

DATE: January 17, 2019

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM# 19-01-01

SUBJECT: Changes in Employment and Training Determination of Road to Economic Self-Sufficiency through Employment and Training (RESET) Job Readiness Assessment and Program Referrals

TO: Executive Directors

FROM: Inez Titus
Director
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To inform the County Assistance Offices (CAOs) of a change to criteria used when determining RESET participation referrals to contracted employment and training (E&T) activities. This change is effective upon the posting of this memo.

BACKGROUND

[Operations Memo 14-06-01](#) and [17-10-01](#), Employment and Training Program Changes, advised CAOs to evaluate a cash recipient's RESET status to determine whether a participant was required to participate in a CAO-directed activity or was to be referred to a contracted E&T program.

Per Cash Assistance Handbook 135.11, the CAO currently performs the following process at application or during any referral assessment:

1. Discusses the applicant/recipient's skills, prior work experience, and employability (known as the Job Readiness Assessment);
2. Determines mandatory (ETP 60), mandatory good cause (GC), or exempt status (ETP 52, 53 or 54);
3. Determines the appropriate project referral (EARN, ELECT, KEYS, Work Ready, or Refugee); then
4. Completes a corresponding AMR (PA 1661).

DISCUSSION

The CAO will discuss the individual's skills, prior work experience, and assess employability (known as the Job Readiness Assessment) at the next (whichever comes first):

- Renewal;
- Partial redetermination;
- Compliance review; or
- Change in RESET participation status.

The CAO will determine whether the individual is a mandatory (ETP 60), mandatory with good cause, or exempt status for his or her RESET program participation requirement. Participants should not be terminated from their current project enrollment.

UPDATE TO THE JOB READINESS ASSESSMENT

The CAO will complete a job readiness assessment, in conjunction with the AMR, to identify criteria to determine the RESET program participation requirement and project referral. The completion of the job readiness assessment should be a discussion between the participant and the CAO. The job readiness assessment should include the questions listed below as applicable and should guide the discussion. Responses will be used to aid the CAO in deciding what program referral is necessary.

These include the initial question and potential follow-up questions (italicized) the CAO may wish to ask based on how the initial question is answered:

Job Readiness Assessment	
Employment	Experience
Are you currently working?	Tell me about your last five most recent jobs (dates/roles/pay/hours worked).
<i>If yes: Where do you work and how many hours per week do you work?</i>	What kind of job skills or training do you have?
<i>If no: Tell me a little about why you're currently unemployed.</i>	What do you think you're good at?
Are you able to work?	Have you ever done any volunteer work or community service?
Work Interests (Immediate or intermediate goals)	Career Interests (long-term goals)
What kind of job interests you?	Is there a career that you would like to work toward?
What job do you think you could get today?	<i>If yes: What steps do you need to take to prepare yourself for this career?</i>
What kind of work do you see yourself doing in a year?	
Education Information	Post-Secondary Education
What is the highest grade you completed?	Do you have an associate degree?
Did you graduate high school or receive a general equivalency diploma?	Have you completed any college semesters/credits?
Did you have any learning problems in school?	Do you have a bachelor's degree?
Do you have any licenses or certificates?	Do you have a master's degree?

