

**NORTH DAKOTA DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES
BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA
April 18, 2022**

IM 5461

TO: Human Service Zones
Policy and System Support
Economic Assistance Policy Quality Control Reviewers

FROM: Michele Gee, Director, Economic Assistance

SUBJECT: BEST & NDWORKS Updates

PROGRAMS: Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program

EFFECTIVE: April 14, 2022

**SECTIONS
AFFECTED:** 430-05-40-55 – Basic Employment Skills Training Program (BEST)
430-05-40-55-10 – Exemptions from BEST
430-05-40-55-15 – Voluntary Participants
430-05-40-55-20 – Human Service Zone Procedures
430-05-40-55-25 – BEST Case Manager Responsibilities
430-05-40-55-30 – Participant Responsibilities
430-05-40-55-35 – Participant Reimbursement
430-05-40-55-37 – Good Cause for Non-Compliance BEST
430-05-40-60-20 – Human Service Zone Procedures
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430-05-40-60-35 – Participant Reimbursement

Basic Employment Skills Training Program (BEST) 430-05-40-55

The Basic Employment Skills Training (BEST) Program is intended to expose participating individuals to job seeking and retention skills. It is operational in Burleigh and Cass ~~human service zones~~counties.

Exemptions from BEST 430-05-40-55-10

The following individuals are not required to participate in BEST ~~(TECS coding on the WORE screen is listed)~~:

1. Geographic (individuals not living in Burleigh and Cass ~~human service zones~~Counties) ~~(EX)~~
2. Migrants in the job stream. ~~(MI)~~
3. Individuals exempt for good cause as determined by sound, professional judgment of the worker. The case must be thoroughly documented to support the exemption. ~~(GC)~~
4. Individuals who are participating in the Parental Responsibility Initiative for the Development of Employment (PRIDE) Program. ~~(PP)~~
5. Individuals where public transportation is limited because of where and when the public transportation is available. ~~(LT)~~
6. Individuals with a temporary disability such as a broken leg, illness, etc. ~~(DI)~~
7. Individuals who do not have a permanent residence and are 'homeless' ~~(MA)~~
8. Limited or non-English speaking individuals ~~(NE)~~
9. Pregnant Women ~~(PG)~~

Voluntary Participants 430-05-40-55-15

Individuals exempt from the BEST requirements may volunteer to participate. Voluntary participants will be referred to the NDWORKS program. If the NDWORKS program has a waitlist in Burleigh or Cass ~~human service zones~~Counties, the voluntary participant will be referred to BEST. Voluntary participants are not subject to the work disqualification.

Human Service ZoneCounty Procedures 430-05-40-55-20

The workers must carry out the following procedures:

- Determine if the work registrant is required to participate in BEST.
- If the work registrant is exempt, enter the exemption reason **in the SNAP Work Registration - Details screen in the eligibility system**~~code and date exempted on TECS screen WORE.~~
- If the work registrant is not exempt, refer them to the **SNAP Employment and Training program using the**~~Employment Communication orientation session using Form SFN 679, "Basic~~**SNAP Employment and Skills Training Referral". The d**~~Date, time and place of orientation sessions are listed on the SNAP Employment and Training Referral notice~~**can be obtained from the local Workshop Coordinator.**

- ~~Inform the Workshop Coordinator of the referral by sending them a copy of the completed Form SFN 679, "Basic Employment Skills Training Referral," that was given to the participant.~~
- If notified by the **BEST case manager** ~~Workshop Coordinator~~ that an individual has failed to comply with BEST participant responsibilities **determine if the participant has good cause, if good cause cannot be determined** ~~begin conciliation procedures by sending the Notice of Eligibility indicating the disqualification for failure to comply with BEST F803—BEST Non-Compliance Notice to the client. Refer to "Good Cause 430-05-40-25-10" in SNAP policy for determining good cause.~~
- Notify the **BEST case manager** ~~Workshop Coordinator~~ **via email** if the work registrant is no longer required to participate in the BEST Program.

