

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 11-2010**

**(Work First)**

**TO:** COUNTY DIRECTORS OF SOCIAL SERVICES  
EMPLOYMENT SECURITY COMMISSION MANAGEMENT

**ATTENTION:** Work First Program Managers and Supervisors  
Employment Security Commission Regional, Local Office &  
Branch Managers

**SUBJECT:** First Stop Employment Assistance Program

**DATE:** May 3, 2010

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** Immediately

**I. General Information**

Effective October 1, 2009, statutory changes at 108A-27.2 (1c); 108A-27.9 (c) (1c) included legislative amendments for all individuals who apply for Work First Family Assistance (WFFA). As a result of the changes, registration for the First Stop Employment Assistance Program at the Employment Security Commission (ESC) has been changed to a work registration requirement for some Work First participants. First Stop is no longer an eligibility requirement for WFFA.

Registration for work with ESC is now required with the Job Search component for Work First participants. All work eligible participants who are assessed as ready to engage in job search will be required to register for work with ESC. This requirement will be included on participant's Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA) Plan of Action.

Failure to register for work with ESC as part of the Job Search component will result in the family to not receive their Work First Benefits cash assistance. The caseworker will reevaluate the family members for Medicaid if appropriate.

Counties may contract with the local Employment Security Commission for additional services such as job readiness classes, etc. Reasonable accommodations may be necessary to assist individuals with disabilities with work registration and with access to employment services.

**II. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**

**A. Requirements for Work Registration**

1. ESC will register all work eligible adults who are assessed as ready to engage in job search by the local department of social services (DSS). The purpose of work registration is to have an evaluation by ESC staff to assess job readiness accurately and make appropriate referrals. The registration could result in an immediate job referral.
2. If the participant registered for work within thirty (30) days prior to beginning job search, it is not necessary to register again. Document in the case record the date the participant registered with ESC.

3. Work First participants may access any personal computer (PC) to self-register for work registration via the ESC website ([www.ncesc.com](http://www.ncesc.com)). If the participant chooses to self-register, it is the individuals' responsibility to confirm they have completed the registration by printing the confirmation page provided.
4. In a two-parent family, both parents must complete the work registration process if they are assessed as ready to engage in employment.
5. Caseworkers must inform participants that it is their responsibility to notify their worker (prior to the deadline given to register for work) if they are unable to complete the work registration process. If the participant is unable to complete the work registration by the deadline, evaluate whether there is good cause. If good cause is established, revise the MRA Plan of Action and set a new deadline date. The worker and participant must sign the revised MRA Plan of Action. If there is not good cause, do not release the WFB payment.
6. Caseworkers may complete and provide participants with the Work Registration form (DSS 5313) to take to ESC when registering for work. This form will notify ESC that the individual is a Work First participant.

#### **B. Provision for individuals with disabilities**

There may be instances in which a participant is required to register for work but cannot complete the work registration because the individual needs reasonable accommodations. To meet the registration requirement, DSS caseworkers should complete the Partial Application Card (Figure 118-1) based on information provided by the participant. The completed form should be forwarded to ESC where it will be entered into the Employment Security Client System (ESCS). Allowing for mail time and keying time at ESC, assume the registration is "complete" 5 workdays from the date the completed form was sent to ESC. DSS caseworkers may also need to assist disabled individuals with online registration.

#### **C. Verifying Work Registration**

Verify work registration by:

- Email, phone or fax from ESC staff
- Printed out confirmation page from Internet registration or,
- Screen print from OLV confirming registered status.

Effective December 23, 2009 ESC and First Stop options were disabled due to the retiring of the mainframe SCC4 and SCC3. Therefore, DSS caseworkers will no longer have access to these systems to verify work registration.

#### **D. Relocating after ESC Work Registration**

If participants move from one county in North Carolina to another and apply for Work First in the new county of residence, the participant must register for work with the ESC in the new county if it is a requirement on the new Mutual Responsibility Agreement Plan of Action.

### **III. EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is effective immediately. Apply this policy to applications and reviews currently in process, at the next review, application, or change in situation.

Should there be additional questions, please contact your Work First Program Consultant.

Sincerely,



Dean Simpson, Chief  
Economic and Family Services  
Division of Social Services

Sincerely,



Manfred Emmrich, Employment Service Director  
Employment Security Commission

DS/kha

cc: Sherry S. Bradsher  
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