English Proficiency	
Is English your first language?	Do you speak any other languages?
<i>If no: What language do you prefer?</i>	Have you ever been tested for English fluency?
<i>If no: Do you require an interpreter?</i>	Are you interested in English Literacy Training?
Can you read and write in English?	
Legal Barriers	
Do you have any previous criminal convictions or pending charges that would affect your ability to get a job?	Are you on probation or parole?
Are you responsible for fines/fees/costs?	Are you on a payment plan?
<i>If yes: In what counties do you owe fines/fees/costs?</i>	Are you interested in learning about Criminal History services and options?
Housing Situation	
Where do you live and who do you live with?	Are you currently in a shelter?
Is your current housing situation stable?	Is your current housing situation safe for your family?
Do you and your family have person space where you live?	Have there been changes in your housing situation recently?
Transportation	
How do you get around?	Do you have a valid driver's license?
Do you or someone in your household own a vehicle?	<i>If no: Is your license suspended? When can it be restored?</i>
<i>If yes: Is the vehicle currently drivable, inspected, and insured?</i>	<i>If no: Have you ever had a driver's license?</i>
Do you have access to someone else's vehicle?	<i>If no: Are you interested in working towards earning a driver's license?</i>
Do you have access to public transportation (bus/train/taxi)?	Do you have any specific issues with transportation that would prohibit you from getting to your job/training/school/medical appointments/child's daycare?
Pregnancy (self and/or household)	
Are you or someone in your household pregnant?	Have you recently been pregnant?
<i>If yes: When is your due date?</i>	Have you ever had a high-risk pregnancy?
Medical Health	Mental Health
Is anyone in the household, including yourself, receiving care for an ongoing diagnosed illness or disease?	Is anyone in the household, including yourself, under the care of a psychologist or psychiatrist?
Is anyone in the household, including yourself, taking prescribed medication?	Is anyone in the household, including yourself, receiving any sort of counseling services?
Alcohol Abuse	Drug Abuse
Does anyone in your household, including yourself, have a history of alcohol abuse?	Does anyone in your household, including yourself, have a history of street drug abuse?
Is anyone in your household, including yourself, seeking rehabilitation services for alcohol abuse?	Does anyone in your household, including yourself, have a history of prescription drug abuse?
	Is anyone in your household, including yourself, seeking rehabilitation services for drug abuse?
Domestic Violence	Safety
Have you ever filed a PFA?	Do you feel safe in your home?
Do you have an active PFA?	Are your children safe in your home?
Have you ever been to an emergency abuse shelter?	Are you currently in an emergency abuse shelter?
School-age Children	Children and Youth
Do you have any school-age children?	Has there ever been Children and Youth involvement with any of your children?
<i>If yes: Do any of your school-age children have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) or receive wrap-around services?</i>	Has there ever been Youth Justice or Probation involvement with any of your children?

Do any of your school-age children have truancy issues?	
Caregiver	
Who is the primary caregiver for your children?	Is there anyone in your household who is disabled/elderly that requires around the clock care?
	<i>If yes: What is their relation to you?</i>
	<i>If yes: Who is their primary caregiver?</i>
Childcare Concerns	Disabled/Elderly Care Concerns
Do any of your children require childcare services?	Do any elderly/disabled adults in your household require adult daycare services?
Do you have any concerns regarding childcare?	Do you have any elderly/disabled adults already receiving adult daycare services?
Do you have any children currently enrolled in Pre-K, Headstart, Early Headstart, or childcare services?	Has your elderly/disabled adult been connected to any in-home care options?
If your child is ill or the daycare center is closed, what is your back-up childcare plan?	If your relative is too ill or the adult daycare center is closed, what is your back-up care plan?

UPDATES TO REFERRALS

Program Referral Chart	
IF	THEN
Individual is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> enrolled in a post-secondary education or high school equivalency program at one of Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges; expressed an intent to enroll in a post-secondary education or high school equivalency program at one of Pennsylvania’s 14 colleges within 60 days of the next available semester; or exempt but volunteers if appropriate. 	KEYS
Individual has: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a recent work history; or an occupation-specific degree, certification, or job skill; Individual is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> employed less than the mandatory hourly participation requirement (See 135.21 Employment and Training Hourly Requirements); at the time of referral, enrolled in an approved self-initiated education or career training other than one of Pennsylvania’s 14 community colleges; 	EARN

