



## CHANGE NOTICE FOR MANUAL

**DATE:** March 1, 2010

**MANUAL:** WORK FIRST MANUAL  
**CHANGE NO.:** 2-2010  
**TO:** County Directors of Social Services  
**EFFECTIVE:** March 1, 2010

### I. BACKGROUND

The changes that are addressed in this notice are to reflect policy changes as it relates to the State Plan, provide clarifications, ensure language consistency and streamline the manual. Throughout the document, references to Figures were removed and/or replaced with a Division of Social Services form number where appropriate and hyperlinked to <http://info.dhhs.state.nc.us/olm/forms>. Where appropriate, the terms "you" and "your" were replaced with "caseworker" and "he/she" was replaced with "individual or "participant."

### II. SPECIFIC CHANGES

#### Work First Manual Section 104B

Plan of Action was added when referring to the Mutual Responsibility Agreement. Roman numerals were renumbered to incorporate new information in Section VII.

#### A. Section I

1. The statement "if your county has chosen to serve these populations" was removed.
2. Added acronym LME to stand for Local Management Entity.

#### B. Section II

1. Added acronym MRA to stand for Mutual Responsibility Agreement.
2. **NOTE** was added prohibiting drug and alcohol testing.

#### C. Section III

1. Referenced QPSA Flow Chart to assist in understanding the referral process from Work First to the QPSA.
2. Removed "apply the appropriate sanction" and replaced with "do not release the Work First cash assistance payment."

#### D. Section IV

1. Removed of the word “sanction” and replaced with “penalty”.
2. Removed pay type “1” and replaced with “2.”
3. Deleted (or “2” for two parent families) and these sanctions are to be entered on the budget as a MRA sanction.
4. Referenced Section 205 of Work First Manual.

**E. Section V**

Removed administer the SUDDS IV for reassessment and replaced with will reassess.

**F. Section VI**

1. Substance Abuse treatment hours that count toward the State’s requirement was changed to 30 hours.

**G. Section VII**

Section was added to clarify county of residence for Work First participants at substance abuse inpatient treatment facilities.

**H. Section IX**

1. “If your county has chosen to serve these populations” was removed.
2. Reference to sanction policy was removed and replaced with a protective payee being assigned.
3. The word “issues” to clarify mental health concerns was added.

**Work First Manual Section 104C**

Section 104C is obsolete.

**Work First Manual Section 105**

Sections 105 and 105A were consolidated into a single manual section, 105 is now entitled “Federal and State Time Limits”. Throughout document note the following changes: Family Support and Welfare Services Section was updated to Economic and Family Services. Specific section references were removed and replaced with more general references. Manual text previously grouped in “**Note**” section are no longer noted as such and are included in the main body of the content. The terms parent/responsible adult was replaced with the term caretaker.

**A. Section I**

1. The section title changed from Background to Introduction and provides an overview of time limits.
2. Work registration codes “O” and “F” do not activate the 24 month time clock.
3. The note referencing Work Force Development was removed.

**B. Section II**

Titled “The 60 Month time Limit (Federal)”- Clarification provided to verify the number of months on the time clock for all adults in the family.

1. Note added that North Carolina’s 24 month time limit began August 1996.

2. Review all assessments for cases approaching the 24 month time limit.
3. Specific references to Work Force Development were removed and replaced with “other community agencies and resources”.
4. Policy updated to include voluntary screening for disabilities for participants within 12 months of termination.
5. References to pull night and pull deadline were updated.
6. “Disorder or conditions affecting” replaces severe illness.
7. Policy was changed to allow families to request a hardship exemption within 3 months of termination.
8. Information released to a family by the county for the hardship hearing process must not include confidential third party information.
9. Individuals with disabilities may delay a hardship hearing more than once.
10. Work eligible adults that are granted exemptions must have an updated MRA Plan of Action.

**C. Section III**

Work First 24 Month Time Limit (State)-Policy contained in the Section III is the policy content from Manual Section 105A.

1. Individuals with work registration code O are not subject to the 24 month time clock. Registration code “A” is no longer a valid code and was deleted.
2. Information regarding individuals with disabilities was added in reference to stopping the 24 month time clock.
3. A chart was included for evaluating the 24 month time clock to show the time line for 12 and 18 months.
4. Policy was updated to give additional guidance regarding the use of assessment tools for cases within 6 month of termination.
5. Information released to a family by the county must not include confidential third party information.
6. The charts used to calculate a family’s net household income were reformatted.
7. Policy was revised to replace references to doctor’ statement with statement from licensed Healthcare Professional.
8. Good Cause definition for disabled or incapacitated caretaker are listed as separate categories.
9. The DSS-5302, Work First Extension/Exemption Month Report is no longer required to be submitted to the Division of Social Services. The Division will automatically track all extensions and exemptions through the Eligibility Information System.

