

Family Economic Security Program Overview 2011 Legislative Session

The Family Economic Security (FES) Program is designed to improve family economic security by providing innovative services that are documented to improve financial literacy and assist in building personal assets for families.

Services are provided to adults over the age of 18 who are not receiving TANF cash assistance and whose household gross income is at or below 185% of the FPL or anyone age 16-18 or up to age 19 if still in high school (receiving TANF or not) whose household gross income is at or below 185% of the FPL.

The services must include completion of a curriculum to increase the families' knowledge in financial literacy and may also include comprehensive financial asset development strategy options such as Individual Development Accounts (IDA's), Match Savings Accounts, or home ownership or education or training in a high demand field leading to employment with an increased wage.

There are currently six (6) FES contractors and one (1) subcontractor with DPHHS providing FES services in some fashion to all 56 counties in the State. The contractors include:

HRDC District 7

Rural Employment Opportunities (REO)

- Subcontractor is Career Transitions

Career Training Institute (CTI)

Career Futures

Missoula Workforce Center

Rural Dynamics, Inc.

Services offered by the contractors vary and include homeownership 'tracks'; youth programs and education. Intensive case management services are available through the majority of the programs, monitoring participants as they proceed with their family economic security plan.

A financial literacy curriculum is mandatory in all programs. Three of the programs have a specific youth track for financial literacy; in the Great Falls area, a specific youth track was developed, providing 12 hours of personal financial training. CTI in Helena also offers a Youth Experiencing Security and Success (YESS) program for youth and young adults age 16 – 30 with a 12-hour financial literacy workshop and one-on-one counseling. Career Futures in Butte offers evening courses for working individuals and has established a portion of the financial literacy curriculum online for ease in participant access.

Education and Training services include paid work experience (WEX) sites; formalizing a individual employment plan (IEP) including self-employment options; incentive programs for completion of a GED, high school diploma or vocational certificate or two year associate degree; and training programs in high demand occupations.

Financial asset development programs include Individual Development Accounts (IDA), matched savings programs with a maximum match rate of 3:1 and other "savings" oriented programs designed to assist families in saving for tomorrow. Rural Dynamics has developed two home ownership "tracks", one designed for those who have the ability to purchase a home within the contract period and another for those who have barriers to home ownership to address.

Overtime Request for Human & Community Services Division

Overtime was previously utilized by three truck drivers, four Child Care/CACFP employees, four PAB field staff and 205 OPA eligibility staff.

Truck drivers travel across the state delivering commodity foods to over 325 locations. Road and weather conditions can make delivery route times longer than expected. Delivery locations now include towns on the extreme eastern route (Wibaux, Baker, Ekalaka, Broadus and other towns in the Miles City area) that were once delivered by a Montana Food Bank Network warehouse in Miles City that is now closed.

Ensuring that trucks leave the warehouse with a full load is the most efficient use of our trucks and driver time, but often requires putting additional delivery stops on each run which means additional delivery time, but it extends the length of time before a return to the same general delivery area is needed and results in an overall cost savings.

These drivers need to be able to respond to emergencies. Trucks were on standby during the recent flooding in Ft. Peck; however, additional deliveries were not requested. Vacations, extended sick time or family emergencies by one driver can result in OT for the remaining two drivers.

Overtime for these three drivers is a necessity. Sometimes, the situations they face cannot be avoided without significant additional costs.

Four Child Care and CACFP program staff used overtime for travel when it was less expensive than an additional overnight stay while monitoring contracts or training staff, and to address staff shortages when positions were vacant and when staff members were on FMLA. Every effort is made to avoid overtime situations, but sometimes it cannot be helped.

Four PAB field staff used overtime for travel while conducting monitoring and training and also when assisting OPA's with eligibility processing. HCSD used available field staff and even some central office staff to assist in processing applications on several occasions, but only four staff required overtime.

OPA eligibility staff was given permission to work overtime on one Saturday in each of two different months. Four Saturday workdays were granted. The purpose was to try and catch up on applications and the best time to do it was when the public was not present. Participation was optional and 187 (almost half) of our eligibility staff participated—some working overtime in both months. This overtime was paid for using ARRA funding. A limited amount of overtime was used by 18 workers during regular work weeks, but was held to a minimum because of the strain on our budget. We project similar "overtime" days will be needed or overtime approved during regular work weeks. Under current conditions, it's virtually impossible for our current staff to process all applications and be timely and accurate. When application numbers decrease significantly, staff will be able to handle the workload, but until then, overtime is needed.