
FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICES CERTIFICATION

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

FNS 245 EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING (E&T)

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Change #17-2021

SEPTEMBER 20, 2021

245.00 EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING (E&T) WORK PROGRAM

The purpose of the Food and Nutrition Services (FNS) Employment and Training (E&T) Program is to provide FNS recipients opportunities to gain skills, training or experience that will improve employment prospects and reduce the reliance on FNS benefits.

Employment and Training counties are defined as counties that have an executed contract with the North Carolina Division of Social Services (DSS).

Employment and Training Partners are agencies that contract directly with the NC DSS or Local Departments of Social Services to operate any portion of the E&T program. The term “partner” implies shared responsibilities in terms of the program’s operation and often with program financing.

To participate in E&T, FNS recipients must meet the following requirements:

- Be an eligible member of an active FNS unit
- Be 16 years of age and older
- Must have path to employment upon completion of program
- A resident of a county that is operating an Employment and Training Program
- Be an unemployed FNS recipients seeking employment
- Be an underemployed FNS recipient that desire to gain better employment
- FNS recipients who are exempt from Work Registration can volunteer if seeking employment

Individuals who are ineligible to participate E&T Program are:

- Work First Family Assistance (WFFA) applicants and recipients required to participate in employment services
- Refugees receiving cash assistance while participating in a Refugee Resettlement Program (RRP)

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245.01 REFERRING FNS UNIT MEMBER RECIPIENT TO FNS E&T PROGRAM

- A. Upon approval of FNS eligibility and the recipient's request to be referred, county DSS staff will enter the E&T referral within 3 calendar days into NC FAST and send notification to the county E&T Coordinator, E&T Social Worker or contracted FNS E&T partner. Refer to NC FAST Job Aid Employment and Training (E&T) Referral Process.
- B. The following information must be included in the encrypted email or confidential notification:
- Date of referral
 - Recipient's name
 - FNS Product Delivery Number
 - Month and Year of current FNS certification period
- C. When the E&T Partner becomes aware of any changes (ex. Address and telephone number, new household members, changes in employment status, failure to comply with E&T partner), the E&T Partner has a responsibility to notify DSS of the change within 10 calendar days. DSS will be required to make updates to the NC FAST E&T Screen and document on the Income Support page in the Case Details tab in NC FAST.
- D. If DSS becomes aware of any changes that effect the participant's FNS eligibility or E&T status, DSS is to make the Employment and Training Partner aware within 10 calendar days, make updates to the NC FAST E&T Screen and document in Case Notes.

245.02 EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING COMPONENTS

An E&T program offered by a local DSS agency must include one or more of the components listed in this section. Counties can select the component(s) they want to provide. The county's selected services must be included in the county's annual Plan of Action. The Plan of Action can be amended on a quarterly basis as needed.

- A. Job Search Training
- A component that strives to enhance job readiness skills by providing instruction in job seeking techniques and increasing motivation and self-confidence. Component may consist of job skills assessments, job finding clubs, job placement services, or other direct training or support activities. Other activities may include resume writing workshops and learning to use

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online job search tools. This component may combine job search activities with other training and support activities.

B. Work Experience

- Goal is to enable participants to move to regular employment.
- Work assignments can be with private and/or for-profit companies.
- Assignments may not replace the employment of a regularly employed individuals performing similar work for equal hours.
- FNS household members volunteering in Work Experience must not be required to work more hours monthly than the total obtained by dividing the household's monthly FNS allotment by minimum wage.
- Depending on the amount of the household's FNS allotment, mandatory E&T participants can be required to work up to 30 hours per week, and the individual's total hours of participation in both work and non-work components is limited to 120 hours per month.
- Work experience may include non-paid activities such as:
 - on-the-job training
 - pre-apprenticeship
 - apprenticeship placements
- Viable work experience sites are those that have entered an agreement with the state DSS office

C. Education Programs

- Acceptable education activities are programs that establish a direct link to job readiness. Federal E&T funds cannot take the place of non-federal funds for existing educational services. Federal financial participation for operating education components may be authorized only for costs that exceed the normal cost of services provided to persons not participating in E&T. Programs include:
 - Adult Basic Education (ABE)
 - Basic Literacy
 - English as a Second Language (ESL)

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- High School equivalency (GED)
- Post-secondary education

D. Vocational and Technical Training

- Vocational courses and programs often result in a certificate of completion. This type of program focuses on teaching a specific trade with a hands-on approach, like construction, agriculture or health, as well as teaching general employment skills, such as typing.
- Technical, community or junior colleges offer technical courses and programs, and these usually result in an associate degree, pre-bachelor's technical degree or certificate. Technical programs typically focus on studying books and manuals for computer-oriented training and careers.
- Vocational and Technical Training examples:
 - Computer Specialist
 - Radiation Therapist
 - Dental Hygienist
 - Electrical and Electronics Repairman
 - Electrician
 - Plumber
 - HVAC Technician
 - Mason
 - Early Child Care Education
 - Medical Transcription
 - Paramedic -EMT
 - Pharmacy Technician

