

Bob Taft
Governor



Tom Hayes
Director

30 East Broad Street • Columbus, Ohio 43215
www.state.oh.us/odjfs

OWF/PRC GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 53

TO: Directors, County Departments of Job and Family Services
Directors, County Public Children Services Agencies
Directors, Child Support Enforcement Agencies

FROM: Tom Hayes, Director

DATE: April 29, 2003

SUBJECT: OWF WORK ACTIVITY DEFINITIONS REVISED

This guidance letter provides the OWF work activity definitions that are contained in Ohio's TANF state plan. With the issuance of this guidance letter, OWF/PRC guidance letter #20 is obsolete.

Federal regulations mandate that states submit a TANF state plan to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) periodically. The TANF regulations (45 CFR, Section 265.1) mandate that states submit a definition of their work activities to HHS either as part of the state plan or with a required annual report. Ohio chose to submit the work activity definitions as part of the state plan.

As a result of the recent submission of Ohio's state plan to HHS, some minor changes were made to existing work activities and a new work activity was defined. On-the-job training (OJT) has been added as a work activity. In the past, OJT was traditionally an activity where a service provider paid a subsidy to an employer for a specified period of time to reimburse the employer for the costs of hiring and training an individual. The OJT contained in Ohio's TANF state plan is not this traditional type of OJT; it is an activity that combines work with education but does not involve a subsidy. The definition of Ohio's OWF work activities including the definition of OJT are contained further in this guidance letter.

Appraisal, Assignment and Self-Sufficiency Contract

Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 5107.14, each adult or minor head of household must sign a self-sufficiency contract which includes a self-sufficiency plan based on an appraisal. Pursuant to Ohio Revised Code Section 5107.42, county departments of job and family services must assign each adult or minor head of household participating in Ohio Works First to one or more work activities or developmental activities. County staff are encouraged to make appropriate assignments to work or developmental activities based on the appraisal of the individual's education, work history, skills,

abilities, barriers, interests, and on the needs of the family. The goal of an assignment to a work or developmental activity is the self-sufficiency of the family.

Combining Education with Work

The preamble to the TANF regulations states that “According to the Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation’s publication, ‘Work First’, the most successful work first programs have shared some characteristics: 1) a mixed strategy including job search, education and training, and other activities and services; 2) an emphasis on employment in all activities; 3) a strong consistent message; 4) a commitment of adequate resources to serve the full mandatory population; 5) enforcement of participation requirements; and 6) a cost-conscious management style.”

The preamble goes on to state, “While the most successful programs consistently and strongly emphasize work, the actual program designs recognize and address the critical role education play in preparing adults for work.”

As described in OWF/PRC Guidance Letter # 15, assignment to education may be an appropriate work activity. Research shows that the factor most correlated with job advancement is developing basic skill levels and obtaining education beyond high school.

Education activities may be built into a work assignment; and two or more programs may be combined into one activity. For example, a few hours of basic education or job skills training may be incorporated into an assignment at a Work Experience Program site.

OWF Work Activity Definitions

The following work activity definitions are contained in Ohio’s TANF state plan. It is recommended that each county department of job and family services have a written policy for assigning individuals to these activities.

Employment means an individual receives compensation for services performed. This includes activities that the CDJFS deems to be legitimately entrepreneurial, including micro enterprise self-employment. Generally, employment is entered on the AEIEI or AEISE screens.

Work Experience Program (WEP) means the program in which individuals work without pay at a job site in a public, private-non-profit, or private-for-profit organization in order to gain work experience and training. It may include activities ensuring that participants become familiar with workplace expectations and exhibit work behavior and attitudes necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. WEP may include specific hands-on training. WEP may include child care service activities in which a participant provides child care for another participant’s child who is a member of another assistance group. WEP may include Community Service activities including a program under which a participant of OWF who is responsible for a minor child enrolled in grade twelve or lower is involved in the minor child’s education on a regular basis. An individual who is assigned to be involved with the minor child’s education is required to attend academic home

enrichment classes that provide instruction for parents in creating a home environment that prepares and enables children to learn at school and must participate in a work assignment at the school that the child attends. WEP is entered on the Work Program Assignment Screen (WPAS) as activity code WEP.

Subsidized Employment Program (SEP) means the program in which individuals work with pay at job sites in public, private non-profit or private-for-profit organizations in order to gain specific occupational training. In return for hiring the individual, a subsidy is provided to the employer for a specified period of time. SEP is entered on the Work Program Assignment Screen (WPAS) as activity code SEP.

On the Job Training (OJT) means a program which combines classroom instruction and paid or unpaid work experience to improve individuals' skill development and assist them in obtaining, retaining, or improving employment. OJT is entered on the WPAS screen as activity code OJT.

Job Search and Job-Readiness Activities means the programs which assist individuals in acquiring the life skills that are used in obtaining, retaining or improving employment; and those activities to seek and secure employment as directed and approved by the CDJFS. Job Search is coded on the WPAS screen as activity code JBSRCH. Job Readiness activities are entered on the WPAS screen as activity code JOBRDY.

Vocational Education means a program of education and training with a goal of enabling individuals to obtain employment. Vocational education includes college, technical, vocational or other course work leading toward a degree, certificate, or license. Study time may be included as part of this activity. Vocational Education is entered on WPAS as Activity code ETWA with sub code 170 (vocational) or 124 (post-secondary).

Job Skills Training means a program designed to increase individuals' employability potential. It may include college, technical, vocational or other course work. It may also include activities ensuring that participants become familiar with workplace expectations and exhibit work behavior and attitudes necessary to compete successfully in the labor market. Various types of structured programs would qualify, e.g., rehabilitation services, counseling, personal development, and pre-employment classes. Study time may be included as part of this activity. Job Skills Training is entered on WPAS as activity code ETWA with sub code 133.

Education Related to Employment means any educational program provided to individuals who do not have a high school diploma or GED. Study time may be included as part of this activity. Education Related to Employment is entered on WPAS as activity code ETWA with sub code 180.

Basic Education Activities means a program provided to individuals who do not possess basic literacy skills whether or not they have obtained a high school diploma or equivalent. Basic education may include high school or equivalent education and adult basic and literacy education. Study time may be included as part of this activity. Basic Education Activities are entered on WPAS as activity code ETWA with sub codes 111 (English as a Second Language), 112 (Adult Basic and Literacy Education, or 113 (high school classes).

In addition to the federal activities that are defined in Ohio's TANF state plan, there are two state activities, *Developmental and Alternative*, that are found in Ohio Revised Code Sections 5107.62 and 5107.64. Developmental and Alternative activities are county defined. Please refer to OWF/PRC Guidance Letter #5 for further discussion of these activities.

If you have any questions about this guidance letter, please contact your state Work Activity Policy Coordinator at WACTA@ODJFS.state.oh.us.

JRS:bn

cc: Deputy Directors
Joel Potts
China Widener
Jane Frye
Joel Rabb
Paul Fraunholtz