

The New R.I. Works Program



Presented by
The Poverty Institute
November 2008

RI Works Program

- Replaces the Family Independence Program
 - Final regulations:
<http://www.ridhrcode.org/1400.htm>
 - Effective date of October 1 but not all provisions are in effect (system not programmed)
-

RI Works Program – Replaces FIP

- Time Limit
 - Employment Plan
 - Exemptions
 - Sanctions
 - Work Incentive
 - Legal Permanent Residents
-



Time Limit for Kids

- Children's entitlement to cash assistance ended
 - Children lose eligibility for assistance when their parent has reached the time limit
 - Citizen children living with a parent ineligible for benefits because not a qualified immigrant lose eligibility for cash assistance once one child has reached the time limit
-

Time Limits for Kids



- The time limits for children do NOT apply to a child who is:
 - Living with a parent who is receiving SSI.
 - Living with a caretaker relative
 - These children can receive cash assistance until they turn 18
-

Time Limit for Kids



□ Current recipients:

- 1,000 “child-only” families closed at the end of September because their parent had already “timed off”
 - Child-only families where parent raising own children and “relative” children were not closed
 - Children living with ineligible parent where one child had received 60 months of assistance were not closed - will close by end of year.
-

Time limit for Kids



- Effective October, as parents reach the 60 month time limit the whole family will close
 - New, shorter time limits under RI Works Program will reduce family's entitlement to benefits
-

New Time Limits – RI Works

- 48 Month Lifetime Limit
 - 24 months (whether or not consecutive) within any 60 month period
-

New Time Limits – Recipients on 10/1

- A family that is receiving cash assistance on October 1
 - Will close on July 1, 2009 if have received 24 months of assistance (counting FIP and months from other states)
 - If reach 60 months before July 1, 2009, then case closes
 - If close before 7/1/09 (e.g., failure to recertify or sanction) then treated as applicant and new time limit rules apply
-

New Time Limit - Recipients

| | Oct. 08 | 7/1/09 |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Child Only | Closed | |
| Child/relative | Close by end of year? | |
| Inelig parent | Close by end of year? | |
| All families except SSI and relative care taker | Close when reach 60 months | Close if 24 months total |

New Time Limits - Applicants

For families applying on/after 10/08

- 48 month lifetime limit applies
 - 24/60 month lifetime limit applies – looking back from date of application
 - Months of FIP and months of cash received in another state are counted except:
 - Months of FIP/cash from another state received as a minor (including parent under 18) do not count
-

New Time Limits – Applicants

- InRhodes not programmed to reflect these new time limits
 - Families are accepted for benefits but may be terminated once system programmed to count 24/60 or 48
 - Families should not be denied or discouraged from applying
 - If choose not to apply for cash, should be encouraged to pursue Rite Care and Food Stamps.
-

Time limit - Hardship Exceptions

- Children and their eligible parent(s) can receive cash assistance in excess of the time limit if:
 - The parent is disabled and unable to work.
 - The family is homeless
 - The parent cannot work because of a domestic violence situation
 - The parent cannot work because s/he needs to be at home to care for a disabled child or spouse
-

Time limit - Hardship Exceptions

- Recipients receive advance notice of closure due to time limit and can request extension
 - Families that have closed due to time limit can reapply
 - Will need to comply with work activities
-

Time limit Hardship Exceptions - Disability

- Parent is unable to work due to a disability as documented by appropriate medical evidence. C-1b is completed by physician
 - And applies for SSI/Social Security Disability benefits
 - Extension may be granted for up to 12 months with additional 12 months
 - Parent is referred to Office of Rehabilitative Services (ORS)
-

Time Limit Hardship Extension – Caring for disabled family member

- Doctor, psychiatrist, psychologist or doctor of osteopathy provides a “descriptive statement” as to the family member’s disability and why full time care is required
 - A plan for “transfer of care” for the disabled family member so the parent can return to full time work is developed
-

Time limit Hardship Exception - Homeless

- A family without a fixed and regular nighttime residence or a family whose primary nighttime residence is:
 - Supervised emergency shelter
 - Halfway house which provides temporary residence for individual who otherwise would be institutionalized
 - Hotel/motel or living temporarily with another family for not more than 90 days
 - A place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation such as a bus station or lobby.
-

Time limit Hardship Exception - Homeless

- Family is referred to Housing Services Unit
 - Documentation may include a letter from shelter, or assessment of the living arrangements by DHS
 - Initial extension is for up to 3 months
 - Additional extension can be granted in 3 month increments up to a maximum of 12 months
-

