# Steps Towards Employment and Permanent Self-Sufficiency (STEPS) Program Packet

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



## **Program Overview**

This packet includes the Ohio Works First (OWF) and Food Assistance and Training (FAET) program requirements. The purpose of STEPS is to help you to become self-sufficient. Please be sure to read the entire packet as it outlines your obligation while participating in the STEPS program.

# Self-Sufficiency Contract and Plan

You must sign a Self-Sufficiency Contract and Plan if you apply for cash benefits or food assistance. The contract specifies your obligation to participate in the STEPS program and strive for self-sufficiency while you are applying for or receiving benefits. If you are unwilling to sign a Self-Sufficiency Contact and Plan, your application will be denied. If you do not participate in the activities outlined in your plan, your assistance will be sanctioned and you may not be eligible for certain benefits such as Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC), etc. Cash benefits will be stopped for your entire household and your food assistance benefits may be sanctioned 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 contact the STEPS unit right away.

If you are applying for OWF and/or Food Assistance: Even though it may be several weeks before benefits are received, you are still required to participate in one or more STEPS activities.

If a work eligible individual is the victim of domestic violence, JFS will consider the location of the site and appropriateness of the activity when making the assignment. The parent or caretaker must be actively seeking help as evidenced by residence in a spousal abuse shelter, a current protective order, a police report, or an affidavit coupled with documented steps to resolve the situation (such as retention of an attorney).

## **Appraisals**

The goal of your appraisal is to discuss the requirements needed for you to become self-sufficient. During the appraisal, a plan of action will be created based on your education, work history, skills, abilities, challenges, interests, and supportive services needed as outlined on the Self-Sufficiency Contract and Plan. The Plan is designed to enhance your employability skills in order to help you gain employment that is suitable for you.

## **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 childcare- 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 childcare- 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 an individual who is married or a head of household and has not attained
  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

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

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 of any child support payments retained by the State. For food assistance only, this will not exceed 120 hours.

An Able-Bodied Adult Without Dependents (ABAWD) is a person between the ages of 18 and 50 with no children in the household. You must either be employed for 20 hours a week, participating and complying with the requirements of a work program for 20 hours per week, or participate as assigned in a Work Experience Program (WEP).

## Ohio Means Jobs (OMJ)

Ohio Means Jobs is available for use by all Allen County residents to find gainful employment, find a better job, or to explore different career options. There are many partnerships within the Job Center such as the Workforce Investment Act that are available to you to help increase your employability. 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

<u>Employment</u>- Subsidized or unsubsidized. You may still be eligible for part or all of your cash, food, medical, childcare, or transportation benefits and other supportive services depending on the type of assistance, family size, and income you earned from your employment. When you gain employment, you will need to contact the STEPS unit right away. If your employment does not meet the required hours, you may still need to participate in STEPS activities. If your assistance decreased and you meet the eligibility criteria, you might qualify for the Employment Incentives Program through Ohio Means Jobs.

Quitting a job or reducing your hours without just cause can result in a six-month ineligibility for cash assistance for your entire household and ineligibility for food assistance for yourself for a sanction period. Even if you think you have a good reason to quit, please contact the STEPS unit to discuss the situation. Your STEPS social worker is available to help you resolve difficulties encountered regarding your employment.

<u>Job Search/Job Readiness (JSJR)-</u> JSJR participants are limited to a maximum of six weeks in a 12-month period with no more than 4 weeks being consecutive and are not limited in the assignment duration. Types include:

- Job Search- Classroom instruction in strategies and skills in job seeking, supervised job search activities, job lead development and self-directed job search (contacting an assigned number of employers and submitting a Job Leads Log, submitting applications and resumes, documenting contacts, reporting as scheduled), identifying and overcoming personal barriers to employment, building self-confidence, hygiene and dress techniques, time management, money and household budgets, obtaining proper dependent care, self-assessments to determine employability, completing resumes, applications, and work histories, learning interviewing techniques, contacting employers, maintaining records of job search activities, understanding employer expectations, understanding unions, benefits, deductions, and hospitalization policies, being prompt and punctual for work, accepting supervision positively, maintaining healthy working relationships, and retaining employment as a step towards self-sufficiency
- Job Readiness- Preparation to seek or obtain employment which may include weekly job readiness seminars, monthly job readiness classes, life skills training, substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities

