

Morongo Tribal TANF Program Tribal Family Assistance Plan

March 1, 2026 – February 28, 2029



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**MORONGO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM
TRIBAL FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN**

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MORONGO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS TRIBAL TANF
TRIBAL TANF FAMILY ASSISTANCE PLAN
2026-2029

MORONGO TRIBAL TANF PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

The mission of the Morongo Tribal TANF Program (MTTP) is to support and encourage Native American self-reliance by promoting cultural preservation, healthy families, education and career development. To fulfill its mission, MTTP's intent is to provide TANF assistance and related support services to eligible Native American families who are in need of temporary assistance. MTTP will provide eligible needy parent(s) and/or caretaker relative participants with job preparation, work, education, and supportive services to enable them to leave the program and become self-sufficient.

MTTP may also provide funds and/or services to eligible families at risk of welfare dependency. MTTP will comply with all financial statutory and regulatory purposes of TANF. MTTP intends that assistance shall be provided promptly with due regard for the preservation of Native American family life.

MTTP will measure progress and achievement of desired and required outcomes of the Tribal TANF program by collecting data that will meet the quarterly reporting requirements as outlined in 45 CFR 286.245.

The four purposes of TANF as established by 45 CFR 260.20 are the guidelines under which MTTP's goals are conducted and accomplished.

MTTP's primary goals are:

- To increase participants' employability and employable skill development by successfully engaging 75% of MTTP's work eligible individuals in training, vocation certification and education programs.
- To support participants by providing assistance to foster completion of items on their Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP).
- Providing education and services to youth and families in an effort to prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
- To support and foster the stability and well-being of two-parent families through the provision of supportive services such as marriage and parenting classes, life skills and prevention education, mental health counseling, educational supports for youth, and traditional cultural activities that contribute to the community and cultural pride and connection.

MTTP will measure the successful achievement of these goals by:

- Tracking participant case data reflecting successful participation in skill development, education, training, and certificate education training on a quarterly basis to show 75% of work eligible individuals in the program are consistently participating in and completing education, training, and skill development activities.
- Tracking participant case data on a quarterly basis to show that participants are successfully completing items in their PRP within the identified time period.

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- Tracking family case data on a quarterly basis to show participants are completing appropriate support services and activities that support and foster out-of-wedlock pregnancy prevention and family stability and well-being.

DESIGNATED AGENCY

The Morongo Band of Mission Indians (MBMI) shall be responsible for the administration of the Tribal TANF program and will provide Tribal TANF assistance and services to the approved service population in the approved service area(s) as outlined in this plan. The TANF department is responsible for the daily operations and supervision of the program, with oversight by the Morongo Tribal Council.

PERIOD COVERED BY THE PLAN

This plan covers the continued operation of the Tribal TANF program by MBMI for an additional 3-year period, beginning March 1, 2026, through February 28, 2029.

REVIEW AND COMMENT ON MTTP TRIBAL TANF PLAN

Pursuant to 45 CFR 286.75 (6), the MTTP Tribal Family Assistance Plan (TFAP) was available for a 45-day public comment period prior to submission between September 23, 2025 to November 12, 2025. Notification of the public comment period was posted on the MBMI website and sent to MTTP participants. The TFAP was posted on the MBMI website and hard copies were available at both MTTP office locations for public review and comment.

SERVICE POPULATION AND SERVICE AREA

Riverside County

MTTP will provide Tribal TANF assistance and/or support services to all eligible needy Morongo Tribal members, members/descendants of federally recognized Tribes, members/descendants of the California Judgment Roll, and their families who reside on the Morongo Reservation; and to eligible needy Morongo Tribal members/descendants and their families who reside in the off-reservation areas of Riverside County, excluding the city of Riverside.

San Bernardino County

MTTP will provide Tribal TANF assistance and/or support services to all eligible needy Native Americans who are members/descendants of a federally recognized Tribe, Alaska Natives, and members/descendants of the California Judgment Roll, and their families, who reside in the off-reservation areas of San Bernardino County.

DUAL ELIGIBILITY: PROVIDING BENEFITS AND ASSISTANCE TO MORONGO BAND OF MISSION INDIANS ENROLLED TRIBAL MEMBERS WHO LIVE OUTSIDE OF THE TRIBAL TANF SERVICE AREA

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In accordance with the authority granted under TANF-ACF-PI-2018-02, MBMI elects to provide the full range of Tribal TANF assistance and services as described in this plan to all eligible enrolled Morongo Band of Mission Indians Tribal members and their families who reside in either Riverside or San Bernardino counties but outside of the approved MTTP service area. MBMI understands that no additional funding will be provided now or in the future for this additional service population, and that all federal rules and regulations governing Tribal TANF apply. MBMI understands that it is not authorized to establish a Tribal TANF office outside of the MTTP approved service area, and that the time limit exception associated with “50% or more not-employed” does not apply to those enrolled Morongo Band of Mission Indians Tribal members who reside outside the Morongo Reservation.

ELIGIBILITY FOR TANF ASSISTANCE AND SERVICES RELATED TO THE PURPOSES OF TANF

Eligibility for TANF assistance and/or services is as established in the approved Morongo TFAP. Only needy families, as defined in the Morongo TFAP, may receive: (a) any form of federally funded or State Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) funded “assistance” (as defined in 45 CFR 286.10); or (b) any benefits or services pursuant to TANF purposes one (1) or two (2), regardless of the purpose served. “Needy” is defined as financially deprived, according to income and resource criteria (if applicable) established in the Morongo Tribal TANF Family Assistance Plan to receive the particular “assistance,” benefit, or service.

