

STEPS TOWARD EMPLOYMENT
&
PERMANENT SELF-SUFFICIENCY
(STEPS)
PROGRAM PACKET

The mission of the STEPS unit is to work together with clients, co-workers, and partner agencies to assist and encourage clients to obtain self-sufficiency through employment.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page 3Program Overview

Page 3Ohio Means Jobs Allen County Job Center

Page 4 & 5STEPS Activities for Cash and/or Food Assistance

Page 5 & 6Supportive Services

Page 6Excused Absence/Good Cause Reasons (OWF Recipients)

Page 7Excused Absence/Good Cause Reasons (ABAWD)

Page 7 & 8Sanction, Compliance, and Penalty Policy

Page 8 & 9SNAP Employment & Training Rights & Responsibilities

Page 9Complaint Procedure for Worker Displacement

Page 9 & 10Conciliation Process

Page 10Job Quit Good/Just Cause Comparison Chart

Program Overview

This packet includes the Ohio Works First (OWF) and Food Assistance Employment and Training (FAET) program requirements. The purpose of the STEPS Program is to help you become self-sufficient. Please be sure to read the entire packet as it tells you about your obligation to seek and obtain employment if you apply for cash assistance and/or food assistance and the consequences if you fail to participate in the STEPS Program. **Note: cash assistance received since October, 1997 is limited to 36 months.**

Self-Sufficiency Contract & Plan

You must sign a Self-Sufficiency Contract and Plan if you apply for cash benefits; a signed plan is required for food assistance recipients. The Contract specifies your obligations to participate in STEPS while you are applying for or receiving benefits. The Plan outlines the requirements for you to take to become self-sufficient. Your application for cash and maybe food assistance for yourself will be denied if you are unwilling to sign the self-sufficiency contract and plan. If you do not participate in the specific activities of your Plan, your cash benefits and food assistance may be sanctioned and you may not be eligible for certain supportive services such as, Prevention, Retention and Contingency (PRC), etc. This also means cash benefits for your entire household will stop, and you will be removed from Food Assistance for the periods listed in the Sanction and Compliance Policy found in your packet. **If any changes occur that might affect your participation, you must call your STEPS Social Service Worker immediately.**

If applying for OWF and/or Food Assistance: EVEN THOUGH IT MAY BE SEVERAL WEEKS BEFORE BENEFITS ARE RECEIVED, YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO PARTICIPATE IN ONE OR MORE STEPS ACTIVITIES.

The Appraisal

The goal of the appraisal is to discuss the requirements necessary for you to become self-sufficient. During the appraisal, a plan of action based on your education, work history, skills, abilities, interests, challenges, and supportive services needs will be established and written on your Self-Sufficiency Plan. This Plan is designed to enhance your employability skills so you become self-sufficient and do not use up your limited number of monthly cash benefits. If a work eligible individual in an assistance group is the victim of domestic violence, ACDJFS will take into consideration the location of the site, and appropriateness of the activity when making an assignment. The parent or caretaker must be actively seeking help, as evidenced by residence in a spousal abuse shelter, a current protective court order, a police report or a sworn affidavit coupled with documented steps to resolve the situation (such as retention of an attorney).

Required Hours of Participation

- OWF**
- Assistance Group with one work eligible individual – 30 hours per week
 - Assistance Group with two work eligible individuals with no federally funded child care – 35 hours per week for the two, with one individual required 130 monthly core hours
 - Assistance Group with two work eligible individuals receiving federally funded child care – 55 hours per week for the two, with one individual required 130 monthly core hours and the other individual required 87 monthly core hours and an additional 22 non-core hours
 - Assistance Group with two work eligible individuals where one is disabled – 30 hours per week
 - Assistance Group with a work eligible individual who is the only parent or specified relative in need with a child under age 6 – 20 hours per week
 - Assistance Group with a recipient who is married or a head of household and has not attained 20 years of age
 - must maintain satisfactory attendance at high school or the equivalent; or
 - participate in education directly related to employment for an average of 20 hours per week

Note: Both parents in a two parent assistance group are required to participate unless circumstances warrant assigning all required hours to one parent.

Note: WEP & Community Service follow the fair labor standards act (FLSA), your OWF grant and amount of food assistance will be added together and a calculation will be made by dividing the amount by the Federal or State minimum wage (whichever is highest) after a deduction for any child support payments retained by the State.

FOOD ASSISTANCE only: Amount of food assistance divided by federal or state minimum wage, which ever is highest, not to exceed 120 hours per month.

