

**Childcare Vendor Handbook**

October 2021

 **1-888-469-JOBS (5627), Option 2**



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**FOREWORD**

Workforce Solutions has developed this Handbook to inform you about childcare financial aid services and to explain your role as a childcare vendor.

All rules, policies and procedures in this Handbook are based on federal or state laws and Workforce Solutions’ policies and procedures.

Please read this Handbook carefully. Keep it handy as a reference. Feel free to call us if you have any questions.

Workforce Solutions

Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO)

Phone: 1-888-469-JOBS (5627)

Choose option 2 for Financial Aid
www.wrksolutions.com

# PURPOSE

This Handbook is for regulated and listed (relative) vendors providing childcare services to customers receiving financial aid through Workforce Solutions. It will:

* provide you with an overview of Workforce Solutions,
* provide information on Workforce Solutions’ policies,
* help you understand your role in providing childcare services,
* explain the conditions childcare financial aid is based on,
* help you understand how to receive reimbursement for providing services to Workforce Solutions’ customers, and
* help you understand that a person may be prosecuted for obtaining or attempting to obtain, by fraudulent means, services and/or payments to which he/she is not entitled.

# VENDOR REQUIREMENTS

## Required Documentation

All childcare vendors are required to submit the following documentation before being reimbursed for childcare services:

* a valid email address to receive and send correspondence,
* an original signed Workforce Solutions Vendor Rate Schedule (Agreement),
* IRS Form W-9,
* a copy of the vendor’s driver’s license or other picture ID (for home-based vendors),
* a copy of the vendor’s social security card or proof of their Employer Identification Number (EIN),
* Security Agreements for using automated information systems, and
* bank depository information.

These items must be kept up to date to remain a vendor with Workforce Solutions.

## Tax Identification Number

Licensed vendors that employ more than one person must always be set up with an Employer Identification Number (EIN). They are operating as a business and should have one. Licensed vendors that employ only one person (which is the owner and operator) may be set up with an EIN or SSN.

## Regulated Vendors

Regulated Vendors include licensed childcare centers, licensed childcare homes, and registered childcare homes.

Regulated vendors must meet the following criteria to be eligible to be paid for providing childcare:

* be licensed or registered with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS),
* provide a copy of the childcare license or permit and current published rates for services available to the public, and
* the business owner cannot have any existing overpayments owed to Workforce Solutions.

## Listed (Relative)Vendors

Listed Vendors include eligible relatives who undergo background checks and list with the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS).

Listed vendors must meet the following criteria to be eligible to be paid for providing childcare:

* be a grandparent, great-grandparent, aunt, uncle, or a sibling of the child and over 18 years of age,
* provide a certification of relationship form signed by the parent,
* maintain a separate residence from the family receiving childcare financial aid, and
* be listed with DFPS and maintain their listing status.

## Vendor Requirements

The childcare vendor’s requirements are listed here, and additional details are provided throughout this Handbook.

1. Maintain your license or listing status in good standing with the DFPS. Inform Workforce Solutions immediately of any changes in your status.
2. Submit and maintain accurate information about your business with Workforce Solutions. Changes in ownership, location, phone number, e-mail address(es), licensing status, tax identification number, and bank accounts must be reported immediately.
3. Submit and maintain accurate and up-to-date information on staff members who are authorized to access Workforce Solutions’ automated systems including Vendor Connection.
4. Receive a Form 2450 for all childcare authorizations prior to allowing children to attend care.
5. Encourage parents to report attendance daily using the vendor’s established attendance reporting process to avoid excessive absences which could cause them to become ineligible for childcare financial aid.
6. Reconcile billing with Workforce Solutions no later than the due dates listed in this Handbook.
7. Providers must notify Workforce Solutions regarding any discrepancies with the service authorization immediately but no later than three business days of receiving the authorization.
8. Notify Workforce Solutions through Vendor Connection by the next business day when a child has five (5) consecutive absences regardless of the reason for absence.
9. Providers are not required to report attendance each day for each child.
10. Report to Workforce Solutions if a child(ren) doesn’t start attending your facility by the 5th day of authorization.
11. Collect the assessed parent share of cost (parent fee) from the parent before rendering the service. Vendors may end care at their facility for failure to pay the parent share of cost amount, report them to Workforce Solutions using the Vendor Connection portal or by submitting the Refusal of Care form from the Workforce Solutions website. Workforce Solutions will end authorization for the child(ren) attendance at the facility.
12. Wait for reimbursement from Workforce Solutions instead of charging the parent directly for agreed upon reimbursement rates.
13. Report all earnings from reimbursement for childcare services to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) at the end of each year and pay appropriate taxes.
14. Report all earnings from reimbursements of childcare services to the Texas Department of Human Services, if applicable.

