds may be used to make payments or to purchase an allowable asset. Only the money saved in the RISE account will be matched by VDSS. The ability of the Saver to obtain the asset within two years shall be a factor in moving forward in the RISE enrollment process.

- B. An Intermediary is a non-profit agency, accessible throughout the state, that the VDSS has entered into an agreement with who will provide comprehensive engagement with the RISE participant to increase successful saving and training outcomes. The Intermediary will provide ongoing support and monitoring of all aspects of the Saver's RISE program participation. The intermediary has a clear understanding of the RISE eligibility requirements and expected program outcomes. VDSS will provide a list of participating intermediaries per locality.

1. The Intermediary at a minimum will:

- a. Approve the RISE candidate's participation;
- b. discuss all RISE policies and requirements with the Saver;
- c. assist the candidate in securing all information necessary to participate;
- d. meet with the Saver monthly;
- e. provide case management and support to ensure the Saver's retention;
- f. provide monthly reporting and data to VDSS;
- g. assist the Saver in setting realistic monthly savings goals;
- h. monitor successful completion of at least eight hours of financial literacy training;
- i. monitor the successful completion of at least six hours of asset-specific training;
- j. assist the Saver in opening the RISE saving's account;
- k. identify financial resources;
- l. council Saver during cash emergencies;
- m. council and assist the save in finding reputable vendors; and,
- n. work closely with the Saver on asset purchases.

- C. As custodian of the account, VDSS will monitor the account to ensure adherence to RISE program requirements. VDSS will set up and monitor the RISE account for the benefit of the Saver. VDSS will generate monthly saver statements which the Intermediary will review and provide to the Saver. The RISE match funds will remain in the central escrow account maintained by VDSS until the Saver has met all withdrawal criteria. Upon the Saver's request to purchase the prescribed asset, the Intermediary will advise the VDSS of the Saver's intent. The Intermediary will assist the Saver in submitting the required backup documentation to VDSS for approval of the match payment to the vendor.**
- D. The VDSS will provide the local departments of social services with the resources to help build the RISE program, including the names of the local intermediaries.**