ABLE BODIED ADULT WITHOUT DEPENDENTS (ABAWD): A person between the ages of 18 and 50 with no children in the household, must either be employed for at least 20 hours per week, participating in and complying with the requirements of a work program 20 hours per week, examples would be a program under the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 or a program under section 236 of the Trade Act of 1974, or participate as assigned in a Work Experience Program (WEP).

Ohio Means Jobs
ALLEN COUNTY JOB CENTER
419-999-0360

This facility is located on the first (1st) floor of the Allen County Dept. of Job and Family Services (ACDJFS) office and is available for use by all Allen County residents to find a job, find a better job, or explore different career options. There are many partners located within the One Stop Center that offer their services such as the Workforce Investment Act (WIOA). You may be referred to use the resource room for your job search or any other services that are offered by the partners.

STEPS ACTIVITIES FOR CASH AND/OR FOOD ASSISTANCE

You may be assigned to one or more activities at a time.

Employment – Subsidized or unsubsidized.

You may still be eligible for all or part of your cash assistance, food assistance, medical card, child care services, transportation, and other supportive services depending upon the type of assistance, your family size, and the income you earn from your job once you become employed. **When you get a job**, you will need to call your STEPS Social Service Worker immediately. If your employment does not meet the required hours, you will be required to participate in additional STEPS activities.

Quitting a job or reducing your work hours without just cause can result in a six month ineligibility for cash assistance for your entire household, and ineligibility for yourself for Food Assistance for six months. Even if you think you have a good reason to quit, you must call your STEPS Social Service Worker to discuss the situation. Your STEPS Social Service Worker is available to help resolve difficulties encountered on the job and with keeping your job.

Job Search/Job Readiness – OWF JS/JR participants are limited to a maximum of six weeks in a 12 month period, no more than four may be consecutive, FAET JS participants are assigned no less than four consecutive weeks not more than six weeks in duration during a twelve month period, FAET JR participants are not limited in the assignment duration, types include:

➤ **Job Search**

Classroom instruction in the strategies and skills in job seeking; supervised telephone job search activities; job lead development and self-directed job search (you must make the assigned number of employer contacts and submit your Job Leads Log as assigned. Job Search involves submitting applications or resumes to employers, documenting these contacts, and reporting as scheduled); identifying and overcoming personal barriers to employment; building self confidence and selling yourself; good grooming and dress techniques; managing time; money and household budgets; obtaining proper dependent care and supervision of dependents while working; conducting self assessments to determine employment options and training needs; completing resumes, work histories, and application forms; learning and using good interviewing techniques; using resources such as the telephone, telephone directories, newspapers, friends and relatives; contacting the individual who is hiring; maintaining good records of job search activities; understanding employer expectations; understanding unions; benefits, taxes, deduction, and hospitalization policies; being prompt and punctual for work; accepting supervision positively; relating to other employees and retaining the job as a step toward security and independence.

➤ **Job Readiness**

Preparation to seek or obtain employment which may include, weekly job readiness seminars, monthly job readiness classes, life skills training and substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment or rehabilitation activities.

On the Job Training (OJT)/Subsidized Employment Program (SEP)

Is a tool intended to offer potential job candidates an opportunity to secure employment providing the knowledge and skills essential to perform the job while giving an employer an incentive to hire them. The position must meet the required hours or you will be required to participate in additional STEPS activities.

A.M.E (Assist, Mentor and Educate) Program

You must attend all classes and training sessions according to your schedule. At least once a month you will receive a schedule indicating where you are to report for your training and the number of hours you are required. Actual reporting times may be scheduled by ACDJFS or the site supervisor. **If you do not receive a schedule by the 3rd day (not counting Saturday or Sunday) of each month, you are required to contact your STEPS Social Service Worker immediately to avoid a possible sanction.** This program offers classes that teach job skills, provide mentoring, assist with job search and job readiness, assist you with problems you may encounter after you obtain employment, and work experience programs.

Work Experience Program (WEP) or Community Service Program (CSP)

WEP and CSP are to provide experience and training for participants in order to assist them to move into employment. You must report to participate at your site as assigned. You will receive a schedule which indicates where you are to report, and the hours required for your work experience. Actual reporting times may be scheduled by ACDJFS or the site. **If you do not receive a schedule by the 3rd day (not counting Saturday or Sunday) of each month, you are required to contact your STEPS Social Service Worker immediately to avoid a possible sanction.** Ohio Administrative Code 5101:4-3-34 is followed when developing and monitoring these sites. You are covered under Worker's Compensation for an injury at a WEP or CSP site. ANY injury on the site must be reported to your worksite Supervisor immediately. It is important that you notify any doctors or hospitals treating you that you need a Worker's Compensation claim form and to submit it to your STEPS Social Service Worker. Programs are subject to FLSA requirements.