# INDEPENDENT CONTRACTOR

Childcare vendors are not employees of Workforce Solutions but are independent contractors. Workforce Solutions will reimburse vendors up to the maximum rate per day per child. Workforce Solutions pays for up to 12 hours of care per day based on parent’s need. Vendors are not allowed to charge the customer for hours of care that Workforce Solutions will pay. The childcare vendor’s policies for providing childcare are between the parent and the vendor and are not dictated by Workforce Solutions.

Reimbursements from Workforce Solutions to childcare vendors are considered earnings and must be reported to the appropriate agencies. Childcare vendors receiving government assistance such as TANF, Food Stamps, or SSI must report their childcare earnings to the Texas Department of Human Services.

Workforce Solutions will not withhold any taxes from the reimbursement childcare vendors receive for providing childcare services unless directed by the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). It is the sole responsibility of the childcare vendor to report earnings in the childcare vendor’s annual tax return.

# SERVICE AUTHORIZATION/REFERRAL

Children must be authorized for childcare financial aid at a specific vendor location before Workforce Solutions will pay for the services. Workforce Solutions staff are responsible for referring (authorizing) children for services at specific vendor locations in Workforce Solutions’ computer system based on parent choice. The Form 2450 is our official notification to the provider authorizing or discontinuing care. Workforce Solutions will send a completed Form 2450 via email or mail to the childcare vendor and give the vendor a courtesy to call to let them know the 2450 was sent. The 2450 contains the referral information and validation code. The authorization is also available directly to vendors in the Vendor Connection portal.

Workforce Solutions will not pay for services without a valid 2450 service authorization. Vendors that accept children for care without a valid authorization from Workforce Solutions staff do so at their own risk, and any request for payment for such care should be directed to the parent, not Workforce Solutions.

## Days of Care

Care is authorized for specific days of the week. For example, if the parent works Monday through Thursday, care will be authorized and paid for only on those days of the week, and care will not be authorized on Friday.

In some circumstances, care will be authorized for a specific number of days at any time during the week. For example, care might be authorized any five days of the week. This means the parent may report attendance for any day of the week, but only for a total of five days each week.

## Child’s Age

Children are authorized and paid at different rates based on their age. Children under the age of 13 are eligible to receive Workforce Solutions services. Children who turn 13 during the authorization period may continue to receive care contingent on the vendor’s policy and the age range the vendor can serve according to DFPS. Children with disabilities may be authorized up to age 19. The following age definitions are used by Workforce Solutions for determining at which rate reimbursement is paid for each child:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Age Group** | **Age Range** |
| Infant | 0 – 17 Months |
| Toddler | 18 – 35 Months |
| Preschooler | 3 – 5 Years |
| School-ager | 6 – 12 Years |

## Full-time vs. Part-time Care

Full-time care is from six to 12 hours a day, part-time care is less than six hours a day.

School referrals will have a part-time referral for the school year which will pay a blended rate. Summer care for school children will have a full-time referral separately and paid at the full-time rate.

Other children receive either a part-time or full-time referral, based on the needs of the customer.

## Location

Services are authorized at a specific, physical location. If the parent or vendor desires to change the location where care is provided, the PARENT must contact Workforce Solutions to request that change. Any new location must be established with Workforce Solutions as an authorized vendor before services may be paid for at that location.

## Refusing Care

As with all other businesses, vendors must comply with all applicable laws when serving customers, including anti-discrimination statutes. However, Workforce Solutions does not prohibit vendors from excluding children from their services where there is a good cause or reason. Reasonable efforts should be made to accommodate a child; however, if a vendor needs to stop providing services to a child, the vendor must submit notification to Workforce Solutions by the next business day. The parent’s eligibility for financial aid is not terminated, only services at that vendor. For example, Workforce Solutions will not terminate care for insufficient funds (NSF) charges and/or late pick-up fees; however, a vendor may request to terminate care at their facility.

