



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**

**ROY COOPER** • Governor

**MANDY COHEN, MD, MPH** • Secretary

**SUSAN OSBORNE** • Assistant Secretary for County Operations for  
Human Services

September 25, 2019

**Dear County Directors of Social Services**

**Attention:** Income Maintenance Administrators, Managers and Supervisors  
Program Integrity Supervisors and Investigators  
All Users of The Work Number

**Subject:** Work Number Usage

**Priority:** **Action Required**

On February 7, 2019, Dear County Director Letter [EFS-FNSEP-11-2019](#) updates and guidance related to usage of The Work Number. The letter provided usage data and included the notification of an enhancement to The Work Number. Once Equifax initiated this enhancement, the number of transactions skyrocketed significantly increasing the cost to your budgets for this service. As a result, you will soon see county charges reflecting the increase.

It is important that you understand the fee structure and financial consequences of staff level actions. Under the current contract with Equifax, North Carolina's allowed usage for a six-month period is 625,000 billable hits. Once we have reached that ceiling, we are charged \$3.22 overage fee for each additional hit, this cost is passed down to individual counties. A hit is considered as any employer data retrieved during the specific timeframe requested by the worker. The options available to staff for requesting wages through The Work Number website are:

- 3 previous months
- 6 previous months
- 1 previous year
- 3 previous years
- and view all available records

For the time period of January to May 2019, **57%** of the request for wages from The Work Number exceeded the three-month history selection. In most cases information older than three months is not required to determine a household's eligibility according to rules for a given program. These habits of requesting unnecessary information have caused us to exceed our current contract limit putting this contract in jeopardy for continuation. There should be few situations which require verification of income beyond a three-month timeframe. An example of such request would be for program integrity investigations.

**NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES • DIVISION OF SOCIAL SERVICES • ECONOMIC AND FAMILY SERVICES**

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AN EQUAL OPPORTUNITY / AFFIRMATIVE ACTION EMPLOYER

Attached to this letter is a spreadsheet that includes The Work Number usage by county for the period of January to May 2019 for all counties. The last column of the spreadsheet contains information by county as to the percentage of billable hits requested greater than three months. We need your assistance in ensuring staff are only requesting the information needed to determine eligibility.

If you have any questions, please contact your Operational Support Team Member.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "David Locklear". The signature is cursive and somewhat stylized.

David Locklear, Deputy Director

DL/ap

**EFS-FNSEP-31-2019**

**Attachment (1)**

NC County Level Record Age Distribution