



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

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Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Pheon E. Beal, Director
(919) 733-3055

March 19, 2004

Re: Food Stamp E&T Updates

Dear County Director of Social Services

Attention: Food Stamp Supervisors

This is an update of current activities in the Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T) Program.

I. CAREER START

Career Start is a demonstration project targeting Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T) participants. The goal of Career Start is to better prepare individuals for the workforce by providing pre-employment skills through the Human Resources Development (HRD) Program in local community colleges. Career Start will be implemented in March 2004 in 15 counties deemed Labor Surplus Areas in 2003 by the US Department of Labor. The counties are: Ashe, Catawba, Cleveland, Columbus, Edgecombe, Hertford, Hoke, Lenoir, Person, Robeson, Rockingham, Rutherford, Scotland, Stanly and Vance.

Career Start is planned to be an eight week process. After an initial orientation, each participant will be evaluated for job readiness. If the individual is determined to be job ready, he is referred directly to the Employment Security Commission (ESC) for job search. If not job ready, the individual will participate up to four weeks in the HRD programs at the community college followed by an additional four weeks of job search at ESC.

The kickoff for Career Start was held in Charlotte on December 10, 2003, with representatives from local departments of social services, Community College and ESC in attendance. Operational Guidelines have been developed and distributed to the participating counties. Career Start will operate as a demonstration project from March through June 2004. An evaluation will determine if Career Start becomes a statewide program.

II. REMOTE COUNTY WORK REGISTRATION

Several years ago, the Division opted not to register individuals for work in counties that were deemed remote. Remote counties were those that did not have a full service ESC office in their area or experienced very high unemployment rates. The United States Department of Agriculture has clarified that all food stamp unit members required to participate in a work program must be registered. Work registration can be accomplished by completion of a brief form by the caseworker during the food stamp application process. There will be no requirement that the form go to the Employment Security Commission. Work registered individuals will be subject to voluntary quit and all other work requirement policies in Section 240 of the Food Stamp Certification Manual. Able Bodied Adults without Dependents (ABAWDs) in these counties must also comply with ABAWD policy found in Section 245 of the Certification Manual. Each ABAWD must be coded on the DSS-8590 in order to be tracked.

Policy manual instructions are being prepared to define procedures. The target date to implement work registration is July 1, 2004, in the following counties: Bertie, Camden, Caswell, Currituck, Gates, Graham, Greene, Halifax, Hyde, Jones, Northampton, Pamlico, Perquimans, Polk, Swain, Tyrrell, and Warren.

If you have questions about these initiatives, please contact David Prince at 919-733-4570.

Sincerely,

Jane Schwartz, Chief
Economic Services Section

JS:dp

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