Job Retention

After securing employment your STEPS Social Service Worker is available to help resolve issues you may encounter on the job. You may also be eligible for supportive services such as transportation, daycare, assistance with purchasing uniforms, shoes/boots etc. while employed. Contact your STEPS Social Service Worker if you are in need of these services.

LEAP (Learning, Earning and Parenting) OWF

The goal of LEAP is for you to obtain a GED or high school diploma. You must attend secondary school or General Equivalency Diploma (GED) classes and meet the attendance requirements. There is a \$62 incentive for regular school attendance. A participant will lose the \$62 incentive and the cash assistance will be reduced if the participant fails to meet the requirements of the LEAP program. LEAP is required for individuals under 19 who are pregnant or have a child, and who have not received a high school diploma or GED. You may be eligible for a grade completion bonus of \$100 and a graduation bonus of \$500.

Education & Training

If you are attending college, a vocational education program, an adult certificate program, or an industrial skills certificate program your school hours may count toward your STEPS requirement, limited to 12 months for OWF participants. Individuals who possess a degree, certificate, or license will not be approved for additional education and training to fulfill STEPS requirements. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of supervisor or administrator. Program must be in a classroom setting. Computer Based Training (CBT) will not be approved for participation. **You must provide STEPS with an official class schedule, grade cards, and meet attendance requirements.** Any changes to Education and Training as assigned must be reported within three (3) working days. Satisfactory performance standards based on the standards of the institution are to be met. Standards for institutions, is a grade point average of 2.0 or other passing grade as defined by the institution. You will receive an attendance sheet every week with your required hours. It is **your** responsibility to have the sheet completed by your instructor(s) and submit it to ACDJFS. In order to be an approved education or training activity, training must be a demand occupation that leads to an employment opportunity in the area. In order to show demand, the occupation must be included in the ACDJFS Ohio Skills Bank showing 15 annual openings or more, in the Economic Development Region 3 (EDR). If statistics are not available for the EDR Region 3, statistics must show 250 or more annual openings in the state of Ohio Employment Projections. Individuals can provide a letter of intent to hire from an employer to have the course of study considered for participation. The perspective employment must be a minimum of 30 hours per week and at a self-sufficient wage as determined by State or Federal minimum wage, which ever is higher. Additional documentation may be used at the discretion of ACDJFS. You may have one hour unsupervised study time for each hour of class time, additional supervised study time not to exceed the hours advised by the educational program policy may be allowable. Individuals with a criminal record which would prevent their opportunity to obtain employment in their course of study will not be approved for education and training participation.

Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment OWF Non-Core

Training that directly relates to job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the ability to obtain employment or to advance or adapt to the demands of the workplace. The number of hours that count towards participation are limited.

Education Related to Employment OWF Non Core

Training for participants who do not have a high school diploma, or certificate of high school equivalency (GED). The training must be a requirement for employment by employers or occupations. Types of training may include basic education, GED, English as a second language or other courses for specific occupations. You may have one hour unsupervised homework time for each hour of class time. The number of hours that count toward participation are limited.

Secondary School or GED

Secondary school or GED programs for participants that have not received either a diploma or GED must be in an actual class room setting. You may have one hour unsupervised study hours for each hour of class time. The number of hours that count toward participation are limited. You must report to participate at your site as assigned. You will receive an attendance sheet every week with your required hours. It is **your** responsibility to have the sheet completed by your instructor(s) and submit it to ACDJFS.

Alternative Activities OWF

Alternative activities are intended to address temporary and permanent barriers to participating in work activities. These assignments may include appointments/follow-ups with your Doctors, treatment plans, or other agencies in the community, such as WIOA, Ohio Rehabilitation Services Commission (OOD), Social Security Administration, Allen County Child Support Enforcement Agency (ACCSEA), Allen County Children Services Bureau (ACCSB), Coleman Professional Services, Family Resource Center, and Lutheran Social Services.

