

STATE OF MICHIGAN



JOHN ENGLER, Governor

FAMILY INDEPENDENCE AGENCY

235 S GRAND AVE, PO BOX 30037, LANSING MI 48909

DOUGLAS E. HOWARD, Director

October 5, 2000

The Honorable Mark Jansen, Chair
House Subcommittee on Appropriations
1901 House Office Building
Lansing, MI 48909

Dear Representative Jansen:

Section 630 (1) of Public Act 294 of 2000 requires the Family Independence Agency (FIA) to submit a progress report to the house and senate appropriations subcommittees with jurisdiction over FIA and the Michigan Department of Career Development (MDCD) on their continuing efforts to collaborate on refining and making available to Work First participants clear joint guidelines on the eligibility of participants for post-employment training support and on how training/education hours can be applied toward federal work participation requirements.

FIA and MDCD continue to work collaboratively to develop statewide Work First policy and program guidelines, which define allowable workforce development activities and services, including occupationally relevant training and education options that meet state and federal requirements.

Last year, we implemented two enhancements to our occupational training and vocational programs. The first model allows Work First participants who are employed at least 10 hours/week to count up to 10 hours of classroom seat time, matched by up to 10 hours of study time, toward their participation requirement. The second model allows Work First clients to participate in a full-time (minimum 30 hours/week) vocational program for up to six months. These are in addition to the existing model which allowed full-time participation in internships, practicums or clinicals required for licensure, degree completion or professional certification, with no work requirement.

FIA and MDCCD review drafts and provide input on policy issuances of the other agency to insure that all policies are consistent between the two agencies, while delineating the individual responsibilities of each agency and the roles of respective staff. Additionally, there are regular meetings at the state and local level to discuss how program policies are being implemented and presented to our mutual customers.

All Work First participants are required to attend a Joint Orientation presented by Michigan Works! Agency (MWA) and FIA staff, during which the various training and education options are presented, along with other program services and client responsibilities. An Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is developed by Work First staff, in conjunction with each participant, to design the most appropriate employment and training plan for that participant. The process includes an assessment and review of the participant's skills, work history, educational needs, and career goals. It also includes a review of the training and education options presented at the Joint Orientation.

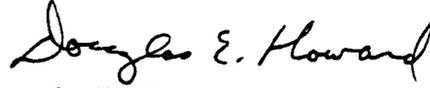
Staff in both agencies, as well as local service providers, are encouraged to continually apprise participants of the various education and training programs and supportive services that can be accessed at any time they are receiving any form of public assistance. The MWAs also use a variety of other methods to make participants aware of training and education options, including radio, television, and print advertisement, and direct mailings.

Recently the MDCCD and FIA developed a poster to publicize training that will be displayed in the Michigan Works! Service Centers, county and district FIA offices, and other sites visited by Work First clients, including food stamp distribution centers, day care establishments, and other community centers. The poster promotes training as a tool through which to obtain employment that can lead to a better job and a better future for the entire family.

Both the MDCCD and FIA are committed to continue working together to clearly articulate and promote education and training as a foundation for career development that expands employment options and helps to end dependency on public assistance.

If you have any questions, please contact Janet Strobe at 373-2536.

Sincerely,



Douglas E. Howard

cc: Speaker Charles Perricone
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Minority Vice Chair
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