



FAMILY INDEPENDENCE ADMINISTRATION

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POLICY BULLETIN #09-87-ELI

CHANGE IN THE STUDENT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA FOR FOOD STAMPS

Date: July 9, 2009	Subtopic(s): Food Stamps
<p> This procedure can now be accessed on the FIAweb.</p>	<p>The purpose of this policy bulletin is to inform Job Center and Non Cash Assistance Food Stamp (NCA FS) Center staff of a change in student eligibility criteria for food stamps. The change intends to allow an averaging of work hours for students enrolled at least half-time in institutions of higher learning.</p> <p>The guidelines for participation in the Food Stamp (FS) Program prior to June 1, 2009, required students to meet one of the following FS eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family Assistance or Federally Safety Net Assistance benefit participant. • A provider of more than half the physical care for a child under 6 years of age or an incapacitated person. • Enrollment in school full-time and is a single parent responsible for the care of a child under 12 years of age. • A provider of more than half the care for a child under 12 years of age and does not have adequate child care to go to work and to school. • During the school year is a participant in a state or federally funded work study program under Title IV-C. • Placement in a school through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Food Stamp Employment Training (FSET), Job Opportunities and Basic Skills (JOBS) Training Program or the Department of Labor (DOL). • Employment for a minimum of 20 hours per week. If self-employed, the student must work a minimum of 20 hours and earn an amount equal to the federal minimum wage x 20 hours.

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT THIS PROCEDURE?
Call 718-557-1313 then press 3 at the prompt followed by 1 or
send an e-mail to *FIA Call Center*

Effective June 1, 2009, the eligibility criteria for employment with a minimum of 20 hours per week has been changed to an average of 20 hours per week and paid at least minimum wage for such employment. This means that a college student can work less than 20 hours a week and still participate in the FS Program, as long as at the end of the month the total number of hours worked average 20 hours.

4 week month

Example A

A FS participant attending Hunter College works part-time with a catering company earning \$8 per hour. In the month of June he worked the following hours:

May

6/5/09: 15 hours

6/12/09: 13 hours

6/19/09: 35 hours

6/26/09: 25 hours

88 Total hours worked for the month

To calculate the average hours worked per week, divide the total hours worked in the month by the number of weeks in the month.

$$88 \div 4 = 22$$

In this example the student worked an average of 22 hours per week earning at least minimum wage.

5 week month

Example B

A FS participant attending Hunter College works part-time with a catering company earning \$8 per hour. In the month of July he worked the following hours:

June

7/3/09: 15 hours

7/10/09: 10 hours

7/17/09: 20 hours

7/24/09: 25 hours

7/31/09 15 hours

85 Total hours for 5 weeks

$$85 \div 5 = 17$$

In this example there were 5 weeks in the month and the student worked the same 85 hours, but he is not eligible for FS because the average hours per week totals 17 hours.

Student earns less than minimum wage

Example C

James Smart is a full-time student at Hunter College and is applying for FS benefits on his mother's case. He works, on average, 12 hours per week, stocking shelves at a local supermarket for \$8 per hour. He also works, on average, 10 hours per week, working on his new social networking site for fellow astronomy students, called Spacebook. He has been making, on average, \$50 per week from Spacebook.

Refer to PB #09-86-OPE for more information on the federal minimum wage.

The 12 hours that James works at the supermarket would count toward meeting the 20-hour employment requirement. The 10 hours spent working on Spacebook does not count towards work hours because he is not earning at a rate equal to the federal minimum wage. ($\$50 \text{ per week} / 10 \text{ hours per week} = \5 per hour).

Note: Workers should determine the weekly average using hours worked during the 30 days prior to the date of application and/or recertification. If the 30-day period prior to the application date does not provide an accurate representation of the number of hours worked weekly, a longer period than the 30 days can be used to obtain a more accurate representation.

Active FS households containing ineligible students are not required to be reassessed until their next recertification for food stamps.

Effective Immediately

Related Item:

PB #09-86-OPE

Reference:

09-ADM-08