



# Financial Aid Standards & Guidelines



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## Table of Contents

- 1.0 Overview
- 2.0 *Applying for Financial Aid*
- 3.0 Fund Sources (*Programs*)
- 4.0 Priority of Service
- 5.0 *Financial Assistance*
- 6.0 Providing Support Services
- 7.0 *Financial Aid Registry*
- 8.0 Appeals
- 9.0 *Appendix*

## 1.0 Overview

The purpose of this guide is to provide standards and guidelines for Workforce Solutions' financial aid.

All Workforce Solutions service providers must use these standards and guidelines in managing financial aid for work support, work search support, and education and training support.

We always start by assessing the customer's wants and needs and work with them to develop a plan to help them reach their employment goals.

## 2.0 Applying for Financial Aid

Customers interested in Workforce Solutions financial aid must speak with a Career Advisor to determine how we can help them get a job, keep a job, ***increase their earnings***, or get a better job.

Currently, a Career Advisor will direct customers ***suitable for Workforce Solutions financial aid*** to complete the [Financial Aid Intake Form](#) (Intake Form), and work with them to collect and submit appropriate supporting documents.

We use the Intake Form to collect basic information to assess potential eligibility for Workforce Solutions' funds, establish priority of service, and ensure we serve customers on a first-come, first-serve basis when funds are limited.

***Upon launch of the new case management system, the Intake Form will be phased out and all customers will need to complete a registration and application in WorkInTexas.com.***

### 3.0 Fund Sources (Programs)

Customers must meet eligibility criteria for at least one of the following fund sources to receive Workforce Solutions financial aid:

- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T)**  
The Texas Health and Human Services Commission (HHSC) determines eligibility for SNAP benefits. Staff can verify a customer is receiving SNAP on the SNAP E&T History tab in the case management system.

A customer must be receiving SNAP benefits and participating in SNAP E&T activities with a Workforce Solutions office to receive SNAP E&T funds for financial assistance. We require co-enrollment under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds depending on the activities in which the customer is participating. Refer to the [Cooperation Rules and Procedures<sup>1</sup>](#) and the [Documentation Requirements for Cooperation](#) for guidelines on participation requirements and co-enrollment.

- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Choices**  
HHSC also determines eligibility for TANF benefits. Staff can verify a customer is receiving TANF on the TANF History tab in the case management system.

A customer must have applied for or be currently receiving TANF benefits and participating in TANF/Choices activities with a Workforce Solutions office to receive TANF funds for financial assistance. We require co-enrollment under WIOA funds depending on the activities in which the customer is participating. Refer to the [Cooperation Rules and Procedures](#) and the [Documentation Requirements for Cooperation](#) for the guidelines on participation requirements and co-enrollment.

- **Non-Custodial Parent (NCP) Choices**  
The Office of Attorney General (OAG) determines eligibility for NCP Choices. Participation is court-ordered by a judge and Workforce Solutions staff connects with the customer at a court hearing. Staff will schedule an appointment for intake and assessment and mirror the services provided under TANF/Choices.

Refer to the [NCP Choices Guide](#) for guidelines on providing service, participation requirements, and procedures when a customer is no longer eligible for the program.

- **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA)**  
Workforce Solutions provides financial assistance to customers who qualify for service under the Trade Act. Trade-affected customers are dislocated workers who lost their employment as a result of increased imports from, or shifts in production to, foreign countries. The Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) determines eligibility for TAA and

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<sup>1</sup> Effective April 15, 2024, the Cooperation Rules and Procedures will be split into separate standards and guidelines for SNAP E&T and TANF/Choices.

creates a TAA Program Detail in the case management system for customers who can receive TAA benefits.

Customers certified for TAA receive expedited eligibility for WIOA Dislocated Worker funds and only have to prove selective service registration, if applicable. Staff **must** co-enroll trade-affected customers under WIOA Dislocated Worker funds.

Refer to the [Trade Adjustment Assistance Procedures](#) for guidelines on providing service under TAA.

- **WIOA Adult:**

- Age: 18 years or older;
- Authorized to work in the U.S.; and
  - The customer must provide documentation from the Authorization to Work Checklist (I-9 Checklist) to support their work status. Documents must be valid at the time of application.

Note: Staff should work with customers to renew documents that may expire within 30 days.

- Selective Service registration: males 18 years old or older born on or after January 1, 1960, only
  - Males born on or after January 1, 1960, must register for Selective Service when they turn 18 or no later than their 26th birthday. Staff should verify selective service registration at [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov). If a customer has not registered and is still under 26 years of age, staff must explain to him the requirement for Selective Service registration to receive Workforce Solutions financial aid and guide him to [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov) for more information and to complete his registration.
  - If he was unable to register during the required period, staff must obtain a written statement from the customer explaining why. Staff must review the statement and determine if the customer knowingly or willfully failed to register. If staff determines he did not, staff must enter a case note explaining their decision to provide assistance. If staff determines he knowingly or willfully failed to register, staff must inform the customer he is not eligible for Workforce Solutions financial aid and must document the decision in case notes. Staff should look for other ways to help the customer and provide other resources for financial aid.
  - Males who enter the WIOA program at age 17 or younger and attain age 18 while participating in the program must be registered with Selective Service by the 30th day after their 18th birthday to remain eligible for WIOA services.
    - Proof of the customer's registration by the 30<sup>th</sup> day after their birthday must be verified by one of the documentation sources listed on the

[Validating and Entering Qualifications \(VEQ\) for Workforce Solutions Financial Aid](#)<sup>2</sup> desk aid.

For more information about who must register with Selective Service, go to [www.sss.gov](http://www.sss.gov).

- Economic Eligibility:  
An individual who meets any **one** of the following criteria satisfies the economic eligibility requirement for WIOA Adult funding:
  - Receives or is a member of a family (based on the WIOA definition) who receives TANF, SNAP, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or other state or local income-based public assistance
  - Received in the past six months or is a member of a family (based on the WIOA definition) who received in the last six months TANF, SNAP, SSI, or other state or local income-based public assistance
  - Homeless
  - Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch (applies only to the individual receiving the free or reduced-price lunch)
  - Foster youth
  - Basic skills deficient
  - Receives or is a member of a family (based on the WIOA definition) who receives an income below the income guidelines (refer to the [Income Guidelines](#) for limits based on family size)
  - An individual with a disability whose own income is below the income guidelines even if the individual’s family has income above the guidelines (refer to the [Income Guidelines](#) for limits based on household of one)
- **WIOA Dislocated Worker:**
  - Age: 18 years old or older;
  - [Authorized to work in the U.S.](#);
  - [Selective Service registration](#), if applicable; and
  - One of the Dislocated Worker [categories](#):
- **WIOA In-school Youth**  
To be eligible for WIOA in-school youth funding, an individual must meet the following criteria and economic eligibility:
  - Age: No younger than 14 and no older than 21
  - [Authorized to work in the U.S.](#);
  - [Selective Service registration](#), if applicable;
  - School Status: Attending school - An individual is “attending school” if, **on the date of the eligibility determination**, the individual is:
    - Registered for or enrolled in:
      - Public school
      - Charter school,
      - Private school,

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<sup>2</sup> Effective April 15, 2024, the Validating and Entering Qualifications desk aid will be replaced by new guidance.

- Disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP),
- Home-schooled,
- Attending high school equivalency programs, including those considered to be dropout reengagement programs, funded by the public K–12 system,
- High school graduate who has registered for postsecondary classes, even if not yet attending postsecondary classes,
- Attending postsecondary classes; or
- In between postsecondary school semesters and has registered for classes for a future semester or has paid all or part of the tuition for a future semester.

**Notes:** Once the school status of the individual is determined that school status remains the same throughout the current participation.

Participation in the following programs is not considered being “in school” for the purpose of determining ISY/OSY status under WIOA:

- Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA
  - Youth Build programs
  - Job Corps programs
  - High School Equivalency programs (HSE; not funded by the public K–12 system)
  - Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)
- In-School Youth Challenge: Meets one or more of the following:
    - Basic skills deficient,
    - An English language learner,
    - An offender,
    - A homeless individual or a runaway,
    - In foster care or has aged out of the foster care system,
    - Pregnant or parenting, and/or
    - Has a disability.
  - Economic Eligibility: An individual who meets any **one** of the following criteria satisfies the economic eligibility requirement for youth funding:
    - Receives or is a member of a family (based on the WIOA definition) who receives TANF, SNAP, Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or other state or local income-based public assistance
    - Received in the past six months or is a member of a family (based on the WIOA definition) who received in the last six months TANF, SNAP, SSI, or other state or local income-based public assistance
    - Homeless
    - Foster youth
    - Lives in a high poverty census tract (refer to the [High Poverty Census Tract Desk Aid](#) for the procedures for determination). ***Workforce Solutions staff must check the census tract before requiring a customer to submit income verification.***



- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch (applies only to the individual receiving the free or reduced-price lunch)
- Receives or is a member of a family (based on the WIOA definition) who receives an income below the income guidelines (refer to the Income Guidelines for limits based on family size)
- An individual with a disability whose own income is below the income guidelines even if the individual’s family has income above the guidelines (refer to the [Income Guidelines](#) for limits based on household of one)

- **WIOA Out-of-school Youth**

To be eligible for WIOA out-of-school youth funding an individual must meet the following criteria.

- Age: No younger than 16 and no older than 24
- [Authorized to work in the U.S.](#);
- [Selective Service registration](#), if applicable;
- School Status - Not attending compulsory or post-secondary school. An individual is “not attending” school if, **on the date of the eligibility determination**, the individual:
  - Has had at least ten (10) consecutive days of unexcused absences and has not returned to school,
  - Is not attending a post-secondary school,
  - Has not registered for post-secondary school classes, or
  - Is enrolled only in non-credit-bearing post-secondary classes.

**Notes:** Once the school status of an individual is determined that school status remains the same throughout the current participation.

Participation in the following programs is not considered being “in school” for the purpose of determining ISY/OSY status under WIOA:

- Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA
- Youth-Build programs
- Job Corps programs
- High School Equivalency programs (HSE; not funded by the public K–12 system)
- Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)
- Out-of-School Youth Challenge: Meets one or more of the following:
  - School Dropout,
  - Required to attend school but has not attended for at least the most recent complete school year’s calendar quarter (the last three months school was in session)
  - Homeless or runaway
  - In foster care or aged out of foster care
  - Pregnant/Parenting
  - Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system
  - Has a disability

**Note:** A young adult who meets any one of the first seven challenges above, does **not** have to provide proof of economic eligibility.

The two challenges below require the individual to meet economic eligibility.

- Received high school diploma/equivalent and is deficient in basic literacy skills or is an English language learner;
- Requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

Staff must explain the reason the customer meets this challenge and why they need the support in case notes. A customer may qualify with this challenge if they:

- Are a dependent member of a single parent family
- Failed all or part of TAKS/STAAR test
- Lacks significant work history (worked less than three (3) of the last 24 months)
- It has been determined by a public or private agency that the customer needs help to complete education or get a job (Workforce Solutions can be the determining agency and staff must document the determination in case notes.)

- Economic Eligibility: Refer to the [economic eligibility](#) section for WIOA In-school Youth.

**Note:** An out-of-school youth can qualify as low-income under free or reduced-price lunch if they are a parent living in the same household as a child who receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch.

## 4.0 Priority of Service

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires the use of a priority list to award financial aid:

<b>WIOA Priority of Service</b>		
<b>Adult, Dislocated Worker &amp; Youth</b>		
<b>First</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recipients of public assistance,</li> <li>• Other low-income individuals; or</li> <li>• Individuals who are basic skills deficient</li> </ul>	The order of priority of service is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses</li> <li>2. Foster youth and former foster youth</li> <li>3. All other individuals in this group</li> </ol>
<b>Second</b>	Individuals at or below the self-sufficiency income levels	The order of priority of service is: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Eligible veterans and eligible spouses</li> <li>2. Foster youth and former foster youth</li> </ol> All other individuals in this group

Workforce Solutions staff **must** document any priority criteria the customer meets in case notes when providing financial aid.

Workforce Solutions also uses priority of service when funds are limited. As funds become available, financial aid is offered to customers using their priority criteria and the date of their request.

See [WS 18-09 Managing Financial Aid – Financial Aid Priority Criteria](#) for more information.

## **5.0 Financial Assistance**

*Workforce Solutions provides financial assistance to customers needing intensive or ongoing service to achieve their employment goals. Assistance may cover work support, work search support, and/or education and training.*

*Customers must complete an assessment, which may include a diagnostic test to gauge current educational functioning levels and an in-depth interview and evaluation to identify career goals and challenges to employment. Career Advisors must develop an individualized employment plan/individual service strategy (IEP/ISS) with the customer and explore community resources to meet their immediate needs. Career Advisors must guide the customer in completing the Intake Form and help them gather and submit necessary documents. To qualify for assistance, customers must meet eligibility for at least one of Workforce Solutions' [fund sources](#).*

### **Assessment**

Career Advisors must conduct an initial assessment for all customers seeking financial assistance to understand their background, experience, education, and goals. This includes:

- Work history, career interests, and educational level
- Financial goals for self-sufficiency
- Potential challenges to employment or training completion
- Need for support services, such as child care assistance and transportation
- Referrals to assessments and tests related to their career interests
- Discussion of labor market information
- Summary of financial assistance needs
- Determination of suitability for Workforce Solutions financial aid
- Explanation of services and how they will benefit the customer

*For education and training, Career Advisors must complete the training justification information in the case management system and may utilize the [Touchpoint Management](#) tool to assess suitability. In addition to the information listed above, the assessment for education and training must include:*

- The customer's comprehension of the chosen occupation's requirements such as working conditions, hours, wages, physical demand, etc.
- Readiness and capability to undertake and complete training
- Ability to fulfill scholastic obligations during the training
- Ability to manage financial responsibilities outlined in the Monthly Expenses Worksheet during the training period
- Ability to overcome potential challenges
- Ability to address employment prerequisites such as criminal background checks
- A clear explanation describing how training will help the customer achieve their career goal.

