

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 1999

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HOUSE BILL 1257

Short Title: Welfare Reform Changes.

(Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Earle and Alexander.

Referred to: Welfare Reform.

April 15, 1999

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO MAKE CHANGES TO THE TEMPORARY ASSISTANCE FOR NEEDY FAMILIES LAW PERTAINING TO THE MEDICAID STANDARD OF NEED, PAY-AFTER-PERFORMANCE FOR TWO-PARENT FAMILIES, TIME LIMITATIONS ON ASSISTANCE, AND OTHER AREAS OF WELFARE REFORM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. G.S. 108A-27.2 is amended by adding the following new subdivisions to read:

"The Department shall have the following general duties with respect to the Work First Program:

...

(1b) Ensure that eligibility criteria across the State include the Medicaid Standard of Need for the Categorically Needy;

(1c) Ensure that qualified two-parent families receive assistance for three months after qualifying for assistance, in order to encourage families to stay together and to overcome barriers to self-sufficiency and gainful employment."

Section 2. G.S. 108A-27.9(c) is amended by adding the following new subdivisions to read:

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1 "(c) The State Plan shall include the following generally applicable provisions:

2 ...

3 (1b) Provisions to ensure that eligibility criteria across the State include the
4 Medicaid Eligibility Standard of Need for the categorically needy;

5 (1c) Provisions to ensure that qualified two-parent families receive
6 assistance for three months after qualifying for assistance, in order to
7 encourage families to stay together and to overcome barriers to self-
8 sufficiency and gainful employment."

9 Section 3. G.S. 108A-27.1 reads as rewritten:

10 "**§ 108A-27.1. Time limitations on assistance.**

11 (a) Under the Standard Work First Program, unless an extension or an exemption
12 is provided pursuant to the provisions of the Part or the State Plan, any cash assistance
13 provided to a person or family in the employment program shall only be provided for a
14 cumulative total of 24 months. After having received cash assistance for 24 months, the
15 person or the family may reapply for cash assistance, but not until after ~~36~~18 months
16 from the last month the person or the family received cash assistance. This subsection
17 shall not apply to child-only cases.

18 (b) Electing Counties may set any time limitations on assistance it finds
19 appropriate, so long as the time limitations do not conflict with or exceed any federal
20 time limitations."

21 Section 4. G.S. 108A-27.3(a) is amended by adding the following new
22 subdivision to read:

23 "(a) The duties of the county boards of commissioners in Electing Counties under
24 the Work First Program are as follows:

25 ...

26 (10a) Ensure that all Work First cases are reviewed no later than three months
27 prior to expiration of time limitations for receiving cash assistance to:

28 a. Ensure that time limitations on assistance have been computed
29 correctly;

30 b. Ensure that the family is informed in writing about public
31 assistance benefits for which the family is eligible even while
32 cash assistance is no longer available;

33 c. Provide for an extension of cash assistance benefits if the family
34 qualifies for an extension; and

35 d. Review family status and assist the family in identifying
36 resources and support the family needs to maintain employment
37 and family stability."

38 Section 5. G.S. 108A-27.4(e) is amended by adding the following new
39 subdivision to read:

40 "(e) Each county shall include in its County Plan the following:

41 ...

1 (7) The process by which the county will review all Work First caseloads
2 no later than three months prior to expiration of time limitations for
3 receiving cash assistance to:

- 4 a. Ensure that time limitations on assistance have been computed
5 correctly;
6 b. Ensure that the family is informed in writing about public
7 assistance benefits for which the family is eligible even while
8 cash assistance is no longer available;
9 c. Provide for an extension of cash assistance benefits if the family
10 qualifies for an extension; and
11 d. Review family status and assist the family in identifying
12 resources and support the family needs to maintain employment
13 and family stability."

14 Section 6. G.S. 108A-27.6(a) is amended by adding the following new
15 subdivision to read:

16 "(a) Except as otherwise provided in this Article, the Standard Work First Program
17 shall be administered by the county departments of social services. The county
18 departments of social services in Standard Program Counties shall:

19 ...

20 (10) Ensure that all Work First cases are reviewed no later than three months
21 prior to expiration of time limitations for receiving cash assistance to:

- 22 a. Ensure that time limitations on assistance have been computed
23 correctly;
24 b. Ensure that the family is informed about public assistance
25 benefits for which the family is eligible even while cash
26 assistance is no longer available;
27 c. Provide for an extension of cash assistance benefits if the family
28 qualifies for an extension; and
29 d. Review family status and assist the family in identifying
30 resources and support the family needs to maintain employment
31 and family stability."

32 Section 7. G.S. 108A-27.2 is amended by adding the following new
33 subdivision to read:

34 "The Department shall have the following general duties with respect to the Work
35 First Program:

36 ...

37 (14) Review the county Work First Program of each electing county and
38 recommend whether the county should continue to be designated an
39 electing county or whether it should be redesignated as a standard
40 county. In conducting its review and making its recommendation, the
41 Department shall:

- 1 a. Examine and consider the results of the Department's monitoring
2 and evaluation of the impact of the electing county's Work First
3 Program as required under subdivision (9) of this section;
4 b. Determine whether the electing county's Work First Program's
5 unique design requires implementation by an electing county or
6 whether the Work First Program could be implemented by a
7 county designated as a standard county;
8 c. Determine whether the electing county's Work First Program and
9 policies are unique and innovative in meeting the purpose of the
10 Work First Program as stated under G.S. 108A-27, and State and
11 federal laws, rules, and regulations, as compared to other
12 standard and electing county Work First programs.
13 The Department shall make its recommendation and the reasons therefor
14 to the Joint Legislative Public Assistance Commission at the time the
15 Department submits the State Plan to the Commission for review as
16 required under G.S. 108A-27.9(a)."

17 Section 8. The Department of Health and Human Services shall amend the
18 North Carolina Temporary Assistance for Needy Families State Plan to include and
19 reflect changes to State law made by this act and any other act of the 1999 General
20 Assembly.

21 Section 9. This act is effective when it becomes law.