REMEMBER, for each activity assigned, you must: **(1)** be on time; **(2)** dress and act appropriately, follow code of conduct; **(3)** call the STEPS Unit or your site supervisor prior to or within one hour of your reporting time if you are going to be late or are unable to attend your assigned activity, and provide verification of good cause for your absence to STEPS within **three (3) days for OWF** and **seven (7) days for ABAWD required individuals.**

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

Daycare

Daycare is available for employment, Education & Training, and/or assigned STEPS activities. You must tell your STEPS Social Service Worker in advance if you need this service and keep all Daycare appointments. You must select your Daycare provider within three days (not counting Saturday and Sunday) of completing your daycare application which is to be completed on the same date as your appraisal appointment. If you choose to make private arrangements for your Daycare, good cause will not be given for failed hours due to lack of Daycare. It is recommended that you have a back-up alternative to your Daycare arrangements.

Transportation

Transportation services (such as bus tickets, a travel allowance, and taxi service) to the worksite, employment or Daycare provider are available if needed. You must tell your STEPS Social Service Worker 24 hours in advance if you need this service. Transportation requests are not to be left on voice mail, you must speak to someone to make arrangements. You may not be eligible for a travel allowance if you are less than one mile from your assigned site. If you reside on a bus route, bus passes will be issued. Participants may receive an expense allowance for transportation expenses associated with the assignment based on need and cost. If costs exceed the amount received, the participant is to provide documentation of the expense to their STEPS Social Service Worker. The expense allowance may be increased or the participant may be moved to another site at the discretion of the STEPS Social Service Worker and Supervisor. The amount of the expense allowance is determined by the number of miles the individual must travel, divided by the expected mileage of the make and year of the vehicle, times the cost of a gallon of gas as determined by ACDJFS. The maximum level of reimbursement shall not exceed \$650.00 per month.

Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC)

Program is designed to help families overcome immediate challenges to achieve or maintain self-sufficiency and personal responsibility. Services are provided to **prevent** a household from reliance on Ohio Works First (OWF) cash assistance. PRC services are also provided to help people **retain** employment. **Contingency** services are provided to meet a presenting need which, if not satisfied, threatens the safety, health or well being of one or more minor members of the household.

COUNTY RESPONSIBILITIES

If you need and are found eligible for the following services, the ACDJFS, Allen County Child Support Enforcement Agency (ACCSEA) or Allen County Children Services Board (ACCSB) may be responsible for providing:

OWF cash assistance	Child Care	Pregnancy Related Services
Food Assistance	Transportation	Prevention, Retention, and Contingency
Medicaid	In-depth Assessments	Job Search and Job Retention Services
Interpreter services	Child Support Services	Other supportive services deemed necessary.
Healthchek	ACCSB Case Plan	

Your STEPS Social Service Worker can arrange for these services as needed.

EXCUSED ABSENCE/GOOD CAUSE REASONS (OWF)

When you are assigned to a STEPS appointment or activity, as a provision of your Self-Sufficiency Plan, there are some acceptable reasons for not reporting at the assigned day and/or time. HOWEVER, you must still notify your site supervisor or STEPS Social Service Worker **no later than one (1) hour prior to your starting time to preserve your rights to be considered to have a good cause reason.** An exception to the 1 hour time limit may be made by the Director or designee of the ACDJFS if you have a dire emergency for which you provide verification AND you were unable to notify the site supervisor or the STEPS Social Service Worker within the time allotted. Good cause failed hours are required to be made up within the month the failed hours occurred. This may require an assignment to another site during evening or weekend hours to make up the good cause failed hours. Notification will be provided to identify the site address, supervisor, dates and times the makeup hours are to be scheduled.

You must call no later than one (1) hour prior to your reporting time AND provide verifications, as required by your STEPS Social Service Worker or worksite supervisor, within three (3) working days of your failure in order for it to be considered good cause. Your STEPS Social Service Worker may extend the verification period up to ten (10) working days after consideration of the facts. VERIFICATIONS RECEIVED AFTER THE ALLOWED PERIOD WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED as meeting the requirements for good cause as established by this policy. Late verifications shall not be considered to have established good cause if provided at any time after the due date, up to and including the dates of any county conference or state hearing. Verifications must cover the dates and times of the absence(s). Documentation verifying good cause, is not acceptable if over one year old.

