

20-76-444. Arkansas Work Pays Program — Created — Duties.

(a) (1) There is created the Arkansas Work Pays Program.

(2) (A) The Arkansas Work Pays Program shall be administered by the Department of Workforce Services.

(B) The administration of the Arkansas Work Pays Program shall focus on promoting the transitional employment assistance outcomes specified in § 20-76-105(1).

(3) Eligible applicants to the Arkansas Work Pays Program shall receive one (1) or more of the following:

(A) Cash assistance;

(B) Support services;

(C) Medical assistance; and

(D) Employment assistance.

(b) (1) Eligibility for assistance under the Arkansas Work Pays Program is limited to applicants or participants who:

(A) Have care and custody of a related minor child;

(B) Reside in the State of Arkansas at the time of application for assistance and during the period of assistance;

(C) Apply for program assistance within six (6) months of leaving the Transitional Employment Assistance Program after at least three (3) months of Transitional Employment Assistance Program assistance;

(D) Have not received more than twenty-four (24) months of Arkansas Work Pays Program benefits;

(E) Were engaged:

(i) In paid work activities for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours per week and met the federal work participation requirement for the past month; or

(ii) In the case of continuing eligibility, in paid work activities for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours per week and met the federal work participation requirement for one (1) of the past three (3) months and for at least three (3) of the past six (6) months;

(F) Are:

(i) Citizens of the United States;

(ii) Qualified aliens lawfully present in the United States before August 22, 1996;

(iii) Qualified aliens who physically entered the United States on or after August 22, 1996, and have been in qualified immigrant status for at least five (5) years; or

(iv) Aliens to whom benefits under Temporary Assistance for Needy Families must be provided under federal law;

(G) Have income below one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the federal poverty level; and

(H) Sign and comply with a personal responsibility agreement.

(2) Families who leave the Arkansas Work Pays Program due to insufficient work hours may reenter the Arkansas Work Pays Program once they establish that they were paid work activities for a minimum of twenty-four (24) hours per week and met the federal work participation requirement for the past month.

(c) (1) Families participating in the Arkansas Work Pays Program with earnings less than the federal poverty level shall receive monthly cash assistance equal to the maximum monthly Transitional Employment Assistance Program benefit for a family of three (3) with no earned income.

(2) The department may set payment levels for families earning above the federal poverty level by rule to allow for a gradual reduction in payments as earnings rise toward one hundred fifty percent (150%) of the federal poverty level.

(d) (1) Enrollment in Arkansas Work Pays Program cash assistance may be limited to three thousand (3,000) participants.

(2) If the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Oversight Board certifies to the Governor and the Chief Fiscal Officer of the State and notifies the Legislative Council, the Senate Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committee, and the House Public Health, Welfare, and Labor Committee that the action is necessary to avoid the number of families receiving Arkansas Work Pays Program cash assistance going over three thousand (3,000), it may authorize a reduction of the months for which families may receive cash assistance or other supportive services.

(3) The number of months for which families are eligible for cash assistance may be reduced in three-month increments from the statutory provision of twenty-four (24) months.

(4) Families who lose eligibility for cash assistance due to the reduction in the number of months of eligibility shall qualify for financial incentives offered to families leaving the Arkansas Work Pays Program.

(5) The Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Oversight Board shall withdraw its reduction of the months for which families are eligible for cash assistance if the reduction is no longer necessary to maintain enrollments below three thousand (3,000) families.

(e) Families participating in the Arkansas Work Pays Program shall be eligible for the same support services and assistance as families enrolled in the Transitional Employment Assistance Program.

(f) The Department of Workforce Services shall administer a work incentive program that includes cash bonuses and other financial incentives to encourage:

(1) Transitional Employment Assistance Program recipients to leave the Transitional Employment Assistance Program and move into the Arkansas Work Pays Program;

(2) Arkansas Work Pays Program participants to stay employed for at least twenty-four (24) hours a week and meet the federal work participation rate; and

(3) Arkansas Work Pays Program participants to leave the Arkansas Work Pays Program and continue employment for at least twenty-four (24) hours per week.

(g) (1) The Department of Workforce Services shall work with local workforce offices to develop and administer services to Arkansas Work Pays Program participants designed to help them move into higher-paying jobs available in their regions.

(2) These services may include:

(A) Employment exchanges;

(B) Education and training;

(C) Work supports; and

(D) Other services designed to help Arkansas Work Pays Program participants increase their earnings and develop careers.

(3) The Department of Workforce Services may make these services available to low-income workers who are not participating in the Arkansas Work Pays Program.

(h) The Department of Workforce Services may contract with the Department of Human Services for administrative services related to eligibility and payments.

(i) The Department of Workforce Services shall make arrangements with the Department of Human Services to facilitate participants' enrollment in the Arkansas Work Pays Program after they leave the Transitional Employment Assistance Program.

(j) (1) The Department of Workforce Services shall promulgate rules establishing the Arkansas Work Pays Program.

(2) The rules shall be subject to review and recommendation by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Oversight Board.

History. Acts 2005, No. 1705, § 19; 2007, No. 514, §§ 21, 22.

20-76-113. Promoting outcomes for the Transitional Employment Assistance Program and the Arkansas Work Pays Program.

(a) The administration of the Transitional Employment Assistance Program and the Arkansas Work Pays Program shall focus on promoting the following Transitional Employment Assistance Program outcomes for Transitional Employment Assistance Program recipients and poor families in Arkansas:

- (1) Increase the percentage of families who receive appropriate services to move off of Transitional Employment Assistance Program cash assistance into employment and toward self-sufficiency;
- (2) Increase the percentage of families who leave Transitional Employment Assistance Program cash assistance due to earnings from work;
- (3) Increase earnings of families who leave Transitional Employment Assistance Program cash assistance;
- (4) Increase the percentage of parents leaving Transitional Employment Assistance Program cash assistance who stay employed; and
- (5) Increase the percentage of former Transitional Employment Assistance Program cash assistance recipients who move out of poverty, including the value of food stamps and the federal Earned Income Tax Credit and child support.

(b) The Department of Workforce Services shall develop and maintain the indicators for the Transitional Employment Assistance Program outcomes listed in subdivisions (a)(1)-(5) of this section, subject to review and approval by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Oversight Board.

(c) (1) The Department of Workforce Services shall develop proper targets for each Transitional Employment Assistance Program outcome by July 1 of each year, subject to review and approval by the board.

(2) The Department of Workforce Services shall review and report on progress in achieving the targets by December 10 and June 10 of each year.

(3) (A) Reports shall be submitted to the Governor and to the Chair of the House Interim Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor and the Chair of the Senate Interim Committee on Public Health, Welfare, and Labor.

(B) The report shall include comments from the Department of Human Services, the Department of Workforce Services, and other relevant state agencies about their activities and their progress toward the Transitional Employment Assistance Program outcome targets.

History. Acts 2007, No. 514, § 7.