On the Job Training (OJT)/Subsidized Employment Program (SEP)- Intends to offer potential candidates an opportunity to secure employment by providing the knowledge and skills needed to perform a job while giving the employer an incentive to hire them. The position must meet the required hours or additional STEPS activities may be assigned.

<u>Assist, Mentor, and Educate (AME) Program-</u> This program offers classes that provide job skills, mentoring, assist with job search and readiness, work experience programs, and assistance with problems encountered while employed. You must attend all classes and training sessions according to your schedule that you will receive once a month with where your training is located and required hours. Actual reporting times may be scheduled by the site supervisor or by ACJFS. If you do not receive a schedule by the 3<sup>rd</sup> business day of the month, contact STEPS immediately to avoid a sanction.

<u>Work Experience Program (WEP) or Community Service Program (CSP)-</u> WEP and CSP provide experience and training to assist you in obtaining employment. You must report to your site as assigned. You will receive a schedule which indicates reporting time (determined by ACJFS or the work site) and hours

required. If you do not receive a schedule by the 3<sup>rd</sup> business day of the month, contact STEPS immediately to avoid a sanction.

Ohio Administrative Code 5101:4-4-34 is followed in developing and monitoring work sites. You are covered under Worker's Compensation for an injury from a WEP or CSP site. Any injury obtained on the job needs to be reported to the supervisor immediately. It is important that you notify any doctors or hospitals treating you that you will need a Worker's Compensation claim form and submit to the STEPS unit. Programs are subject to FLSA requirements.

<u>Job Retention-</u> After securing employment, your STEPS worker can help you resolve issues that you encounter on the job. You may be eligible for supportive services such as daycare, transportation, assistance with purchasing uniforms, shoes/boots, etc while employed. Contact the STEPS unit if you need these services.

<u>Learning</u>, <u>Earning</u>, and <u>Parenting</u> (<u>LEAP</u>)- The goal of LEAP is for you to obtain a GED or high school diploma. You must attend secondary school or GED classes and meet the attendance requirements. There are incentives to meeting the goals and participation in the LEAP program. LEAP is required for individuals under 19 who are pregnant or have a child who have not received a diploma or GED.

<u>Education and Training-</u> If you are attending college, a vocational program, an adult certification program, or an industrial skills certification program, your school hours may count towards your STEPS requirement (limited to 12 months for OWF). Individuals who possess a degree, certificate, or license will not be approved for additional training to meet STEPS requirements. Exceptions may be approved at the discretion of a supervisor or administrator. You must provide STEPS with an official class schedule, grad cards, and meet attendance requirements. Any changes to your education and training must be reported to STEPS within three working days.

You must be passing with a 2.0 GPA to meet the standard for the program. You will receive an attendance sheet every week to be completed with your required hours. It is your responsibility to have your instructor complete the form and to submit it to the STEPS unit. To be an approved education and training activity, training must be in a in-demand occupation and lead to employment in that area. The educational facility must be an approved training provider on WIET along with being identified as an indemand occupation on the Ohio Means Jobs website. The in-demand icon must show 200 or more openings annually in the state of Ohio.

The perspective employment must be a minimum of 30 hours a week at a self-sufficient wage as determined by state or federal minimum wage, whichever is higher. Additional documentation may be used at the discretion of ACJFS. You may have one-hour of unsupervised study time for each hour of class time. Additional supervised study time which does not exceed the hours advised by the educational program policy may be allowable. Individuals with a criminal record which would prevent their employability in their course of study are not eligible for education and training participation.