GOOD CAUSE REASONS:

1. Illness of the work eligible individual or of another family member related by blood, marriage or adoption, living in the same household, if care by the work eligible individual was necessary;
2. For either the work eligible individual or a family member living in the same household, a previously scheduled appointment necessary for medical, dental, or vision care;
3. A previously scheduled job interview for a work eligible individual, including any subsequent interviews and/or testing requirements;
4. Court ordered appearances;
5. Appointment with another social service agency or program;
6. Death in the family. You can be excused up to five (5) days for the death of a spouse, domestic partner (domestic partner is defined as one who stands in place of a spouse and who resides with the work eligible individual), child, or parent. You can be excused for up to three (3) days for the death of grandparents, siblings, stepchild, stepparent, step-siblings, great-grandparents, mother-in-law, father-in-law, sister-in-law, brother-in-law, son-in-law, or legal guardian or other person who stands in the place of a parent. Verification of the death and/or relationship will be required;
7. A school, place of work or worksite is closed for the day;
8. Lack of child care
9. A failure of the county agency to provide supportive services;
10. A failure of the county agency to provide the work eligible individual with all information necessary about the assignment;
11. Circumstances involving domestic violence which make it difficult for the individual to comply in full with a provision of the self sufficiency contract/employability plan, in accordance with rule 5101:1-3-20 of the Administrative Code;
12. Other circumstances determined on a case by case basis by the county agency.

EXCUSED ABSENCE/GOOD CAUSE REASONS (ABAWD)

It is my responsibility to provide written documentation to Allen County JFS caseworker within 7 calendar days, from the date of the first occurrence, of each assigned day missed or failed in order to verify my claim of good cause. Allen County JFS shall be responsible for determining good cause at any time when an individual fails or refuses to comply with an appraisal, an employment and training program assignment or when an individual voluntarily quits a job or reduces his or her work effort. In determining whether or not good cause exists, Allen County JFS shall take into account the facts and circumstances, including information submitted by the employer and the individual involved.

Good cause shall include circumstances beyond the member's control, such as, but not limited to:

- 1) illness
- 2) illness of another assistance group member requiring the presence of the member,

- 3) an assistance group emergency
- 4) the unavailability of transportation
- 5) the lack of adequate child care for children who have reached age six but are under age twelve
- 6) domestic violence

When Allen County JFS determines that good cause exists the individual shall be excused and a sanction shall not be imposed. Sanctions are not imposed on volunteer participants.

SANCTION, COMPLIANCE, AND PENALTY POLICY

OWF SANCTIONS

If a member of an Ohio Works First (OWF) assistance group fails or refuses, without good cause, to comply with any provision of the Self-Sufficiency Contract or Plan, the following sanctions will be imposed. The sanctioned individual may also be removed from the Food Assistance program for the duration of the OWF sanction period.

First Time

- All cash benefits will stop for one (1) month.
- Food Assistance will stop for one (1) month for the sanctioned individual.
- Cash benefits and food assistance will not begin again until the sanctioned individual completes the JFS 03804 and serves the minimum sanction period.

Second Time

- All cash benefits will stop for three (3) months.
- Food assistance will stop for three (3) months for the sanctioned individual.
- Cash benefits and food assistance will not begin again until the sanctioned individual completes the JFS 03804, serves the minimum sanction period and completes a work and/or alternative activity not to exceed two weeks.

Third Time and all additional failures

- All cash benefits will stop for six (6) months.
- Food assistance will stop for six (6) months for the sanctioned individual.
- Medicaid will stop for the sanctioned individual until the sanctioned individual completes the necessary compliance.
- Cash benefits and food assistance will not begin again until the sanctioned individual completes the JFS 03804, serves the minimum sanction period and completes a work and/or alternative activity not to exceed two weeks.

Food Assistance Sanctions

If a FAET individual fails or refuses without good cause to complete the appraisal process or comply with their employability plan and/or work requirements, the sanctioned individual will be removed from food assistance.

First Time

- Food assistance will stop for one (1) month.
- Food assistance will not begin until the sanctioned individual completes the JFS 03804 and serves the minimum sanction period or qualifies for an exemption from work registration.

Second Time

- Food assistance will stop for three (3) months.
- Food assistance will not begin until the sanctioned individual completes the JFS 03804 and serves the minimum sanction period or qualifies for an exemption from work registration.

Third Time

- Food assistance benefits will stop for six (6) months.
- Food assistance will not begin until the sanctioned individual completes the JFS 03804 and serves the minimum sanction period or qualifies for an exemption from work registration.