BEST Case Manager ~~**Workshop Coordinator**~~ **Responsibilities 430-05-40-55-25**

The local **BEST case manager** ~~Employment Communication Workshop Coordinator~~ must:

- ~~Conduct orientation sessions.~~ ~~Employment Communication Workshops and Network Center.~~
- Inform the worker of participant non-compliance.
- Inform the worker when a participant gains employment.
- ~~Inform the State Office of days of attendance of participants.~~
- Inform **Submit monthly program tracking spreadsheets to** the State Office of numbers of individuals who begin the Employment Communication Workshops.
- Inform **Submit monthly participant reimbursements to** the State Office of numbers of individuals who gain employment.

Participant Responsibilities 430-05-40-55-30

BEST participants must do the following:

- Attend the ~~Employment Communication O~~ **orientation** session assigned.
- Contact the **BEST case manager** ~~coordinator~~ to reschedule if necessary.
- **Participate and follow the BEST responsibilities provided by the BEST case manager on the BEST Responsibilities form.**
- ~~If selected, attend the Employment Communication Workshop.~~
- ~~Participate in Network Center for a minimum of five days.~~
- ~~Cooperate and comply with the Network Center Coordinator.~~

Participants failing to meet these responsibilities will be subject to Program [disqualification](#).

Participant Reimbursement 430-05-40-55-35

~~Participants payments will be made to individuals who have been approved and have an open SNAP case up to a maximum of \$50.00 per month in the BEST program may be eligible for reimbursement for supportive services. Reimbursements will be made by the State Office directly to participating individuals during the month following participation and are excluded as income.~~

Allowable Expenses include the following:

- Up to \$150/month for Transportation includes the following (receipts are not required):
 - Bus fare, voucher or pass;
 - Gas;
 - Taxi, Uber and/or Lyft fees.
- Up to \$25/month for the following (receipts are required):
 - Grooming and personal hygiene;
 - Job Readiness
 - Phone cards, employment related clothing, work boots/shoes.

~~BEST Program participants are reimbursed a flat rate of fifty dollars for transportation related costs to participate in BEST.~~

~~Reimbursements will be made by the State Office directly to participating individuals during the month following participation and are excluded as income.~~

Good Cause for Non-Compliance – BEST 430-05-40-55-37

The worker is responsible for determining good cause when an individual has failed to comply with the BEST Program. The BEST ~~case manager~~ ~~Contractor~~ may be able to provide reason(s) why the individual failed to participate, however the determination must be made by the worker.

When the BEST ~~case manager~~ ~~Contractor~~ notifies the worker of non-compliance, the worker must send notice Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) – E&TF802—BEST Good Cause Determination to the individual. The individual must establish if good cause exists within 10 days of the notice. If good cause does not exist or the individual does not respond, the worker must begin the ~~disqualification process found in “Disqualification Time Frames for BEST 430-05-40-55-45”~~ ~~conciliation procedure.~~

Good cause for non-compliance with the BEST Program includes circumstances beyond the individual’s control, including but not limited to:

- a. Illness.
- b. Illness of another household member requiring the presence of the individual.
- c. A household emergency.
- d. Unavailability of transportation.
- e. Lack of adequate child care for children who have reached age six, but are under age 12.
- f. Acceptance of employment of more than 30 hours a week which doesn't materialize or results in employment of less than 30 hours a week.

Good cause is appropriate for instances where the lack of transportation or dependent care is short-term or temporary.

EXAMPLES:

- 1. The bus was behind schedule
- 2. The individual's car broke down
- 3. The individual did not have adequate child care to participate.

Transportation, dependent care or other necessary participation expenses that are a more chronic issue may be reason to exempt an individual from BEST.

Good cause for non-compliance can also include good cause reasons as outlined in Good Cause 430-05-40-25-10.

