Q&A
CHANGES TO SERVICE AND TRACKING FOR TANF

Recording Cooperation in TWIST

1. Why do we need to duplicate the same employment information found in the "employment outcome" tab and in counseling notes?
   - **You don't need to duplicate the information. Enter the employment information in TWIST in the Employment Outcome detail tab. Make sure to enter the source of wage data, the wage data description and the verification date/person.**

2. Office staff may call an employer to verify initial employment only after receiving the customer's permission. When staff document a telephone call to an employer, we consider that as acceptable documentation of hours. (Please confirm this is acceptable documentation of employment and not just hours – it appears to be addressing initial employment since the next bullet addresses ongoing reporting of hours)
   - **Yes. A documented conversation with the employer is acceptable verification of employment.**

Teen Parents

3. If the teen goes to school for more than 20 hours, can we put more than 20 hours of participation in the system?
   - **Yes. The teen must attend *at least an average* of 20 hours per week during the month.**

4. What is satisfactory progress?
   - **We've changed the policy to read "satisfactory attendance" instead of "satisfactory progress". Satisfactory attendance means she is continuing to attend school and work toward her diploma.**

5. What if the customer fails one class, once we get the report card, how many hours do we need to take out of the system?
   - **None. We changed the policy and will not require you to change the hours in TWIST. The PSR must meet with the customer to make sure she's taking advantage of services to help her progress. The PSR may offer to arrange and pay for tutoring. Document this information in TWIST Counseling Notes.**

6. How do we determine satisfactory progress on a weekly basis? Customers will be able to provide progress reports for each grading period, however it will be after the fact.

   - **See answer to question # 4 above. We changed the policy to read "satisfatory attendance". The teen must attend *at least an average* of 20 hours per week during the month to be counted as cooperating. Acceptable documentation includes: ________.**

Counseling Note re: daily job search hours

7. Job search hours need to be noted, does the tracker need to be specific? For example: Customer prepared for job interview for 2 hours? OR Customer job searched 2 hours?

   - **The tracker does not need to be that specific. Simply note "looked for work" or "job search".**

     Example: 1/5/2007 Patty Smith. On Tuesday customer looked for work for 10 hours, Wednesday customer looked for work for 10 hours, Friday customer looked for work for 10 hours. Total of 30 hours of job search for week-ending 1/5/2007.

Employment Letter

8. "Hours of work each day", should be per "week".

   - **The letter is revised and posted to the website.**

9. Is this letter optional now or are we asking all customers to report hours weekly by phone even if they have provided 4 weeks of paystubs - and staff are using the six month projection procedure? Will those customers for whom we are projecting hours also be *required* to complete this form?

   - **The letter is optional. The letter may be sent to a customer when she reports employment to you. You will need to verify initial employment. You cannot project hours for a customer until you gather 4 representative weeks of work hours. If the 4 representative weeks of work hours do not meet cooperation requirements, the customer will need to continue reporting hours weekly until you can document 4 weeks that meet cooperation requirements.**

   - **If you are projecting hours the customer does not have to report hours weekly by phone.**

Verification

10. Is it possible to have the following employment information added to the Verification of Hours form? Job Title, Start Date, Salary The form also does not include "Required" under the customer signature or the supervisor's signature.

    - **This form is used to verify hours. You should already have the job title, start date and salary from your verification of her employment. The revised form with "Required" under the signatures has been posted to the website.**

11. We require all customers in these services (school, community service) to have attendance sheets signed by a supervisor – per previous versions of this issuance, so why are we including them in the sample? What do we do when one is selected – simply mark it verified or select another customer?)

    - **Check to make sure the attendance/time sheets are signed by a supervisor. Mark it verified.**

12. This provision to "expand the sample" to select additional weeks was removed the last time we conducted quarterly verification. Please clarify for future reference.

    - **Do not expand the sample. Instructions have been revised – you will now mark the record "No". See the revised detailed instructions in the issuance.**

13. We cannot correct TWIST data after 20 days into the next calendar quarter without a data integrity request, so for this March sample – no data can be corrected. Should we submit data integrity requests or just document the discrepancy in counselor notes?

    - **Submit the data integrity request. If you are making the correction more than 20 days into the next calendar quarter – a data integrity request window will pop-up in TWIST. Write your justification for making the change in the request box. Explain the justfication in TWIST Counseling Notes.**
    - **You cannot change cooperation hours in TWIST after two months. Document the discrepancy in TWIST counseling notes.**

Projection of Work Hours

14. Can we project hours that do not meet cooperation? For example, customer needs 30 hours for cooperation, customer attends school 20, and works average of 11, after 4 weeks of check stubs. Can we make the projection 11 hours?

- **Yes.**

15. If the PSR never saw the customer, the EC obtained the employment information, who needs to do that monthly contact to verify the hours?

    - **The EC is responsible for helping customers get a job or get a better job and should not be contacting customers about hours. The PSR or support staff can do this task.**

16. Is the projection of hours purely optional? Can we choose to do this for all customers and discontinue weekly phone reporting? Will these customers be included in the verification of hours sample that we pull quarterly since they already will have a representative month verified initially, and then a week out of every month thereafter? If they will be excluded, how will they be excluded from the overall sample number as well as the individual customers selected for verification?

    - **The projection of hours is optional. It should be considered for all working TANF recipient customers. When you are able to document 4 representative weeks of work hours for a customer, then she does not have to call in her work hours each week. The customer may appear in your verification sample. If she is selected in the sample - complete the verification.**

17. For the projection of hours, are hours data entered weekly or can we input two-three weeks of cooperation hours at a time?