# PARENT SHARE OF COST

Parents receiving childcare financial aid may be assigned a monthly parent share of cost (parent fee). The amount of this fee will be deducted from the total reimbursement for childcare services each month. As a childcare vendor, it is your responsibility to collect the monthly parent fee from the parent before rendering services. Parent fee information is provided to vendors when children are authorized for childcare financial aid.

The payment for the parent share of cost is a transaction between the parent and the vendor. Workforce Solutions does not pay a vendor the parent share if a parent fails to make appropriate payments.

The vendor may refuse to accept the child if the parent does not pay their share of cost. Transfer to another provider is prohibited, unless the parent has paid the parent of cost to the current provider, barring the transfer being related to health and safety concern for the child.

Nonpayment of the parent share of cost, when reported by a vendor, is a program violation for customers assessed a parent share of cost. The vendor must report the nonpayment to Workforce Solutions by the last working day of the month the parent share of cost is due. Vendors may complete and submit the [Refusal of Care](https://www.wrksolutions.com/Documents/Aid/Refusal-of-Care.pdf) form using the vendor portal or via fax: 713-974-7983.

# REPORTING ATTENDANCE

Parents will use the provider’s established procedures to report attendance.

Providers are no longer required to report daily attendance for any authorized child(ren), but they are required to report when a child has accrued five (5) consecutive absences via Vendor Connection, regardless of the reason for absences:

* Five (5) consecutive days of absences = 1 Provider Notice;

Example: A child is absent Thursday and Friday of one week and then Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday of the next week. This means this child has five consecutive days of absences. The provider must report the five absences no later than the next workday.

* Eight (8) Provider Notices = 40 absences, termination begins.
* Individual absences in a week will not count towards excessive absence total.
* Holidays are not counted as absences.

## Relative Vendors

Relative childcare vendors are required to submit attendance weekly.

* Attendance should be submitted in Vendor Connection**.** If Vendor Connection is not available, relative vendors will be allowed to submit [Manual Attendance Forms](https://www.wrksolutions.com/Documents/Aid/Manual-Attendance-Report-Relative.xlsx) toFA.Office@wrksolutions.com**.** Relative vendors may also contact their Accounts Payable Representative for a copy of the form.
* Attendance is due the Monday after the attendance week is complete to prevent a delay in payment. Failure to submit attendance will result in the relative vendor not being paid.

# VENDOR RESPONSIBILITIES

# A vendor is responsible for ensuring amounts charged to Workforce Solutions for childcare are:

# not more than the amount charged by the vendor to private pay customers;

# based on childcare services that were authorized and provided;

# not based on information that is false or fraudulent;

# not based on childcare services provided when the parent or child was not eligible for services.

**If the parent withdraws the child from care at the facility, the vendor must notify us immediately.**

# Vendors are responsible for adhering to all rules, policies, and procedures in this Vendor Handbook and in their Vendor Rate Schedule (Agreement).

**PERSONAL IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION**

Vendors have a responsibility to ensure customer’s personal identifiable information (PII) is kept confidential. PII is information that can be used to distinguish or trace an individual’s identity, either alone or when combined with other personal or identifying information that is linked or linkable to a specific individual. Examples of PII include, but are not limited to: SSN, address, home phone numbers, birthdates, medical information, financial information, and computer passwords. Measures should be taken to ensure PII is kept confidential and unauthorized individuals cannot access or view PII in print or electronic form. Vendors are also prohibited from using customer’s PII information to transact business without prior approval from customers. Vendors cannot falsely present themselves as the customers to obtain information, get or extend a service, or for any type of financial gain. Failure to abide by PII standards could result in corrective action or contract termination.

# CORRECTIVE ACTION

# Workforce Solutions will take the following corrective actions when a vendor does not comply with reporting accurate attendance or does not meet its [vendor responsibilities](#_VENDOR_RESPONSIBILITIES). Depending on the severity of the violation, Workforce Solutions may immediately terminate the vendor agreement. The steps described below are a guide.

# First Offense:

Workforce Solutions will inform the vendor of the violation and initiate a Service Improvement Agreement. If the vendor action is determined to be fraud, Workforce Solutions may cancel the vendor’s agreement.

