



Department of
Job and Family Services

John R. Kasich, Governor
Michael B. Colbert, Director

OFFICE OF FAMILY ASSISTANCE
OFFICE OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

May 14, 2013

TO: Directors, County Department of Job and Family Services
Directors, Workforce Investment Boards

FROM: Kara B. Wentz, Deputy Director
Office of Family Assistance

John B. Weber, Deputy Director
Office of Work Force Development

SUBJECT: **Ohio Works Incentive Program**

The Offices of Family Assistance and Workforce Development are excited to announce an opportunity for Workforce Investment Boards to coordinate with their local county Departments of Job and Family Services to further assist Ohio Works First recipients to move into and retain unsubsidized employment through the - *Ohio Works Incentive Program*.

Background

A primary focus of the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) over the past several years has been on improving the Ohio Works First federal work participation rates to ensure recipients are getting the services they need to promote and move towards self sufficiency. Through many policy and system changes and the remarkable efforts and commitment of the county agencies, Ohio has managed to meet the all-family rate of 50% during the last federal fiscal year. This improvement has been a huge effort to achieve and will be an even harder road to maintain.

As the county agencies continue to work with their Ohio Works First recipients those recipients with greater barriers are maintained on the roles to gain further assistance to move toward self sufficiency. To further assist with this population and the continued improvement of Ohio's work participation rate ODJFS has promised to focus on providing further work supports for Ohio Works First recipients.

Program Overview

Workforce Investment Boards, in coordination with local county Departments of Job and Family Services, are invited to apply to participate in the Ohio Works Incentive Program to further assist Ohio Works First recipients in achieving and maintaining unsubsidized

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Columbus, Ohio 43215
jfs.ohio.gov

employment. The program allows for placement and retention incentives to be earned for individuals placed in on-the-job training or directly into unsubsidized employment. There are additional incentive payments that may be earned for individuals retaining these positions 90 or 180 days (to achieve retention incentives the on-the-job training component must have ended and the employment must have been maintained for at least 90 or 180 days from the initial placement date). The goal of this project is to reduce dependency on the Ohio Works First program while strengthening Ohio's workforce.

Application

Participating One-Stops must exhibit a strong partnership with local county Department of Job and Family Services and be committed to the employment success of Ohio Works First program participants. Workforce Investment Boards interested in participating in the program must submit the following:

1. **Letter of Intent** - A letter of intent to participate in the program must be submitted to Sue Cook by email at sue.cook@jfs.ohio.gov by close of business **Wednesday, May 22th**.
2. **Application:** The application is attached and must be submitted by close of business **Friday, June 14, 2013** to:

Sue Cook
sue.cook@jfs.ohio.gov

The application must be submitted by the Workforce Investment Board and must include a letter of support from the Directors of the county Departments of Job and Family Services that plan to participate. In the application the Workforce Investment Board must explain the plan for a joint partnership for:

1. The referral process of Ohio Works First recipients to the One-Stop;
2. The process and coordination for identifying barriers to employment (i.e. transportation, child care, etc.) and how the barriers will be addressed;
3. The case management techniques that will be utilized to assist participants in retaining the unsubsidized employment; and
4. The verification process to ensure the Workforce Investment Board is submitting accurate data for invoicing.

Video Conference

A video conference will be held at 10:00 am Friday, May 17, 2013 to answer questions prior to the letter of intent submission requirement. Each county agency will automatically be able to be connected. If a Workforce Investment Board would like to be connected separately please contact Denise Olson at Denise.Olson@jfs.ohio.gov and provide your site identification number.

Important Dates

Task	Date	Description
Video Conference	May 17, 2013	A video conference will be held at 10:00am to answer questions prior to letter of intent submission deadline.
Letter of Intent	May 22, 2013	A letter of intent must be submitted to Sue Cook by email at sue.cook@jfs.ohio.gov .
Application	June 14, 2013	Complete applications must be received no later than close of business Friday, June 14, 2013 to: Sue Cook sue.cook@jfs.ohio.gov
Program Run Dates	July 1, 2013 – June 30, 2015	This program is dependent on the state fiscal year 2014 -2015 biennial budget and available funding.

If you have questions or would like further information regarding Ohio Works Incentive Program please contact Sue Cook at (614) 644-1207 or by email at sue.cook@jfs.ohio.gov

cc: Michael Colbert, Director
Michael McCreight, Assistant Director
Bruce Madson, Assistant Director
Family Assistance Staff
Workforce Development Staff

Joel Potts, OJFSDA
Larry Long, CCAO
ODJFS Deputy Directors
Kim Bridges, OCDA
Crystal Allen, PCSAO

Ohio Works Incentive Program

Background

On August 28, 2009 Ohio received notification of its failure to meet both the two-parent and all-family work participation rates for federal fiscal year (FFY) 2007 and of a potential \$32,758,572 penalty to the State Family Assistance Grant (i.e. TANF). Ohio filed an appeal of reasonable cause for failure to meet the rate; however, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families denied the agency's plea for reasonable cause on July 29, 2011. As a result, the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) entered into a corrective action plan.

