



Monroe County Legislature

WILLIE J. LIGHTFOOT
LEGISLATOR - DISTRICT 27

WILLIE J. LIGHTFOOT
LEGISLATOR-DISTRICT 27
147 TRAFALGAR STREET
ROCHESTER, NEW YORK 14619
OFFICE (585) 753-1940
HOME (585) 436-1045
E-MAIL: legpieal@rochester.com

OFFICIAL FILE COPY
No. <u>070096</u>
Not to be removed from the Office of the Legislature of Monroe County
Committee Assignment HUMAN SERVICES -L
WAYS & MEANS

March 12, 2007

To the Honorable
Monroe County Legislature
407 County Office Building
39 West Main Street
Rochester, New York 14614

Re: **Focusing the Job Search Requirement for Family Assistance and Safety Net Recipients**

Honorable Legislators:

In December 2006, the most recent month for which New York State Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance statistics are available, nearly 12,000 adults in Monroe County were receiving either Safety Net or Family Assistance. Monroe County encourages Temporary Assistance applicants and recipients to consider finding employment their first priority, and an important element of the County's assistance program is the requirement that applicants undertake a job search as a condition of eligibility.

The Monroe County Department of Human Services (MCDHS) currently distributes a job search handbook to Temporary Assistance applicants that stipulates two job applications per day for Family Assistance applicants and three job applications per day for Safety Net applicants. All applications must be made to businesses that are hiring, and no more than five applications per week may be made via fax or the internet by Safety Net applicants, no more than three by Family Assistance applicants.

Certainly, finding a good job that offers family-supporting wages and benefits is the best way for an individual to become self-sufficient and stay off public assistance. However, community members have rightly raised concerns that the MCDHS job search program encourages participants to focus too much on meeting a quota and not enough on exploring genuine opportunities for sustainable employment. While the chance of finding employment is related to the number of job contacts a person makes, a job search requirement can become counterproductive if it leads individuals to apply for jobs at random, simply to meet the requirement, giving little consideration to whether or not they are qualified for the job.

Temporary Assistance recipients must be provided with the opportunity to engage in job search and job readiness activities that improve their chances of finding and maintaining a job that meets their needs. Therefore, we request that the County administration institute a policy limiting the number of job applications a Safety Net or Family Assistance applicant or recipient can be required to make to seven per week.

This proposal shall have no impact on the 2007 Monroe County Budget.

Respectfully submitted,

Willie J. Lightfoot
Legislator - District 27

Carla M. Palumbo
Democratic Leader

Calvin Lee, Jr.
Assistant Democratic Leader

Stephanie Polowe Aidersley
Legislator - District 16

Carrie M. Andrews
Legislator - District 21

Glenn J. Gamble
Legislator - District 22

C. Stephen Eckel
Legislator - District 26

José A. Cruz
Legislator - District 29