# Second Offense:

# Workforce Solutions may stop new referrals to the vendor for a minimum of 90 days. If the vendor action is determined to be fraud, Workforce Solutions may cancel the vendor’s agreement.

**Third Offense:**

# Workforce Solutions will terminate the vendor’s agreement.

# PAYING EARLY EDUCATION AND CARE VENDORS

Workforce Solutions will pay an early education and care vendor according to the executed Vendor Rate Schedule, within the dates a parent is eligible to receive our financial aid, and according to the following requirements:

1. Workforce Solutions will pay a vendor for each day the child is authorized to attend.

1. Workforce Solutions will pay a regulated vendor up to nine holidays per calendar year. In order to keep parents from being penalized against their annual limit as described in 5 below, vendors must report all holidays (paid and unpaid) and any changes to the holidays in advance. Annual holidays for the upcoming year must be reported no later than November 30th of the current year. Failure to report holidays timely may lead to a delay in payment.
2. Workforce Solutions will not reauthorize care for a child who exceeds 40 unexplained absences in a 12-month authorization period. After 40 unexplained absences, customers care will be terminated. They will not be allowed to reapply for services or be placed on the waitlist for 60 days.
3. Workforce Solutions will not pay for subsidies for a child at licensed childcare centers, including before or after school programs and school-age programs, in which the parent or his or her spouse, including child’s parent or stepparent, is the director or assistant director, or has an ownership interest; or licensed, registered home where the parent also works during the hours his or her child is in care (with the exception of children placed under protective services by DFPS).
4. Vendor may not charge fees to a parent receiving childcare subsidies that are not charged to parents who are not receiving subsidies.
5. Vendor is prohibited from charging Workforce Solutions’ customers the difference between the vendor’s published rates and the negotiated Workforce Solutions rate which is reflected on the Vendor Rate Schedule.
6. Vendor may not deny a childcare referral based on the parent’s income status; receipt of public assistance; or the child’s Texas Department of Family and Protective Services/Child Protective Services (CPS) status.
7. Workforce Solutions will not pay listed providers for absences.

## Emergency Closures

Workforce Solutions will reimburse the childcare vendor for each child currently enrolled when they are closed due to extenuating circumstances, such as weather conditions (when the local school is also closed for that day), fire, electrical or gas outage, etc. The vendor will use Vendor Connection or call 1-866-469-5627 to report an emergency closure. Workforce Solutions will authorize a limited number of days specific to the emergency that occurred.

## Maximum Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions sets maximum reimbursement rates that vendors may be reimbursed for childcare services based on the following:

* the type of vendor;
* the age of the child receiving childcare services; and
* the type of care authorized (full-time or part-time).

Workforce Solutions utilizes the annual survey provided by the Texas Workforce Commission to establish maximum reimbursement rates. Current daily reimbursement rates for vendors are displayed on the Vendor Rate Schedule or Vendor Agreement and the Vendor Connection portal. All vendors will be reimbursed for services rendered at the vendor’s published rate up to the maximum reimbursement rate established by Workforce Solutions. Vendors will not be reimbursed at a rate higher than their published rate for the age of the child receiving childcare financial aid.

If vendors change their rates, new reimbursement rates may be submitted to Workforce Solutions. **All rate changes will take effect the following month after a signed contract is received by** **Workforce Solutions.**  For example, if Workforce Solutions receive the signed agreement April 2, 2019, the new rates will be effective May 1, 2019.

## Enhanced Reimbursement Rates

Workforce Solutions has established enhanced reimbursement rates for all age groups receiving care at Texas Rising Star and Texas School Ready providers. These rates are published on the [Workforce Solutions website](http://www.wrksolutions.com/for-individuals/financial-aid/financial-aid-for-child-care).

***Blended Rates***

Vendors will be reimbursed a blended rate for all preschool and school-age children on school referrals during the normal school year, including school holidays and teacher in-service days. During summer months, vendors will be reimbursed for children on school referrals according to the referral.

TWC has determined the school year is approximately 175 school days in session and 30 days not in session during the school year, with a total of 205 days during the school year. For those approximate 205 days, the blended rate will be used whether the school-age child(ren) attends part time or full time. When figuring the blended rate, the lower rate between the maximum rate paid and the provider’s rate will be used.

