

**DSS ADMINISTRATIVE LETTER NO. ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES 2-2015
(Work First)**

TO: County Directors of Social Services

ATTENTION: Work First Program Administrators, Managers, and Supervisors

DATE: March 31, 2015

SUBJECT: Work First Cash Assistance Job Bonus

EFFECTIVE DATE: Effective Upon Receipt

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

The purpose of this letter is to provide updated policy regarding Job Bonus for the Work First Program. Job Bonus is offered to Work First cash assistance households when new earned income results in the household being monetarily ineligible for cash assistance. The Cash Assistance Job Bonus assists the family in transitioning from Work First cash assistance.

II. POLICY PROCEDURES

The Work First Family Assistance Job Bonus Waiver was renamed; it is now known as the Work First Family Assistance Job Bonus. The revised [DSS-8222/DSS-8222sp](#) serves as the notice of termination for the household and includes Hearing Rights.

A. Change Reported Timely

1. Determine the impact of the increased earnings on the household's cash assistance payment. The Work First case owner may accept the household's statement of the increased earnings pending third party verification. Refer to the [Integrated Eligibility Policy Manual](#) (IEM) for income verification procedures.
2. Follow the procedures as defined in the IEM for processing changes in income if the increased earnings do not terminate the household from cash assistance.
3. Evaluate the household's eligibility for Job Bonus if the increased earnings will terminate the household from cash assistance.
4. If the household is eligible for Job Bonus send a manual DSS-8222/8222sp to the household notifying them of their eligibility for Job Bonus.
5. If the change is reported during an office visit and eligibility for Job Bonus can be determined provide the DSS-8222/8222sp to the household during the office visit.
6. The DSS-8222/8222sp must be returned within ten (10) calendar days for the household to be eligible for Job Bonus. The Work First case owner must include the deadline date on the form.
7. If the DSS-8222/8222sp is not returned within ten (10) calendar days follow Work First policy to terminate the cash assistance case.

8. If the DSS-8222/8222sp is returned by the deadline and the household has chosen to accept the Job Bonus, refer to the Job Bonus Job Aid for processing instructions.
9. If the DSS-8222/8222sp is returned within ten (10) calendar days and the household declines the Job Bonus, follow Work First policy to terminate the cash assistance case.

B. Change Not Reported Timely

1. If the household fails to report the increased earnings timely, it is considered non-compliance with their Mutual Responsibility Agreement (MRA). The household is ineligible for Job Bonus and the worker must follow policies related to MRA noncompliance.
2. Review the case to determine if there is an overpayment. If there is an overpayment, refer the case to the Program Integrity Unit.

C. Evaluating for Job Bonus at the End of a Certification Period

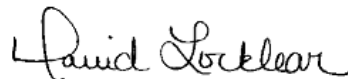
A household may report increased earnings at their Cash Assistance Review or anytime near the ending of their certification period.

1. Job Bonus is applied to the cash assistance case once in a lifetime for a concurrent period of three (3) months.
2. The Job Bonus months must occur within the same certification period. It cannot be applied over multiple certification periods. If determined eligible for Job Bonus, the household will receive Job Bonus only for the months remaining in their current certification period.
3. If eligible for Job Bonus, determine how many months are remaining in the household's current certification period. Provide the household with the DSS-8222/8222sp and explain to the household the abbreviated Job Bonus period. The household must be informed that any months used for Job Bonus meet the definition of the lifetime limit.

III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS

This policy is effective upon receipt. Refer to NC FAST Fast Help to view the revised Job Aid on Applying a Job Bonus. Please email any questions regarding this policy to DHHS Operational Support Team (OST) at ost.policy.questions@dhhs.nc.gov.

Sincerely,



David Locklear, Acting Chief
Economic and Family Services