



AUG 01 2008

United States
Department of
Agriculture

Food and
Nutrition
Service

3101 Park
Center Drive

Alexandria, VA
22302-1500

SUBJECT: Questions and Answers on the Farm Bill

TO: Regional Directors
Food Stamp Program

Attached are questions and answers on issues related to the Employment and Training provisions of the Farm Bill. These Q's and A's will be available on the FNS website as well as the FNS partner website.

If you have any questions about the material, please contact Harriet Kornegay (703-305-2501).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Arthur T. Foley".

Arthur T. Foley
Director
Program Development Division

Attachment

Questions and Answers Regarding the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Employment and Training Provisions of the Farm Bill

Section 4108 – Employment, training, and job retention

Question 4108 - 1: Under this provision is the restriction on providing support services to those who become employed lifted?

Answer: Yes. However, the State agency may only provide job retention services to an individual who secured employment after receiving other employment/training services under the E&T program offered by the State agency.

Question 4108 - 2: What types of job retention services are potentially approvable for E&T funding?

Answer: We will address this issue in a proposed rule. The State has discretion until a final rule is issued. If the State agency has questions about certain services, it should confer with FNS before including them in its State E&T plan.

Question 4108 - 3: What types of participant cost related to job retention are reimbursable?

Answer: Under current regulations, the State agency must provide payments to E&T participants for expenses that are reasonable and necessary and directly related to participation in E&T. Reimbursable costs may include, but are not limited to:

- Clothing required for the job;
- Equipment or tools required for the job;
- Test fees;
- Union dues;
- Relocation expenses;
- Tools; and
- Licensing and bonding fees.
- Transportation
- Child care

Question 4108 - 4: Will the job retention funds be part of the 100% federal funding or will they fall under the matching funding?

Answer: State agencies may use their 100 percent Federal E&T grants to pay the costs of administering job retention services as with any approved E&T activity. However, costs incurred by the State agency in connection with allowable participant expenses must be funded by the State agency, with 50 percent reimbursed by the Federal government.

Question 4108 - 5: Would travel costs to and from the actual employment work site be reimbursable?

Answer: Transportation expenses are generally allowable. We will address this issue further in a proposed rule. The State has discretion until a final rule is issued.

Question 4108 - 6: Effective October 1, 2008, volunteers may participate more than 120 hours per month but those required to participate can only be required to do so for up to 120 hours. Is this correct?

Answer: Yes. The total amount of time spent each month by a voluntary participant in an E&T work program, combined with hours worked in a workfare program, and hours worked for compensation is unlimited. The total amount of hours that can be mandated by the State agency (120 hours) is unchanged. Also a mandatory participant may now volunteer for an unlimited amount of additional hours.

Question 4108 - 7: May individuals who are employed 30 hours and are exempt now volunteer to participate?

Answer: Yes. There is no limit on the number of hours per month voluntary participants spend in an E&T component.

Question 4108 - 8: Must a State agency allow a SNAP participant to participate in a State-offered E&T component if the client desires to volunteer for that component (a training or education component, for example)?

Answer: No. The State decides who will participate in the E&T Program.

Section 4122 - Funding of employment and training programs

Question 4122 -1: Does this provision affect the requirement to spend reallocated funds in the same federal fiscal year in which they were allocated?

Answer: No. The change doesn't directly affect State agencies. For FNS, it means unspent carryover funding "goes away" after 15 months and will no longer remain available until it's expended. This takes away some flexibility to reallocate funds and could mean that we can no longer continue to ensure that State agencies will receive no more than a 20 percent decrease in their 100 percent Federal E&T grants from one year to the next.

Question 4122 - 2: Does this provision allow State agencies 15 instead of 12 months to spend their annual 100 percent Federal E&T grants?

Answer: No. State agencies continue to have 12 months. FNS has 3 additional months to reallocate unexpended funds to other States. Reallocated funds must be obligated by the first quarter of each fiscal year.