To figure the blended school calendar rate, the following formula is used: [(Part time rate x 175) + (Full time rate x 30)] / 205 = blended rate.

## Billing Periods and Payment Schedules

Workforce Solutions operates with weekly billing periods and payment schedules unless announced differently on the Vendor Connection portal.

Workforce Solutions processes payments based on the weekly attendance information uploaded on Sunday for the week ending seven days prior. For example, attendance information for the week ending October 15th is uploaded on October 23rd, and Workforce Solutions processes payments during the week of October 23rd.

## Payments

Workforce Solutions pays for services rendered through one of the following electronic methods:

* Direct deposit; or
* Workforce Solutions debit card.

Both methods are free to vendors. All licensed childcare facilities will receive payment through direct deposit into a checking or savings account. All childcare vendors providing home-based care may have their payments directly deposited into a personal savings or checking account or may choose to receive payment via a Workforce Solutions debit card. If you choose the debit card, you will receive your card in the mail directly from the bank. The card will come with directions on how to use the card and a separate toll free phone number to call with questions about your card.

Vendors may set up direct deposit to their checking or savings account by filling out the [Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement](https://www.wrksolutions.com/Documents/Aid/Direct-Deposit-Authorization.pdf) and returning it with a voided check or deposit slip from their bank account. The [Direct Deposit Authorization Agreement](https://www.wrksolutions.com/Documents/Aid/Direct-Deposit-Authorization.pdf) is available on the Workforce Solutions website.

Workforce Solutions makes payments according to the schedule described in the Billing Periods and Payment Schedule section, or Claims Submission and Payment Schedule, which is available on the [Vendor Connection portal](https://ccvendorportal.wrksolutions.com/CCVENDORPORTAL/vendor/default.aspx). While Workforce Solutions always attempts to meet the payment date on the schedule, occasionally there may be delays due to several reasons, including delays in the banking system or a temporary shortage of funding.

## Overpayments

Workforce Solutions will recoup funds from the vendor’s payment when previous payments result in overpayment. Overpayments occur when a vendor is paid for service days after a parent withdraws child(ren) from the vendor’s care.

## Payment Statements

Payment statements are made available on the [Vendor Connection portal](https://ccvendorportal.wrksolutions.com/CCVENDORPORTAL/vendor/default.aspx). If a vendor uses the Workforce Solutions debit card program, they may use any affiliated ATM or the toll free phone number on their card to obtain net payment information when the payment is available on their debit card.

## Billing Inquiries

If you believe an error was made on your payment, vendors can create a Billing Inquiry Action in the [Vendor Connection portal](https://ccvendorportal.wrksolutions.com/CCVENDORPORTAL/vendor/default.aspx), access the [Billing Inquiry form](https://www.wrksolutions.com/Documents/Aid/Billing-Inquiry-Form.pdf) on Workforce Solutions website, or contact your assigned Accounts Payable Specialist. They will assist you with any billing inquiries you may have.

## Reconciliation

Workforce Solutions reconciles billing and payment issues on a quarterly basis. Vendors are required to submit all inquiries and discrepancies with billing no later than the date shown in the chart below. Failure to submit your reconciliation by the date shown may result in non-payment of any outstanding amounts.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Service was provided in the month of:** | **Submit all inquiries by:** |
| October – December | February 15 of the following year |
| January – March | May 15 |
| April – June | August 15 |
| July – September | To be announced |

Child(ren) paid for with funds from Child Protective Services (CPS) are reconciled by the end of September of every year. Vendors with CPS child(ren) will receive a special notice from Workforce Solutions to inform them of the CPS reconciliation due date.

# WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SYSTEMS

Workforce Solutions maintains the [Vendor Connection portal](https://ccvendorportal.wrksolutions.com/CCVENDORPORTAL/vendor/default.aspx). This portal provides information on vendor records, referrals, payments, parent fees and child absences. It also allows action requests to be submitted to Workforce Solutions. All vendors must ensure staff at the physical site have access to Vendor Connection. Multiple staff may have a user ID for each location and staff at multi-site vendors may see all their sites through a single user ID.

All vendors will use the Vendor Connection portal to access their payment statements, childcare authorizations (2450), and other information about their relationship with Workforce Solutions.

