

**Fact Sheet:**

# Gap in Service

A *Gap in Service* prevents an unintentional exit from taking place in one of three scenarios:

1. Delay before beginning of training
2. Health/medical reason or Family care
3. Temporary move from the area

After 90 days of inactivity, a participant would be considered as exited from the program unless an allowable gap in service had been documented. The gap in service stops the “90-day clock.”

**A Gap in Service is dependent on the participant's intent to continue services.** If the participant has no intention of continuing services, then an exit is more appropriate. The utility of the gap is based on the individual's intent to continue participation once the situation changes.

**A Gap in Service is optional.** This is an area of grantee flexibility and, as such, is a judgment call to some extent; sometimes it's simply more appropriate to exit the individual. For instance, an individual may be a Reserve member called to active duty. Although a gap in service is possible (i.e., temporary move from the area), “reservist called to active duty” is an allowable exclusion. In other words, individuals may be exited for this reason with no performance-related implications. A gap in service, on the other hand, requires additional “administrative” activities, so to speak.

**A Gap in Service must be documented.** At a minimum, grantees should document the rationale in the participant case file and/or management information system – specifically – which of the three allowable circumstances has occurred, the beginning date of the gap in service and the expected end date. The length of the gap in service should reflect the time needed to take care of the circumstances preventing grant participation within specific parameters as noted below.

**A Gap in Service cannot exceed 180 days.** This qualification is noted in federal policy, although the policy also clarifies that an *additional gap* of up to 180 days is possible (if, for instance, the circumstances are still preventing grant participation).

**A Gap in Service requires periodic contact.** At a minimum, grantees should be in periodic contact with the individual to ensure the situation has not changed. It would also be recommended to log those contacts in the participant case file and/or management information system.

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Scenario #1 – A grant program participant has a health issue that will preclude further participation for at least 90 days. *What do you do?* The first question is always whether the individual intends to continue with the program. Based on the answer, a gap in service might be appropriate although an alternative is exiting the individual (i.e., health/medical reason is an allowable exclusion).

Scenario #2 – A grant program participant was on a gap in service for an allowable circumstance and, although they originally intended to continue participation, they later changed their mind. *What happens now?* Well, then you have an exit, with the exit date applied retroactively to the last of service. (For instance, if an individual was on a gap in service of 120 days and, at the 100<sup>th</sup> day, decided not to continue, the exit date would be 100 days prior – i.e., still the last date of service.)

Scenario #3 – A grant program participant finishes one class, disappears and then resurfaces later to attend another class. Since there is a “delay before the beginning of training,” *can a gap in service be utilized for the time in between?* Generally, an exit would be more appropriate in this scenario because the delay before training was due to the individual and not the training schedule.

Scenario #4 – A grant program participant takes classes during the spring semester and then goes on summer break. This is a gap in service and not an exit since the participant intends to continue services when classes resume in the fall and the break in service is planned.

Scenario #5 – A delay before the beginning of training can be applied to an individual who must wait an extended period of time before a class is offered. For example, a student begins a class in September 2008 and subsequently fails the class in April 2009. The next new class does not begin until September 2009. Although this break would be more than 90 days, this would be considered a gap in service since the individual intends to continue participating in training but must wait until the next new class is offered in September 2009.