



TEXAS
**Department of Family
and Protective Services**

Emergency Assistance Eligibility

Resource Guide

Investigations

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Resource Guides

The purpose of Resource Guides is to provide information that helps you do your job better. This information includes reference material, procedures, and guidelines that help you complete the tasks you are required to do by policy.

It's important to remember that the information in Resource Guides **does not substitute for policy**. We may sometimes include policy statements, but only to show you the policy to which the information is related. We will highlight any policy that actually appears in the Resource Guide and will almost always include a link to the actual policy. For example:

Per [4222.2 Re-Allowing Placement](#):

If the caseworker learns of a detailed justification for changing the status of and considering placements in a foster family that is on Disallowed Placement status, the caseworker must elevate this consideration through the regional chain of command to the regional director.

The policy in the handbook always takes precedence over what is in the Resource Guide. We try to keep policy and Resource Guides synchronized, but sometimes there is a delay. **If you have questions, always follow the policy in the Policy Handbook.**

Resource Guides provide important information on a range of topics, for the purpose of assisting and guiding staff to:

- make essential decisions
- develop strategies to address various issues
- perform essential procedures
- understand important processes
- identify and apply best practices

The information in the Resource Guides is not policy (except where noted), and the actions and approaches described here are not mandates. You should adapt the way you perform critical tasks to the individual needs and circumstances of the children and families with whom you work.

State office and field staff are working together to identify Resource Guide topics, define the content, and develop the appropriate guides. CPS will regularly post Resource Guides as they are developed, and update them as needed. Check the Resource Guides page, in the CPS Handbook, to see new or revised Guides.

We hope these Guides provide useful information to guide and assist CPS staff in effectively performing their job tasks. These Guides, combined with clear and concise policy in the Handbook, should help staff provide a high level of service to children in Texas.

EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE ELIGIBILITY

Per [2700 Emergency Assistance \(EA\) Eligibility](#):

In both traditional Investigations and Alternative Response stages, the caseworker must complete the Emergency Assistance (EA) section in IMPACT when the:

- investigation final risk level is "high" or "very high";
- alternative response risk finding is "risk indicated"; or
- child is removed

One of the Emergency Assistance (EA) eligibility items that must be determined is "Annual Family Income." The caseworker has to determine if the income of persons in the family is \$63,000 or more or is less than \$63,000. If the annual income is \$63,000 or more, the family is not eligible for EA. If the annual income is less than \$63,000, and the family meets the other three eligibility criteria, the family is eligible for EA.

FAMILY ELIGIBILITY UNIT

The **family eligibility unit** consists of these individuals living in the same home:

- alleged victims in an investigation, or the reference child (oldest alleged victim in the Intake) in an alternative response;
- financially responsible adults (or teen parents), which:
 - the child's biological or adoptive parents whose parental rights have not been terminated, or
 - the managing conservator; and
- the minor siblings (including half and adoptive siblings) of:
 - the alleged victims in an investigation, or
 - the reference child in an alternative response.

INCOME TYPES

Per [2710 Determining Annual Family Income](#):

The caseworker must determine whether the family receives any of the following types of income:

- wages, salaries and tips;
- self-employment income;
- monthly child support payments received on behalf of the child or the child's siblings who are living in the home;
- governmental benefits such as SSI or RSDI, Railroad Retirement benefits, veteran's benefits, TANF, SNAP, and WIC;
- unemployment compensation or disability insurance benefits; and
- any other income the family receives. The caseworker must collect:
 - the name of each income source (for example, the employer that pays wages, the agency that provides a government benefit, and so on);
 - each income amount; and
 - each income recipient.

If the family reports they have no income, the caseworker must ask and document how the family supports itself.

Potential Questions to Ask

The caseworker collects information to determine the monthly gross income amount.

The caseworker asks the financially responsible adults in the family the following questions:

- Is any person in the family working?
- If yes, what is the person's job title, location, and the amount of the gross monthly income?
- How much have you earned in the last 12 months?
- Is any person in the family receiving monthly Social Security benefits, or any other federal government benefit or paycheck?
- If yes, what is the type and amount of the benefit, and have you received it for the last 12 months?
- Is any person in the family receiving any other type of monthly income, for example child support?
- If yes, what is the type and amount of the gross monthly income? How much have you received in the last 12 months?

Per [2710 Determining Annual Family Income](#):

If CPS removed a child from the home, the caseworker must use the *Eligibility Determination Worksheet* of the *Foster Care Assistance Application (FCAA)* to verify the income information provided by the parents (i.e., by the financially responsible adults in the same home as the child).

The *Foster Care Assistance Application (FCAA)* is the document that was used to determine if the child qualified for Title IV-E foster care assistance. The *Eligibility Determination Worksheet* contains a summary of the child's and family's income in the month of removal. This information was used to determine IV-E eligibility. The caseworker uses this information to determine monthly income for the family eligibility unit and convert it to an annual income amount.

When using the FCAA as the income information source, the caseworker does not need to ask the family the questions listed above.

When using the FCAA as the income information source, the caseworker is required to document in the Contact narrative that the caseworker used the FCAA information.

DETERMINING INCOME

Once the caseworker gathers the information, he or she calculates the gross annual income. If the family provides gross monthly income, the caseworker multiplies the total by 12 to determine the gross annual income. *Gross income* means the overall total before taking out taxes and other deductions.

DOCUMENTATION

The caseworker follows all documentation requirements listed in [2710 Determining Annual Family Income](#), under Documentation.

To record the family's annual income category in IMPACT:

- Go to either the *Investigation Conclusion* page (for Investigations) or *Alternative Response Conclusion* page (for Alternative Response) in IMPACT.
- Find the *EA Eligibility Application/Determination* section.
- Select the appropriate income category in the *Annual Family Income* dropdown box.