



RHODE ISLAND KIDS COUNT

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Comment Regarding Proposed Rhode Island Works Program Rules and Regulations (218-RICR-20-00-2)

Rhode Island Department of Human Services

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Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT strongly supports the legislative change that was made during the 2021 session that allows adults in the Rhode Island Works program to work and not have their earned income count against their benefit for six months or until their family income exceeds 185% of the federal poverty level or they reach their 48-month lifetime limit. Rhode Island KIDS COUNT urges the Rhode Island Department of Human Services to **consider the additional regulatory language proposed by the Economic Progress Institute that clarifies that it is a parent's choice to determine when the six-month income set aside is applied and ensures that financial counseling is provided** so parents can make the best financial decisions for their family and maximize the impact of the income set aside.

Unlike the existing income disregard, the income set aside provision is not automatically applied to a Rhode Island Works case and a parent must make the decision on when to apply this provision. **Financial counseling about the income set aside is critically important so a parent can make the best financial decision for the family** including deciding when to apply the provision and how this action may impact other benefits the family receives.

Rhode Island KIDS COUNT would like to thank Governor McKee and the Rhode Island General Assembly for including improvements to the Rhode Island Works Program in the FY 2022 budget. We thank the Rhode Island Department of Human Services for your work to help families maintain economic stability while moving into the workforce.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comment.