

Committee Action Item

Approval to Apply for a Statewide Waiver Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) Program

Food stamp recipients who meet certain criteria must complete hours in an activity to continue getting benefits. Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) are not able to receive food stamps for more than three months in a 36-month period unless they participate in a qualified activity each month and submit proof of their hours to the State of Florida. Florida offers time limited ABAWDs the opportunity to participate in activities through the Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSET) program. The FSET program introduces the participant to the work requirements, assists the participant with finding an activity and records the participant's hours of participation in a data entry system. If the participant does not complete his/her hours and does not have a good reason for missing his/her activity, the FSET program staff reports the issue to the Department of Children and Families (DCF).

States may ask to "waive" ABAWDs from the time limit provisions. These waiver requests are submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA requires data to demonstrate that ABAWDs are not able to find work due to high unemployment or lack of jobs in the area. The USDA announced that states meeting alternative triggers associated with Unemployment Compensation claims and federal extended benefit triggers can apply for a waiver that excuses otherwise time limited ABAWDs from time limits. The USDA stated that Florida may submit a request to waive ABAWDs Statewide.

At its February 18, 2009 meeting, the WFI Workforce Readiness and Performance Council approved a motion to approve the State's applying to become a "Waiver State" by no later than October and asked a workgroup to review the impact and timing of making this application. Subsequently, the workgroup met to review various options and now recommends applying for a statewide "waiver" for implementation effective July 1, 2009. The workgroup's full report is scheduled to be presented April 7, 2009 for review by the Workforce Readiness Committee acting on behalf of the council.

Attachment: Options for Services

Needed Action

Review the workgroup recommendation and ratify the approval of the Workforce Readiness and Performance Council for Florida to apply for a statewide waiver (Option 1) excusing ABAWDs from time limits to be implemented July 1, 2009.