Time limit -Domestic Violence

- Parent is referred to Family Violence Advocate
 - Advocate provides safety planning and makes a recommendation to DHS as to whether parent is unable to work due to the effects of the domestic violence
 - Waiver is granted for 6 months and can be renewed
-

Checklist for families that close to cash assistance

- Is family eligible for an extension?
 - Is family receiving Food Stamps and have stamps been adjusted to reflect loss of income?
 - Are family members receiving RIte Care?
 - If living in subsidized housing, has rent been adjusted to reflect loss of income?
-

Employment Plan - Overview

- Unless exempt, most parents required to participate in 4 week “intensive employment services” at NetworkRI as first activity
 - Parents with disabilities participate in Rehabilitation Plan through ORS
 - Parents with limited literacy and job skills or ESOL needs participate in “intensive work readiness program” (In development)
-

Employment Plan - Hours

- Parent with child under age 6 is required to participate in activities for 20 hours/week
 - Parent with child 6+ is required to participate in activities for 30 hours/week
 - When both parents are in the home, one parent must participate in activities 35 hours/week
 - For 2 parent family when youngest child is 6+, DHS can require both parents to be engaged in activities
-

RI Works

Intake and Employment Plan

- Family applies for assistance with social case worker
 - Appointments made with eligibility worker and SCW for preliminary employment plan
 - Preliminary Employment plan = referral to One Stop Center unless:
 - Under age 20 – referred to teen parent program
 - Exempt:
 - Receiving SSI
 - Caring for child under 1 (12 months max; 12 weeks max for teen parent)
 - Caring for incapacitated family member
 - Domestic Violence
-

RI Works vs. FIP - exemptions

| | FIP | RI Works |
|-----------------------------------|------------|---|
| Disabled-SSI | Yes | Yes |
| Disabled | Yes | No – rehab plan |
| Child under 1 | Yes | Yes – but only 12 months in lifetime |
| Pregnant | Yes | Applicant – yes Recipient – only if can't work |
| Caring for disabled family member | Yes | Yes |
| Domestic Violence | Yes | Yes |

Intake and Employment Plan in More Detail

□ Step One: Screening Interview

- Crisis Assistance
 - Domestic Violence Notice
 - DHS-1 completed and signed (protective filing date)
 - Expedited Food Stamps reviewed
 - Child Care application and pending letter issued*
 - Appointments with ET and SCW set
 - C-1b Provided if applicant indicates medical reason for inability to work
-

Intake and Employment Plan in More Detail

- Step Two: Eligibility Worker – intake interview
 - DHS-2 reviewed and completed
 - Documents received
 - Forms signed
 - Decision on eligibility within 30 days
 - Step Three: Social Case Worker
 - Preliminary Employment Plan – referral to “intensive employment services” at One Stop
-

Network RI One Stop Centers

- Providence: One Reservoir Ave
 - Pawtucket: 175 Main Street
 - Woonsocket: 219 Pond Street
 - West Warwick: 1330 Main Street
 - Newport DHS Office: 110 Enterprise Center
Middletown
 - First session is Monday of 3rd week after intake at DHS
 - If parent hasn't been able to arrange for child care – contacts SCW at DHS to get extension
-

Employment Plans and Activities

- Intensive Employment Services – DLT
 - TABE Test
 - Week of job readiness/testing
 - Three week job search
 - On going assessment during job search -
Can be referred to training if it appears that unable to find work w/o additional skills or to:
 - SER Jobs for Progress
 - South Shore Mental Health
 - DHS staff located at One Stop are liaisons with SCW at DHS office. DHS “controls” plan
-

Employment Plan and Activities

- After Intensive Employment Services ends, if parent has not found job:
 - Additional job search may be required (not currently an option) or
 - Core (minimum 20 hours/week) and non-core activities
-

Employment Plan Activities

| Core | Non-Core |
|--|---|
| Employment/subsidized public or private employment | Job skills training related to employment |
| Work Experience | Education related to employment |
| OJT | |
| Community Service | |
| Vocational Education (12 mo) | |
| Job search/job readiness | |
| | |

Special Circumstances

- Parent with disability (not receiving SSI)
 - Teen parents
 - Parents with service plan through DCYF
 - Families that are homeless
-

Parent Alleges Disability that Prevents Work

- Provided C1-b for provider to complete
 - Parent required to attend the Intensive Employment Program
 - Completed C1-b is returned to social caseworker
 - Information used to determine appropriate activities and/or referral to ORS for development of "rehabilitation plan"
-

