

**§ 108A-29.1. Drug screening and testing for Work First Program applicants and recipients.**

(a) The Department shall require a drug test to screen each applicant for or recipient of Work First Program assistance whom the Department reasonably suspects is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances. The Department shall provide notice of drug testing to each applicant or recipient. The notice shall advise the applicant or recipient that drug screening, and testing if there is reasonable suspicion that an individual is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances, will be conducted as a condition of receiving Work First Program assistance, and that the results of the drug tests will remain confidential and will not be released to law enforcement. Dependent children under the age of 18 are exempt from the requirements of this section. The Department shall require the following:

- (1) That for two-parent households, both parents comply with the requirements of this section.
- (2) That any teen parent who is emancipated pursuant to Article 35 of Chapter 7B of the General Statutes complies with the requirements of this section.
- (3) That each applicant or recipient be advised before drug testing that he or she may inform the agent administering the test of any prescription or over-the-counter medication he or she is taking.
- (4) That each applicant or recipient being tested signs a written acknowledgement that he or she has received and understood the notice and advice provided under this subsection.
- (5) That each applicant or recipient who fails a drug test understands that he or she has the right to take one or more additional tests at his or her own expense.
- (6) That each applicant or recipient who fails a drug test be provided with information regarding substance abuse, substance abuse counseling, and substance abuse treatment options, including a list of substance abuse treatment programs that may be available to the individual.

(b) An applicant or recipient who tests positive for controlled substances as a result of a drug test required under this section is ineligible to receive Work First Program assistance for one year from the date of the positive drug test except as provided in subsections (b1) and (b2) of this section. The individual may reapply after one year. However, if the individual has any subsequent positive drug tests, the individual shall be ineligible for benefits for three years from the date of the subsequent positive drug test unless the individual reapplies pursuant to subsection (b1) or (b2) of this section.

(b1) An applicant or recipient deemed ineligible under subsection (b) of this section may reapply for Work First Program assistance after the expiration of 30 days from the date of the positive drug test if the individual can document either the successful completion of or the current satisfactory participation in a substance abuse treatment program offered by a provider under subsection (e) of this section and licensed by the Department. The applicant or recipient who reapplies for Work First Program assistance after successful completion of a substance abuse program shall pass a drug test. The cost of any drug testing and substance abuse program provided under this subsection shall be the responsibility of the individual being tested and receiving treatment. An applicant or recipient who reapplies for Work First Program assistance pursuant to this subsection may reapply one time only.

(b2) An applicant or recipient deemed ineligible under subsection (b) of this section may reapply for Work First Program assistance after the expiration of 30 days from the date of the positive drug test if a qualified professional in substance abuse or a physician certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine determines a substance abuse program is not

appropriate for the individual and that individual has passed a subsequent drug test. The cost of any drug testing provided under this subsection shall be the responsibility of the individual being tested. An applicant or recipient who reapplies for Work First Program assistance pursuant to this subsection may reapply one time only.

(c) The children of any applicant or current recipient shall remain eligible for benefits, and these benefits shall be paid to a protective payee pursuant to G.S. 108A-38.

(d) The Social Services Commission shall adopt rules pertaining to the testing of applicants and recipients under this section. The Social Services Commission shall adopt rules pertaining to the successful completion of, or the satisfactory participation in, a substance abuse treatment program under subsection (b1) of this section, including rules regarding timely reporting of completion of or participation in the substance abuse treatment programs.

(e) Area mental health authorities organized pursuant to Article 4 of Chapter 122C of the General Statutes shall be responsible for administering the provisions of this section.

(f) Repealed by Session Laws 2013-417, s. 4, as amended by Session Laws 2014-115, s. 66 (c), effective March 1, 2015.

(g) For the purposes of this section, reasonable suspicion that an applicant for, or recipient of, Work First Program assistance is engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances may be established only by utilizing the following methods:

- (1) A criminal record check conducted under G.S. 114-19.34 that discloses a conviction, arrest, or outstanding warrant relating to illegal controlled substances within the three years prior to the date the criminal record check is conducted.
- (2) A determination by a qualified professional in substance abuse or a physician certified by the American Society of Addiction Medicine that an individual is addicted to illegal controlled substances.
- (3) A screening tool relating to the abuse of illegal controlled substances that yields a result indicating that the applicant or recipient may be engaged in the illegal use of controlled substances.
- (4) Other screening methods, as determined by the Social Services Commission under subsection (d) of this section.

(h) Child only cases shall be exempt from the requirements of this section. (1997-443, s. 12.8; 2009-489, s. 13; 2013-417, s. 4; 2014-115, s. 66(c).)