25.4 LOCAL OFFICE RESPONSIBILITIES IN FSE&T THE WORK PROGRAM

In addition to the responsibilities contained in other chapters of this Manual, the Contract staff Worker has responsibilities related to the FSE&T work program. The FSE&T Contract Worker must assist the client in all reasonable ways to achieve self-sufficiency or to at least meet the ABAWD work requirement. To accomplish this, the FSE&T Contract Worker must assess the client's knowledge and skills, work with the client and make informed recommendations about courses of action appropriate for each individual to develop a plan that is expected to lead to self-sufficiency. In addition, he must enter into an agreement with the client concerning his involvement in the process of becoming self-sufficient, monitor the client's progress to determine changing needs and the need for supportive services and take appropriate follow-up action based on the client's actions. The following sections in this Chapter are devoted to work activities and follow-up actions and contain information necessary for the Worker to assist the client in becoming self-sufficient and in developing opportunities for him.

A. CASE MANAGEMENT

The Work Programs (WP) sub-system in RAPIDS is used by the FSE&T Contract Worker in managing FSE&T.

To meet the goals of the FSE&T Program, a Worker performs the following activities:

- Completes the PRP with the client after the case is referred by an IM Worker.

- Negotiates the PRP with the client to determine the best means to achieve self-sufficiency and accept personal responsibility and to meet the work obligation. The initial PRP, including Part II, must be manually completed by the FSE&T Contract Worker. Once this is completed and all other eligibility requirements are met, the case is confirmed in RAPIDS and the referral to the WP sub-system is accomplished. Changes to Part II of the initial PRP are made using WP screens WPJS and WPAS. These changes must be attached to the initial PRP.

- Establishes for the client reasonable and appropriate requirements related to the client's capability to perform the tasks on a regular basis, including physical capacity, skills, experience, family responsibilities and place of residence. In addition, reasonable and appropriate requirements take into account the client's proficiency.

- Monitors compliance with the PRP

- Provides continuous assessment of the client's needs and goals and negotiates adjustments to the PRP as necessary

- Develops employment and other work activity opportunities for the client within the community

- Makes referrals to other community services

- Provides payment for supportive services, i.e transportation as appropriate.

- Identifies potential resources and makes appropriate referrals to secure them

This case management process provides for substantial flexibility in administration of the work component of FSE&T, but the mandates must be met for each ABAWD to meet the ABAWD work requirement.

Self-sufficiency is defined as being able to provide for one's basic needs without relying on Food Stamp assistance. It is recognized that some individuals will not be able to become completely self-sufficient. For these individuals the goal is to reduce reliance on Food Stamps as much as possible or, at the very least, maintain eligibility for Food Stamps.

B. ASSESSMENT

Assessment is the ongoing process of determining each adult's goals, skills, needs and challenges. Assessment begins at registration and does not end until case management stops.

An in-depth assessment is necessary to discover the client's challenges to meeting his goals and to develop plans to overcome them.

The assessment is limited to producing information useful to both the client and the FSE&T Worker in evaluating the client's challenges and in meeting his goals.

Rather than being a fixed process with mandated procedures, assessment is an ongoing activity. As the client's circumstances change, his goals and/or challenges may change, resulting in revisions in the actions or activities necessary for him to succeed.

The assessment process necessarily includes a series of interviews and conversations with the client. It may also include educational and/or aptitude or interest testing and interpretation of this information; identification of the client's skills, abilities and interests; use of community resources; and research into possible employment opportunities. The following RAPIDS screens record the appropriate assessment result. Their use is mandatory.

WPED (Education
WPAW (Employment)
WPJR (Participation Readiness)

The product of the assessment is a plan for progressively moving toward the client's goals. The plan is used to negotiate the PRP which specifies the steps and actions necessary to achieve the goals. Failure without good cause to keep appointments to initiate or continue the assessment process is a failure to cooperate and the appropriate penalty is applied.

The FSE&T Contract Worker may develop a PRP to schedule educational, aptitude and interest testing as appropriate and available. The test administrator is responsible for completing a release of information for each client.

