

Know Your Welfare Rights!

WELFARE TO WORK



An information series prepared by Legal Services of

New Jersey

Important Information about the **WELFARE TO WORK PROGRAM**

If you are receiving or applying for cash benefits, food stamps, Medicaid, or other assistance from the welfare office, there are other things they *must* do to help you.

- Your caseworker or another person must ask you about jobs you have had, the kinds of jobs you would like to do, the kinds of education and training you will need, transportation problems you have, and other work-related questions. They must then give you a written **Employment Profile** based on your answers. [This is the law: **N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.7.**]
- Your caseworker must help you prepare an **Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP)**. This plan must contain all of the things you will do and all of the things the welfare agency will do to help you get and keep a decent job. The IRP should spell out things that could prevent you from finding a good job (including the need for more training or education, help with transportation, or special childcare needs) and **it should say how the welfare agency is going to help you solve these problems.** [This is the law: **N.J.A.C. 10:90-4.8.**]
- If you are receiving Emergency Assistance (EA)—such as a temporary rent subsidy or housing in a motel or shelter—your EA caseworker must also work with you to prepare an **EA Service Plan**. This plan must say what you are going to do, **and what the agency is going to do**, to help you find permanent housing that you can afford. The EA Service Plan and the Individual Responsibility Plan should not be in conflict with each other. [This is the law: **N.J.A.C. 10:90-6.6.**]
- To help you get and keep a job, the welfare office should give you **supportive services**. These include:
 1. **Child care assistance** (which can last for up to two years after you leave welfare because you are working);
 2. **Transportation help** (before you get a job and for up to one month after);
 3. **Medicaid for you and your children** for up to two years after you leave welfare because of a job (after two years, your children can almost always get Medicaid if you can't afford other health insurance);
 4. **Medicaid payments for back bills** (but only in some cases); and
 5. **Up to \$500 in cash** for some work expenses including tools, uniforms, and car maintenance.

[This is the law: **N.J.A.C. 10:90-5-1.**]

If your caseworker says that you *don't* have these rights, show him or her the citation to the regulations listed on this page. The citations are listed at the end of each paragraph above.

If you have any questions about your rights, or think you were treated unfairly by the welfare office, call **LSNJ-LAW™**, Legal Services of New Jersey's statewide, toll-free legal hotline, at:

1-888-LSNJ-LAW
(1-888-576-5529)

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