The latest statewide data (January 2013) reveals that seventy county agencies met or exceeded the all-family work participation rate with a state all-family rate at 52.22%, surpassing the 50% federal requirement. The state two-parent rate has also seen a dramatic improvement at 56.13%, which is up 26.83% since Ohio's first year of participation rate penalty in FFY 2007.

This has been a huge effort to achieve and will require even more effort and resources to maintain. As the caseload declines, many current Ohio Works First recipients face considerable barriers in attaining full self-sufficiency. To ensure our continued success, ODJFS is strengthening work supports for Ohio Works First recipients and is looking to engage the expertise of Ohio's Workforce Investment community to expand job placement and retention for Ohio Works First recipients.

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Payment Points

Participating Workforce Areas are eligible to receive \$150,000 per one-stop system (30 systems) upon ODJFS approval of the application to facilitate the approved project plan. Additional incentive payments are available for each Ohio Works First recipient placed and retained in unsubsidized employment. Below are the possible payment points:

Track	Placement or Earnings Increase	Retention – 90 days	Retention – 180 days
A (OWF Recipients)	\$1,000 1 - Receiving Ohio Works First with initial placement in unsubsidized employment or on-the-job training.	\$1,500 2 – Receiving Ohio Works First working in unsubsidized employment for 90 consecutive calendar days.	
B (No longer OWF Recipients because of earned income)	\$ 1,500 3 – Income from on-the-job training or unsubsidized employment leads to customer no longer being eligible for Ohio Works First.	\$2,000 4 – Remains in unsubsidized employment and off of Ohio Works First for 90 consecutive calendar days.	\$1,000 5 – Remains in unsubsidized employment and off of Ohio Works First for 180 consecutive calendar days.

Payment Requirements

1. In order for a Workforce Area to earn an incentive payment, the individual must be an Ohio Works First recipient at the time of initial work, as verified by the county agency.
2. Payments in the 90 or 180 day retention categories cannot be achieved while an individual is still assigned to on-the-job training. These incentive payments are not available until the on-the-job training has ended and unsubsidized employment has been maintained for 90 or 180 days from the initial hire date.
3. Payments to Workforce Investment Boards will be made through an invoicing process and will be considered non-reimbursable (NRB) funds. Workforce Areas may co-enroll program customers in WIA programs.
4. Multiple placement pay points may be achieved for the same individual for the same track and/or for individuals crossing over both tracks; however, all cases are subject to review and each placement must be made to move the individual toward self sufficiency.
5. Retention means retention in unsubsidized employment but that does not necessarily mean employment with the same employer.
6. Placement payment requests may be made no sooner than the completion of the first week of employment.

The pilot program will run from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015, based upon the availability of funding.

Required Verification

One-Stop staff will use the Ohio Workforce Case Management System to document placement, retention and eligibility. Training will be conducted in the near future to outline the documentation and invoicing processes. The Workforce Investment Boards must ensure that the One-Stops are working with the county Department of Job and Family Services to confirm:

1. The participant is actively engaged in unsubsidized employment (employers could change; but unsubsidized employment for the 90 or 180 day period is required) at a minimum of twenty hours per week or 86 hours per month verified by use of The Work Number, wage records, pay stubs, etc.
2. The status of the participant Ohio Works First case. If the participant is no longer eligible for Ohio Works First because they are over-income as a result of the unsubsidized employment that must be documented.
3. The amount of the Ohio Works First benefit the individual's assistance group is receiving or was receiving prior to placement.

Next Steps

Participating One-Stops must exhibit a strong partnership with local county Departments of Job and Family Services and be committed to the employment success of Ohio Works First program participants. Workforce Investment Boards interested in participating in the program must submit:

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Ohio Works Incentive Program Application

