

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA  
SESSION 2009**

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**SENATE BILL 964**

Short Title: DHHS to Maximize Federal Program Benefits. (Public)

Sponsors: Senator Nesbitt.

Referred to: Appropriations/Base Budget.

March 26, 2009

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO DIRECT THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES TO MAXIMIZE THE BENEFITS OF THE FEDERAL FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE PROGRAM AND THE FEDERAL FOOD STAMP EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING PROGRAM.

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

**SECTION 1.** The Division of Social Services of the Department of Health and Human Services is directed to adopt all optional provisions of The Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-246, sections 4105, 4106, 4108, and 4119.

**SECTION 2.** The Division of Social Services is directed to expand eligibility for the Food and Nutrition Service program by adopting categorical eligibility through Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and raising the gross income limit to one hundred sixty-five percent (165%) of the federal poverty level.

**SECTION 3.** The Division of Social Services is directed to develop a plan to increase outreach to eligible Food and Nutrition Service applicants and maximize available federal funds for outreach.

**SECTION 4.** The Division of Social Services is directed to take all steps permissible under federal law to simplify administration of the Food and Nutrition Service program, which will increase program participation while reducing county administrative costs, including lengthening the certification period to the maximum period of time permitted by federal law, reducing verification requirements, and improving the notices and forms given to applicants and recipients.

**SECTION 5.** The Department of Health and Human Services is directed to develop a plan, in consultation with the Employment Security Commission of North Carolina and the North Carolina Community College System, to maximize the benefits of the federal Food Stamp Employment and Training Program to assist as many food stamp recipients in this State by improving the recipients' ability to obtain regular employment and reduce the recipients' dependence on public assistance. The plan shall include:

- (1) Increasing the number of counties in which services are available, extending services to better include adult education, vocational, and postsecondary educational opportunities, and tracking participant employment, educational, and earnings outcomes.
- (2) Recommendations for maximizing the receipt of available federal matching funds and allocating those resources among partner agencies.
- (3) Amendments to the State plan submitted to the U.S. Department of Agriculture needed to implement programmatic changes.



1           **SECTION 6.** The Department of Health and Human Services shall provide the  
2 plans requested in this act to the Senate Appropriations Committee on Health and Human  
3 Services, the House of Representatives Appropriations Subcommittee on Health and Human  
4 Services, and the Fiscal Research Division by March 1, 2010.

5           **SECTION 7.** This act becomes effective July 1, 2009.