*In some instances, a customer may already have a training program identified. Career Advisors must explore and share with the customer all eligible training providers related to*

*their chosen occupation and industry using the ETPL, and help the customer identify the best program to meet their employment goals.*

*When assisting customers in full-time (at least 32 hours per week), permanent positions who need support for work, staff should first partner with them to tap into existing community resources. If the resources are insufficient and the customer agrees to create a detailed IEP/ISS, the plan should outline their career objectives, specific action steps, and timelines for maintaining or improving their employment situation. Potential strategies might include career exploration, upskills training, or intensive job search assistance. Staff must document in the customer's case notes the reasons for financial assistance, including the barriers faced, resources attempted, and the structured plan for employment advancement.*

Additionally, staff must ensure the initial assessment includes the following:

- Verification of employment through:
  - A check stub
  - A company letterhead confirming employment or scheduled start date
  - An offer letter from the employer (physical or electronic), or
  - Documentation in case notes of a phone conversation with the employer validating the customer's employment or start date.
  - Customer's employment details:
    - Employer name, address, and phone number,
    - Contact information for the employer (not required if other documentation is provided)
    - Employment status or pending hire date
    - Job title, and
    - Wage details
- Specification of the assistance type and amount, along with a justification for the associated costs.

When assisting job-seeking customers, staff must help determine effective job search strategies and create a tailored job readiness plan, which may include workshops and seminars. Staff must document how Workforce Solutions will support customers in finding employment or preparing for education and training opportunities.

After completing the initial assessment, Career Advisors must help the customer gather supporting documents needed for an eligibility determination, document the assessment in case notes including a list of documents received, and direct the customer to complete the Financial Aid Intake Form. *Career Advisors must inform the customer that their eligibility determination may take up to two weeks from the date all documents are received.*

### **Individual Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategy**

*Before training and support services can be approved, a determination of need must be made using an IEP/ISS for each customer.*

Career Advisors must collaborate with the customer to establish goals and objectives needed to help the customer achieve their career goal, tailor the necessary actions to the customer's needs, and include timelines and support services.

Refer to [WS 23-02 Individual Employment Plans](#) for guidelines on the development of the IEP/ISS.

## Verify and Document Eligibility

Career Advisors must:

- ***Create or update the customer's registration and enrollment in the case management system including Wagner-Peyser and the appropriate program application,***
- ***Complete all applicable fields with the customer's current information (if a customer refuses to answer a question, staff must document this in case notes)***
- Document the initial assessment in case notes,
- Complete the individualized IEP/ISS plan in WIT, and
- Enter the appropriate service in the case management system.

Eligibility Specialists must:

- Review the initial assessment case note before accepting the Financial Aid Intake Form ***(if the customer does not have an initial assessment documented, staff should route the request to the nearest career office based on the customer's zip code),***
- Review the customer's Intake Form for potential eligibility of all fund sources,
- Review the supporting documents to verify they're valid and prove eligibility for one or more of Workforce Solutions' fund sources,
- Complete and sign the [I-9 Checklist](#), and
- Calculate the customer's income if the customer does not meet another economic eligibility criteria.

If the customer is eligible:

- ***Complete the program application in the case management system,***
- Verify the customer's information is accurate and complete,
- ***Enter the training program deposit amount in the ITA/Financial Assistance tab when the training is approved (the deposit amount is an estimate of the total cost of training from the provider's costs listed on the ETPL),***
- ***Enter training withdrawals (expenditures) in the ITA/Financial Assistance tab for the month the service was performed,***
- Document the following in case notes:
  - List of documents used to determine eligibility;
  - Family size determination and corresponding income limit per the guidelines, if applicable;
  - All eligible fund sources and the criteria/qualifications the customer meets;
  - Explanation of economic eligibility or income documentation and calculations, if applicable;
  - Verification of or update to WIOA priority criteria; and
  - Method of customer notification of eligibility or denial;
- Notify the customer and career office of the eligibility determination, and

- Create the customer's training or support account in FAMS, **or**

If the customer is not eligible:

- Document the denial in case notes, and
- Send the customer a denial letter with information regarding their right to appeal.

### **Ongoing Assessment and Case Management**

After a customer is determined eligible for assistance, Career Advisors must recap the information discussed in the initial assessment and:

- Reinforce program requirements;
- Discuss any changes in the customer's goals;
- Identify support services needed to facilitate progress;
- Address any emerging challenges hindering program or activity completion;
- Devise a plan to help the customer overcome obstacles;
- Update the IEP/ISS in WIT, if necessary;
- Enter the appropriate service in the case management, and
- Enter the appropriate O\*NET code(s) when enrolling participants in training-related services.

Career Advisors must maintain **regular** monthly contact with customers receiving financial aid. ***Monthly contact must be direct, two-way contact between the Career Advisor and the customer in-person, or via videoconferencing, email, text, phone call. If staff are unable to reach the customer on the first attempt, two additional attempts must be made within thirty (30) days using varied methods. Staff must document the attempts and methods in case notes. Contact with the training provider or employer, including the Attendance and Progress report, does not satisfy the monthly contact requirements.***

***During the monthly contact***, Career Advisors should:

- Evaluate the customer's progress and offer guidance for completion,
- Review and update the IEP/ISS as needed,
- Make sure services are delivered and entered into the case management system timely, and
- Utilize the Workforce Solutions [Service Matrix](#) desk aid to determine the appropriate service code.

If the customer is not progressing satisfactorily, Career Advisors should provide resources and guidance such as tutorials or community resources.

For education and training, Career Advisors must track training benchmarks by:

- Obtaining a copy of the customer's grades, transcripts, or other documentation from the training provider showing the customer's progress at the end of each term or semester, and/or before a new voucher is requested;
- Documenting the customer is making satisfactory progress at the midpoint using the MSG form;
- Store a copy of the customer's grades in the document management system; and

- Including the training benchmarks in the *IEP/ISS*.

At the training benchmark, if the customer has not made satisfactory progress or maintained a 2.0 grade point average **and** has not provided a reasonable explanation for their lack of progress or plan to be successful, staff must advise the customer they may not be eligible for continued financial aid.

If the Career Advisor determines the customer will not successfully complete the training program, they must notify the customer that financial assistance will end and send a request through FACS to the Eligibility Specialists to have a denial letter sent to the customer.

If the customer fails to maintain contact with us or no longer needs our service, staff must document the attempts or conversation with the customer in case notes, close any open service including the customer's goals and objectives in their IEP/ISS *attached to the program the customer is no longer participating in*, their support and/or training account, and *the program application in the case management system*.

## Services and Activities

### A. Education & Training

Workforce Solutions utilizes various fund sources to cover the cost of education and training including, SNAP E&T, TANF/Choices, NCP Choices, TAA, WIOA, and special projects and initiatives such as the National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG). Scholarships are available for basic skills, career training, and career advancement training.

