

1 AN ACT concerning public aid.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 5. The Illinois Public Aid Code is amended by
5 changing Section 9A-8 as follows:

6 (305 ILCS 5/9A-8) (from Ch. 23, par. 9A-8)

7 Sec. 9A-8. Operation of Program.

8 (a) At the time of application or redetermination of
9 eligibility under Article IV, as determined by rule, the
10 Illinois Department shall provide information in writing and
11 orally regarding the education, training and employment
12 program to all applicants and recipients. The information
13 required shall be established by rule and shall include, but
14 need not be limited to:

15 (1) education (including literacy training),
16 employment and training opportunities available, the
17 criteria for approval of those opportunities, and the right
18 to request changes in the personal responsibility and
19 services plan to include those opportunities;

20 (1.1) a complete list of all activities that are
21 approvable activities, and the circumstances under which
22 they are approvable, including work activities, substance
23 abuse or mental health treatment, activities to escape and

1 prevent domestic violence, caring for a medically impaired
2 family member, and any other approvable activities,
3 together with the right to and procedures for amending the
4 responsibility and services plan to include these
5 activities;

6 (1.2) the rules concerning the lifetime limit on
7 eligibility, including the current status of the applicant
8 or recipient in terms of the months of remaining
9 eligibility, the criteria under which a month will not
10 count towards the lifetime limit, and the criteria under
11 which a recipient may receive benefits beyond the end of
12 the lifetime limit;

13 (2) supportive services including child care and the
14 rules regarding eligibility for and access to the child
15 care assistance program, transportation, initial expenses
16 of employment, job retention, books and fees, and any other
17 supportive services;

18 (3) the obligation of the Department to provide
19 supportive services;

20 (4) the rights and responsibilities of participants,
21 including exemption, sanction, reconciliation, and good
22 cause criteria and procedures, termination for
23 non-cooperation and reinstatement rules and procedures,
24 and appeal and grievance procedures; and

25 (5) the types and locations of child care services.

26 (b) The Illinois Department shall notify the recipient in

1 writing of the opportunity to volunteer to participate in the
2 program.

3 (c) (Blank).

4 (d) As part of the personal plan for achieving employment
5 and self-sufficiency, the Department shall conduct an
6 individualized assessment of the participant's employability.
7 No participant may be assigned to any component of the
8 education, training and employment activity prior to such
9 assessment. The plan shall include collection of information on
10 the individual's background, proficiencies, skills
11 deficiencies, education level, work history, employment goals,
12 interests, aptitudes, and employment preferences, as well as
13 factors affecting employability or ability to meet
14 participation requirements (e.g., health, physical or mental
15 limitations, child care, family circumstances, domestic
16 violence, sexual violence, substance abuse, and special needs
17 of any child of the individual). As part of the plan,
18 individuals and Department staff shall work together to
19 identify any supportive service needs required to enable the
20 client to participate and meet the objectives of his or her
21 employability plan. The assessment may be conducted through
22 various methods such as interviews, testing, counseling, and
23 self-assessment instruments. In the assessment process, the
24 Department shall offer to include standard literacy testing and
25 a determination of English language proficiency and shall
26 provide it for those who accept the offer. Based on the

1 assessment, the individual will be assigned to the appropriate
2 activity. The decision will be based on a determination of the
3 individual's level of preparation for employment as defined by
4 rule.

5 (e) Recipients determined to be exempt may volunteer to
6 participate pursuant to Section 9A-4 and must be assessed.

7 (f) As part of the personal plan for achieving employment
8 and self-sufficiency under Section 4-1, an employability plan
9 for recipients shall be developed in consultation with the
10 participant. The Department shall have final responsibility
11 for approving the employability plan. The employability plan
12 shall:

13 (1) contain an employment goal of the participant;

14 (2) describe the services to be provided by the
15 Department, including child care and other support
16 services;

17 (3) describe the activities, such as component
18 assignment, that will be undertaken by the participant to
19 achieve the employment goal. The Department shall treat
20 participation in high school and high school equivalency
21 programs as a core activity and count participation in high
22 school and high school equivalency programs toward the
23 first 20 hours per week of participation. The Department
24 shall approve participation in high school or high school
25 equivalency programs upon written or oral request of the
26 participant if he or she has not already earned a high

1 school diploma or a high school equivalency certificate.
2 However, participation in high school or high school
3 equivalency programs may be delayed as part of an
4 applicant's or recipient's personal plan for achieving
5 employment and self-sufficiency if it is determined that
6 the benefit from participating in another activity, such
7 as, but not limited to, treatment for substance abuse or an
8 English proficiency program, would be greater to the
9 applicant or recipient than participation in high school or
10 a high school equivalency program. The availability of high
11 school and high school equivalency programs may also delay
12 enrollment in those programs. The Department shall treat
13 such activities as a core activity as long as satisfactory
14 progress is made, as determined by the high school or high
15 school equivalency program. Proof of satisfactory progress
16 shall be provided by the participant or the school at the
17 end of each academic term; and

18 (4) describe any other needs of the family that might
19 be met by the Department.

20 (g) The employability plan shall take into account:

- 21 (1) available program resources;
- 22 (2) the participant's support service needs;
- 23 (3) the participant's skills level and aptitudes;
- 24 (4) local employment opportunities; and
- 25 (5) the preferences of the participant.

26 (h) A reassessment shall be conducted to assess a

1 participant's progress and to review the employability plan on
2 the following occasions:

3 (1) upon completion of an activity and before
4 assignment to an activity;

5 (2) upon the request of the participant;

6 (3) if the individual is not cooperating with the
7 requirements of the program; and

8 (4) if the individual has failed to make satisfactory
9 progress in an education or training program.

10 Based on the reassessment, the Department may revise the
11 employability plan of the participant.

12 (Source: P.A. 96-866, eff. 7-1-10.)