



December 1, 2020

Patrick O'Donnell, Clerk of the Legislature
State Capitol, Room 2018
P.O. Box 94604
Lincoln, NE 68509

RE: Employment First Participant Report

Dear Mr. O'Donnell,

Nebraska Revised Statute 43-517 requires the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) to report annually to the Legislature information regarding the Employment First participants who are or who have been engaged in an Associate's Degree educational program.

In the month of September 2020, there were 46 Employment First participants engaged in an Associate's Degree educational program. All 46 participants were making satisfactory progress in their educational pursuits. These participants spent an average of 2.99 months in education to fulfill their work requirement under the program. The graduation rate of participants from the past year October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020 averages less than 1%.

From October 1, 2019 through September 30, 2020, the average hourly earnings for participants in the program was \$13.17. A September 2020 report indicates during the 2019-2020 reporting year, 32 participants have been employed for at least six months while 50 have been employed for at least 12 months (total of 72 unduplicated participants).

Of the the 72 former program participants employed as of September 2020, 22 reported their education levels:

- Two participants have less than an 11th grade education,
- 13 have a 12th grade education,
- Three have received a certificate or diploma
- Four have an Associate's Degree and
- None have a Bachelor's Degree.

The Department does not presently have formal activities that are intended to promote post-secondary education opportunities for participants. Upon entry into Employment First, participants are assessed to determine current educational levels, career interests, as well as any barriers to attaining economic self-sufficiency. Following an assessment, Case Managers engage the participant to determine activities in which they may participate to help them reach their ultimate career goal. When the participant's goal requires additional training or education, it is encouraged by the Case Manager and included as a work activity on the participant's plan.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 402-471-1757 or Stephanie.L.beasley@nebraska.gov.

Respectfully,

Stephanie Beasley, Director
Division of Children and Family Services
Department of Health and Human Services