<u>Job Skills Training Directly Related to Employment OWF Non-Core-</u> Training that directly relates to job skills required by an employer to provide an individual with the skills to gain employment or advance/adapt to the needs of a workplace. The number of hours that count towards participation are limited.

<u>Education Related to Employment OWF Non-Core-</u> Training for participants who do not have a high school diploma or GED. The training must be a requirement for employment by the employer or occupation. These types of training may include basic education, GED courses, ESL courses, or other courses for specific occupations. You may have one hour of unsupervised study time for each hour of class time. The number of hours that count towards participation are limited.

<u>Secondary School or GED-</u> Secondary school or GED programs for participants who have not yet received either must be in an actual classroom setting. You may have one hour of unsupervised study time for each hour of class time. The number of hours that count towards participation are limited. You must report to participate at your site as assigned. You will receive an attendance sheet every week to be completed with your required hours. It is your responsibility to have your instructor complete the form and to submit it to the STEPS unit.

<u>Alternative Activities OWF-</u> These activities are intended to address temporary and alternative barriers to participating in work activities. These assignments include appointments/follow-ups with medical professionals, treatment plans, or with other agencies in the community such as WIOA, OOD, Social Security, CSEA, Coleman Professional Services, or the Family Resource Center.

REMEMBER: For each activity designed, you must be on time, dressed appropriately, and behaved appropriately as described in the Code of Conduct. Call the STEPS unit or site supervisor prior to or within one hour of your reporting time if you are going to be late or are unable to attend. Provide any verifications of good cause for your absence to the STEPS unit within three days for OWF or 7 days for ABAWD required participants.

## Supportive Services

<u>Daycare</u>- Daycare is available for employment, Education and Training, and/or assigned STEPS activities. You must contact STEPS if you need this service and keep all daycare appointments. You must select your provider within three business days of completing the daycare application which is to be completed on the same day as your appraisal appointment. If you choose to use private daycare arrangements, good cause will not be granted for failed hours due to lack of childcare. It is recommended that you have an alternative to your daycare arrangement.

<u>Transportation-</u> Transportation to the worksite, employment services, or daycare can be provided if needed. You must notify STEPS 24 hours in advance if you need this service. Transportation requests cannot be left on a voicemail; you must speak to a social worker to arrange this service. You may not be eligible if you reside less than a mile away from the site. If you reside on a bus route, bus tickets will be issued.

Participants may receive an expense allowance for transportation expenses associated with the assignment based on need and cost. If the costs exceed the amount received, you must provide verification of the expense to STEPS to evaluate if your expense allowance will be increased or if you will be assigned to an alternative site. The amount of the expense allowance is determined by how many miles traveled divided by the expected mileage of the make and year of the vehicle used multiplied by the cost per gallon of gasoline as determined by ACJFS. The maximum level of reimbursement cannot exceed \$650 per month.

<u>Prevention, Retention, and Contingency (PRC)-</u> Designed to help families overcome immediate challenges to achieve self-sufficiency. Services are provided to prevent a household from reliance on OWF assistance and to retain employment. Contingency services are provided to meet a need that prevents threats to the safety, health, or well being of minors in the household.

If you are found to be eligible for the following services, ACJFS, ACCESEA, or ACCSB may be responsible for providing: OWF, SNAP, Medicaid, interpreter services, Healthcheck, child care, transportation, in-depth assessments, child support services, ACCSB case plan, pregnancy related services, PRC, Job Search and Job Readiness, or other supportive services deemed necessary.

## Excused Absence/Good Cause Reasons (OWF)

When you are assigned to an activity as part of your Self-Sufficiency Plan, there are some acceptable reasons for not reporting to the activity. It is your responsibility to call the STEPS unit or site supervisor prior to or within one hour of your reporting time if you are going to be late or are unable to attend in order to be considered for good cause. An exception to the one-hour time limit may be made by the director or designee of ACJFS if you have a dire emergency for which you provide verification AND you were unable to notify the STEPS unit or site supervisor. Good cause failed hours are required to be made up within the month that the failed hours occurred. This may require an assignment to another site during evening or weekend hours.