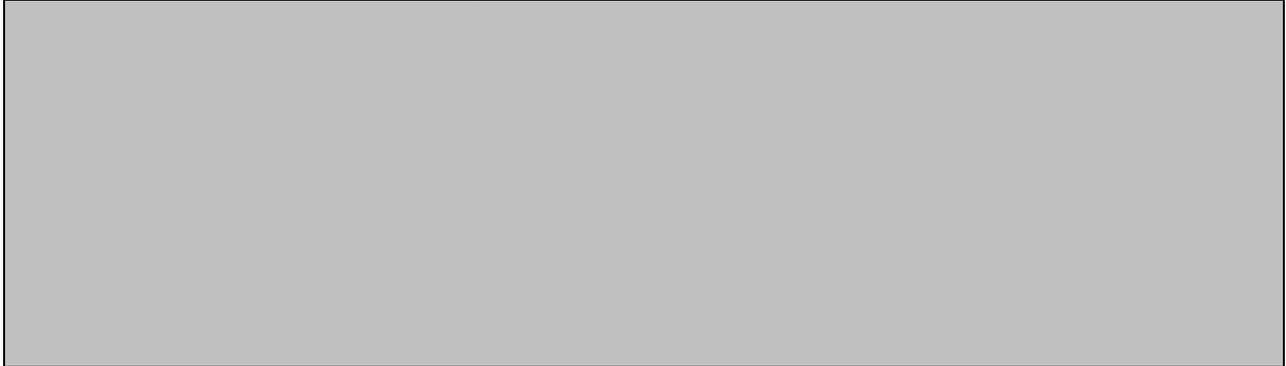
Organization Name	
Organization Address	
Program Contact Person (include name, phone number, and email address)	
Fiscal Contact Person (include name, phone number, and email address)	
Name of Director of Agency (person responsible for signing contract.)	
OAKS (Ohio Administrative Knowledge System) Vendor Number	
Geographical/regional area serviced	

Program Information

Please answer all of the statements/questions in the space available below. Text boxes will expand automatically if more space is needed. However, please submit no more than 5 pages of text for the application (the page limit does not include attachments). Attach a project timeline identifying milestone events and recruitment strategies to the operational plan.

1. Identify the methods and processes the county agency(ies) will use to refer clients to the Workforce Investment Area or One Stop. (No more than a page)

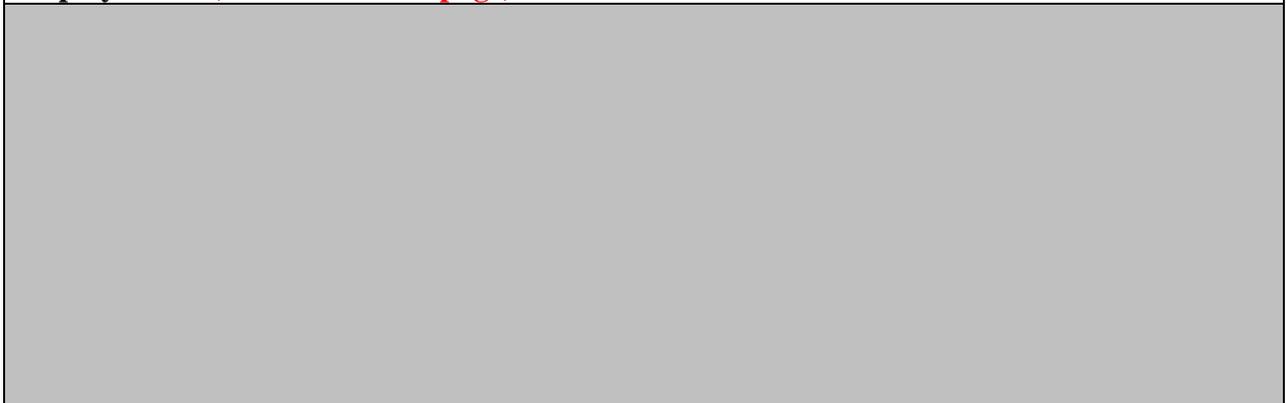
2. Indicate the type of employment and “work readiness” activities your agency will offer to clients. (No more than a half of a page)



3. Describe the One-Stop intake and assessment procedure for new clients. (No more than a page)



4. Identify and describe your methods for identifying and addressing client’s barriers to employment. (No more than a page)



5. Identify methods and processes that will be used for ensuring participant success in maintaining participation in unsubsidized employment (i.e. what types of case management, check-in points, follow-up will be conducted). (No more than a page)

6. Will clients that complete a program milestone successfully receive a monetary incentive? (No more than a page)

7. Will any sub-grantees be used for this project (i.e. will funds be dispersed to a county agency)? (If yes, please describe the procurement process and the timeline to accomplish procurement.) (No more than a half of a page)

8. How will the One-Stop and County Departments of Job and Family Services work together to ensure:

- 1. proper verification is received to confirm a participant is actively engaged in unsubsidized employment at least twenty hours or more per week (at least 86 hours per month);**
- 2. if the individual is still receiving Ohio Works First; and**
- 3. if the individual is no longer receiving Ohio Works First that the benefit stopped due to earned income, the date benefits stopped and the monthly benefit amount prior to termination? (No more than a page)**

9. What number of Ohio Works First participants do you estimate to enroll in this program by county? (No more than a page)