MTTP may use segregated federal TANF funds to provide services and related activities that do not constitute “assistance” (as defined in 45 CFR 286.10) to individuals and family members who are not financially deprived, but who are in need of the kind of services that meet TANF purposes three (3) and four (4). Objective eligibility criteria will be established and applied for participation in these services and activities.

Unless the State instructs otherwise, the Morongo Tribal TANF Program may also use MOE funds to pay for non-assistance, pro-family activities for individuals or family members, regardless of financial need.

ELIGIBLE NEEDY FAMILIES

MTTP defines needy families as those families with a total family net income equal to or less than 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines (FPG) for the provision of any form of cash assistance or TANF funded support services and activities under as defined in this plan.

ELIGIBLE INDIAN/NATIVE AMERICAN FAMILY

MTTP defines an eligible Indian/Native American family as one comprised of all biological children, step-children, adopted children, and/or relative children (including non-Native Americans) under the age of 18 (up to age 19, if attending high school), living with an eligible adult(s) where at least one (1) family member is a Morongo Tribal member or descendant, a member or descendant of a federally recognized tribe, Alaska Native, or member or descendant of the California Judgment Roll.

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In addition, eligible Indian/Native American families must meet one of the following criteria:

- (a) Native/non-Native single-parent family with eligible child(ren) or expecting a child (individuals will become eligible for Tribal TANF assistance and/or services in the third month of pregnancy); or
- (b) Native/non-Native two-parent family with eligible child(ren); or
- (c) Native/non-Native needy caretaker relative with eligible child(ren); must be related by blood (no limit to the degree of relationship, blood, or customary adoption; any degree of kinship, including guardianship as determined by valid Morongo Tribal Court Order of Guardianship); or
- (d) Eligible Native American child(ren) residing with a non-needy caretaker relative; must be related by blood (no limit to the degree of relationship, blood, or customary adoption; any degree of kinship, including guardianship as determined by valid Morongo Tribal Court Order of Guardianship); or
- (e) Eligible Native American child(ren) residing with a timed-out parent or timed-out needy caretaker relative.

INCOME AND EARNINGS

California has one of the highest overall cost of living in the 50 states and exceeds the U.S. base cost of living index for groceries, housing, utilities, transportation and health costs¹. As a result, families making 200% of the Federal Poverty Level in California are in a worse economic position than a family with the same amount of income in most states. For MTTP to provide services with parity with other Tribal TANFs in other states, all eligible needy MTTP participants' net earned income will be counted in determining eligibility for cash assistance/services less the first \$500.00 plus 50% of each additional dollar of non-subsidized earned income up to the FPL limits. An additional \$250.00 of earned income by the second adult in a two-parent family will also be disregarded. Individuals who receive disability-based income will be entitled to the same disregard up to \$500.00.

All net earned income will be counted in determining the monthly TANF grant amount (less the first \$500.00 plus 50% of each additional dollar of non-subsidized earned income. An additional \$250.00 of earned income by the second adult in a two-parent family will also be disregarded. Individuals who receive disability-based income **or who receive universal basic income (UBI) payments** will be entitled to the same disregard up to \$500.00. Total income/earnings, including unearned income, will be subtracted from the grant amount and will not exceed the grant amount.

MTTP will exclude the first \$250.00 per child of monthly child support received from being counted as income in determining eligibility for cash assistance and in the calculation of the monthly grant amount. MTTP will exclude Indian Judgment Funds or any other disbursement that is not defined as income under federal law and will disregard income earned from temporary U.S. Census Bureau employment, subsidized employment income, and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds. Income earned by a dependent minor child in the Family Assistance Unit (FAU) will not be counted. MTTP will

¹ "Cost of Living Data Series", *Missouri Economic Research and Information Center*, <https://meric.mo.gov/data/cost-living-data-series>, accessed February 3, 2023.

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not count amounts received in the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), including federal EIC, state EIC, and additional child tax credit as income. All income tax refunds will be exempted for a period of twelve (12) months before being counted as an available resource. Child care expenses are not disregarded in the calculation of net income.

RESOURCES AND ASSETS

The available resource limit is \$10,000.00 per Family Assistance Unity (FAU.) MTTP will exclude up to two (2) operating vehicles per two-parent family (one (1) vehicle per adult), a primary home/residence, and land/homes located on an Indian reservation. All other assets (e.g., property, mineral rights, stocks, bank accounts, etc.) are considered available assets. MTTP may exempt an additional savings, up to \$5,000.00 per child, for youth participants saving for college (as defined in MTTP policies and procedures).

Any resources beyond the established limit will be considered available income to the family, including equity in other vehicles. Exceptions may be granted in special circumstances (e.g., inoperable vehicles, capital equipment used for employment purposes, burial accounts, retirement accounts, and/or other assets that are held in trust or have little or no discernible value).

TANF ASSISTANCE

MTTP will provide eligible needy Native American families monthly assistance, as defined at 45 CFR 286.10, in the form of cash, checks, vouchers, or other forms of benefits designed to meet a family's ongoing basic needs such as food, clothing, shelter, utilities, household goods, personal care items and general incidental expenses. Except where excluded by regulation, this includes supportive services such as child care and transportation assistance for those TANF recipients who are participating in work activities but are not employed. Annual cost of living adjustments may be applied to cash assistance payments, as funding permits (as defined in MTTP policies and procedures)

SUPPORT SERVICES

MTTP may provide eligible needy program participants in compliance with the following support services, as funding permits. All supportive services and program activities are tied to one or more of the purposes of TANF and promote self-sufficiency:

1. Vocational training, skills assessment, job readiness, job skills development, job retention, job advancement, and placement support.
2. Pregnancy prevention education, workshops, activities, and/or conferences that discuss teen pregnancy and related topics such as healthy relationships for youth up to age 19.
3. Youth support services and activities to support youth in developing positive life skills, leadership skills, education skills, cultural knowledge as well as to support youth in learning about job skills, job preparation and prevention (e.g., suicide, drug abuse).
4. Domestic violence services, including financial assistance, child care, transportation, temporary housing, counseling, educational assistance, and/or other appropriate support services outside the Family Violence Option (FVO) waiver.