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exempt but volunteers if appropriate; or • requesting assistance with job search and finding employment may choose to participate in EARN regardless of ETP or GC status 	
<p>The individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has Good Cause 53 and has been identified as having “limited employability” referred for the number of hours the individual is able to participate; • does not already have a high school diploma or GED and is enrolled in or interested in enrolling in a high school equivalency program not at a community college; • is under age 22 pursuing or interested in pursuing a high school diploma or GED if county does not have an Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) provider; • is exempt but volunteers if appropriate; * • is in the third trimester of pregnancy when the PA 635 indicates employable; • has Good Cause 55 and has been identified as having barriers to participation; * • has multiple barriers to participation and has demonstrated a pattern of being terminated from E&T programs due to these barriers; or • Extended TANF and has a permanent disability (Track 2) * <p>*except in Philadelphia as determined by local CAO procedure</p>	<p>WORK READY</p>
<p>Individual is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • under age 22 pursuing a high school diploma or GED and the individual is enrolled in a high school or GED program served by the Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) program 	<p>ELECT</p>
<p>Individual is determined mandatory (ETP Code 60) and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is under age 22 pursuing a high school diploma or GED if county does not have an Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) provider IF they opt out of a Work Ready referral; 	<p>CAO-DIRECTED</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is meeting the hourly requirement in unsubsidized employment and have no need for case management services; or • if there is no core activity available (this activity requires BEP approval. See Section 135.2, Employment and Training Activities) 	
<p>Individual is determined mandatory (ETP Code 60), they are a refugee TANF household recently resettled, and the individual:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • has extreme barriers that require remediation before entering a mainstream program. Extreme barriers include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - illiterate in their own language - severe trauma survivor (victim of torture, human trafficking victim, prisoner of war) - has no functional English Learner level; or - in the first year of resettlement <p style="text-align: right;">45 CFR §400.146 45 CFR §400.147</p> <p>A refugee TANF recipient may volunteer to participate in EARN, WorkReady, ELECT, and/or KEYS if they meet other participation criteria instead of a refugee contracted employment program.</p> <p>If a refugee is exempt but volunteers, they may not be referred to a refugee employment provider, even if they have the barriers listed.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">CONTRACTED REFUGEE EMPLOYMENT PROVIDER</p> <p>*See Supplemental Handbook, Chapter 730: Refugee Assistance Program</p> <p>*If no program exists, please utilize the “Work Ready Stop Gap” procedure. This procedure involves opening the refugee in a CAO Activity and manually referring them to the local Work Ready for physical hours of participation until the refugee receives a Social Security Number. The CAO must contact the Pennsylvania Refugee Resettlement Program and advise them of the situation so that they may contact the nearest contracted refugee employment program and they will provide job development and refugee-related case management services for the client.</p>

NOTE: Per PC EPP-18398-135, TANF eligible high school students without children are not referred to programming but are placed into tracking code 74 (in the good cause dropdown menu).

Reminder: The CAO should engage in a discussion about volunteering to participate with an employment and training vendor if the individual is exempt (ETP Codes 52, 53 or 54) or has been granted GC (GC codes 53, 55, 56, 57, 58, 86, or 87). In addition, the CAO should explain the benefits of engagement with the program to the participant. The CAO may refer participants who wish to volunteer for participation to the appropriate project including Work Ready (WR). For example, WR may be able to assist a participant who has difficulty finding home care attendants or possibly finding employers that would work with his or her disability, or a participant who is claiming GC because of domestic violence (DV) may be provided help in connecting with the local DV program.

CAOs and contractors will continue to provide equal access to all E&T programs and services to individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), including providing information on non-core English as a Second Language services that may be available in the community. All RESET rules apply to LEP individuals.

NOTE: Diversion should be offered to all applicants who meet TANF and Diversion criteria before authorization of ongoing TANF cash assistance.

NEXT STEPS

1. Retain this Operations Memorandum until the information is incorporated into the Cash Assistance Handbook, Chapter 135.
2. Any questions may be directed to the Bureau of Employment Programs, TANF Policy Unit via RA-PWBOP.DETP@pa.gov.