## User Setup/System Security

Owners or designated representatives must select and authorize which staff will have access to the Vendor Connection portal. Owners or designated staff are responsible for terminating access when a staff person is no longer employed by the vendor and setting up access for new employees. Vendors using Workforce Solutions’ systems must maintain security over their user ID and password. The owner of each user ID is responsible for the use of their access and is liable for any misuse of their access.

***Sharing user access with others is strictly prohibited.***

# WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS VENDOR VISITS

Workforce Solutions conducts both announced and unannounced site visits at all vendors.

***First Referral Site Visits***

First referral site visits are scheduled for newly set up vendors within 30 days of their first referral from Workforce Solutions. The visit will consist of:

* A review of all Workforce Solutions’ policies and guidelines,
* Training on Workforce Solutions’ databases, and
* An opportunity for vendors to discuss any issues or concerns regarding Workforce Solutions’ processes and procedures.

***Unannounced Visits***

Workforce Solutions conducts unannounced visits in order to verify adherence to Workforce Solutions’ policies. These visits are mandatory for vendors. Refusing Workforce Solutions access to your facility to perform any type of visit could result in the removal of all Workforce Solutions funded children and termination of your Vendor Agreement. During the visit, the Workforce Solutions representative troubleshoots any technical issues and answers any questions. The owner or director must be available to answer questions pertaining to vendor responsibilities and guidelines. (See Reporting Attendance.)

***Service Improvement Agreement (SIA) Visit***

The SIA visit is conducted when a vendor is found to be in violation of Workforce Solutions’ policies and guidelines. The Workforce Solutions representative will define the infraction and describe the necessary action the vendor must take to correct the violation. The representative will also discuss potential consequences if the vendor fails to correct the area of noncompliance within a 30-day timeframe.

# POLICY VIOLATIONS

Failure to comply with Workforce Solutions’ policies and/or federal and state rules may result in a range of actions, including:

* Repayment to Workforce Solutions - Vendors will be required to refund any payments they are not entitled to, including overpayments, duplicate payments, or payments made in error. If an overpayment cannot be returned in full, a payment arrangement may be implemented. Vendors’ failure to repay when requested will result in withholding of current and future payments to recover the amount owed. If the amount owed is for the current fiscal year, the overpayment amount will automatically be taken out of the vendor payment; no payment arrangements may be made.
* Refusal to refer additional children to a vendor.
* Removal of current children from care.
* Termination of Vendor Rate Schedule or Agreement.
* Vendors who knowingly and intentionally misrepresent information or use any fraudulent means to obtain childcare funds will be referred to the appropriate authorities including the District Attorney’s office or the Regulatory Enforcement Division of the Texas Workforce Commission.

# VENDOR LICENSING STATUS

The DFPS may place childcare vendors on **Corrective** or **Adverse Action** when they are found in noncompliance with their licensing standards. Workforce Solutions will notify parents in writing of the vendor’s **Corrective** or **Adverse Action** status.

Parents that have child(ren) enrolled at a vendor on **Corrective Action** are allowed to continue a child’s enrollment, as long as the parent acknowledges the vendor’s DFPS status in writing and elects to maintain the child enrollment. Care will remain at the current vendor if the parent fails to return a signed acknowledgement letter to Workforce Solutions Financial Aid Payment Office within 14 calendar days of the date of notification. Parents may choose to transfer their children from a vendor on corrective action and may do so in writing or over the phone within 14 calendar days of the date of notification by Workforce Solutions. Vendors on **Corrective Action** will not qualify to receive enhanced reimbursement rates from Workforce Solutions. In addition, vendors will not be allowed to receive new referrals and therefore will not be paid for any new children until all the conditions imposed by the **Corrective Action** are met.

If a vendor is placed on **Adverse Action**, Workforce Solutions will notify parents in writing that child care will end at the current vendor and require parents to choose another eligible childcare vendor within 14 calendar days of the date of notification by Workforce Solutions. Parents may notify us in writing or over the phone. Vendors will not be paid for new children and will not qualify to receive enhanced reimbursement rates from Workforce Solutions.

# VENDOR DEBARMENT

Vendors must immediately notify Workforce Solutions if it or its employees become debarred, excluded suspended, ineligible or voluntarily excluded from state or federal programs. Once notified, Workforce Solutions will notify existing customers of their option to transfer to another vendor, and may further:

* Suspend new referrals of Workforce Solutions funded children;
* Immediately remove all children referred by Workforce Solutions from the vendor; and
* Refuse payment for services delivered.