You must call no later than one hour of your reporting time and provide verifications within three working days of your failure to be considered for good cause. Your STEPS social worker may extend the verification period up to 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, to include any time after the due date, up to and including the dates of any county conference or state hearing. Verifications must cover the date of the absence and is not acceptable if over one year old.

#### Good cause reasons include:

- Illness of the work eligible individual or of another family member related by blood, marriage, or adoption living in the same household and care by the work eligible individual was necessary
- A previously scheduled appointment necessary for dental, medical, or vision care for either the work eligible individual or a family member living in the same household
- A previously scheduled job interview for a work required individual, including any subsequent interviews and/or testing
- Court ordered appearances
- Appointment with another social service agency or program
- Death in the family. You can be excused up to 5 days for the death of a spouse, domestic partner, child, or parent. You can be excused up to 3 days for the death of grandparents, siblings, stepchild, stepparent, stepsiblings, great-grandparents, mother/father-in-law, legal guardian, or another person who stands in the place of a parent. Verification of the death will be required.
- A school, place of work, or worksite is closed for the day
- Lack of childcare
- Failure of county agency to provide supportive services
- Failure of the county agency to provide the work eligible individual with all information necessary about the assignment

- Circumstances involving domestic violence which makes it difficult for the individual to comply in full with provision of the self-sufficiency contract/employability plan, in accordance with the Ohio Administrative Code 5101:1-3-20.
- Other circumstances determined on a case by case basis by the county agency.

#### Excused Absence/Good Cause Reasons (ABAWD)

It is your responsibility to provide written documentation to ACJFS within 7 calendar days from the date of the first occurrence of each assigned day missed or failed in order to verify your claim of good cause. ACJFS is responsible for determining good cause at any time when an individual fails or refuses to comply with an appraisal, an employment or training program assignment, or when a participant voluntarily quits a job or reduces their hours or work effort. In determining if good cause exists, ACJFS shall consider the facts and circumstances submitted by the employer and the individual. When ACJFS determines that good cause exists, the individual shall be excused and a sanction will not be imposed. Sanctions are not imposed on volunteer participants.

#### Good cause can include:

- Illness of the participant or a member of the AG requiring the presence of the member
- An assistance group emergency
- Lack of childcare for children who have reached age 6 but under 12
- Domestic violence

## Sanction, Compliance, and Penalty Policy

#### **OWF Sanctions:**

If a member of an OWF Assistance group fails or refuses to comply with any provision of the Self-Sufficiency Contract or Plan without good cause, 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.

<u>First time</u>: All cash benefits stop for one month, food assistance will stop for one month for the sanctioned individual, cash benefits and food assistance will not begin again until the sanctioned individual serves the minimum sanction period and signs the JFS 3804

<u>Second time</u>: All cash benefits stop for three months, food assistance will stop for three months for the sanctioned individual, cash benefits and food assistance will not begin again until the sanctioned individual serves the minimum sanction period, signs the JFS 3804, and completed a work and/or alternative activity not to exceed two weeks

Third time and all additional failures: All cash benefits stop for six months, food assistance will stop for six months for the sanctioned individual, Medicaid will stop for the sanctioned individual until the necessary compliance is completed, cash benefits and food assistance will not begin again until the sanctioned individual serves the minimum sanction period, signs the JFS 3804, and completed a work and/or alternative activity not to exceed two weeks

#### **Food Assistance (SNAP) Sanctions:**

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

<u>First time</u>: All SNAP benefits stop for one month and will not begin again until the sanctioned individual signs the JFS 3804 and serves the minimum sanction period or qualifies for a work registration exemption

