



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

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Courier # 56-20-25 Fax 919-733-0645

Michael F. Easley, Governor
Carmen Hooker Odom, Secretary

Sherry S. Bradsher, Director
(919) 733-3055

March 9, 2007

Re: Food Stamp E&T Program

Dear County Director of Social Services:

ATTENTION: Food Stamp Supervisors

Since 1987, the Division has utilized the Employment Security Commission (ESC) to provide job search and other job-related activities to Food Stamp Employment and Training (E&T) participants. Career Start, an additional component offered through local, selected Community Colleges was added in 2003.

Effective July 1, 2007, the E&T Program is being modified to provide the most effective and efficient services to the individuals served. The objective of the E&T Program is to assist individuals with finding jobs and/or to provide job training to required Food Stamp participants who are between the ages of 16 and 59. The Division currently has contracts with the Employment Security Commission for job search activities in 81 counties and the Community College System for the administration of Career Start in 33 counties.

We are aware that E&T disqualifications due to noncompliance and tracking the paperwork flow among the agencies has drastically increased. Plant closings and limited economic growth in many counties make successful job search particularly challenging and participants continue to struggle with transportation and other barriers. Due to these issues, we plan to implement changes to make Food Stamp E&T a more successful component.

1. **Reduce the number of E&T counties from 81 to 56**

The ESC utilizes personnel time working directly with E&T participants based on the number of E&T participants referred. Staff time allocated in twenty-five counties is at a .30 FTE level. We plan to remove E&T job search requirements in these 25 counties. This will bring the total number of counties exempt from E&T requirements to 41.

Individuals subject to work requirements in the 41 counties will be exempt from E&T but not from work registration. Work registration will consist of placing a signed work registration form in the case file. Mandatory work registrants will continue to be subject to voluntary reduction in hours, voluntary quit and/or the ABAWD provisions. Work registrants will be encouraged to visit the local ESC for job search; however, no formal referral process is required.

The E&T requirements will continue to be a part of the Food Stamp Program in 56 counties.

2. **Reduce the number of Career Start counties from 33 to 26**

Currently, there are 33 counties with an E&T Career Start component. Six of these programs will be eliminated as a result of reducing the number of ESC E&T counties. One Community College has elected not to continue Career Start due to staffing issues.

3. **Revise E&T to serve a targeted group of individuals**

Unless exempt, food stamp unit members ages 16 through 59 are required to register and participate in work programs. Work registration remains a requirement; however, in the 56 counties that continue to participate in E&T, the program will target only those work registrants who:

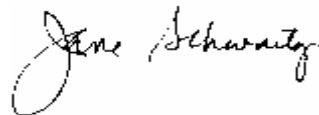
- a. Are between the ages of 18-49
- b. Have a recent connection (within 12 months) to the workforce; or
- c. Have a high school diploma or GED
- d. Whose youngest child over six years of age
- e. Are ABAWDs and non-ABAWDs

All other mandatory work registrants must sign a work registration form to be maintained in the case file.

Attached is an updated county listing indicating the designated work program status.

These changes will narrow the Food Stamp E&T Program to create the greater opportunities for successful outcomes for Food Stamp recipients subject to work registration. It will also eliminate or reduce county funds budgeted for participant reimbursement in the 25 affected counties. If you have questions, please feel free to contact David Prince at 919-733-4570.

Sincerely,



Jane Schwartz, Chief
Economic Services Section

Attachment
FAEP-04-2007

cc: JoAnn Lamm, Deputy Director
Food Assistance and Energy Programs Representatives