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5. Referral, outreach, and assistance with costs of non-medical substance abuse services and mental health services to remove barrier(s) to employment and promote self-sufficiency.
6. Assistance with dental and vision services in the absence of any resources for these types of services to remove barriers(s) to employment and promote self-sufficiency.
7. Child care and transportation costs for participants engaged in approved TANF work/education activities.
8. Family formation support services, activities, education and incentives to support the formation and maintenance of two-parent families. These services and activities may include conferences, classes, workshops, and/or activities which focus on marriage, parenting (early parenting, motherhood, fatherhood), anger management, life skills, prevention education (suicide, substance abuse), financial management, health and wellness, family literacy, healthy relationships, peer support, and counseling and support groups (mental health, family/marital/individual counseling, substance abuse, domestic violence).
9. Any justifiable job related and/or educational cost(s) for participants cooperating with MTTP work/education participation requirements. This includes books, uniforms, tuition, fees, educational supplies, employment supplies, and clothing allowances.
10. Educational activities designed to increase self-sufficiency (excluding any expense for public education).
11. Non-paid job training and work experience (e.g., computer proficiency courses); incentives may be provided for meeting milestones or goals outlined in the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP).
12. Culturally relevant support services/activities which promote self-sufficiency by strengthening community involvement, foster knowledge of culture and tradition, encourage family formation, build social support networks and/or potential employment networks, and increase utilization of Native community resources.
13. Payment of up to \$3,000.00 per adult toward educational loans that are in default.
14. Payment of up to \$3,500.00 per adult toward traffic fines and associated fees in order to obtain/retain driver's license (limited to non-felony related incidents) for the purpose of removing barrier(s) to employment.
15. Payment of up to \$3,000.00 per lifetime toward removing the barrier to transportation as follows: vehicle registration, auto insurance, car payment, and/or payment of parking fines for the purpose of removing barriers to employment, education, job preparation, and/or job training.
16. Family maintenance/preservation services; short-term, family-focused services designed to assist families in coping with significant stresses or problems that may interfere with the ability to nurture children and/or become self-sufficient (e.g., family counseling, bereavement).
17. Work subsidies (i.e., payments to employers or third parties to help recover the cost of employee wages, benefits, supervision and training), as specified in 45 CFR 286.10 (b)(2).
18. Year-round subsidized youth employment intended for youth ages 14 through 19, if attending high school; goals include opportunities to develop job skills and work experience. The subsidy rate will be 100% of wages and fringe benefits; employment opportunities may include off-reservation employers, Tribal and/or enterprise employers, and/or onsite job placement/training.
19. Vocational training, apprenticeship, and/or professional trade education at a public school such as a community college or vocational school for youth and adults.
20. MTTP may work with Child Protective Services and/or Morongo Social Services to assist with family reunification by providing TANF assistance and supportive services to the parent(s) even when the child(ren) has been removed from the home for a period not to exceed six (6) months

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provided they are in compliance with a court and/or Morongo Social Services approved reunification plan and MTTP work participation requirements.

21. Tutoring services and/or assistance with the costs of tutoring and/or after school programs.
22. Transitional services for youth are to engage children in families that have either reached the 60 month time limit or are no longer eligible for TANF assistance due to a mix of earned/unearned income. This may include continued participation in youth programs and activities. Youth aged 16 years and older with a Personal Responsibility Plan may qualify for transitional services offered to transitional adult participants.
23. Job skills training, educational opportunities, and work readiness activities for the non-needy caretaker case type to the extent such activities contribute to the stability and betterment of the child(ren)'s home environment.
24. Assistance with vehicle repair, including parts and labor, may be provided for the purpose of removing barrier(s) to employment.

“OTHER” ELIGIBLE

“Other” eligible families for whom “at-risk” criteria have been established may be eligible to participate in some Purpose 3 and 4 activities focused on culturally relevant activities that advance the prevention of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, encourage and foster the formation of two-parent families, and support family strengthening and maintenance.

“Other” eligible applicants/participants must be members of the approved service population, must reside in the approved service area, and are required to complete drug and alcohol testing and a limited background check.

The following “at-risk” criteria will be utilized to determine “other” eligibility for Native American individuals and families who may benefit from participation in select activities under Purposes 3 and 4. At least two (2) of these factors must be present for families for participating in Purpose 3 and 4 activities and/or services:

- Lived on a reservation
- Residing in a documented high crime rate area
- Family with an absent parent (single parent)
- Parent(s) who are not high school graduates
- Have a negative self-perception and/or low self-esteem
- Homelessness and/or housing issues
- Previous involvement in the juvenile justice system
- Living in under-performing school districts
- Native child living with a caretaker relative
- Youth with low academic skills
- Parent(s)/Guardian(s) with substance abuse issues

ACTIVITIES UNDER TANF PURPOSES 3 AND 4

MTTP may provide TANF Purpose 3 and 4 activities and support services to both eligible needy families and to “other” eligible families who meet the criteria outlined in the plan for eligibility for receipt of such services. Purpose 3 and 4 activities and support services may include participant incentives. MTTP Purpose 3 and 4 support services and activities include:

1. Tribal cultural and traditionally relevant support services and activities such as educational classes, workshops, traditional food gathering activities and nutrition, and talking circles, which are designed to foster and build community connection; foster knowledge and understanding of cultural traditions; contribute to the building of social support networks; and contribute to strengthening family formation.
2. Educational classes, workshops, and training activities and programs focused on teen pregnancy prevention; self-esteem and healthy relationship development; and the development of decision making skills for youth and teens.
3. Healthy marriage workshops, positive parenting classes, domestic violence and anger management classes and awareness activities, health education classes, prevention classes, counseling and responsible/healthy lifestyle choice classes to support and foster positive family formation, family stability, and maintenance.
4. Youth services and activities including vocational, career, and education development, mentoring, tutoring, stress relief strategies, life skills and other services designed to reduce the need for government based income.