Human Service ZoneCounty Procedures 430-05-40-60-20

Human Service ZoneCounty Workers must:

- Complete the Affidavit for SNAP Employment and Training Registrants (SFN 353). The individual must sign the Affidavit for SNAP Employment and Training and a copy must be given to the individual and a copy placed in the case file. The worker must document in the case narrative that the individual was given a signed copy of the Affidavit for SNAP Employment and Training.
- Refer them to the NDWORKS program **electronically through the eligibility system** using the SNAP Employment and Training Program Referral.
- If a client volunteers in Cass or Burleigh County the worker will refer them to the NDWORKS program. If NDWORKS is serving their max clients and has a wait list, the client will then be referred to the BEST program. NDWORKS is the first referral option for all voluntary clients.

- The **human service zone**county should complete the **electronic** SNAP Employment and Training Program Referral and a copy must be given to the participant **if they are in the office**, and a copy placed in the case file. The worker must document in the case narrative that the individual was referred to NDWORKS and that a copy of the SNAP Employment and Training Program Referral was given to the participant.
- ~~Notify the NDWORKS case manager of the referral by emailing the signed SNAP Employment and Training Program Referral to them. The date the SNAP Employment and Training Program Referral was emailed to the NDWORKS case manager must be documented in the case narrative.~~
- ~~Notify the NDWORKS case manager if a participant's SNAP case closes.~~

NDWORKS Case Manager Responsibilities 430-05-40-60-25

NDWORKS Case Managers must:

- Contact the participant within 7 days of the receipt of Form SNAP Employment and Training Program Referral.
- Schedule the orientation and provide the date and time of orientation to the participant.
- Notify the **human service zone**county worker via email of the date and time the participant is scheduled for orientation.
- Complete a formal assessment and develop an employment plan specific to the participant. The employment plan must be updated monthly, at a minimum.
- Provide monthly case management, including weekly contact with the participant.
- Contact with the **human service zone**county worker monthly to verify a participant continues to receive SNAP. Monthly contact can be via telephone or email.
- Inform the **human service zone**county worker via email when a participant gains employment.

- Track all participation and outcome measures and report these to the State Office no later than 15 calendar days after the end of each calendar month.
- Submit participant reimbursement requests along with receipts to the State Office using the SFN471 – Vendor Payment Authorization and Request For Payment For Goods and Services no later than 15 calendar days after the end of each calendar month.
- If a client become disengaged for a period of 30 days, they will be removed from the NDWORKS SNAP E&T program. If at any point after those 30 days the participant engages, a new referral will be made. If the contractor has a wait list, the re-referred individual will be placed on it.

Participant Reimbursement 430-05-40-60-35

Participants in the NDWORKS program may be eligible for reimbursement for supportive services. Reimbursements will be made by the State Office directly to participating individuals during the month following participation and are excluded as income.

Allowable expenses include the following:

- ~~Transportation~~ Up to \$150/month for transportation. Transportation includes the following (receipts are not required):
 - Bus fare, voucher or pass (if not provided by NDWORKS);
 - Gas;
 - Taxi, Uber and/or Lyft Fees.
- Up to \$25/month for the following (receipts required):
 - Grooming and personal hygiene;
 - Job Readiness
 - Phone cards, employment related clothing, work boots/shoes
 - ~~Clothing or tools needed for employment;~~
 - ~~Licensing and testing fees necessary for employment;~~
 - ~~Books/training materials necessary for individuals to complete an educational component.~~
- Up to \$50/month for License/Certification/Examination fees (receipts required)
 - GED, CAN, Professional
- Up to \$75/month for books and training materials (receipts required)

NDWORKS is required to submit participant reimbursements for supportive services and should be submitted to the State Office via ~~SFN471~~ Vendor

~~Payment Authorization and Request For Payment For Goods And Services,~~
along with any receipts provided by the participant, no later than 15
calendar days after the end of each calendar month.