Education and training services are offered to customers who:

- Require education or training for employment leading to self-sufficiency or comparable wages
- Possess the necessary skills for successful completion;
- Choose a training program aligned with:
  - Occupations on the [High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations](#) list, or targeted occupations on the list for another workforce area to which a customer is willing to commute or relocate ([Eligible Training Providers List](#) or ETPL);
  - Pathway occupations and credentials determined by Board staff through a special project or contract; or
  - Occupations that have been determined on a case-by-case basis to have a high potential for sustained demand and growth in the workforce area, based on sufficient and verifiable documentation, in accordance with the procedures used to establish targeted occupations; and
- Are unable to obtain grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of training, and related support services such as dependent care, transportation, and other support services, including state grants and funds, TAA, and federal Pell Grants; or require WIOA assistance in addition to other sources of grant assistance.

**Notes:** Customers may enroll in WIOA-funded training while their application for a Pell Grant is pending.



US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) benefits for education and training services are not the same as “other grant assistance” under WIOA’s eligibility requirements. Eligibility for VA benefits does not prevent a veteran or the veteran’s eligible spouse from receiving WIOA-funded services, including training funds. Similarly, WIOA does not require veterans or spouses to exhaust their entitlement to VA-funded training benefits before allowing them to enroll in WIOA-funded training.

Workforce Solutions financial aid for education and training include tuition, fees, books, supplies, and other related educational expenses as described in the [Financial Aid Limits by Type of Assistance](#) chart. We fund transportation expenses and child care expenses for customers who are going to school in addition to education and training costs.

- We do not guarantee a customer continued funding through their expected course of training.
- We evaluate continued funding at the beginning of each term or semester of training. See [Ongoing Assessment and Case Management](#).
- To continue funding a scholarship and related transportation and child care expenses, we must have funds available, and the customer must adhere to the requirements in their signed award letter to:
  1. Report to us as required;
  2. Maintain grades and progress in training; and
  3. Limit changes in courses of training.

**Note:** WIOA funds cannot be used to pay for:

- Any portion or term of training for which the customer has signed a loan as part of financial aid; or
- Costs that were paid by the customer (or another source) before WIOA enrollment.

1. **Basic Skills** are training programs that equip customers with the ability and understanding necessary to enter the workforce and be an active participant in work across a variety of occupations. Examples include:
  - Computer skills training - programs that teach people non-job specific computer skills from introductory courses on how to use a computer to specific software products as the Microsoft Office Suite;
  - Adult basic education - programs that teach people basic literacy, remedial education, High School Equivalency (HSE) preparation or teach them how to speak, read or write English;
  - Job readiness - training focused on soft skills or non-technical skills that help individuals learn how to interact and function in different work environments. Courses may include an overview of the skills and behaviors necessary to be successful in any job or information about working in a specific industry but cannot teach occupation-specific skills (how to do a job). For example, a job readiness skills course might provide customers with an overview of the construction industry and teach them basic safety training and terminology used in a variety of construction jobs. Courses may include instruction in problem-solving and other cognitive skills, oral communication skills, personal qualities and work ethics, and interpersonal and teamwork skills.

Workforce Solutions provides a maximum of \$3,000 within the program year, October 1<sup>st</sup> -September 30<sup>th</sup>, for basic skills education/training.

Career Advisors should refer customers to:

- Free, local, and/or online computer literacy and skills resources; and/or
- Training available through the adult education and literacy consortium **before referring to the list of approved programs for scholarships.**

2. **Career Training** programs provide customers with occupation-specific knowledge and skills, help customers develop new skills, and may lead to entry-level positions. Programs vary from traditional instructor-led classes to asynchronous e-learning courses, and must award a competency-based credential, such as a certificate or degree.

Workforce Solutions provides support for career training programs that prepare customers for employment in high-skill, high-growth occupations in the Gulf Coast region. Staff use the [High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations](#) list as a resource to help customers interested in pursuing education or training or need help choosing a career path for demand occupations. It is also a resource for labor market information such as employment growth, available openings, typical education, work experience, and wage data for the occupations.

Workforce Solutions provides a maximum of \$6,000 within the program year, October 1<sup>st</sup> - September 30<sup>th</sup>, for career training.

3. **Career Advancement** training consists of short-duration workshops, seminars, or courses to help customers achieve industry-recognized certifications, gain additional skills, and/or enhance existing skills or knowledge to advance within an occupation. Career advancement may include testing/assessment to demonstrate competency and training to allow an individual to transition existing skills from one occupation or industry to another.

Workforce Solutions provides support for career advancement training programs that build on existing skills and experience for occupations on the [High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations](#) list. Examples of career advancement training include, but are not limited to SAP, additional welding training such as MIG, TIG, Fluxcore, and Network + training.

Workforce Solutions provides a maximum of \$6,000 within the program year, October 1<sup>st</sup> - September 30<sup>th</sup>, for career advancement training.

Office management may approve training programs that exceed the limits on a case-by-case basis. Staff must justify the need of the requested training, clearly explain how it will help the customer reach their employment goal and explain why the customer is unable to obtain additional funding through other resources and/or afford to pay the cost in case notes. Managers **must** enter a case note approving the additional funds and include an explanation of the process by which the decision was made.

#### 4. **Out-of-Region Training Vendors or Programs**

In extraordinary circumstances, a customer may request to attend a training from an out-of-region vendor including, but not limited to, ease of access, timeliness or length of the training program, the specific credential awarded upon completion.

If a customer requests to attend a training from an out-of-region vendor, career office staff must:

- i. Confirm the occupation is on the [High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations](#) list, or on the targeted occupations list for another workforce area to which a customer is willing to commute or relocate ([ETPL](#));
- ii. Determine whether we have an approved vendor in the Gulf Coast region offering the requested training program, and if so, refer the customer to that vendor.
- iii. If the customer still requests training with the out-of-region vendor, career office staff must document the conversation including justification for the customer to attend the training in case notes; and
- iv. Send a request to FAPO through FACS using the *FAMS: Create Vendor* issue type. FAPO will contact the out-of-region vendor to complete the process.

**Note:** We are not currently providing support to vendors outside of Texas.

#### **B. Work Experience**

Work experience may be paid or unpaid internships, transitional jobs, or structured learning experiences that occur in a workplace for a limited period of time and may lead to full-time employment. Work experience may be arranged within the private for-profit sector, the nonprofit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience setting where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA), exists.

Work experience:

- Helps customers who have barriers to employment because of chronic unemployment or inconsistent work history;
- Is intended to help customers transition to unsubsidized employment by the time their work experience ends; and
- Helps customers gain necessary work experience and demonstrate work success that they would otherwise not be able to attain.

Customers in paid work experience, also known as work-based learning (WBL), can work up to 240 hours, not to exceed 16 weeks, and earn up to \$15.00 an hour.

***Career Advisors must determine suitability and work with the customer to develop an IEP/ISS before enrolling a customer in a work experience assignment.*** Career Advisors must maintain monthly contact to document the customer's progress and work with them to determine their next step, such as finding permanent employment, before the completion of their work experience assignment. Career Advisors may provide other resources and information:

- Customized labor market information,

- Career guidance and exploration,
- Education and training opportunities to gain new skills, or
- Career advancement opportunities to upskill or change careers.

