

**OPM 98-58**

September 8, 1998

**TO:** All Appointing Authorities

**FROM:** Oscar B. Jackson, Jr., Administrator and  
Cabinet Secretary of Human Resources

**SUBJECT:** *State Work Incentive Program*

Since July, 1997, the "State Work Incentive Program" has provided Merit System agencies an additional option for placing persons in entry-level state jobs. This program, established in 72 O.S. Section 840-5.16 (1997 Supp), permits agencies to make unclassified appointments of participants in the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program (TANF) for a maximum of two years. The appointments are not subject to an agency's full-time-equivalent employee limitation. These employees receive full state benefits and may be converted to a vacant position in the classified service at the end of two years if the employee: (a) has achieved satisfactory performance on service ratings; (b) possesses the minimum qualifications of the job class; and (c) has passed any entrance examination required by the Office of Personnel Management for the class.

According to our records, 44 persons have been appointed by eight Merit System agencies--The Oklahoma Military Department, the Department of Corrections, the Employment Security Commission, the Oklahoma State Health Department, the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, the Office of Personnel Management, the Secretary of State and the Department of Human Services-- since the program's inception. Only three of the 44 appointees, or about 7%, have left state service since their appointment.

The State Work Incentive Program can serve both as a useful staffing tool for Merit System agencies and as a significant partner in Oklahoma's overall Welfare-to-Work initiative. I encourage each of you to explore its potential within your agency. If you have any questions regarding the program, please contact Hank Batty, Assistant Administrator, Employee Selection Services, at (405) 521-6333.