SANCTION COMPLIANCE

OWF OAC 5101:1-3-15 Prior to reinstatement of benefits the individual shall sign the JFS 03804 "Ohio Works First/Food Assistance Sanction Compliance" and meet all eligibility requirements. If the sanction was due to failure without good cause to complete a work and/or alternative activity, completion of a work and/or alternative activity not to exceed two weeks is required before your minimum sanction period is over. If your sanction was due to failure or refusal to cooperate without good cause with the Child Support Enforcement Agency (CSEA), the CSEA will determine the compliance activity required to end your sanction.

Failure to do so by the end of the minimum sanction period will result in your having to reapply for cash assistance, complete the appraisal process, sign a new self-sufficiency contract and still complete a compliance activity and possibly complete a Job Search/Job Readiness assignment prior to receiving your benefits following your sanction period.

It is your responsibility to contact the STEPS unit within sufficient time prior to your minimum sanction period to schedule your compliance activity if you wish to regain eligibility as soon as your minimum sanction period has been served. Failure to do so may cause delay in your regaining eligibility for OWF cash assistance and/or Food Assistance.

FA-OAC 5101:4-3-11.2 Prior to reinstatement of benefits the individual shall sign the JFS 03804 "Ohio Works First/Food Assistance Sanction Compliance" agreeing to participate in the work program and to comply with the employability plan developed by the individual and the county agency pursuant to the provisions of rules 5101:4-3-29 and 5101:4-3-31 of the OAC.

If the JFS 03804 is signed prior to the end of the sanction period the sanctioned individual shall regain eligibility and benefits shall be reinstated after the minimum sanction period is served.

If the JFS 03804 is signed after the end of the minimum sanction period, the individual shall regain eligibility effective the day the JFS 03804 was signed and returned to the county agency and benefits shall be reinstated pursuant to paragraph (K)(3)(a) of rule 5101:4-7-01 of the OAC

If the circumstances change and the individual qualifies for an exemption from work registration in accordance with rule 5101:4-3-11 of the Administrative Code, the individual may qualify for food assistance benefits. Such exemptions may occur before the minimum sanction period ends.

COMPLIANCE TO OBTAIN MEDICAID ELIGIBILITY FOLLOWING A THIRD OCCURRENCE (OR ADDITIONAL) OWF SANCTION FOR FAILURE OR REFUSAL TO COMPLY WITH PROVISIONS OF THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY CONTRACT OR PLAN OR FAILURE TO COOPERATE WITH CHILD SUPPORT ENFORCEMENT AGENCY (CSEA) OAC-Medicaid 5101:1-40-02.1

The Allen County Department of Job and Family Services will consider the sanctioned individual(s) eligible for Medicaid benefits when the individual(s) completes each of the following steps:

1. Sign the JFS 03804 Compliance Agreement form, if the JFS 03804 is signed within 30 days of closing date the individual shall have Medicaid eligibility reinstated, if the JFS 03804 is signed after 30 days of closing date the individual must reapply.
2. Establish cooperation with CSEA as verified by CSEA.

PENALTIES

An Ohio Works First (OWF) assistance group will lose cash assistance for six months if the OWF participant quits a job without good cause. Also the failed individual will be ineligible for food assistance for six months.

Failure or refusal to sign the self-sufficiency contract or failure to attend reappraisal shall result in denial or termination of OWF for the assistance group. An application must be submitted to regain eligibility.

Failure without good cause to cooperate in the application and reapplication process and provide necessary documentation.

Refusal to cooperate with a quality assessment (QA) review.

If an ABAWD participant fails with out good cause, the Food Assistance Sanctions section, on page 8, applies. If an ABAWD individual is not fulfilling the work requirements or meeting an exemption they may not receive FA for more than three (3) countable months during any 36 month period.

A LEAP participant will lose the \$62.00 monthly incentive for regular school attendance and his/her cash assistance will be reduced if the participant fails or refuses to meet the requirements of the Leap program. He/she and the rest of the assistance group may lose their cash benefits if the LEAP participant continues to not attend school.

SNAP EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING PROGRAM (E&T), WORK REQUIREMENTS, RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES 5101:4-3-30

Each employable and each volunteer individual shall be informed in writing of their rights and responsibilities concerning the FAET program prior to or during the appraisal. Failure or refusal to meet these responsibilities could result in sanctions which would adversely affect the amount of food assistance benefits.

(A) Work Program Requirements:

- 1) Respond to a request for supplemental information regarding employment status or availability for work;
- 2) Report to an employer when referred by the county agency unless the potential employment is unsuitable;
- 3) Accept a bona fide offer of suitable employment when referred by the county agency;
- 4) Continue suitable employment until it is no longer considered suitable; the individual is terminated for reasons beyond the individual's control; or the individual becomes exempt from work registration; and
- 5) Participate in an appraisal, sign an employability plan and participate in the SNAP employment and training program if the individual is an able-bodied adult without dependents (ABAWD).

