



Department of Human Resources
311 West Saratoga Street
Baltimore MD 21201

FIA ACTION TRANSMITTAL

Control Number: FIA/OPR 498-38

Effective Date: Upon Receipt

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TO: DIRECTORS, LOCAL DEPARTMENTS OF SOCIAL SERVICES
DEPUTY/ASSISTANT DIRECTORS FOR FAMILY INVESTMENT
FAMILY INVESTMENT SUPERVISORS
Charles E. Henry for
FROM: KEVIN MAHON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RE: CLARIFICATION OF THE ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE
FAMILY INVESTMENT PROGRAM

PROGRAM AFFECTED: TEMPORARY CASH ASSISTANCE

ORIGINATING OFFICE: OFFICE OF POLICY AND RESEARCH

SUMMARY

The successful design of the Family Investment Program includes local flexibility, an employment focus and the use of a careful assessment of the individual customer's skills, abilities and strengths to develop a plan to become independent. Local departments already have the flexibility to allow welfare customers, in accordance with the family independence plan, to take college courses alone or in combination with work.

Clarification of Policy:

This Action Transmittal clarifies the role of higher education in the Family Investment Program. While the local departments may go beyond this minimum, they must provide child care and other supportive services consistent with the assessment and family independence plan to current customers who choose to pursue a course of higher education and:

- ✓ Are employed at least 20 hours per week in an unsubsidized job or participating for at least 20 hours per week in an approved work activity; and,
- ✓ Are engaged in a course of study that will directly lead to a job as documented in the assessment and family independence plan; and,

- ✓ Are engaged in a course of study that will take two years or less to complete; and,
- ✓ Maintain at least a "C" average in their course work.

ACTION REQUIRED

- Local departments should offer this option to all current customers at the time of their next scheduled redetermination for continued assistance. They will not limit customer choices to this option.
- All levels of staff must be clear in the message that our welfare reform program is a highly individualized one. Case managers should inform customers that before making *any* decision about education, every current or prospective student should discuss their educational and independence plans with their case manager.

ACTION DUE

Upon receipt.

INQUIRIES

Please direct questions to Yolanda Parker at (410) 767-7259.

cc: **FIA Management Staff**
Constituent Services