**Work First Manual Section 118**

Throughout this section name change for Work First Representative to Work First Program Consultant. Renumbered manual section to incorporate the Work First Manual Section 104C, First Stop Registration, into 118.

**A. Section I**

Re-titled from Employment Services to Introduction. Duplicate manual content removed.

**B. Section II**

1. First Stop registration is no longer an eligibility requirement.
2. Work eligible individuals are required to register for work at the Employment Security Commission as part of the Job Search component.

3. Policy is also provided related to the registration process, verification of the registration, provision of reasonable accommodations and county re-location.

**C. Section III**

1. Policy updated to include additional information on 24 month time limit.
2. Changed section title to “Individuals with Disabilities.”
3. The 35 hour State work activity requirement was revised to mirror the Federal definition of full time participation. Individuals whose youngest child is age 6 years or older must complete at least 30 hours per week, individuals whose youngest child is under age 6 must complete at least 20 hours weekly, and two parent families must complete at least 35 hours (55 hours if receiving federally funded childcare) per week. The work activity requirements are a Federal requirement and serves as a guide for developing the MRA Plan of Action. While the required hours have changed, more or less hours may be scheduled for a participant based on a through assessment and the development of an individualized MRA- Plan of Action.
4. The MRA Plan of Action must reflect any reasonable accommodations.
5. Provided guidance to agencies to ensure individuals with disabilities have full access to all programs and services.
6. Employment Workers are responsible for monitoring recipients’ compliance with the MRA-Plan of Action. The Employment worker will also determine whether or not the Work First Benefits payment is issued each month.
7. The participant must be informed that failure to comply with any aspect of the Mutual Responsibility Agreement, Core Requirements or Plan of Action, can result in the WFB payment not being released.

**D. Section IV**

1. Section was re-titled “The Mutual Responsibility Agreement Plan of Action”.
2. Policy was revised to include additional items that must be part of the MRA and be fully explained to the participant. The MRA must be completed within 5 days of the date of the Work First Application. Examples were given for determining when an MRA should be updated.
3. Policy updated to reflect changes to the definition of full time participation.

**E. Section V**

1. Section was re-titled “Federal Work Activities”.
2. Change in Federal and State minimum wage to \$7.25 per hour.
3. Policy added to include Job Quit Penalty.
4. Clarification of policy regarding the 12 week limit on Job Search and Job Readiness.
5. Fair Labor Standards Act – Policy was clarified regarding the calculation of the maximum number of hours a participant may be assigned to Work Experience.
6. Key Risk Management Services is provider of Workers Compensation insurance coverage for Work Experience participants. A Workers Compensation Guide may be accessed via the Figure 2.
7. The FLSA calculation for Community Service must be documented in the case file.
8. Documentation of an ESL program as a necessary part of Vocational Educational Training must be documented in the case file.
9. Teen Head of Households count toward the numerator of the Work

Participation Rate.

10. In addition to a monthly time card, attendance reports signed by the participant may be used to document State work activities.

**F. Section VIII**

1. Participants with an "O" work code are included in the All Family Participation rate if they have an average of 20 hours per week in federal countable activities.
2. Cases where the only parent's work code is an "I" are **not** included in the denominator.
3. The monthly total of hours for each work activity is converted to a weekly average when calculating the participation rate. The charts were updated to reflect such.
4. Use the DSS-5309, Excused Absence Log, to document absences entered into EPIS.
5. Allowable holiday hour must be reported in EPIS.
6. The example for projecting monthly participation was updated.

**III. IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Apply this policy to the next review, application, ongoing case or change in situation effective March 1, 2010.

**This change notice obsoletes FSCWS Administrative Letters 08-2007, 04-2008, 05-2008, 05-2009 and 09-2009.**

**IV. INSTRUCTIONS FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE WORK FIRST MANUAL**

<u>Remove</u>		<u>Insert</u>	
<u>Section</u>	<u>Pages</u>	<u>Section</u>	<u>Pages</u>
104B	All	104B	1-7
		Figure 104B1 Figure 104B2 Figure 104B3	
104C	All		
105A	All		
105	All	105	1-22
		Figure 105f1 Figure 105f2	
118	All	118	1-41
		Figure 118f1 Figure 118f2	

If you have any questions, please contact your Work First Program Consultant.

Sincerely,



Dean Simpson, Chief  
Economic and Family Services Section

DS/kha/sdm  
Attachments:

[WF104B](#)  
[WF104Bf1](#)  
[WF104Bf2](#)  
[WF104Bf3](#)  
[WF105](#)  
[WF105f2](#)  
[WF118](#)  
[WF118f1](#)  
[WF118f2](#)

cc: Sherry S. Bradsher  
Jack Rogers  
Sarah Barham  
Hank Bowers  
Work First Local Support  
Local Business Liaisons