(B) You will become ineligible for food assistance benefits if you:

- 1) Fail or refuse to, without good cause, complete the appraisal process
- 2) Fail or refuse to, without good cause, participate in an employment and training program to the extent required by the county agency
- 3) Fail or refuse to, without good cause, accept an offer of suitable employment
- 4) Fail or refuse to, without good cause, provide the county agency with sufficient information to allow the county agency to determine your employment status or the job availability
- 5) Voluntarily and without good cause quit a job of thirty or more hours a week or reduce your work effort and, after the reduction, are working less than thirty hours per week. If you reduce your work hours to less than thirty a week, but continue to earn weekly wages that exceed the federal minimum wage multiplied by thirty hours, you will remain exempt from program work requirements.

Ineligibility can last up to six (6) months.

(C) Rights of SNAP E&T Participants include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Receiving copies of all employability plans
- 2) Notification of the right to request a state hearing on issues related to participation in SNAP E&T and failure or refusal to participate
- 3) Nondiscrimination in SNAP E&T program assignments
- 4) Receiving supportive services for the authorized SNAP E&T activity
- 5) Filing a conciliation request; and
- 6) Accepting employment pursuant to the work registration requirements listed above.

(D) Responsibilities of SNAP E&T Participants include, but are not limited to:

- 1) Reporting to the appraisal and other appointments with the county agency program staff or providers

- 2) Reporting to the WEP, education, training, supportive service, or job search sites at the scheduled dates and times
- 3) Obeying the rules at the work site, following instructions, and otherwise demonstrating acceptable work habits and behavior
- 4) Providing the county agency with information relevant to securing or retaining employment and providing supplemental information as requested
- 5) Notifying the immediate supervisor, other designated individual, or the county agency staff of the reason for nonparticipation as scheduled
- 6) Participating in SNAP E&T activities for the scheduled number of hours as assigned
- 7) Accepting necessary supportive services determined to be needed for participation
- 8) Reporting any changes which would affect the individual's ability to participate in SNAP E&T
- 9) Providing Allen County agency with documentation of attendance and participation in a SNAP E&T activity as requested
- 10) Providing a good cause reason for nonparticipation as required
- 11) Contacting Allen County agency, unless otherwise instructed by the county agency, if a monthly scheduling notice or the participant expense allowance has not been received
- 12) Reporting to a job site, to an employer for a scheduled job interview, or to any related subsequent interviews or testing appointments when referred by county agency or its designee
- 13) Accepting a bona fide offer of employment

Failure or refusal without good cause to participate in an employment and training program to the extent required by the county agency will result in a sanction. The good cause criteria for work registration failures (described above) applies to E&T failures as well.

COMPLAINT PROCEDURE FOR WORKER DISPLACEMENT

Ohio Administrative Code section 5101:4-3-36 states no participant shall be assigned to any program activity that results in the displacement of other persons. This section further states, that each County Department of Job and Family Services shall establish and maintain a grievance procedure for resolving complaints by individuals or their representatives.

The complaint procedure for Allen County Department of Job and Family Services is as follows:

- a. An employee who believes displacement has occurred should discuss the problem with the employer.
- b. An employee who is not satisfied with the employer's response, or believes they cannot approach the employer, can contact the STEPS Program Administrator of the ACDJFS.
- c. The ACDJFS Director or his/her designee will investigate the complaint by utilizing worksite visits, gathering statements, hearings, or other actions which will bring to light the facts of the complaint. The ACDJFS will render the decision within seven (7) days of the complaint.
- d. A complainant who is not satisfied with the ACDJFS response may appeal the decision to the U.S. Department of Labor pursuant to the provisions of chapters 5101:6-1 to 5101:6-9 of the Administrative Code.

THE CONCILIATION PROCESS

The conciliation process (grievance procedure) is for us to discuss and hopefully take care of problems while you are in the STEPS Program. Usually the best way to solve a problem is to talk to your worksite supervisor, Skill Shop Instructor, teacher, or the STEPS Staff. If that does not work, you may want to ask for a conciliation hearing as follows:

The ACDJFS shall have a conciliation process to resolve disputes which arise concerning required STEPS participation. The conciliation process may be initiated by the participant or by the STEPS Unit.

