

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE PITWORKS PROJECT

The PITTworks Project helps people get good jobs in Pitt County, and to get the training they need to get good jobs.

Getting a stable job with good pay can be difficult, but it is almost never impossible. PITTworks helps people learn the right ways and wrong ways to do it, and how to avoid common mistakes.

How is PITTworks different from other job training and placement programs? PITTworks is focused completely on Pitt County, on the 70,000 jobs that are located right here, and especially on the jobs that are in most demand.

PITTworks is also focused completely on the people who are most in need of good jobs: people who are receiving Food & Nutrition Services (food stamps) from Pitt County Social Services.

- **Who manages PITTworks?**

The PITTworks Project is a partnership between several government, educational, and non-profit organizations that serve Pitt County. The lead partners are the Pitt County Department of Social Services, Pitt Community College, and the Pitt County NCWorks Career Center. Other partners include N.C. STRIVE, Literacy Volunteers of Pitt County, the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Region Q Workforce Development Board, Trillium Health Resources, Greene Lamp Community Action Agency, the Community Crossroads Center, and the Churches Outreach Network.

- **Will PITTworks find me a job?**

No. PITTworks will help you, but only you can find a job for yourself.

- **What kind of help does PITTworks offer?**

PITTworks offers three kinds of help.

If you are unemployed, or if you want to find a better or more stable job but you aren't sure what kind of work you should look for, PITTworks can help you explore possible career choices.

If you already know what type of work you would like to do, PITTworks can help you find a training program and financial aid.

If you already have enough training but are having trouble finding work, PITTworks can help you to navigate the local job market, learn to compete more effectively for jobs, and develop workplace skills to help ensure your success.

- **Who can enroll in PITTworks?**

PITTworks is specially designed for people who are receiving Food & Nutrition Services ("FNS," also known as food stamps) from Pitt County Social Services.

Almost any FNS client can enroll in PITTworks as long as they are also: 1) between the ages of 18 and 59, AND 2) not working in paid employment for 30 or more hours per week, AND 3) not receiving unemployment insurance ("UI") benefits, AND 4) do not have a pending application for UI benefits, AND 5) not currently receiving Supplemental Security Income, or Social Security Disability income, or Work First Family Assistance.

Unfortunately, regulations do not allow PITTworks to enroll people who are in the categories listed above. However, PITTworks can put them in touch with other employment and training resources.

If you do not receive food stamps but would like to enroll in PITTworks, please contact Pitt County Food & Nutrition Services at 902-1352 to see if you qualify.

- **Do I have to be in PITTworks to keep my food stamps?**

No. Most food stamp clients will continue to receive their benefits whether or not they enroll in PITTworks.

However, federal rules require some clients to engage in 20 hours per week of certain work or training activities in order to keep their food stamps longer than three months. These clients may find that PITTworks is the best way to keep their food stamps, and to eventually find stable and well paid employment.

Generally, food stamp clients who want to continue receiving benefits are required to engage in work activities if they meet all of the qualifications to enroll in PITTworks, AND 1) are between the ages of 18 and 49, AND 2) have no one under age 18 living with them, AND 3) are physically and mentally able to work, AND 4) are not in school or training at least half time, AND 5) are not working in paid or volunteer employment for at least 20 hours per week, AND 6) are not taking care of a disabled adult.

- **What if I have a physical or mental disability?**

If you have a physical or mental disability that keeps you from engaging in work activities at least 20 hours per week, and if you are concerned about losing your food stamps, your FNS caseworker can help you document your disability. Please call 902-1352.

If you have a physical or mental disability, and are not receiving Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Income, and would like to find a job, PITTworks is here to help you. PITTworks cooperates with the state Division of Vocational Rehabilitation and with Trillium Health Resources to help disabled people get specialized training and help.

- **What if I have a criminal record?**

PITTworks can help people with criminal records find jobs. The program works closely with L.I.F.E. STRIVE's Re-entry Program and the state Former Offender Initiative, which specialize in helping people who have been incarcerated. PITTworks also offers training and job search assistance that can help those with criminal records to rejoin the workforce.

- **How can I enroll in PITTworks?**

Contact your FNS caseworker at the Pitt County Human Services Center, 902-1352, or Deidire Hill, Employment Services, at 902-1151.

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