<u>Second time</u>: All SNAP benefits stop for three months and will not begin again until the sanctioned individual signs the JFS 3804 and serves the minimum sanction period or qualifies for a work registration exemption

<u>Third time</u>: All SNAP benefits stop for six months and will not begin again until the sanctioned individual signs the JFS 3804 and serves the minimum sanction period or qualifies for a work registration exemption

Sanction Compliance- OWF OAC 5101:1-3-15: Prior to the reinstatement of benefits, the individual shall sign the "JFS 3804 Sanction Compliance Agreement" and meet all eligibility requirements. If the sanction was due to a failure without good cause to complete a work/alternative activity, completion of the work/alternative activity which is not to exceed two weeks is required before the sanction period is over. If your sanction is due to failure or refusal to cooperate with child support, the CSEA will determine your sanction and compliance activities needed.

Failure to do so by the end of your minimum sanction period will result in you having to reapply for cash assistance, complete a new Self-Sufficiency Contract and Plan, complete the appraisal process, and complete a compliance activity and Job Search & Job Readiness to receive benefits following your sanction period.

It is your responsibility to contact the STEPS unit within enough time prior to your minimum sanction period to schedule your compliance activity if you wish to regain eligibility as soon as your sanction period has been served. Failure to do so may cause a delay in eligibility for assistance.

FA-OAC 5101:4-3-11.2: Prior to the reinstatement of benefits, the individual shall sign the "JFS 3804 Sanction Compliance Agreement" 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 Ohio Administrative Code.

If the 3804 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 3804 is signed after the end of the minimum sanction period, the individual shall regain eligibility effective the day the 3804 was signed and returned to the county agency. Benefits shall be reinstated pursuant to paragraph (K)(3)(a) of OAC rue 5101:4-7-01.

If the circumstances change and the individual meets a work registration exemption in accordance with OAC Rule 5101:4-3-11, the individual may qualify for food assistance benefits and may occur before the minimum sanction period is completed.

<u>Medicaid sanctions</u>- Compliance to obtain Medicaid eligibility following a third or additional OWF sanction for failure or refusal to cooperate with the Self-Sufficiency Contract or Plan OR failure to cooperate with CSEA (OAC 5101:1-40-02.1) requires the following to become eligible for Medicaid:

- Sign the JFS 3804 Sanction Compliance Agreement. If the 3804 is signed within 30 days of closing date, the individual shall have Medicaid eligibility reinstated. If the 3804 is signed after 30 days, the individual will need to reapply for Medicaid.
- Establish cooperation with CSEA as verified by CSEA

<u>Penalties-</u> An OWF assistance group will lose cash assistance for six months if the OWF participant quits a job without good cause. The OWF participant will also be ineligible for SNAP for six months.

Failure or refusal to sign the Self-Sufficiency Contract and Plan or to attend reappraisal shall result in a 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 to provide necessary documentation or to cooperate with a Quality Assessment Review will result in a penalty.

If an ABAWD participant fails without good cause, the SNAP sanctions previously described will apply. If an ABAWD is not fulfilling the work requirements or meeting an exemption, they may not receive SNAP for more than 3 countable months of any 36-month period.

A LEAP participant will lose the monthly incentive for regular school attendance and his/her cash assistance will be reduced id the participant fails or refuses to meet the requirements of the program. The assistance group could lose eligibility if the LEAP participant does not cooperate.

## SNAP Employment & Training Program

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 SNAP benefits.

