



<b>WS 24-07 Priority of Service</b>
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<b>Effective Date: Immediately</b>
<b>Wagner-Peyser, WIOA, Adult Dislocated Worker, Youth</b>
<b>Expires: Continuing</b>

To: All Service Providers

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Subject: Priority of Service

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## Purpose

This policy provides guidance on applying priority of service for veterans, their spouses, and eligible foster youth in all new and existing qualified employment and training programs. The policy includes definitions, eligibility, identification, priority order, support services, and documentation requirements.

## Recissions

WS 18-09 Managing Financial Aid – Financial Aid Priority Criteria Change 3 released April 2, 2024.

## Background

Providing priority of service for veterans, their spouses, and eligible foster youth is crucial because it acknowledges their distinct challenges and ensures they receive the support they need. Veterans and their families have made tremendous sacrifices, and by prioritizing their access to jobs and training opportunities, we can help them transition more smoothly into civilian life and achieve long-term success. For eligible foster and former foster youth, this priority helps them overcome barriers and build a path to success.

## Policy

When working with a customer interested in financial aid, staff must be aware of the following guidelines:

### 1. Priority of Service Definitions

- **Eligible Veteran** - an individual who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service and who was discharged or released from service under conditions other than dishonorable.

- **Eligible spouse**

- A. Federal Qualified Spouse – spouse of:**

1. Any veteran who dies of a service-connected disability.
2. 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:
  - a. Missing in action
  - b. Captured in the line of duty by hostile force.
  - c. Forcibly detained or interned in line of duty by a foreign government or power.
3. Any veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the US Department of Veteran Affairs.
4. Any veteran who died while a disability indicated in (3) of this definition existed.

- B. State Qualified Spouse – a spouse:**

1. Who meets the definition of federal qualified spouse or,
2. of any member of the armed forces who died while serving in the active military, naval or air service.

- **Transitioning Service Member** – an individual on terminal leave with a DD214 (Certificate of Release or Discharge from Active Duty) with a discharge status other than dishonorable is considered a veteran and eligible for priority of service.

- **Eligible Foster youth** - A youth, age 14 or older, who is receiving substitute care services under the managing conservatorship of the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services (DFPS), including youth residing in private foster homes, group homes, residential treatment centers, juvenile correctional institutions, and relative care.

- **Former Foster youth** - A youth up to 23 years of age, who formerly was under the managing conservatorship of Department of Family Protective Services (DFPS), until:

- a court transferred the conservatorship;
- the youth was legally emancipated—the youth’s minority status was removed by a court; or
- the youth attained 18 years of age.

- **Children Experiencing Homelessness** – individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes:

- Children and youths who are sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; are living in motels, hotels, trailer parks, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or

transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.

- Children and youths who have 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.
  - Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations or similar settings; and
  - Migratory children (as defined in section 1309 of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965, as amended) who qualify as homeless because they are living in circumstances described in this definition above.
- **Children With Disabilities** – a child who has a physical or mental impairment that:
    - Substantially limits one or more major life activities,
    - Has a record of such impairment or is regarded as having such an impairment.

Major life activities include, but are not limited to, caring for oneself; performing manual tasks; walking, hearing, seeing, speaking, or breathing, learning; and working.

## 2. Signage

Priority of service signage must be displayed and visible in the resource room areas of the career office.

## 3. Establishing Priority

Workforce Solutions staff must identify individuals who meet the definition of the priority criteria above whether contact is via telephone, virtual or in-person. Once identified, Workforce Solutions staff must inform an eligible veteran, an eligible spouse, or an eligible foster youth of:

- Their entitlement to priority of service
- Availability of Workforce Solutions services including employment, training, and job search assistance
- Eligibility requirements for programs and services.

## 4. Priority Order

### A. Workforce Services/Support Services:

- Individuals identified as an eligible veteran, an eligible spouse, or an eligible foster youth/former foster youth must receive priority over all other equally qualified individuals in the receipt of workforce services.
- If funding for training and scholarships is limited, priority must be given first to eligible veterans, followed by eligible spouses, and then eligible foster youth or former foster youth, before other equally qualified individuals.

- Individuals currently receiving workforce services, not meeting the priority criteria above must not be displaced to provide services to an eligible veteran, an eligible spouse, or an eligible foster youth/former foster youth.
- In addition, these individuals must have access to necessary support services including transportation and support services to ensure they can fully participate in workforce services.

## **B. Child Care**

- Priority of service for child care services for an eligible veteran, an eligible spouse, or an eligible foster youth/former foster youth is dependent on the availability of Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) child care funds.
- If TWC child care funds are available, children of individuals below must be served in the following priority order:
  1. Protective services child care
  2. Qualified veteran or qualified spouse
  3. Eligible foster youth/Former Foster youth
  4. Experiencing Homelessness
  5. Military deployment
  6. Teen parents
  7. Children with disabilities
  8. Parents/Families who have siblings in families already receiving our financial aid for one or more children.
  9. Parents/Families who are students at, or employees of, a match partner using Initial income levels.
  10. Parents/Families participating in career, employment or education activities that require financial aid to successfully complete their service.
  11. Parents with children who are receiving child care services based on eligibility for time limited special projects.
- If there is a waiting list for TWC funded child care services, care for a child currently enrolled in child care services must not be discontinued to serve a child of a parent meeting a priority above.
- Customers participating with Workforce Solutions in the following programs are not subject to the child care waiting list:
  - Choices
  - Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Applicant (TANF)
  - Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (SNAP)

- At-Risk/Former Choices

## 5. Documentation Requirements

Individuals receiving priority of service as an eligible veteran, or an eligible spouse must certify they meet the definition. Self-attestation is acceptable for basic career services.

However, self-attestation is not required if the veteran presents a DD214, or the veteran's status has been verified during program participation in WIT. Once an individual has been identified as an eligible veteran or eligible spouse, recertification of eligibility is not required unless the individual indicates their status has changed, or it is required by program enrollment.

An individual may self-identify as an eligible veteran, an eligible spouse, or an eligible foster youth via WorkInTexas.com (WIT) or other sign-in method available at Workforce Solutions locations.

## Action

1. Workforce Solutions service providers must ensure all staff implement priority of service at all service delivery points. Where applicable, priority of service information must be available and easily accessible to the public.
2. Workforce Solutions service providers must display priority of service in the resource room areas of the career office.
3. Workforce Solutions service provider management must ensure that all staff are thoroughly trained and equipped with the essential knowledge to effectively apply priority of service for customers seeking assistance.
4. Workforce Solutions service provider senior management are responsible for actively monitoring and ensuring staff adhere to the procedures outlined in this issuance.

## References

1. [WD Letter 01-21, Change 1, issued March 18, 2024, titled Applying Priority of Service, and Identifying and Documenting Veterans and Transitioning Service Members – Update](#)
2. [WD Letter 43-11, Change 2, issued February 19, 2020, titled Priority of Service for Eligible Foster Youth](#)
3. [WS 23-05 Financial Aid Standards and Guidelines, Change 1 released April 1, 2024](#)

## Attachments

- [WFS Priority Service Stand Up Poster 1](#)
- [WFS Priority Service Stand Up Poster 2](#)
- [WFS Priority Service Resource Room Monitor and Digital Screen Saver 1](#)
- [WFS Priority Service Resource Room Monitor and Digital Screen Saver 2](#)

- [WFS Priority Service for Social Media 1](#)
- [WFS Priority Service for Social Media 2](#)

## **Questions**

Staff should first ask questions of their managers or supervisors. Direct questions for Board staff to [Workforcepolicy@wrksolutions.net](mailto:Workforcepolicy@wrksolutions.net).