ELIGIBLE FAMILIES MOVING INTO THE SERVICE AREA

Eligible Native American families moving into the service area will receive the same amount of cash assistance and/or support services as all other eligible program participants.

TRANSITIONAL ASSISTANCE

MTTP may provide transitional services to families who are no longer eligible for TANF assistance due to employment and earned/unearned income. Provision of these services is not to exceed 24 months and is intended to assist families transition off TANF and become self-sufficient. Services may include child care, transportation and work-related support such as professional licensing fees, uniforms and tools. Families who exceed the established Federal Poverty Guideline threshold in a benefit month will not be eligible for services in that benefit month; families who exceed the established Federal Poverty Guideline threshold for two consecutive benefit months will have their cases closed.

Transitional services for youth may include continued participation in youth programs and activities. Youth aged 16 years and older with a Personal Responsibility Plan may qualify for transitional services offered to transitional adult participants.

DIVERSION ASSISTANCE

MTTP may provide diversion assistance to families at risk of TANF dependence not to exceed a lifetime limit of \$5,000.00. Diversion services include cash payments and/or services provided to families who 1) are not currently TANF recipients; 2) are at risk of becoming dependent on TANF; and 3) are in need of

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a one-time or limited benefit(s) to help them avoid becoming dependent on TANF. Referrals to other community resources and nonprofit agencies (e.g., food pantries, United Way) will be offered in conjunction with diversion services to support families' efforts to avoid becoming dependent on TANF.

NON-RECURRING SHORT TERM BENEFITS

For Program Participants

Non-recurring short-term benefits may be provided to eligible needy participant families to meet extraordinary needs that may arise from a crisis situation or an episode of need beyond those intended to be covered by regularly monthly assistance and/or supportive services. Non-recurring short-term benefits are subject to limitations, as specified in MTTP policies and procedures. As provided through 45 CFR 286.10 (b)(1), non-recurring short-term benefits must meet the following criteria:

1. Designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;
2. Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and
3. Will not extend beyond four (4) months from the start of the crisis situation.

Non-recurring short-term benefits may include temporary hotel accommodations, evacuation transportation, household goods, utilities, and the purchase of food and/or clothing.

For Emergency Cases

Non-recurring short term emergency benefits may be provided to families that have experienced a crisis, such as a natural disaster (e.g., wildfire, pandemic). Total family net income must be equal to or less than 300% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines to be eligible.

Per 45 CFR 286.10 (b)(1), non-recurring short-term benefits are:

1. Designed to deal with a specific crisis situation or episode of need;
2. Are not intended to meet recurrent or ongoing needs; and
3. Will not extend beyond four (4) months.

These benefits may include emergency housing, household goods, emergency food, utilities, and clothing and will be capped at a maximum of \$5,000.00 per lifetime. All other resources must be exhausted or not available.

INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT ACCOUNT PROGRAM

MTTP elects to operate an Individual Development Account (IDA) program. It will use Federal TANF funds to fund IDAs for individuals who are eligible for TANF assistance and will exercise flexibility within the limits of Federal regulation and the statute, as funding permits.

The following restrictions apply to IDA funds:

1. A recipient may deposit only earned income into an IDA. Earned income is defined as money derived from paid work.
2. A recipient's contribution to an IDA may be matched by MTTP.

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3. A recipient may withdraw funds only for the following reasons:
 - a. To cover post-secondary education expenses if the amount is paid directly to an eligible education institution.
 - b. For the recipient to purchase a first home if the amount is paid directly to the person to whom the amounts are due, and it is a qualified acquisition cost for a qualified principal residence by a qualified first-time buyer.
 - c. For business capitalization, if the amounts are paid directly to a business capitalization account in a federally insured financial institution and use for a qualified business capitalization expense.
4. To prevent recipients from improperly withdrawing funds in an IDA, MTTP will:
 - a. Report withdrawals as earned income in a month of withdrawal, unless already counted as income.
 - b. Report withdrawals as resources in determining eligibility for MTTP.
 - c. Take other steps as MTTP deems necessary to ensure compliance with laws governing IDAs.

COORDINATION WITH OTHER PROGRAMS

MTTP will coordinate with other service providers to assist applicants and program participants in obtaining information and referral services to related community resources (e.g., mental health, domestic violence, and housing). MTTP may coordinate with the state, county, local high schools, community colleges, universities, and local Native American programs for educational needs and to enhance job opportunities.

MTTP support services may be provided through a variety of methods, including direct provision of services by MTTP and/or through agreements with other TANF organizations, local community organizations, Tribal service providers, county/local governments, welfare related agencies, school districts, and other private contractors where feasible and reasonable services may be obtained.

CHILD CARE

MTTP will provide childcare funding or services to eligible families participating in approved work/education activities and any other requirements set forth in the participant's Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). Child care is a major barrier to employability; services may be provided by contracted state-licensed or license-exempt child care providers (e.g., approved family members). All child care providers, including license-exempt providers, will be required to adhere to MTTP child care policies and procedures.

MTTP defines appropriate child care as contracted state-licensed providers, license-exempt providers or approved family members. Unsuitable informal child care is defined as any child care provider (e.g., family member, relative, or non-relative) who refuses to adhere to MTTP child care requirements and procedures (as outlined in MTTP policies and procedures). Per the regulations at 45 CFR Part 286.150, MTTP will not penalize a single custodial parent caring for a child under the age of six (6) that demonstrates an inability to obtain appropriate child care. This exception does not extend the time limit for receiving Federal assistance.

