

## About the Agency

### Participants Can Get a Tax Break

Most Family Independence clients who are working qualify for a special tax benefit called an earned income credit. This can be in the form of a lump sum refund when income taxes are filed.

### If You Want to Move to Get a Job

DSS may be able to help FI clients move if they cannot find a job where they now live because of plant closings, lack of entry level jobs or high unemployment.

### Employers Get Breaks Too

Employers gain when they hire FI clients. They get good, eager employees who are willing to work. In addition, DSS offers special programs to employers.

**Work Experience** is a program designed to provide workplace training opportunities for FI recipients while also providing employers a chance to observe prospective employee at no cost.

**On-the-Job Training** is a program offered through the local DSS and reimburses employers up to 50 percent of a qualified employee's pay for 6 months or 24 weeks, with a possible extension up to an additional 30 days.

**Cost-saving state and federal tax credits** are available to employers who hire eligible FI recipients.



For more information,  
contact your local DSS office.

**DSS**  
*Serving Children and Families*

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## Family Independence Program



*What it's all about.*



The South Carolina Department of Social Services is committed to helping people build better lives. Because of the changes in the welfare laws, DSS has become an agency that focuses on employment and training for its clients while maintaining its commitment to ensuring the well-being of the children and families it serves.

### **About the Law**

The South Carolina Family Independence (FI) Act of 1995 and the federal Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Act of 1996 are the two laws that govern the way DSS now operates in South Carolina.

### **How It Works**

#### **Here's what happens when someone receives Family Independence:**

The client and his or her DSS case manager develop and agree on a Family Plan for the client to follow. The plan outlines the steps the client and DSS must take to help the client become independent, while maintaining a safe and nurturing environment for the children and their family. The client receives a FI stipend but must agree to participate in activities such as job search, job readiness, family management skills, work experience, community service, OJT, and other training.

These activities are designed to identify and build upon the employment-related strengths and abilities of each client, so that clients can improve their chances of getting and keeping a good job. FI clients may also participate in educational and

vocational training activities when necessary and appropriate.

The South Carolina Department of Social Services provides job development and placement services.

### **DSS Helps in Other Ways**

DSS offers child care and transportation assistance to participants who are involved with the FI Work Program. DSS may also pay support services such as child care for a short time for clients who go to work and leave the FI roles.

### **Don't Forget Child Support**

People who apply for FI benefits must give specific information about the absent parent of their children in order to help DSS collect child support. Identifying the absent parent and then locating that parent are two of the steps in that process. DSS will make every effort to collect child support for the children of clients participating in FI.

### **Special State Programs**

DSS has special programs for two-parent families who receive FI. DSS also has a special program for disabled individuals in families receiving FI.