



30 East Broad Street Columbus, Ohio 43215-3414  
jfs.ohio.gov

**OFFICE OF FAMILY STABILITY LETTER #62**  
June 8, 2007

**TO:** Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services

**FROM:** Jeanne Carroll, Deputy Director  
Office of Family Stability

**SUBJECT: Termination of the Employment Retention Incentive (ERI) Program**

The temporary law authorizing the Employment Retention Incentive (ERI) Program will expire on June 30, 2007. Amended Substitute House Bill 119 (Ohio's budget bill) does not include language that would permit the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to continue the ERI Program into the next state fiscal year. The ERI program was introduced in Office of Family Stability (OFS) letter #54 on July 25, 2006 and went into effect on August 1, 2006.

ERI payments may only be issued on or prior to the close of business on Wednesday June 27, 2007. With the implementation of the Ohio Administrative Knowledge System (OAKS), no warrants will be processed from June 28 through June 30, 2007 (reference OFS letter #61).

Rule 5101:1-23-80 of the Ohio Administrative Code governing ERI will be rescinded and policy pertaining to the issuance of replacement warrants for the ERI program will be issued in a future Cash Assistance Manual Transmittal Letter (CAMTL). The rule will be submitted for statewide clearance later in the month of June.

**Applications and payments**

Effective June 28, 2007, ERI applications should no longer be accepted by the CDJFS. If an application is received by the CDJFS on or after June 28, 2007, the CDJFS shall deny the application using reason code 256. ERI applications accepted on or before June 27, 2007 must be authorized no later than the close of business on June 27, 2007. ERI warrants will be processed during the auxiliary benefit issuance run on the evening of June 27<sup>th</sup>. CRIS-E table TERI (ERI incentive funding) will be inactivated on June 28, 2007 and no ERI payments will be processed after the table is inactivated.

All ERI applications, brochures, and fact sheets should be removed from the CDJFS. The JFS 07204 "Application for Employment Retention Incentive (ERI)" and the JFS 07206 "Employment Retention Incentive" brochure will be removed from the ODJFS website by June 28, 2007. All ERI forms and brochures will no longer be available for order at the ODJFS warehouse or for download from the ODJFS website.

All initial and subsequent ERI payments that can be authorized should be processed as quickly as possible to ensure that ERI payments are authorized no later than the close of business on June 27, 2007.

### **Employment Retention Incentive Programs under PRC**

The CDJFS may create a limited local program to issue employment retention incentive payments to those individuals who would have been eligible for subsequent payments had the ERI program continued into the next fiscal year. The CDJFS can also choose to establish and fund a local county program to provide incentive payments to individuals who terminate OWF due to employment or individuals not receiving OWF who are TANF-eligible and obtain and retain employment. The CDJFS can adopt the same eligibility requirements as in the current ERI program or create different eligibility requirements. All requirements must be reflected in the CDJFS PRC plan and plan amendments must be submitted to the ODJFS "Program-Policy" e-mail box.

### **Recipient Notification**

An ad hoc notice is being drafted and will be mailed to all ERI recipients who could still qualify for the 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, or 4<sup>th</sup> payment to inform them of the ERI Program termination and that they will receive no further ERI payments from ODJFS. The ad hoc notice will be sent to ERI recipients as soon as Amended Substitute House Bill 119 is signed. A copy of the notice will be provided to the CDJFS as soon as it is available and the CDJFS will be notified when that notice has been sent to the recipients in order to address any phone calls regarding the termination of the program. The ad hoc notice will not be recorded on CNHS (client notice history).

### **ERI payments and food stamp benefits**

If an ERI application is authorized for an initial payment after May 22, 2007, the change would have no impact on the food stamp assistance group. CLRC should be clearly documented to reflect that receipt of the ERI payment has no effect on the food stamp budget and no further payments are expected to be received from the ERI program.

For food stamp assistance groups previously approved for the ERI program and who had the ERI income prorated over the nine-month period, this report is considered a known change to the county agency and shall prompt the eligibility worker to remove the projected income of \$111.00 per month listed on AEFMI under OTER and end date the ERI income, effective June 30, 2007.

### **Processing Replacement ERI Warrants**

Since ERI warrants cannot be issued out of CRIS-E on or after June 28, an alternate method of replacing warrants has been established and will be included in rule 5101:1-23-80 of the Administrative Code in more detail. A new form is being created that will be used by the CDJFS in requesting a replacement for a warrant that was lost, stolen, destroyed, or never received. In order for a replacement to occur, there must be one of the following disposition codes on CRIS-E screen IQER: RC – returned/canceled; VO – void; or IS - issued with no disposition. If the ERI warrant shows IS and has not been redeemed, the CDJFS must: (1) Initiate the stop payment process via CRIS-E screen SFES by entering the disposition status of SR on IQER; (2) Complete the JFS 02132 and AUD 7202 if no warrant has been returned to the CDJFS.

If the warrant disposition is RC, VO or SR, the CDJFS shall complete the new replacement form and submit it by mail or fax to staff at the Office of Family Stability designated to handle the replacement process for ERI warrants only. If appropriate to replace, the new warrant will be processed by the Accounts Payable Section in the ODJFS Office of Fiscal Services and issued directly to the recipient at the address indicated on the form. After the warrant is authorized, the form will be faxed to the CDJFS as verification of the re-issuance. All ERI replacement warrants must be reissued by October 31, 2007.

**NOTE:** All other replacements will still be handled through CRIS-E; only the ERI warrants will be issued through this process.

### **Reports**

Two reports have been created to monitor the ERI cases:

- A report listing all of the ERI applications pending will be generated for each of the CDJFS every Friday. The cases on the pending lists must be disposed of (approved or denied) no later than the close of business on June 27, 2007.
- A report listing all ERI recipients who may still qualify for a 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> ERI payment. This report can be used for the CDJFS to review and remove the projected ERI income from the AEFMI screen that was used for the food stamp benefits and for those CDJFS who will be continuing the employment retention incentives under its PRC program.

The initial reports will be distributed by the Program Policy Services Unit shortly.

Additional information will be provided at the OFS statewide video conference on Wednesday June 20, 2007. If you have questions that you would like to have addressed at the video conference, please submit them to the ODJFS Program Policy Services Unit TANF-FSTA mailbox.

JC:mm

- c: Helen E. Jones-Kelley, Director  
Fred Williams, Assistant Director  
Mary Ann Drewry, Assistant Director  
Terry Thomas, Assistant Director  
ODJFS Deputy Directors  
Loretta Adams, OJFSDA  
Crystal Allen, PCSAO  
Kim Newsome, OCDA  
Larry Long, CCAO