

DATE: July 21, 2016

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM #16-07-03 Employment & Training

SUBJECT: The Education Leading to Employment and Career Training (ELECT) Program

TO: CAO Executive Directors

FROM: Inez Titus
Director,
Bureau of Operations

PURPOSE

To inform the County Assistance Offices (CAOs) that there are changes to the operation of the ELECT program.

BACKGROUND

The principal goal of the ELECT programs is to assist eligible expectant, custodial, and noncustodial parents under the age of 22 to break the cycle of welfare dependence by remaining in school, maintaining regular attendance, obtaining a high school diploma or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) certificate, and securing post-graduation employment, education, or training that will help them become successful parents and self-sufficient adults.

In addition to promoting self-sufficiency programs, ELECT will provide participants with pregnancy prevention information, guidance, and services to reduce the incidence of secondary youth pregnancies. They provide services to promote the importance of healthy parental relationships and encourage the significance of fathers in their children's lives. These services are provided to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP) recipients and to those not currently receiving TANF benefits through the Family Works (FW) initiative. These participants must be attending secondary education at one of the 29 ELECT programs.

The Department of Human Services (DHS) and the Pennsylvania Department of Education (PDE) collaborate to oversee the 29 Intermediate Units (IUs) and Local Education Agencies (LEAs) that administer these services across Pennsylvania.

DISCUSSION

The Office of Income Maintenance (OIM) has resumed oversight of the ELECT Program as of July 1, 2015. The change in oversight has resulted in the return of the FW extension and a change in the ELECT referral process between the CAO and ELECT providers effective July 1, 2016.

Family Works Program:

The FW program is designed for individuals that are not receiving TANF cash assistance. In order to qualify for FW, the student's gross income must be within 235 percent of the Federal Poverty Income Guideline (FPIG). The student does not have to be employed to qualify for services and the income of the student's parent(s) is not used to calculate eligibility. Unearned income and resources are not counted; however, the student must provide verification of earned income.

A putative father must verify paternity. The Paternity Tracking System through the Pennsylvania Automated Child Support Enforcement System should be checked to verify paternity. [Attachment 1- PTS User Guide](#) gives detailed instructions on how to conduct this inquiry. A non-custodial parent is expected to provide verification with a birth certificate, court order or other legal documents. The minor child does not have to be receiving TANF or be TANF-eligible in order for their parent to be enrolled in ELECT.

FW participants have the right to appeal a decision or failure to act by the CAO which affects eligibility for FW benefits/services. When the eligibility determination is for the Non-Continuous Eligibility period only, or if ongoing eligibility is discontinued, the client may appeal the CAO's decision and FW benefits/services may continue during the pending appeal period.

ELECT Referrals

There are two ways that a student can be referred to the ELECT program:

The CAO initiates the ELECT referral. CAOs will discuss the availability of the ELECT program, including the FW initiative with potentially eligible individuals as they would with any appropriate program available to provide additional services to our clients. The CAOs will also provide referred clients with contact information for the program to which they are referred. The CAO will create electronic referrals to ELECT for TANF and FW eligible individuals that are attending one of the IUs or LEAs that are served by ELECT. [Attachment 2- ELECT Program List](#) provides the ELECT program information.

The ELECT program requests an ELECT referral from the CAO. Referrals from ELECT to the CAO will be done through the PA 1720, [Family Works Application \(Attachment 3\)](#), or a request for an electronic referral for those that have been identified as TANF recipients.

CAO Responsibilities

For TANF students, the CAO will submit an electronic ELECT referral by creating a “Y” Project on the Employment and Training Project screen. The need for an Agreement of Responsibility (AMR) depends on the age of the student. Students under the age of 18 do not require an AMR. All students age 18 or older must have an AMR. If the student has an existing AMR for participation in high school or GED, the AMR must be updated with the ELECT program contact information. If the student does not have an existing AMR, one must be completed for participation in high school/GED and list the ELECT program’s contact information. Copies of the AMR must be submitted to the ELECT programs. Failure to comply with the ELECT program will NOT result in sanction. A student’s compliance is based on their participation in the high school or GED program, not the ELECT program.

For non-TANF students, the CAO will make a FW eligibility determination. If eligible, upon FW authorization in eCIS, the CAO will submit an electronic referral to ELECT by creating a “Y” project on the Employment and Training Project screen. Applicants for FW do not have to report to the CAO to complete an FW application. The ELECT provider will forward a completed FW application and all supporting documentation to the appropriate CAO for a determination of eligibility; however, the CAO may also initiate FW applications for SNAP/Medical Assistance (MA) students. The CAO determines eligibility for FW based on the application and documentation received.

The CAO processes FW benefits through eCIS, in the same manner as TANF, SNAP or MA. FW clients will be opened with a “SC” category code, ETP code 70, and a referral to ELECT will be completed through the opening of the “Y” Project. [Attachment 4- Family Works Processing Instructions](#) provides detailed directions on how to open the “SC” category. If the applicant appears to meet the income requirement, the ELECT program is authorized to provide service on a temporary basis from the date the application is signed through the date the CAO determines eligibility or ineligibility.

Data Entry

The CAO is responsible for the initial “Y” project entry in eCIS. Monthly data entry responsibilities rest with the ELECT providers.

ELECT providers will be responsible for tracking and data entering the participation hours of all ELECT students. Students meeting satisfactory progress in their secondary school or GED program will have their hours deemed to their full hourly participation requirement by participating in ELECT and tracked under Activity Code (AC) 13: GED/High School. All activities must be recorded weekly, including employment hours. The ELECT program is required to data-enter all participants' education and training hours by the 15th of the month following the month of participation. ELECT programs will also be responsible for tracking employment hours for participants that are age 18 and older, under activity code 33. Employment hours are required to be data entered by the last day of the month following the month of participation.

ELECT providers will administer the ELECT program utilizing the [ELECT DHS Policy and Procedure Manual \(Attachment 5\)](#).

Current Enrollee Procedure

Beginning July 1, 2016, ELECT providers will begin identifying current enrollees that receive TANF or may be eligible for Family Works. The CAO ELECT Liaison will receive a list of ELECT participants that have been identified as receiving TANF. The CAO will have 15 days to create a referral using the "Y" project for TANF recipients participating in ELECT. The CAO ELECT Liaison will receive Family Works applications for all ELECT participants that are not receiving TANF. The CAO will have 30 days to process the Family Works application and make a referral to the ELECT program.

NEXT STEPS

1. Share this memorandum with appropriate staff.
2. Share the ELECT DHS Manual with appropriate staff.
3. Questions about this Memo or the ELECT program can be directed to the Bureau of Policy, Division of Employment and Training, at (717) 787-1302.

Attachments

Attachment 1- PTS User Guide

Attachment 2 - ELECT Program List

Attachment 3 - Family Works Application

Attachment 4 - Family Works Processing Instructions

Attachment 5 - ELECT DHS Policy and Procedure Manual