    - **Enter hours monthly.**

18. For the projection of hours, can we call employers to verify the 4 representative weeks of work hours for a customer and use the phone call as documentation?

    - **Use documentation received from the customer – paycheck stubs, timesheets or verification of hours forms. Check with your management for approval to contact an employer to verify 4 weeks of work hours.**

Self Employment

19. What documentation is needed for self-employment verification? For example: Customer who cut yards, beauticians and barbers. Most often customers do not have any documents to support their income or expenses – is a written statement from the customer considered acceptable documentation, or will we require some type of third party or other means of verification?

- **Use your judgement. Ask the customer about the documentation she keeps. She could have copies of checks, copies of receipts, other verifying paperwork or a signed statement from the customer. You may use the Self-Employment Income Verification form. This form is posted on the website under "Other Financial Aid forms and instructions".**

Good Cause & Excused Absence Desk Aid

20. On the good cause desk aid, it states "Exception: A customer caring for a disabled family member will be excluded from the denominator if the customer's disabled family member does not attend school full time." How will this work as far as TWIST data entry to remove these applicants out of the denominator? This should be all of the code H and some of the code C. Right now they are all still in the denominator. Is there a future TWIST change pending or is there something we can do now to trigger this?

    - **TWIST will be changed to exclude these customers. We will let you know when the change occurs. Until then, these customers will continue to count in production rates.**

21. Does this exception apply to school age persons only or does this apply to anyone being cared for who is not in school?

    - **The new rules draws a distinction between caretakers who care for disabled family members attending full time school – and caretakers who care for disabled family members who are not in full time school. If the disabled family member is attending school full time, the caretaker can look for and go to work. This caretaker customer will count in the denominator. If the disabled family member is not attending school full time, the caretaker may be needed at home and not able to look for and go to work.**

22. What is the maximum number of hours for an excused absences and holiday excused absences? For example: A customer that does not work a set number of hours per day. It could 2 today, 10 tomorrow.

    - **Use your judgement and the information you have about the customer's work. Write a counseling note to show the excused hours and how you decided.**

23. Do excused absences also count as actual participation as stated in the policy for holidays – the number of hours the customer was scheduled for on that day?

- **Yes.**

24. For Holiday Excused Absences, most service providers are closed Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving and Christmas Day and either Christmas Eve or the day after for Christmas. Can we include these as Holiday Excused Absences?

    - **No. The list of holidays is approved and provided to us in policy from TWC.**

25. If the customer is meeting her reduced work requirement, but cannot participate the full federal participation hours level (i.e. 30 hours) – staff may allow good cause for the customer. Do not initiate a penalty if the customer is meeting her reduced work requirement. Please clarify that this still only applies to customers with Mandatory.

    - **Yes. This only applies to customers who are not exempt. Exempt customers do not have work requirements and therefore will not have "reduced work requirements".**

26. Require a doctor's statement (Form 1836 A or B) if the customer says she cannot participate due to her own, or a family member's, illness for a period of more than three days. For short-term illnesses we need a statement that indicates a start and end date, and when the customer will be able to return to work. The 1836 does not have that specific information; rather it is a broad range of time (6 months or less). This leaves us still not knowing when a customer is able to return to work. We have been and would prefer to obtain the standard doctor's note that all physicians' offices provide for patients to give to employers stating when the customer will be able to return to work, unless the customer indicates that the situation is not short term, in which case we would request the 1836 form.

    - **You may obtain the standard doctor's note instead of the Form 1836 A/B.**

Job Search Log and Instructions

27. The new job search log form and the instructions with example for customers will be printed to be used as an insert in the Orientation brochure for TANF applicants. (only Applicants? Should we also use this sheet for FSE&T?)

    - **Use it as an insert in the orientation brochure for TANF applicants and recipients and in the orientation brochure for Food Stamp recipients.**

28. Customers are reporting ¼ or ½ hour increments on job search logs. Can we round up the hours? Customers are not totaling the hours on job search logs and submit logs with less than 30 hours. Any advice on how to handle this?

- **Total the hours for the week. Round up the ½ hour to whole hour. For time less than ½ hour – round down.**
- **Talk with the customer and explain how her hours should be entered and the number of hours she should spend preparing and looking for work.**

Orientation

29. Can you confirm that we are changing our procedure to enter an initial appointment date 60 days in the future for all TANF Applicants to now enter the day of the orientation? This is what we assume from the statement in the but this represents a change not just to the situation mentioned in the Quick Reference #8.

    - **Yes. We are changing the procedure. Staff must enter the date of the orientation as the initial appointment date.**

30. Since the "Quick Reference Note for Trackers #8" has been rescinded, is there another feasible work around to get customers to count for us.

    - **No.**

31. In the TANF Orientation & Assessment Checklist, Section II, question 2, "Is this your first time receiving The WorkSource Orientation to discuss your TANF responsibilities? If yes, proceed. If no, STOP and escort customer to next the available PSR?" This conflicts with the TANF process map which indicated that the customer can remain with an EC if the customer is not a conditional applicant. Which is correct?

    - **The process map is correct.**

Changes in Service and Tracking - Food Stamp Recipients

32. How many of these changes apply to TANF only? There is no mention of FSE&T here in the memorandum, but throughout the issuance there were references to FSE&T (from the original issuance).

    - Do we calculate job search in the same way for both TANF and Food Stamp recipients? **Yes.**
    - Do we use the same job search log? **Yes.**
    - Can we project hours in the same way? **No. Do not project hours for Food Stamp recipients.**
    - Does the good cause/excused absence policy apply only to customers receiving TANF? **Yes.**
    - **A**re we only verifying contacts/employment for customers receiving TANF? **No. We verify contacts and employment for TANF and Food Stamp.**