Work program requirements:

- Respond to a request for supplemental information regarding employment status and availability for work
- Report to an employer when referred by the county agency unless the potential employment is unsuitable
- Accept a bona fide offer or suitable employment when referred by the county agency
- Continue suitable employment until it is no longer considered suitable: the individual is terminated for reasons beyond their control or the individual becomes exempt from work registration
- Participate in an appraisal, sign an employability plan, and participate in the SNAP employment and training program if the individual is an ABAWD

You will become ineligible for SNAP if you:

• Fail or refuse to complete the appraisal process without good cause

- Fail or refuse to participate in an employment and training program to the extent required by the county agency without good cause
- Fail or refuse to accept an offer of suitable employment without good cause
- Fail or refuse to provide the county agency with sufficient information to allow to the county agency to determine your employment status or job availability without good cause
- To voluntarily quit a job of thirty or more hours a week without good cause or to reduce your hours or work effort and after the reduction, you are working less than 30 hours a week. If you reduce your hours but still earn more than the federal minimum wage multiplied by 30, you will remain exempt from work registration
- Ineligibility can last up to 6 months

#### Rights of SNAP E&T Participants include, but are not limited to:

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

## Responsibilities of SNAP E&T Participants include, but are not limited to:

- Reporting to the appraisal and other appointments with the county agency program staff or providers
- Reporting to the WEP, education and training, supportive service, or job search sites at the scheduled times and dates
- Providing the county agency with information relevant to securing or retaining employment
- Notifying the immediate supervisor, designated individual, or ACJFS staff of the reason of nonparticipation as scheduled
- Participating in SNAP E&T activities for the scheduled number of hours assigned
- Accepting necessary supportive services determined to be needed for participation
- Reporting any changes which would affect the individual's ability to participate in SNAP E&T
- Providing ACJFS documentation of attendance and participation in SNAP E&T activities as requested
- Providing good cause for nonparticipation
- Contacting ACJFS if a monthly scheduling notice or expense allowance has not been received
- Reporting to a job site, to scheduled interviews, or any subsequent interviews or testing appointments when referred by ACJFS
- Accepting a bona fide offer of employment
- Refusal or failure to participate in a SNAP E&T activity without good cause will result in a sanction. The good cause for work registration failures applies to SNAP E&T failures as well.

## Complaint Procedure for Worker Displacement

Ohio Administrative Code 5101:4-3-36 states that no participant shall be assigned to any activity that results in displacement of another person. Each JFS shall establish and maintain a grievance procedure for resolving complaints by individuals or their representatives.

<u>The Conciliation Process-</u> This grievance procedure is for us to address and resolve issues that arise while one is participating in the STEPS Program. Usually, the best way to solve a problem is to speak to your supervisor, instructor, or the STEPS staff. If this does not resolve the issue, you may want to ask for a conciliation hearing. The conciliation process may be initiated by STEPS staff or the work participant.

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

- Disputes over assignments
- Inappropriate treatment by an ACJFS employee or site supervisor
- Irregular work hours that create a severe hardship on the participant
- Worksite assignments that deviate from the normal duties of the job
- Disagreement with disciplinary action at the worksite involving the participant
- Other areas of concern to the participant relating to STEPS participation
- Disputes concerning working conditions, Worker's Compensation, or number of hours of participation
- Disputes concerning failure to participate in the STEPS program

ACJFS will maintain an accurate record of all conciliation requests to include any pertinent facts and the resolution of the request. Once a request is initiated, the ACJFS should attempt an informal resolution. The conciliation process may be initiated by:

- A written notice from the STEPS unit to the participant
- A verbal or written request from the participant to the STEPS administration or designee, including when there is an act of nonparticipation. The conciliation process requires that such requests are made within seven calendar days, which begins following the day of nonparticipation.

A resolution of the conciliation process, when initiated in accordance to this rule, shall be reached within a maximum of 15 calendar days from the date that the request was initiated. No adverse action may be proposed until the conciliation process is concluded.

The participant may have a representative at the conciliation conference and shall be notified in writing of this right. When a conciliation conference is initiated, ACJFS shall convene a conciliation conference which is presided over by the director or designee. Both ACJFS and the individual may bring whoever (within reason) to the conference to try to informally resolve the dispute. When appropriate, the worksite supervisor may attend or information requested from the worksite may be presented.

The conciliation process 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 Ohio Administrative Code and will in no way limit the participant's hearing rights.

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