# COMPLAINTS/BOARD REVIEW (APPEALS)

# Childcare vendors have the right to have complaints heard without the threat of losing childcare reimbursement. Vendors should begin by explaining the problem or complaint to Workforce Solutions staff; if this is unsuccessful, they must ask to speak with the management staff and explain the problem. Management may be reached by phone at 713-975-7409 or by email at wfvendor@wrksolutions.com. If a vendor continues to have an unresolved complaint, they may contact the Gulf Coast Workforce Board at 713.627.3200 or board.reviews@wrksolutions.net.

***Complaints***

Vendors may file complaints, for any reason, at any time regarding dissatisfaction with Workforce Solutions’ service. Vendors include organizations and individuals approved in the Workforce Solutions Vendor Network, which include career education and training programs, career advancement training programs, basic skill training programs, work and education support vendors, and childcare vendors. We ask that all complaints be submitted in writing and, at a minimum, include the following information:

* The name of the vendor, physical and mailing address, telephone number
* The type of service provided (training or child care)
* Name of the person filing the complaint, phone number and email or mailing address
* A detailed description of the problem or issue; date of occurrence; the reason for the complaint and individuals involved

Vendors may mail or email correspondence to:

Complaint – Financial Aid Payment Office, P.O. Box 741361, Houston, Texas 77274-1361; or email wfvendor@wrksolutions.com with a subject line **“Complaint”**

***Board Review – Childcare Vendors***

Child care vendors have a right to request a Board review of a decision or determination made by Workforce Solutions. Child care vendor Board requests must be received in writing within 14 calendar days from the date the decision was made regarding the determination.

Types of child care vendor appeals include:

* Recoupment
* Overpayment
* Underpayment
* Service Improvement Agreement

Child care vendors may mail or email correspondence to:

Childcare Vendor Appeal – Gulf Coast Workforce Board, P.O. Box 22777 • Houston, Texas 77227-2777; or email board.reviews@wrksolutions.net with a subject line **“Childcare Vendor Appeal”**

# DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

It is against the law for Workforce Solutions to discriminate on the following bases: against any individual in the United States, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, sex stereotyping, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, or political affiliation or belief or, against any beneficiary of, applicant to, or participant in programs financially assisted under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, on the basis of the individual’s citizenship status or participation in any WIOA Title I–financially assisted program or activity.

The recipient must not discriminate in any of the following areas: deciding who will be admitted, or have access, to any WIOA Title I–financially assisted program or activity; providing opportunities in, or treating any person with regard to, such a program or activity; or making employment decisions in the administration of, or in connection with, such a program or activity. Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure communications with individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others. This means, upon request and at no cost to the individual, recipients are required to provide appropriate auxiliary aids and services to qualified individuals with disabilities

If you think you have been subjected to discrimination under a WIOA Title I–financially assisted program or activity, you may file a complaint within 180 days from the date of the alleged violation to Workforce Solutions in writing or via phone.

Ruben Neal, EO Officer

14355 E. Wallisville Road

Houston, TX 77049

Telephone Number: (281) 458-1155, Ext 2260

**Right to Appeal**

If you disagree with the processing of your discrimination claim, you may appeal with the Gulf Coast Workforce Board (the Board). The Board shall resolve equal opportunity complaints in a fair and prompt manner. Acts of restraint, interference, coercion, discrimination, or reprisal towards complainants exercising their rights to file a complaint under this procedure are prohibited. This procedure applies to all applicants and participants who have cause to file a discrimination complaint related to activities or programs administered by the Board. If you have an equal opportunity issue, you may submit your written complaint to the Board or Contractor EO Officer, as appropriate.

Gulf Coast Workforce Board Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer: Sabrina Parras

P.O. Box 22777

Houston, TX 77227-2777

Telephone Number: (713) 627-3200

Relay Texas: 1-800-735-2989/ TTY 1-800-735-2988 (Voice)

Email: sabrina.parras@wrksolutions.net

***Technical Assistance***

Contact your Accounts Payable Specialist or Vendor Service Representative if you need:

1. Assistance understanding Workforce Solutions’ policies and procedures and/or
2. Using Workforce Solutions’ automated systems.