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Affordable child care is determined based on fair market rates charged by comparable child care providers in the service area. Reasonable distance shall be determined on a case-by-case basis, taking into consideration the availability of child care providers near the family's home, work, and school locations. MTTP transitional child care assistance may continue up to 24 months for those families moving off TANF due to a combination of earned/unearned income that exceeds TANF benefit allocations.

Funding for child care may continue up to 24 months for children in timed-out families where assistance is extended to the children in the family using State MOE. The adult in the timed-out family unit must be employed.

NON-DUPLICATION OF SERVICES

Applicants are required to sign the MTTP Application for Services, certifying that neither they nor any other family member in the FAU is receiving TANF assistance from any other Tribal TANF or State TANF program. Information is verified with other TANF programs to prevent duplication of TANF assistance and/or services. Names and social security numbers of all family members will be shared with county welfare offices before approving an MTTP application to avoid duplication of services and to verify time on aid.

Annual recertification will be required for all active cases. Applicant(s)/Participant(s) are also required to verify information on a monthly basis to ensure continued compliance and identify potential changes within the household that may affect eligibility.

ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

Riverside and San Bernardino counties are collectively known as the Inland Empire. The largest industries in Riverside County are retail, health care and social assistance, and construction,² while the largest industries in San Bernardino County are health care and social assistance, retail, and transportation and warehousing.³

According to the State of California Employment Development Department (EDD), the unemployment rate in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties was 3.9%, compared to a rate of 3.8% for the state and 3.4% for the country.⁴ However, the Inland Empire has recovered the jobs it lost during the pandemic, the national surge in e-commerce has boosted this industry's services, including transportation and warehousing, and wage growth is four times that of the state.⁵

² "Riverside County, CA", *Data USA*, www.datausa.io/profile/geo/riverside-county-ca, accessed December 1, 2022.

³ "San Bernardino County, CA", *Data USA*, www.datausa.io/profile/geo/san-bernardino-county-ca, accessed December 1, 2022.

⁴ Frances Gines, "Riverside-San Bernardino-Ontario Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) (Riverside and San Bernardino Counties) Nonfarm employment", *State of California Employment Development Department Labor Market Information Division*, November 18, 2022, [www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/rive\\$pd.pdf](http://www.labormarketinfo.edd.ca.gov/file/lfmonth/rive$pd.pdf), accessed December 1, 2022.

⁵ Victoria Pike Bond, "Pandemic left behind, the Inland Empire economy flourished in 2022", *University of Riverside*, December 21, 2022, <http://news.ucr.edu/articles/2022/12/21/pandemic-left-behind-inland-empire-economy-flourished-2022>, accessed December 23, 2022.

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Riverside County

The Morongo Tribe is located in a rural area of Riverside County. There are long distances between the Morongo Reservation and surrounding cities and community members are dispersed widely on the reservation. The geographic isolation, rural environment and limited public transportation options create barriers to accessing off-reservation jobs and employment sites. On reservation land, MBMI provides some employment opportunities at the gaming casino and at Tribal enterprises. The Riverside-San Bernardino Indian Health, Inc. on the reservation also offers some employment opportunities, but most positions require a high level of education, skills, and specialization. A large outlet mall located near the Morongo Reservation provides additional retail employment opportunities, provided the individual seeking employment has reliable transportation and necessary skills. Although there are other work opportunities in the area along with more virtual jobs being available, many TANF program participants lack adequate training, access to transportation, or have other barriers to resolve before they are able to seek training or employment.

San Bernardino County

The County of San Bernardino is the largest county in the contiguous United States and includes many isolated and rural communities. Due to the county's considerable size, the distances between cities/towns can be vast. Employment opportunities, public transportation, and access to resources is limited. The more urban areas offer additional opportunities, but the cost of living is higher. Families with low wage jobs are not able to become economically stable or access the education and training necessary to obtain higher paying jobs.

The Inland Empire 2021-2024 Regional Workforce Development Plan notes there is a gap between the needs of the fastest growing occupations in the area (material moving workers, healthcare aides, construction trade workers, information and record clerks, TK-12 and special education teachers, and business operations specialists) and the area's workforce. The jobs available to persons with a high school diploma or less are low wage occupations; higher-wage jobs require at least an associate's degree.⁶

MTTP will work in collaboration with local employers to develop employment opportunities for eligible participants. MTTP will establish, develop, and maintain relationships with nearby industries and businesses to provide work experience, training, and subsidized/unsubsidized employment opportunities. MTTP will work with participants to prepare them for positions available within the industries specific to the area. MTTP will address and resolve the deficiency in employable skills through trainings, education, employment assessments, referrals, and job placement in ways that promote self-sufficiency and support traditional Native American customs.

TRIBAL WORK ACTIVITIES

MTTP approved work activities include:

⁶ "Inland Empire 2021-2024 Regional Workforce Development Plan", *Inland Empire Regional Planning Unit, San Bernardino County Workforce Development Board/Riverside County Workforce Development Board*, <http://wp.sbcounty.gov/workforce/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2021/08/IE-Regional-Plan-FINAL.pdf>, accessed December 4, 2022.