E. Job Retention

- Job retention component provides supportive services for up to 90 days to individuals who have secured employment. This component is meant to help achieve satisfactory performance, retain employment, or to increase

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earnings over time. Job retention is only applicable to individuals who have previously participated in other E&T components and were receiving FNS benefits in the month of or one month prior to beginning job retention services. Job retention is a standalone component. A participant cannot be in job retention and another component simultaneously. Job retention services can be granted even if the individual is no longer a member of an active FNS case. There is no limit to the number of times an individual may receive job retention services, as long as the individual has re-engaged with E&T prior to obtaining new employment. Supportive services providing can include:

- Case management
- Life skill classes
- Referrals to other services
- Test fees
- Licensing and bonding fees
- Clothing required for job
- Equipment or tools required for a job
- Relocation expenses for employment purposes
- Transportation assistance
- Childcare

F. Self-Employment Training

- This is a component that improved the employability of participants by providing training in setting up and operating a small business or other self-employment venture.

G. Pre-Apprenticeship /Apprenticeship

- Pre-apprenticeship is a component designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in an Apprenticeship program. These programs promote a diverse and skilled workforce and prepare participants to meet the basic qualifications for entry into an apprenticeship, through:
 - An approved training curriculum based on industry standards,

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- Educational and pre-vocational services,
 - Hands-on training in a simulated lab experience or through volunteer opportunities, and
 - Assistance in applying to Apprenticeship programs.
- H. Apprenticeship is a component that is an employer-driven, “learn-while-you-earn” program that combines on-the-job training, provided by an employer that hires the apprentice, with job-related instruction in curricula tied to the attainment of national skills standards.

245.03 PARTICIPANT REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS

- A. The FNS E&T Program requires that participants are reimbursed for actual expenses incurred (e.g. transportation, books and personal safety items).
1. Expenses reimbursed by the local DSS are paid to the participant upon confirmation of participants’ compliance with E&T program. This confirmation is received from the E&T Partner. Reimbursements are given in accordance with the county’s Employment and Training Plan of Action.
 2. Participant expenses that are paid by the Employment and Training Partner are to be received by the participant within 30 calendar days of compliance. All payments should be in accordance with the reimbursement agreement with the local or State DSS as detailed in a Plan of Action.
- B. Reimbursement for Transportation and Other Expenses
- Reimburse participants for transportation and other expenses (i.e., books, uniforms, and personal safety items) incurred that are reasonably necessary and directly related to participation in the E&T Program as follows.
1. Actual expenses incurred up to the amount the county has agreed upon per month; or
 2. A flat monthly fee, for expenses incurred, up to the amount the county has agreed upon; or
 3. A predetermined prorated amount that is specified in the county E&T Plan of Action; or

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4. Arrange or purchase transportation (i.e., provide bus passes) or pay vendors directly for any items necessary for participation up to whatever amount the county sets per month.

The payments to FNS E&T participants may be made in advance for anticipated expenses in the coming month.

245.04 TERMINATION OF VOLUNTEER E&T STATUS PROCEDURES

- A. When any of the following changes occur, terminate the volunteer status of the FNS participants. Document the reason for the termination and send to E&T Partner within ten calendar days of the effective date of the change. Use the DSS-8640, Work Registration Responsibilities to notify the FNS participant that the individual is not an E&T work program participant. Reasons for termination of volunteer status are:

1. The volunteer moves from the Employment and Training county.
2. The volunteer no longer wishes to volunteer.
3. The volunteer does not comply with the E&T Partner.
4. The volunteer is terminated from FNS for reasons other than disqualification for failure to comply with work requirements or failure to reapply.

Update NC FAST E&T Screen and document the Income Support page in the Case Details tab in NC FAST.

- B. A volunteer is automatically terminated from volunteer status when the FNS unit participant fails to apply for recertification within 30 days after the end of its certification period.

245.05 WORKERS COMPENSATION INSURANCE

All FNS recipients who participate in FNS E&T Program component Work Experience are covered by a statewide worker's compensation insurance policy. The policy is renewed annually and maintained by NC DSS. The coverage is provided by Key Risk Management Services.

When a participant contacts the local E&T provider to report a claim:

- A. Call the toll-free telephone reporting service at 1-866-847-8872 to initiate the claims process. This should be done immediately but no later than five (5) business days from the date the county social services agency learns of the incident. The policy number is 992-444. The North Carolina Department of

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- Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services is the insured agency.
- B. Notify the Economic and Family Services Section/ Food and Nutrition Employment and Training at 919-527-6300 to report the incident and to provide the claim number. This should be done immediately but no later than five (5) business days from the date the county social services agency learns of the incident.
 - C. Use the Report of Injuries Log, DSS-5322, to list all report of injuries sustained by participants engaged in Community Service or Work Experience activities. Submit the log quarterly to the Division at the attention of the FNS Employment and Training Program by the timelines identified on the log. It is not necessary to submit the log if there are not any injuries for the report period.
 - D. In the event of worksite injury, the insurance carrier recommends the CompCareLXTM managed care network of pharmacies and medical providers. Please ensure all worksite sponsors are aware of the network providers and procedures related to worksite injuries and workers' compensation.