When the test results are received, the FSE&T Contract Worker records the information on the appropriate RAPIDS screen. An interview is scheduled with the client, as soon as possible, to discuss the test results.

If the client indicates substance abuse problems, referral for evaluation and counseling should be made prior to scheduling vocational testing. Any determination of substance abuse problems is based on statements made by the client, not on the feelings or perceptions of the FSE&T Contract Worker.

In assessing the client's current situation and negotiating the PRP, the FSE&T Contract Worker must explore family situations, education, work history, skills, aptitudes, attitude toward work, employment potential, possible social services or other support systems. Individual circumstances may require more or less exploration.

C. DEVELOPMENT OF THE SELF-SUFFICIENCY PLAN (PRP)

While RAPIDS screens WPJS and WPAS are used for the recording of Part 2 of the PRP. It is not appropriate to print part 2 for Food Stamp purposes. The paper form must be used.

The PRP consists of 2 parts. Part I contains information and requirements applicable to all individuals who are required to complete it. Part II is the Self-Sufficiency Plan which is the result of negotiations between the client and the Worker. The Self-Sufficiency Plan is subject to renegotiation throughout the client's receipt of Food Stamps. Initial and ongoing assessment produces information that allows the Worker to provide reasonable guidance to the client to attain his goals and forms the basis of the Plan.

The promotion of self-sufficiency is accomplished primarily through the use of the Personal Responsibility Plan (PRP). The PRP is completed during negotiations between the FSE&T Contract Worker and the adult(s) in each case. During the negotiation, the client must be encouraged to provide information about his goals for becoming self-sufficient and the means by which his goals may be achieved.

NOTE: Failure to sign the PRP is a sanctionable issue. However, at the time of enrollment, the PRP may not include all goals and all plans necessary to achieve the goals. The PRP may be revised to adjust to the client's changing needs.

The FSE&T Contract Worker must explore all of the aptitudes, interests and work goals presented by the client to determine which are possible, and which can be accomplished with the resources available to the client and to the Department. They must be accomplished in an appropriate time and result in self-sufficiency for the client. In addition, the FSE&T Contract Worker must explore other possibilities not presented by the client and offer these to the client as alternatives. At all times, the FSE&T Contract Worker is expected to balance the client's wishes with his need to achieve self-sufficiency.

All requirements listed on the PRP must be reasonable and appropriate for the individual.

The PRP must be specific enough to provide direction for the client and must reflect careful analysis of the client's needs and potential. It must also be flexible enough to change as opportunities and situations warrant. Changes in occupational goals or activities to meet the client's work requirement require revisions to the PRP or a new PRP signed by the client and the Worker. Each time the Self-Sufficiency Plan is revised, the client and the FSE&T Contract Worker must initial and date the changes. When a new PRP is completed, both must sign and date the form. The client must be provided with a copy of the PRP each time a revision is made or a new one is completed.

The PRP outlines the objectives and the steps needed to achieve self-sufficiency, as well as a time frame for the completion of program requirements.

It may be possible for the client to achieve self-sufficiency without a document defining specific activities. However, clarifying goals and actions to reach the goals helps the client and FSE&T Contract Worker to focus on the most appropriate actions. The development of a meaningful Self-Sufficiency Plan helps the client in understanding the expectations. The plan also helps the Worker to be more specific in his responsibilities. By signing the PRP, each party agrees to fulfill his respective responsibilities.

D. JOB DEVELOPMENT

Job development and the subsequent placement of individuals in employment is the focus of FSE&T Program. FSE&T Contract staff are expected to be visible in the community and participate in various employment related activities and initiatives. FSE&T Contract staff are expected to relate to private employers and related organizations professionally, honestly and with integrity.

Job development and placement efforts must be coordinated closely with the local Job Service Office and with WV WORKS staff. As appropriate, clients are required to register with the Job Service office and to keep their applications current. The results of career-oriented testing is shared with the Job Service Office as needed. A Release of Information form must be signed by the client prior to the sharing of information. The completed form must be placed in the case record. To increase the resources available to the client, contacts are established and maintained with DRS, Department of Education, Community Action agencies and other public and private organizations that could offer activities or support.