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1. Unsubsidized/subsidized Tribal employment.
2. Unsubsidized/subsidized private or public employment.
3. Participation in a “NEW” (Native Employment Works) activity.
4. Work experience.
5. On-the-job training or job shadowing.
6. Job search/job readiness assistance and basic skills development within the limitations specified at 45 CFR 286.105(b) and (c).
7. Community service as approved by the MTTP.
8. Post-secondary education/vocational educational training.
9. Job skill training directly related to employment.
10. Education/training directly related to employment.
11. Satisfactory attendance in secondary school or in a course of study leading to a GED for a participant who has not completed secondary school or received such a certificate.
12. Provision of child care services for child(ren) of another MTTP participant who is engaged in approved work/education activities.
13. Entrepreneurship/small business development training.
14. Life skills training/education, including financial management, health and hygiene, family wellness, and other skills that contribute to readiness for employment, with ongoing assessment of progress.
15. Culturally relevant work activities designed to increase self-sufficiency, including activities that result in products or services which may be sold to provide income or those activities that increase skills applicable to employment.
16. Participation in mental health counseling, domestic violence counseling, and/or substance abuse/chemical dependency treatment with ongoing assessment of progress as an activity to remove barriers to self-sufficiency and promote family formation.
17. Driver education services which teach participants to drive an automobile or obtain a driver license.
18. Community economic and job development activities as approved by the Administration of Children and Families (ACF).

Reasonable travel time from a participant’s home to/from assigned work/training/education sites and to/from child care providers will be counted toward the participant's work activities requirement. MTTP defines “reasonable travel time” as the exact time it takes the individual to travel, not to exceed three (3) hours daily. Travel time is counted towards meeting the work requirement because the service area is in geographically isolated and rural areas, requiring travel of extended distances between locations of work/training/education sites, child care providers, and residences. Therefore, authorizing travel time to count towards the work requirement allows participants to secure training and work opportunities that would otherwise be impractical to accept due to logistical barriers.

In accordance with 45 CFR 286.110, participants receiving income from subsidized employment will not fill a position that would or has displaced other workers. MTTP has established policy and procedures for displacement to prevent violation of federal regulation and to address grievances; this policy is incorporated in all subsidized employment agreements and memorandums of understanding.

MANDATORY WORK REQUIREMENTS

The work participation requirements will apply to families that receive TANF assistance that include an adult or minor head of household receiving such assistance. In accordance with 45 CFR 286.80 (b)(1) and (2) MTTP agrees to satisfy the following minimum participation rates as established by MTTP:

Tribal Work Participation Rates **March 1, 2023 – February 28, 2026**

All Families:

<u>Fiscal Year(s)</u>	<u>Minimum Participation Rate</u>
2023	33%
2024	33%
2025	33%
2026	33%

Weekly Work Participation Requirements **March 1, 2023 – February 28, 2026**

Single Parent/Needy Caretaker Family:

<u>Fiscal Year(s)</u>	<u>Minimum Number Hours/Week</u>
2023-2026	24

Two-Parent Family:

<u>Fiscal Year(s)</u>	<u>Minimum Number Hours/Week</u>
2023-2026	34

In the case of two-parent families, at least one (1) parent will be required to participate in a work activity for the minimum hours per week specified, or they may elect to combine the work activity hours of both parents to meet the minimum requirement. Each adult will complete a PRP to identify barriers to employment and establish goals. Required activities will be assigned, and failure to comply will result in sanctions and/or case closure (as defined in MTTP policies and procedures).

LIMITATIONS AND SPECIAL RULES

An individual is considered to be engaged in work/training/education by virtue of participating in any approved work/training/education activity specified in this plan. MTTP shall consider participation of an individual in a job search and/or job readiness activity for a minimum of three (3) days per week to be considered a full week of participation by that individual. Per 45 CFR 286.105, a participant's job search and/or job readiness activity may only count toward fulfilling work/training/education requirements for a total of six (6) weeks in any fiscal year, and if the Tribe's unemployment rate in the Tribal TANF service area is at least 50% greater than the national average unemployment rate for that fiscal year, then an individual's participation in a job search/job readiness activity will count for up to 12 weeks in that fiscal year. If the job search and/or job readiness activity is an ancillary part of another activity, then there is no limitation on counting the time.

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A single parent with a child under one (1) year of age shall be exempt from any work participation requirements for a maximum of 12 months (or until the child reaches the age of one (1)). A teen head of household who maintains satisfactory school attendance (high school, GED, or college) will be considered to be meeting work participation requirements.

Upon certification by a Case Advocate and approval of the MTTP Authorized Official, participants who are victims of domestic violence (DV) may be exempt from work participation hours up to a maximum of three (3) months. Domestic violence victims may be exempt from cash assistance overpayments (up to three months) while living at a woman's/victim's shelter, established on a case-by-case basis. In addition, a domestic violence exemption from work participation may be extended beyond three (3) months in cases where participation would: 1) put the DV victim or their children at further risk; 2) make it more difficult for the individual to escape the DV situation; or 3) unfairly penalize those who are or have been victims of domestic violence.

An adult participating in an inpatient substance abuse/mental health rehabilitation program (when placement includes children) may be exempt from work participation, up to a period of three (3) months.

A single parent caring for a child with special medical needs may be exempt from work participation requirements for a period of time deemed appropriate by a physician, with no limitation of the age of the child. This exception will be established on a case-by-case basis.

TIME LIMITS

MTTP shall limit the time an eligible needy family may receive assistance to a maximum of 60 months lifetime, whether consecutive or cumulative. When an eligible needy family reaches the 60-month time limit, without an approved hardship exemption, federal cash assistance to the family will cease. Timed-out families may still be eligible to receive federally funded non-assistance support services.

MTTP will count all prior months of assistance funded by TANF block grant funds received from any Tribe or state toward the 60-month time limit, except for any month that was exempt or disregarded by statute, regulation, or under any experimental, pilot, or demonstration project approved under section 1115 of the Social Security Act.

MTTP will not count assistance received from another Tribal/state program toward the 60-month time limit, if the recipient lived on an Indian reservation or Alaskan Native Village in which at least 50% of the adults living there were not employed during the time of eligibility for assistance. MTTP will not count any month of assistance to a family that does not include an adult or minor head of household.