The conciliation process shall include, but is not limited to:

1. Disputes over assignments.
2. Inappropriate treatment by an ACDJFS employee or worksite supervisor.
3. Irregular work hours that create a severe hardship on the participant.
4. Worksite assignments that deviate from the normal duties of the job.
5. Disagreement with disciplinary action at the worksite involving the participant.
6. Other areas of concern to the participant relating to STEPS participants.
7. Disputes concerning working conditions, Worker's Compensation coverage, or the number of hours of participation.
8. Disputes concerning failure to participate in the STEPS program.

The ACDJFS shall maintain an accurate record of all conciliation requests, including any pertinent facts and the resolution of the conciliation. Once a conciliation request is initiated, the ACDJFS should attempt an informal resolution.

The conciliation process may be initiated by:

1. A written notice from the ACDJFS STEPS Unit to the participant for a conciliation conference; or
2. A written or verbal request from the participant to the STEPS Administrator or designee for a conciliation conference or;
3. A written or verbal request from the participant to the STEPS Administrator or designee for a conciliation conference when there is an act of nonparticipation. The conciliation process requires that such requests shall be made within seven (7) calendar days, which begins the day following the day of nonparticipation.

A resolution of the conciliation process, initiated in accordance with this rule, shall be reached within a maximum of fifteen (15) calendar days; with the date of conciliation process was initiated. No adverse action may be proposed until the conciliation process, if requested, is concluded.

The participant may have a representative at the conciliation conference and shall be notified in writing of this right. When a conciliation process is initiated, the ACDJFS shall convene a conciliation conference, which is presided over by the director or designee. Both the ACDJFS and the individual may bring whoever (must be reasonable) to the conference in an attempt to informally resolve differences. When appropriate, the worksite supervisor may attend, or information from the worksite supervisor as requested by the ACDJFS may be presented.

The conciliation conference does not replace the right to request a county conference pursuant to the provisions of Chapters 5101:6-1 to 5101:6-9 of the Administrative Code and the conciliation process shall not in any way limit the participant's hearing rights.

The individual shall be notified in writing of the outcome of the conciliation conference. The notification shall also contain an explanation of the right to a state hearing pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 5101:6-1 to 5101:6-9 of the Administrative Code. When the conciliation conference is to be followed by a proposal of an adverse action the prior notice sent to the individual will fulfill this requirement.

JOB QUIT GOOD/JUST CAUSE COMPARISON CHART

<p style="text-align: center;">OWF/<u>PURE</u> FOOD ASSISTANCE</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">FOOD ASSISTANCE (<u>MIXED</u> – FAET)</p>
<p>Voluntary Job Quit <u>JUST CAUSE:</u> 5101:1-3-15 (A 2) ORC 5197.26(C) -Discrimination based on age, race, sex, color, handicap, religious beliefs or national origin -Work demands or conditions that render continued employment unreasonable, such as working without being paid on schedule -Unsuitable employment because: -wage is less than Federal minimum -work is at a site subject to strike or lockout -there is documented risk to health or safety -the employee is physically or mentally unfit -Documented illness of employee or AG member -Documented family emergency -Lack of child care for AG children under the age of six</p>	<p>Voluntary Job Quit / Reduced work effort <u>GOOD CAUSE:</u> 5101:4-3-11 (F), (O) and (O2) -Circumstances beyond the AG member's control -Illness -Illness of another AG member -An AG emergency -Unavailability of transportation -Lack child care for children six to twelve -Discrimination by employer based on age, race, sex, color, handicap, religious beliefs, national origin or political beliefs -Unreasonable work demands or conditions -Employment or enrollment in school -Resignation by persons under 60 which is recognized by employer as retirement -Employment which becomes unsuitable after the acceptance of such employment -Acceptance of employment which either does not materialize or does not meet the minimum wage requirement -Migrant work or other work where people frequently move from one employer to another employer -Wage less than applicable minimum wage -Employee is required to join, resign from, or refrain from joining a labor organization -Site subject to strike or lockout -Risk of health and safety is unreasonable -Employee is physically or mentally unfit -The employment offered within first 30 days of registration is not in registrant's major field of experience</p>
<p>Note: This statutory listing is not exhaustive. The CDJFS is not required to, but may allow other reasons. Those reasons should be put in writing and be part of the county's plan.</p>	<p>-Distance unreasonable (greater than 2 hour commute) or the cost of commuting is unreasonable considering the wage -Working hours or nature of job interferes with participant's religious beliefs.</p>