### **C. On-the-Job Training (OJT)**

On-the-job training (OJT) is a training option that provides employers the opportunity to train new employees on the specific knowledge and skills essential to the full and adequate performance of a specific job. OJT opportunities are formed through a contractual agreement between the employer and Workforce Solutions and may last up to 400 hours, depending on the occupation and training provided by the employer. Workforce Solutions provides the employer with a partial wage reimbursement for approved customers. Customers begin their OJT as full-time employees of the company and have the opportunity for long-term employment (directly hired by the company) upon completion of the OJT program.

OJT employers are approved through Talent Development in the Employer Engagement Division. Refer to the [Talent Development Standards and Guidelines](#) for additional procedures on providing service and participation requirements.

### **D. Apprenticeships**

- I. Pre-apprenticeships are designed to prepare individuals for entry into Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAP) or other job opportunities. They may last a few weeks to a few months and may or may not include wages or stipends. Pre-apprenticeship programs may be provided by employers or a private or public training institution.

Pre-apprenticeship training programs are approved through Talent Development in the Employer Engagement Division and screened by the FAPO, if the training program is listed on the ETPL.

Workforce Solutions pays for the cost of training for an approved customer if the training program is listed on the HSHG occupations list or leads directly into a Registered Apprenticeship Program. Refer to the [Talent Development Standards and Guidelines](#) for additional procedures on providing service and participation requirements.

- II. Registered Apprenticeships are programs that train individuals for jobs through an apprentice system at a specific employer or union. Registered apprenticeships have structured and federally approved curricula with required on-the-job training and classroom education components leading to skills milestones.

Registered Apprenticeship programs must be registered on the ETPL and be an approved vendor for the Gulf Coast region. FAPO provides assistance to providers to complete the intake process.

Refer to the [Talent Development Standards and Guidelines](#) for additional procedures on providing service and participation requirements.

### **E. Special Projects**

Workforce Solutions often partners with other organizations to provide service to specialized populations. Our partnerships may fill specific gaps in our vendor network or expand our service in the community. Special projects may be related to education and training offerings, provide specific needs related to a particular industry, occupation, geographic location, disaster, or project to support customers entering the workforce, going back to work, continuing to work, or advancing in a career.

Special Projects have various start and end times, scopes of service, and may last for one or more years, depending on the contract. Information about special projects can be found on [www.wrksolutions.com](http://www.wrksolutions.com) or the [Workforce Solutions Hub](#).

## 6.0 Providing Support Service

*Support services are provided for expenses that are reasonable and necessary to assist a customer in achieving the goal and objectives outlined in their IEP in WIT. Support services can cover work, work search, and education expenses related to helping the customer obtain suitable employment. For customers seeking work support, they must have a full-time (at least 32 hours per week), permanent position and agree to maintain a relationship with us.*

We limit assistance to a 12-month period beginning October 1<sup>st</sup> and ending September 30<sup>th</sup> the following year. Staff should refer to the [Financial Aid Limits by Type of Assistance Desk Aid](#) for a description of items and corresponding limits.

Career office management or designated staff may approve an exception to the financial aid limits by documenting in case notes a clear explanation of the customer's need and/or extraordinary circumstances, and justification for their decision to provide financial aid above the established limits.

Career Advisors must collaborate with the customer to determine the specific item(s) to be purchased and arrange the method of purchasing the item(s). Except for bus passes, customers are required to submit receipts or invoices for **all** purchases. Staff must store the receipt or invoice in the document management system using the customer's WIT ID number, and record the financial aid provided under the program ribbon in the case management system.

Career Advisors must advise the customer:

- Funds must be used for the intended purpose,
- **A receipt showing proof of the items purchased must be submitted within five (5) business days,** and
- If it is discovered the funds were not used for the intended purpose or if the customer fails to submit receipts within five business days, the customer may have to repay the funds provided and risk losing additional support services from Workforce Solutions.

If the customer does not submit receipts as requested, staff must follow the procedures outlined in the [Cash Card Integrity Review Desk Aid](#).

### **Types of Support Services**

#### **A. Clothing and Tools**

Workforce Solutions may provide customers with clothing and/or tools, including, but not limited to work uniforms, boots, hard hats, or other items required to work, accept a job, or attend a training program. We offer the following purchase options:

- **Order Online**

Staff works with the customer to select the items they need from an online marketplace. The items ordered can be picked up at a local retail location, locker, or delivered to the customer's address of choice. Career Advisors must follow the steps to purchase items through Amazon (see [Amazon Purchasing](#) desk aid).

- **Provide a Voucher or Check**

Staff may provide a customer with a voucher or check to purchase agreed upon items from vendors approved through FAPO. To obtain a voucher or check, staff must record the request in the FAMS. FAPO may send the voucher electronically or mail the voucher/check to the career office.

- **Reimburse the Customer**

Customers may be reimbursed for the purchase of items previously agreed upon in the assessment by presenting a receipt for the purchase. During the assessment, staff will discuss with the customer the item(s) for which the customer will receive reimbursement, the agreed upon total amount of financial aid to be provided, how the receipts will be submitted, and the deadline for receiving the receipts (within five business days). Funds for reimbursement can be provided by check or loaded on a cash card. Staff must record and send the request to FAPO through the FAMS. Checks are sent to career offices once per week.

Customers will forfeit their reimbursement if they have not submitted their receipt in the time requested. Staff must notify customers via email of their reimbursement forfeit.

- **Load Funds onto Cash Card**

If none of the above options are feasible to meet the needs of the customer, staff may load the funds on a cash card to purchase agreed upon items. During the assessment, staff will discuss with the customer the items for which the customer will receive funds, the agreed upon total amount of financial aid to be provided, how the receipts will be submitted, and the deadline for receiving the receipt (within five business days). Staff must record and send the request to FAPO through the FAMS. Program Tracking Specialists load the funds onto the cash card.

Note: Funds will be removed from cash cards after 45 days of inactivity.

## **B. Transportation**

### **Personal Expenses**

Workforce Solutions staff may provide personal transportation assistance to help a customer start work or accept a job, continue working, participate in SNAP E&T or TANF/Choices, and attend a training program in the form of:

- **Bus Passes**

Each career office location with access to a bus line in their area maintains an inventory of bus passes for customers who use public transportation. The customer may be provided a bus pass (or multiple bus passes depending on their travel days and routes) to help pay for the cost of their trip to start work or continue working. Staff must document the calculation used to determine the amount of bus passes provided to the customer in case notes.

- **Reloadable Cards**

Career office staff can issue a reloadable card for customers using their personal vehicles or customers who have an arrangement with someone else such as a relative or friend, to

use their vehicle for work. The amount of assistance staff provides is based on the expected daily round-trip mileage to and from the customer's job, calculated using an online map service such as MapQuest, Google Maps, etc. multiplied by 30 cents per mile.