Once a family is ineligible to receive federally funded TANF assistance due to the federal time limit, MTTP may continue to provide assistance to the eligible children of timed-out adults using State Maintenance of Effort (MOE) funds provided to MTTP by the State of California, if the funds are available. A family receiving extended assistance through State MOE funds may be eligible for federally funded non-assistance supportive services and must meet the same financial eligibility standards applicable to all other eligible families as defined by MTTP.

HARDSHIP EXEMPTIONS

Hardship exemptions may be considered when conditions hinder or inhibit an individual's ability to maintain work or enter into work activities, thus requiring exceptions to the 60-month time limit on a case-by-case basis. Hardship exemptions are approved by the TANF Site Manager, TANF Executive Director, or other TANF Authorized Official, on a case-by-case basis and will be reevaluated monthly. MTTP may exempt up to 20% of the TANF caseload from applicable time on aid limits based upon hardship.

MTTP will consider exemptions from the 60-month time limit in the following categories of hardship:

1. Individuals with cognitive, physical, and/or mental disabilities (including medical conditions) resulting in limited education, job skills attainment, and/or ability to secure and retain employment (documented by a physician or other medical professional).
2. Single parents with four (4) or more children under the age of 12.
3. Adults responsible for the full-time care of an elderly (age 55+) or disabled relative (as established and documented by a physician or medical professional).
4. Victims of domestic violence.
5. Individuals who have been impacted by a natural disaster for a period not to exceed eight (8) months.
6. Cases in which one (1) parent in a two-parent family is temporarily incapacitated by illness or disability (as documented by a physician or other medical professional) and must be cared for by the other parent full time; not to exceed 12 months.
7. Cases where an individual has reached the 59th month of the Federal Time Limit and will receive a certificate or diploma within six months or has enrolled in a training or apprenticeship program resulting in job placement within six months. This exemption will be in place until the individual completes the certificate/diploma/training.
8. Cases experiencing a housing crisis not to exceed three (3) months.
9. Cases where time limit termination of benefits would likely result in a child(ren) being placed into emergency shelter or foster care not to exceed three (3) months.

PENALTIES AGAINST INDIVIDUALS

If a parent/needy caretaker relative in a family receiving TANF assistance refuses to engage in required work and/or educational activities, in the absence of good cause, MTTP may reduce and/or terminate cash assistance and/or place the family on a vendor pay system covering basic needs, only until such time that the parent/needy caretaker relative resumes work requirements.

MTTP will not reduce or terminate assistance if a single custodial parent caring for a child under the age of six (6) refuses to engage in required work due to a demonstrated inability to obtain child care for the following reasons: 1) unavailability of appropriate child care with a reasonable distance from home or work site; 2) informal child care by a relative or under other arrangements is unavailable or unsuitable; 3) appropriate and/or affordable formal child care arrangements are unavailable. "Appropriate child care", "affordable child care", and "reasonable distance" are defined under the "Child Care" section of this plan.

TANF participants who fail to participate in required MTTP activities, work and/or education activities will be subject to sanctions. Sanctions will be applied for non-compliance as outlined in MTTP policies

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and procedures. After the third sanction is applied in a 12-month period, the case will be closed, and the participant will be eligible to reapply for MTTP services after a three (3) month waiting period. If the participant's case closes, either voluntarily or involuntarily, and the participant returns to the program, they will resume assistance at the prior sanction level. Intentional Program Violations (IPV), including fraud, may result in additional penalties, including recoupment/repayment of benefits. When instances of fraud are suspected, MTTP will investigate and decide whether to deny, reduce, or terminate assistance and/or services according to MTTP policies and procedures. Findings of fraud may be shared with County/State partners as a part of the mutual agreement to disclose information pertaining to TANF eligibility.

APPEAL PROCESS

MTTP will advise applicants/participants during the application process verbally and in writing of their right to appeal any adverse action by MTTP to deny, reduce, suspend, or terminate assistance services. Participants who are appealing an adverse action (i.e., sanction) may be placed on a vendor pay system. Participants on the vendor pay system may also receive vouchers/checks/pre-paid cards for necessities such as food, shelter, household goods, and personal care items. MTTP will provide all participants written notice ten (10) business days before the onset of action (e.g., penalties, case closure). Participants will also be informed in writing of the process by which they may appeal the adverse action. MTTP will use the following dispute resolution process when resolving d:

1. The participant may appeal in writing to the Site Manager his/her objection to the adverse action within ten (10) business days of the Notice of Action (NOA).
2. The Site Manager will respond with a decision within ten (10) business days of receipt of the written appeal. The participant may appeal this decision in writing to the MTTP Executive Director within another ten (10) business days.
3. The MTTP Executive Director will review the documentation and provide a decision to the participant in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the second written appeal. The participant may appeal the MTTP Executive Director's decision in writing within ten (10) business days to the Morongo Social Services Executive Director.
4. The Morongo Social Services Executive Director will review the documentation and provide a decision to the participant in writing within ten (10) business days of receipt of the third written appeal. The participant can appeal the latter decision in writing within ten (10) business days to the MTTP Appeals Committee.
5. The MTTP Appeals Committee will respond to the participant with a decision within 30 calendar days of the fourth written appeal. The committee's decision is final.

