



Family Assistance Letter #108
Attachment B
Ohio Works Now Supplemental Food Assistance Program
September 29, 2011

In an effort to improve the nutritional status of working families, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services has developed a new state sponsored program, the Ohio Works Now supplemental food assistance program, which will issue a benefit of \$10.00 a month in addition to the food assistance benefits received by employed needy families with children. This benefit is part of the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) program. Effective January 2012, this additional benefit will be loaded on a monthly basis onto the Ohio Direction Card for eligible food assistance assistance groups.

The Ohio Works Now process is completely automated and will require no county worker action other than answering client inquiries about the program. Food Assistance assistance groups will not have to apply for the Ohio Works Now benefit. Eligibility for the benefit will be determined each month based on data in the CRIS-E eligibility system. Ohio Works Now benefits will be automatically loaded onto the Ohio Direction Card that food assistance assistance groups are already issued with their Food Assistance benefits. Ohio Works Now benefits are not cash benefits but rather Food Assistance benefits and can only be spent as permitted in Ohio's Food Assistance Program.

The assistance group will receive a monthly notice about its eligibility for the Ohio Works Now benefit. Case information about the benefit will be available in CRIS-E.

To be eligible for the Ohio Works Now benefit:

- The food assistance assistance group must include a minor child and the biological or adoptive parents of the minor child; or a pregnant woman, with no other children, who is at least in her sixth month of pregnancy;
- The employed individual must be considered a work-eligible individual pursuant to Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:1-1-01 (Z);
- The employed individual must be employed at least:
 - 20 hours/week (86 hours/month) for families with one parent in the home with the youngest child of the Ohio Works Now assistance group being under age six; or
 - 30 hours/week (129 hours/month) for families with one parent in the home with the youngest child of the Ohio Works Now assistance group being age six or older; or
 - 55 hours/week (237 hours/month) for families with two parents in the home; with at least 30 hours/week (129 hours/month) completed by one parent;

- The food assistance assistance group may not be in receipt of Ohio Works First cash assistance.

All families receiving an Ohio Works Now benefit will be included for potential reporting for the state's work participation rate under the category of a separate state program funded with state maintenance of effort funds. TANF requirements such as time limits, child support assignment and enforcement cooperation and self-sufficiency contracts, are not applicable to this program.

In order to confine Ohio Works Now expenditures to appropriated state funds, ODJFS may issue an order at any time suspending the program or reducing the benefit amount. The order will be distributed to all county agencies on the same day and will be in effect until rescinded.

Proposed Ohio Administrative Code Rule 5101:1-2-50: Ohio Works Now is currently in clearance for review. More information about the Ohio Works First program will be distributed very soon, including a Frequently Asked Questions document, a copy of the notice that will be sent to recipients and screenshots of the new Ohio Works Now CRIS-E screens that will be able to be accessed.

Questions about the Ohio Works Now program can be directed to the TANF_FSTA e-mail box or by calling 1-866-886-3537 (Option 6).