- **Mobility service provider, i.e., Uber, Lyft, taxi, etc.**

If none of the above options are feasible to meet the needs of the customer, staff may, as a last resort, provide assistance to pay for the cost of transportation by a mobility service provider. Staff must use the vendor's website to project the total cost of the customer's expected travel and store a copy of the proof in the document management system. Staff must also document the projected amount in case notes.

### **Vehicular Expenses**

Workforce Solutions may provide financial aid to pay vehicular expenses such as:

- **Minor Car Repairs, Maintenance, Consumables and Safety Inspections**

Workforce Solutions may pay for minor mechanical repairs, maintenance, consumables, and safety inspections if the customer:

- Demonstrates clearly and conclusively they are unable to work, effectively search for work, or attend school without the repairs;
- Demonstrates they own the vehicle or has the approval of the vehicle owner for the proposed service (see [Vehicle Permission/Hold Harmless Form](#)); and
- Co-signs a statement with the vehicle's owner that they use the vehicle to get to work, school, or search for work, as identified in the customer's IEP/ISS.

Workforce Solutions has procured Firestone for vehicular repairs. When we approve paying for this service, Career Advisors:

- Assess the customer's need, documents the discussion in case notes and lists the car repairs/consumables in the customer's IEP/ISS
- Informs the customer of the financial aid limits and works with the customer to locate a Firestone repair shop within 50 miles of their residence, and
- ***Requests the cost of repairs via the financial aid management system.***

If there isn't a Firestone repair shop within 50 miles of the customer's home or if Firestone is unable to complete the repairs, the customer may submit two estimates from area automotive vendors.

Career office management must approve the repair work from one of the vendors after considering:

- cost effectiveness,
- proposed time to complete repairs, and
- ease of access for the customer; and
- document their decision in case notes.

- **Car Insurance and Registration**

Workforce Solutions may pay for liability car insurance and vehicle registrations if the customer:



- Demonstrates clearly and conclusively they are unable to work, effectively search for work, or attend school without car insurance and/or registration;
- Demonstrates they own the vehicle or has the approval of the vehicle owner for the proposed service (see Vehicle Permission/Hold Harmless); and
- Co-signs a statement with the vehicle's owner that they use the vehicle to get to work, school, or search for work, as identified in the customer's IEP/ISS.

We will pay the vendor directly for car insurance and registration or load funds onto a cash card.

- **Licenses**

Workforce Solutions may provide financial aid to pay expenses related to licenses including:

- Intake form or renewal fees
- Testing
- Certification
- Immigration document renewal fees
- Background checks
- TWIC – for customers to keep a job, accept a job offer, or get a better job

Staff may provide a customer a voucher or check to pay for the license from an approved vendor through FAPO, or load funds onto a cash card. Staff must record the request in the FAMS.

- **Documents**

Workforce Solutions may provide financial aid to pay expenses to obtain a document for work requirements such as:

- Birth Certificate
- School records
- Passport

Staff may provide a customer a voucher or check to pay for the document from an approved vendor through FAPO, or load funds onto a cash card. Staff must record the request in the FAMS.

## 7.0 Financial Aid Registry

### **Background**

The Financial Aid Payment Office (FAPO) manages the funds used to provide Workforce Solutions financial aid and notifies the system when funds are limited. Staff should review the [Fund Alert](#) when working with customers who request financial aid and help them create a plan based on the availability of funds.

When FAPO notifies the system that a fund source is closed to new financial aid requests, staff can place eligible customers on the Financial Aid Registry (Registry) in the document management system using the stamp labeled “Financial Aid Registry.” See Financial Aid Registry Desk Aid.

The Registry ensures we serve customers on a first-come, first-serve basis when funds become available. It is our policy to check a customer’s eligibility for **all** fund sources, including sources outside Workforce Solutions, before adding the customer’s financial aid request to the Registry.

Note: The Registry does not apply to Trade Act-funded scholarships.

### **Establishing the Registry**

Customers must apply and prove eligibility for a closed fund source before entry on the Registry.

When a fund source is closed, Workforce Solutions staff must:

1. Explain to customers who are not obviously eligible for other funds and want to apply for our financial aid that they must complete an Intake Form and provide proof of eligibility so we can notify them when funds are available.
2. Give all customers asking about financial aid the Customer Notice of Closed Funds Flyer.
3. Determine eligibility for all fund sources. If a customer is eligible for an open fund source, staff should provide service using those funds. For customers who are **only** eligible under the closed fund source, staff must place them on the Financial Aid Registry. See Financial Aid Registry Desk Aid. Staff will also send the customer the Financial Aid Added to Registry Letter.
4. Follow up with customers to assess their need for financial aid or other services and maintain monthly contact with customers who need our financial aid. Staff must enter services monthly in the case management system and document contact in case notes.
5. Remove any customer who does not respond to our outreach or no longer needs our financial aid. See Financial Aid Registry Desk Aid.
6. Send a denial letter if the customer is not eligible for any fund source.

**When Funds Become Available**

Workforce Solutions will contact customers on the Registry when funds become available. Customers must have maintained contact with us and expressed a need to receive Workforce Solutions financial aid.

Staff will review case notes and send customers the Financial Aid Registry Call-in Letter.

## 8.0 Appeals

Customers may file a complaint about the service they received at Workforce Solutions or appeal the decisions made by staff related to financial aid.

[WS 18-16 Complaint Processing Standards and Guidelines](#) establishes the procedures for processing complaints and appeals submitted to Workforce Solutions.

## Appendix A: Dislocated Worker Categories

Category	Description	Notes
1	<p>An individual who has been terminated or laid off, or has received notice of termination or layoff, and is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• eligible for or has exhausted entitlements to unemployment benefits; and</li> <li>• unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation.</li> </ul> <p>Unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation is determined through an evaluation of the labor market, which determines that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The industry or occupation shows either no growth or a decline in available job opportunities as documented by labor market statistics or the TWC-approved labor market analyses;</li> <li>• The individual has been looking for work—since termination, layoff, or receipt of notice of layoff—but has been unable to find employment in their previous industry or occupation due to economic conditions and/or skill limitations;</li> <li>• The individual received a Reemployment Services Eligibility Assessment (RESEA) letter requiring them to connect with the local Workforce Solutions career office; or</li> <li>• There are a lack of suitable job matches in WorkInTexas.com (WIT).</li> </ul> <p>Staff must provide a clear explanation for unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation in case notes.</p>	<p>Transitioning service members (TSM) or recently separated veterans qualify as Category 1 Dislocated Workers if they are discharged under conditions other than dishonorable, whether voluntarily or involuntarily.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A TSM is an individual in active-duty status (including separation of leave) who is within 24 months of retirement or 12 months of separation. (A TSM is still considered employed by the military and is therefore not a veteran.)</li> <li>• A recently separated veteran is any veteran who applies for participation under WIOA within 48 months after their discharge or release from active military, naval, air, or space service.</li> </ul> <p>Expedited Eligibility:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Customers certified under the Trade Act for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) or</li> <li>• Customers outreached for RESEA within the last ten (10) weeks.</li> </ul> <p>Customers who receive expedited eligibility only have to prove selective service registration, if applicable.</p>
2	<p>An individual who has been terminated or laid off, or has received notice of termination or layoff, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has been employed for a sufficient duration as to demonstrate workforce attachment, but is not eligible for unemployment benefits due to insufficient earnings; or</li> <li>• the employer is not covered under state unemployment law, and the individual is</li> </ul>	<p>Individuals who are laid off on a temporary basis, with a specific recall date, are not eligible to qualify as a WIOA dislocated worker.</p>

	unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation.	
3	An individual who has been terminated or laid off or has received notice of termination or layoff as a result of a permanent closure of or substantial layoff at a plant or facility enterprise.	
4	An individual who is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that the facility will close.	
5	An individual who was previously self-employed (including farmers, ranchers, and fishermen), but has become unemployed due to general economic conditions in their community of residence or due to natural disaster	
6	<p>Displaced homemaker—An individual who:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; or</li> <li>• is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and whose family income is significantly reduced due to a: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ deployment;</li> <li>➤ call or order to active duty;</li> <li>➤ permanent change of station; or</li> </ul> </li> <li>• service-connected death or disability of the member; and</li> <li>• is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.</li> </ul>	
7	The spouse of an active-duty Armed Forces member who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member.	
8	The spouse of an active-duty Armed Forces member who is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.	

## Appendix B: Definitions

- **Active duty:** Full-time duty in the active military service of the United States. Such term includes full-time training duty, annual training duty, and attendance, while in the active military service, at a school designated as a service school by law or by the Secretary of the military department concerned. Such term does not include full-time National Guard duty.
- **Adult:** An individual who is 18 years of age or older.
- **Attending a job training or educational program:** An individual is attending a job training or educational program if the individual:
  - Is considered by the program to be officially enrolled;
  - Meets all attendance requirements established by the program; and
  - Is making progress toward successful completion of the program as determined by the training/education provider.
- **Basic skills deficient:** An individual who has English reading or computing skills at or below 8<sup>th</sup> grade level on a generally accepted standardized test or a comparable score on a criterion-referenced test.
- **Behind grade level:** An individual with educational attainment that is one or more grade levels below the grade level appropriate to the age of the individual.
- **Corroborative witness:** An individual who personally knows or can identify the customer and who is reasonably likely to be able to verify the self-certification. Such verification may be accomplished by the witness signing the applicant statement form or by completion of a telephone/document inspection form.
- **Dislocated worker:** An individual who –
  - A. (i) has been terminated or laid off, or who has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment, including separation notice from active military service (under other than dishonorable conditions); and
  - (ii) is eligible for or has exhausted entitlement to unemployment compensation; or has been employed for a duration sufficient to demonstrate attachment to the workforce, but is not eligible for unemployment compensation due to insufficient earnings or having performed services for an employer that were not covered under a state unemployment compensation law; **and**
  - (iii) is unlikely to return to a previous industry or occupation;
  - B. (i) has been terminated or laid off, or has received a notice of termination or layoff, from employment as a result of any permanent closure of, or any substantial layoff at, a plant, facility, military installation, or enterprise; or
  - (ii) is employed at a facility at which the employer has made a general announcement that such facility will close within 180 days;

- C. was self-employed (including employment as a farmer, a rancher, or a fisherman) but is unemployed as a result of general economic conditions in the community in which the individual resides or because of natural disasters;
  - D. is a displaced homemaker; or
  - E. (i) is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined above), and who has experienced a loss of employment as a direct result of relocation to accommodate a permanent change in duty station of such member; or  
(ii) is the spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and who meets the criteria for a Displaced Homemaker.
- **Displaced homemaker:** An individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who—
    - A. has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; or
    - B. is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty (as defined above) and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, death, or disability of the member; and is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment.
  - **Documentation:** Physical evidence obtained during the verification process and maintained in customer records. Such evidence would be copies of documents, completed telephone verification/document inspection forms, signed self-certification forms, and the VEQ.
  - **Economic conditions:** Economic conditions that result in the dislocation of a self-employed individual may include:
    - Failure of one or more businesses to which the self-employed individual supplied a substantial portion of products or services
    - Failure of one or more businesses from which the self-employed individual obtained a substantial portion of products or services
    - Substantial layoffs from, or permanent closure(s) of, one or more plants or facilities that support a significant portion of the state or local economy
    - Depressed prices or markets for the articles or services produced or provided by the self-employed individual, and
    - Generally high levels – in excess of 4.5% - of employment in the local workforce development area
  - **Educational program:** A program that leads to one of the following:
    - High school diploma,
    - High school equivalency (HSE) or GED credential, or
    - Postsecondary degree from an institution of higher education.
  - **Eligible spouse:** An individual whose military active duty or veteran spouse was-
    - A. Any veteran who died of a service-connected disability;



- B. Any member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
    - (i) Missing in action;
    - (ii) Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force; or
    - (iii) Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power;
  - C. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs; or
  - D. Any veteran who died while a disability was in existence. A spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member (i.e., categories b. or c. above) would lose his or her eligibility if the veteran or service member were to lose the status that is the basis for the eligibility (e.g., if a veteran with a total service-connected disability were to receive a revised disability rating at a lower level). Similarly, for a spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member, that eligibility would be lost upon divorce from the veteran or service member.
- **Employed:** A individual who is currently:
    - A. working:
      - (i) as a paid employee;
      - (ii) in his or her own business, profession, or farm; or
      - (iii) worked 15 hours or more per week as an unpaid worker on a farm or in an enterprise operated by a member of the family; or
    - B. not working but has a job or business from which he or she is temporarily absent because of illness, bad weather, vacation, labor management dispute, or personal reasons, whether paid by the employer for time off, and whether seeking another job.
  - **English language learner:** An individual who has limited ability in speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language **and** meets at least one of the following two conditions:
    - A. his or her native language is a language other than English, or
    - B. he or she lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language.
  - **Ex-offender:** An individual who either:
    - A. has been subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for committing a status offense or delinquent act, or
    - B. requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or conviction for committing delinquent acts, such as crimes against persons, crimes against property, status offenses, or other crimes.
  - **Family:** Two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or decree of court, who are living in a single residence, and are included in one or more of the following categories:
    - A. A married couple and dependent children;

- B. A single individual, parent or guardian and dependent children; or
- C. A married couple.

Note: Family size is determined based on those individuals meeting the above definition at the time of completion of the intake form.

For purposes of (B), references to *guardian* refer to *legal guardian*.

- (i) In a situation in which a customer is claiming, for purpose of defining his or her family, to be in a common-law marriage, written attestation must be obtained from both parties affirming the fact. Texas family law requires individuals in an “informal” marriage (aka common-law marriage) to be at least 18 years of age.