Teen Parents

- Parent under age 20 without a high school diploma or GED is referred to teen parent program for services to help complete diploma or GED
 - Attendance in school or a GED program for an average of 20 hours/week meets the employment requirement
 - For minor teen, exempt only for 12 week following birth
 - For 18 and 19 yr old, can be exempt for 12 months maximum in lifetime
-

Parents who have DCYF Service Plan

- Parents involved with DCYF have a service plan outlining the required activities such as parenting classes, substance abuse treatment.
 - Up to 10 hours of DCYF required activities can be counted toward the parent's 20 or 30 hour/month requirement
 - DHS SCW is supposed to coordinate with DCYF caseworker so parent is able to comply with both DCYF service plan and DHS Employment Plan
-

Families that are homeless or about to become homeless

- Housing search can count as an activity for up to 90 days
 - For 2 parent HH, one parent must do 35 hours of "regular" activity and second parent signs employment plan and conducts the housing search (unless one parent receives SSI)
 - Self-directed housing search: parent provides SCW with log of face-to-face meetings on bi-weekly basis
-

Families that are homeless or about to become homeless

- Family living in a homeless shelter that has a structured program – required to participate in shelter's program services
-

Employment Plans – Current Participants

- When current activity ends, referred to DLT for intensive employment program
 - If vocational training, allowed to finish; post-secondary education?
-

Employment Plan Issues to Watch For

- Parents with disabilities
 - Parents involved with DCYF
 - Families that are homeless
 - Parents with limited literacy or who have English Language needs
 - Parents who have difficulty finding child care or have transportation difficulties
-

RI Works Program: Work Incentive

- Earnings disregard is applied:
 - \$170 and ½ balance
 - If family closes to cash and is working at least 30 hours/week when case closes, family can receive a cash bonus payment for 12 months (Spring 2009)
-

Work Incentive – RI Works and FIP

| | FIP | RI Works |
|-----------------|---|---|
| Work Disregard | \$170 plus ½ balance | \$170 plus ½ balance |
| Cash Supplement | Any month in which parent worked 30 hrs not counted toward time limit – so supplement not limited | Once parent reaches time limit, cash ends. Bonus payment for 12 months. |

RI Works - Sanctions

- Current sanction rule:
 - If parent fails to co-operate with employment plan activities without “good cause” a sanction is imposed
 - For first 6 months, benefit is reduced by parent’s share
 - After total of 6 months (whether or not consecutive, case is closed) Full Family Sanction
 - Parent is notified in advance of sanction and can request “conciliation meeting” with SCW
-

RI Works Program: Sanctions

- New sanction rules will go into effect spring 2009
 - Sanction is applied if parent fails without good cause to develop and carry out employment plan or accept job offer or if quits job
 - During first 3 months (whether or not consecutive) check is reduced by parent's share
 - Full family sanction after 3 months of non-compliance
-

RI Works Program - Sanctions

- If parent fails to comply, DHS sends notice of cash assistance reduction (first 3 months) or closure
 - Parent can request meeting with case worker to establish “good cause”
 - Conciliation process is eliminated
-

RI Works Program: Legal Permanent Residents

By mid-later spring 2009:

- Ineligible until in status 5 years (unless entered as refugee or asylee)
 - 600 children and 400 parents who are LPRs will close (not eligible for RIte Care)
 - No new LPRs – until reach 5 years (except if in country before 8/22/96 and continuously lived in US)
-

RI Works – Notice and Hearing

- Applicant entitled to written notice about eligibility within 30 days of application
 - Recipient – notice of benefit reduction or closure at least 10 days prior to action
 - Right to request hearing – 30 days from date on notice
 - For benefit closure or reduction – if request within 10 days of notice, benefits continue until hearing decision
 - RI Legal Services: 274-2652
-

RI Works - Monitoring

Families that have timed off

Watch for:

- Applicants denied due to time limits
 - Parents with disabilities – permanent and temporary
 - Parents who are sanctioned
 - Families involved with DCYF
 - Families eligible for extension (recipients and re-applicants)
-

Benefits for Working Families

Tax Credits

- EITC: up to \$4,824 for parent with 2 children (federal) and state (5% of fed)
- Child Tax Credit: \$1,000/child

Child Care Subsidy

Food Stamps

Rite Care

Help for Low Income Families

www.povertyinstitute.org

For more information...

www.povertyinstitute.org

Linda Katz: 456-4634

Heidi Collins: 456-2751
