



North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Division of Social Services

325 North Salisbury Street • 2420 Mail Service Center
Raleigh, North Carolina 27699-2420
Courier # 56-20-25

Beverly Eaves Perdue, Governor
Lanier M. Cansler, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director
(919) 733-3055

March 11, 2009

DEAR COUNTY DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES:

ATTENTION: Work First Program Administrators, Supervisors, and Staff

SUBJECT: TANF State Plan for the 2010-2011 Biennium

The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) State Plan for the 2010-2011 biennium is available for public comment effective March 12, 2009. The 45-day public comment period will end April 27, 2009. It is important to note that each county Department of Social Services (DSS) maintains a copy of this plan, which has been attached, for public viewing. In addition, interested citizens can view a copy of the plan at <http://www.ncdhhs.gov/dss/pubnotice/index.htm> and forward comments to Work.First@ncmail.net.

Minor changes in the TANF State Plan have been incorporated to bring North Carolina's plan in compliance with the federal Final Rule that resulted from the Deficit Reduction Act (DRA) of 2005 and to correspond with the state's approved Work Verification Plan. Some changes reflect updated language and grammar, and clarifications to existing policy. For example, all references to Area Mental Health have been changed to Local Management Entities.

Language has been added in the State Plan regarding Title VI and American for Disabilities Act requirements that counties must adhere to in their Work First programs.

Other notable changes include:

- Removal of the requirement for Standard Counties to submit written biennial county plans,
- Redefining the Work First Goals and Measures,
- Removal of the term "First Stop" and clarification of the role of the Employment Security Commission with Work First recipients,
- Clarification of requirements for Mutual Responsibility Agreements,
- Elimination of the 35-hour work participation requirements for single-parents and including the federal requirements of an average of 20-hours per week for a single parent with a child under the age of six (30 hours for a single parent with a child age six or over,)
- Inclusion of federal definitions for Work Eligible Individuals and work activities that count in the federal work participation rates,
- Inclusion of a job-quit policy,
- Clarification that SSI and SSDI are not to be counted as income in determining eligibility for Work First (this applies to both Standard and Electing Counties,)

- Inclusion of an allowance for Job Bonus more than once in a lifetime,
- Clarification on the use of Benefit Diversion based on federal requirements,
- Inclusion of a Work First Benefits payment process whereby both single parents and two-parent families, unless exempt, submit their documentation of hours of countable work activities at the beginning of the month following the month of those activities. If they are in compliance with their Mutual Responsibility (MRA), the county will release their cash assistance for that month. Good cause for not meeting the required hours is defined.

Other changes include the re-designation of two (2) counties. Cumberland County has proposed to operate as an electing county, while McDowell County has proposed to operate as a standard county. It is imperative that electing counties review the eligibility criteria incorporated into the 2010-2011 Biennial State TANF Plan to ensure it is an accurate representation of the policies.

Any additional questions regarding the State TANF Plan for the 2010-2011 Biennium should be forwarded to Gretchen Williams, Program Consultant in the Economic and Family Services Section, at (919)-334-1109.

Sincerely,



Dean Simpson, Chief
Economic and Family Services Section

Attachment

cc: Sherry Bradsher
Sarah Barham
Local Business Liaisons
Charisse Johnson
Hank Bowers
Work First Policy
Work First Representatives

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