GOOD CAUSE

MTTP may temporarily exempt program participants from fulfilling work participation requirements, and/or resulting work participation sanctions, if the participant can demonstrate "good cause." Good cause is a temporary condition or circumstance that significantly hinders an individual's ability to fulfill the weekly work participation requirement on a temporary basis. It is the responsibility of the participant to provide written verification supporting the claim of good cause; exemptions will be reviewed on a monthly basis. Acceptable examples of good cause include:

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1. Temporary lack of appropriate child care (as defined in this plan).
2. Jury duty verified by appropriate documentation.
3. Temporary lack of transportation.
4. Mental or physical illness of the participant or their dependent child (established and documented by a qualified professional), until resolved.
5. Required court appearances that conflict with scheduled work activities and/or education, until resolved.
6. Extreme weather conditions such as flood, heavy snow, wildfire or other extreme acts of nature, until resolved.
7. Cases in which an eligible participant adult must provide full time care to a partner/spouse or immediate family member with a serious health problem (established and documented by a qualified professional), limited to 12 weeks in a 12 month period.
8. Participants whose individual circumstances are considered extraordinary and beyond their personal control, such as a temporary family crisis or tragedy, for a period of time determined and approved by the TANF Site Manager, MTTP Executive Director, or other TANF Authorized Official, on a case-by-case basis.

TRIBAL OPTIONS

The following Tribal Options apply to eligible needy participants meeting the criteria as outlined in this plan; services may be provided as funding permits.

1. MTTP will require all school age children to attend school full time with regular attendance; verification of enrollment and current status is required. Cash assistance and/or services will be reduced until the child returns to school and attends regularly.
2. MTTP will deny/terminate TANF assistance and services for applicants/participants who commit fraud to collect cash aid and/or support services or are found guilty of welfare fraud in a court of law, for a maximum of three (3) years.
3. MTTP will require current immunization verification of all children aged six (6) years and under in the household; medical exemptions may be granted.
4. MTTP will exempt parent(s) or needy caretaker relative age 55 years or older from work participation requirements. MTTP considers persons reaching age 55 to be an elder in the Native American community and deserving of deferential treatment. Elders will be provided the same case management and support as with other cases.
5. No family cap.
6. No deprivation requirement.
7. MTTP will continue to provide cash assistance while parent(s) or needy caretaker relative is participating in substance abuse treatment program for a maximum of 90 days (when placement includes children).
8. MTTP may provide school age participants (grades TK-12) with educational incentives such as good grade incentives. Educational incentive limits and/or allowances are subject to availability of funds; specific guidelines and incentive parameters are outlined in MTTP policies and procedures. Good grade incentives may take the form of check, voucher or gift card and will not exceed two (2) semesters per school year nor exceed \$1,200.00 per student annually. Additional incentives may be provided for participation or academic achievement (e.g., perfect attendance), as funds permit.

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9. Eligible participants who complete high school or earn a GED while on the program will receive an incentive in an amount not to exceed \$1,000.00. TANF participants may also be eligible to receive incentive awards for higher education degrees and/or certifications (as defined in MTTP policies and procedures).
10. MTTP may provide school age participants (grades TK-12) with clothing incentives or allowances. Clothing incentives are to be used for books, school supplies, clothing, and personal care items. Specific guidelines and incentive parameters are outlined in MTTP policies and procedures. Incentives may take the form of check, voucher or gift card; not to exceed \$1,000.00 per child annually, as funds permit.
11. MTTP will require youth to participate in academic and prevention activities to encourage academic achievement and to increase the rate of high school graduation and college attendance. Youth participants who successfully complete this requirement may qualify to participate in educational field trips, conferences, workshops, youth leadership activities, and receive incentives applicable to the activity.
12. All MTTP applicants/participants (both eligible needy families and “other” eligible) are required to complete drug and alcohol testing, including non-needy caretaker relatives. Alcohol and drug screenings will be completed at intake and/or random intervals for cause; random substance abuse tests will be unannounced. A positive test will require participants to be assessed and possibly referred for counseling/rehabilitation (as defined in MTTP policies and procedures). Eligible needy families may be provided services through a vendor pay system or protective payee, and/or benefits may be denied, reduced, or terminated until the participant(s) complies with their PRP and program requirements.
13. MTTP will deny/terminate services to convicted or registered sex offenders. Any applicant and/or MTTP participant that has been convicted of a non-sex related crime on a child will be required to attend and successfully complete treatment programs as indicated in their PRP.
14. A single parent with a child under one (1) year of age may claim exemption from fulfilling work/education participation requirements for 12 months. This exemption may be used in partial increments for multiple children as long as it does not exceed the 12-month lifetime limit.
15. A pregnant Native American woman with no other eligible children may be eligible for cash assistance, payable only for her needs, beginning in the third month of pregnancy.
16. Caretaker relatives who have children placed in their homes may have separate open cases for each child.

MANDATED REPORTING AND CONFIDENTIALITY ASSURANCE

MTTP will require all staff to participate in and complete annual Mandated Reporting training and complete mandatory reporting requirements.

MTTP is committed to protecting the personal information of families receiving Tribal TANF program services. MTTP staff are required to sign a Confidentiality Assurance form acknowledging their understanding and commitment to a participant’s right to complete and full confidentiality, and that violation of a participant’s confidentiality may result in the staff member’s immediate termination.

FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY

For each year in which the Morongo Band of Mission Indians receives or expends TANF funds the Tribe will comply with the fiscal accountability provision of section 5(f)(1) of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act 25 U.S.C. 450(c)(f)(1), relating to the submission of a single agency audit report required by Chapter 75 of Title 31, U.S. Code.

DATA COLLECTION AND REPORTING

MTTP will comply with all federal statutory and regulatory requirements relating to data collection and reporting pertinent to the Tribal TANF program.

RETROCESSION

In the event that MBMI elects to retrocede this Tribal TANF program, the Morongo Tribe will comply with all statutory and regulatory requirements pertaining to retrocession as outlined in 45 CFR Part 286.30 and the Social Security Act.

It is the intent of MTTP to provide assistance and services to eligible families in a fair and equitable method.