- **Family income:**

When determining WIOA income eligibility, the following income sources are excluded from income:

- Needs-based scholarship assistance.
- Cash welfare payments (including TANF, SSI, RCA, GA, emergency assistance, and general relief).
- Onetime income received in lieu of TANF cash assistance.
- Income earned while a veteran was on active military duty and certain other veterans’ benefits, i.e., compensation for service-connected disability, compensation for service-connected death, vocational rehabilitation, and education assistance.
- Lump sum payments received as assets in the sale of a house, where the assets are to be reinvested in the purchase of a new home.
- Payments received as the result of an automobile accident insurance settlement that are being applied to the repair or replacement of an automobile.
- Foster care payments.
- Any withdrawal from an Individual Development Account (IDA) for the purchase of a home, medical expenses, or educational expenses.
- Onetime cash payment, including tax refunds; loans, which are debt and not income; onetime insurance payments; gifts; and lump sum inheritances.
- Noncash benefits such as employer-paid fringe benefits, food, or housing received in lieu of wages, Medicare, Medicaid, food stamps, school meals, and housing assistance.

Everything that is not listed as excluded from income above is included as income.

- **Foster child:** An individual who is currently in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system.
- **Homeless:** An individual who:
  - A. Lacks a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence; this includes an individual who:

- (i) is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason;
  - (ii) is living in a motel, hotel, trailer park, or campground due to a lack of alternative adequate accommodations;
  - (iii) is living in an emergency or transitional shelter;
  - (iv) is abandoned in a hospital; or
  - (v) is awaiting foster care placement;
- B. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings, such as a car, park, abandoned building, bus or train station, airport, or camping ground;
  - C. Is a migratory child who in the preceding 36 months was required to move from one school district to another due to changes in the parent's or parent's spouse's seasonal employment in agriculture, dairy, or fishing work; or
  - D. Is under 18 years of age and absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of his or her family (i.e., runaway youth).

This definition does not include an individual imprisoned or detained under an Act of Congress or State law. An individual who may be sleeping in a temporary accommodation while away from home should not, as a result of that alone, be recorded as homeless.

- **Individual with a disability:** An individual with a disability as defined in the Americans with Disabilities Act, is an individual who:
  - A. has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual;
  - B. has a record of such an impairment; or
  - C. is regarded as having such an impairment.
- **Job training program:** A program that provides training or instruction leading to one of the following:
  - Basic literacy,
  - English proficiency,
  - An occupational or professional certification or license, or
  - The acquisition of technical skills, knowledge, and abilities specific to an occupation.
- **Layoff:** A separation of an employee from an establishment that is initiated by the employer; an involuntary separation; a period of forced unemployment.
- **Low-income individual:** An individual who-
  - A. receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, the program of block grants to States for temporary assistance for needy families program under part A of title IV of the Social

- Security Act, or the supplemental security income program established under title XVI of the Social Security Act, or State or local income-based public assistance;
- B. is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of-
    - (i) the poverty line; or
    - (ii) 70 percent of the lower living standard income level;
  - C. is a homeless individual (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or a homeless child or youth (as defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
  - D. receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (Schoolwide free or reduced-price lunch does not meet this eligibility criteria);
  - E. is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made; or
  - F. is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirement of clause A, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.
- **Offender:** Any adult or juvenile who is, or who has been, subject to any stage of the criminal justice process for whom service under WIOA may be beneficial or who requires assistance in overcoming artificial barriers to employment resulting from a record of arrest or convictions.

Note: Includes misdemeanors.

- **Parent:** An individual who is responsible for the care and supervision of a child and is identified as the child's natural parent, adoptive parent, stepparent, legal guardian, or person standing in loco parentis (as determined in accordance with TWC policies and procedures). Unless otherwise indicated, the term applies to a single parent or both parents.
- **Permanent closure:** The term plant closing means the permanent or temporary shutdown of a *single site of employment* or one or more *facilities* or *operating units* within a single site of employment. An employment action that results in the effective cessation of production or the work performed by a unit, even if a few employees remain, is a closure.
- **Pregnant or parenting youth:** Individuals who are pregnant or parenting.
- **Public announcement:** An employer has publicly declared through the media the impending closure of a specific facility, including the planned date of final closure, and documented verification of such has been made to the state.
- **Public assistance:** Federal, state, or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test.

- **Runaway youth:** An individual under 18 years of age who absents himself or herself from home or place of legal residence without the permission of parents or legal guardian. This definition is from regulations issued pursuant to the Runaway and Homeless Youth Act.
- **School dropout:** An individual who is no longer attending any school and who has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
- **Self-certification:** An individual's signed attestation that the information he or she submits to demonstrate eligibility for a service is true and accurate.
- **Substantial/mass layoff:** Any reduction in force, including those who have received a notice of layoff, that is not the result of a plant closing and that results in an employment loss at a single site of employment during any 30-day period for:
  - A. At least 33% of the employees (excluding employees regularly working less than 20 hours per week)
  - B. At least 50 employees (excluding employees regularly working less than 20 hours per week)
  - C. At least 500 employees (excluding employees regularly working less than 30 hours per week)
- **Teen parent:** An individual 18 years of age or younger, or 19 years of age and attending high school or the equivalent, who has a child.
- **Unemployed:** An individual who is without a job and wants and is available for work. The determination of whether an individual is without a job is made in accordance with the following criteria, used by the DOL Bureau of Labor Statistics to define individuals as unemployed:

An individual who did not work during the seven consecutive days prior to intake form, who made specific efforts to find a job within the past four weeks prior to intake form, and who was available for work during the seven consecutive days prior to intake form. Also included as unemployed are those who did not work; and individuals:

- A. waiting to be called back to a job from which they have been laid off; or
  - B. waiting to report to a new wage or salary job scheduled to start within 30 days.
- **Verification:** Confirming eligibility requirements through examination of official documents, e.g., birth certificates, public assistance records, or speaking with official representatives of cognizant agencies.
  - **Working:** Working is defined as participation in:
    - A. Activities for which one receives monetary compensation such as a salary, wages, tips, and commissions or
    - B. Choices or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training activities

- **Work experience:** Planned, structured learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time.
  - A. Can be paid or unpaid
  - B. Arranged within the private, nonprofit, or public sector
  - C. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship exists, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA)

## Appendix C: List of Revisions

Note: The guide contains minor editorial changes that are not included on the List of Revisions. Some sections of the guide have been moved into other sections.

April 2024

SECTION	REVISION
Financial Aid Standards & Guidelines	Removed all mentions of “short-term” and “substantial” and changed to financial assistance
3.0 Fund Sources	Linked to Dislocated Worker categories chart in Appendix A  Added definition of transitioning service members (TSM)
5.0 Financial Assistance	Updated procedures for providing financial assistance to customers with regards to assessments, <i>individual employment plans (IEP/ISS)</i> , and community resources
Verify & Document Eligibility	Added the requirement to enter program costs and information onto the ITA/Financial Assistance tab
Ongoing Assessment & Case Management	Added the requirement to enter appropriate O*Net codes for the corresponding training program in the case management system
6.0 Providing Support Services	Updated procedures for providing support services  Added the requirement for full-time, permanent position for work support
7.0 Financial Aid Registry	Changed “Scholarship Registry” to “Financial Aid Registry”