



<b>WS 16-07</b>
<b>September 30, 2016</b>
<b>Financial Aid</b>
Expires: <b>Continuing</b>

To: Career Offices  
Payment Office  
Call Center

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SUBJECT: Changes for Financial Aid Process and Procedures

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## Purpose

Provide direction for several key changes in financial aid process and procedures

## Background

Amendments in 2014 to the federal Child Care and Development Block Grant—which powers Workforce Solutions’ financial aid to families for child care—have resulted in changes to the Texas rules effecting our processes and procedures.

In addition to the information contained in this issuance, we will be providing the following:

- Revised parent agreement form and parent handbook
- Revised language for the web pages concerning applying for financial aid, especially for child care
- Revised income guidelines effective October 1, 2016
- Revised financial aid application

## Changes

Following are several key changes to Workforce Solutions financial aid process and procedures. As noted above, we are providing revised forms, letters, and information noting other changes under separate cover.

### A. Parent Information Notification and Reporting Requirements:

Contractors and staff must notify parents that they are *only* required to report the following information on changes to a family's situation:

1. Changes in family income or family size that would cause the family to exceed 85 percent of SMI for a family of the same size;
2. Permanent changes in work or attendance at a job training or educational program; and
3. Any change in family residence, primary phone number, or e-mail (if available).

Contractors and staff must ensure that parents are informed that:

1. A change must be reported within 14 calendar days of its occurrence; and
2. Failure to report changes may result in a determination of fraud and the requirement that a customer repay costs.

Contractors and staff must notify parents that they *may* also report changes in:

1. reductions in income or increases in family size; and
2. work, job training, or education program participation that may result in an increase in the level of child care services authorized.

### **We will use the revised Parent Agreement to notify parents.**

### B. Absences for Currently Enrolled Children

Workforce Solutions will not terminate financial aid for child care if a child exceeds our previously established absence policies.

Beginning October 1, 2016, a child may accrue up to 65 absences (excused, unexcused or failure to swipe) during the parent's 12-month eligibility period. We will provide additional direction in the near future on the process for working with parents of children with excessive absences.

- C. Failure to Pay the Parent Share of Cost for Currently Enrolled Children  
Workforce Solutions will not terminate financial aid for child care if a parent does not pay the parent share of cost.
- D. At-Risk and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (Applicant, Transitional) customers receiving financial aid prior to October 1, 2016.

This guidance is effective prior to the customer's next scheduled eligibility redetermination:

1. End financial aid for child care for changes in family income or family size that cause the family to exceed 85 percent of the state median income (SMI).
2. Continue financial aid during temporary changes in the status of the parent as working or attending a job training or education program.
3. Continue financial aid up to the end of the customer's scheduled redetermination period for the family if a child turns 13 years old (19 for a child with disabilities).
4. Continue financial aid for three months for a non-temporary cessation of activities, up to the end of the customer's scheduled redetermination period.
  - a. End financial aid if no required activity has resumed by the end of the three-month period or the end of the customer's scheduled redetermination period, whichever comes first.
5. Provide a suspension only if the customer requests a suspension.
6. If a parent reports a reduction in income or family size change that would decrease the share of cost, reduce the parent share of cost.
7. Upon the parent's report of a change in income or family size, the staff must ensure that the new income calculation guidelines are used to determine if the family exceeds 85 percent of SMI or if a reduction in the parent share of cost is warranted.

- E. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (Choices) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (Employment & Training) customers receiving financial aid prior to October 1, 2016.

This guidance is effective **prior** to the customer's next scheduled eligibility redetermination for Choices and SNAP E&T financial aid:

1. Continue financial aid up to the end of the customer's scheduled redetermination period for the family if a child turns 13 years old (19 for a child with disabilities).

2. Continue financial aid for three months, or up to the end of the Board's scheduled redetermination period, whichever is earlier, if the parent stops participating in Choices or SNAP E&T services.
3. End financial aid if no required activity (Choices, SNAP E&T, or other work, job training, or education activity) has resumed by the end of the three-month period or the end of the family's scheduled redetermination period, whichever comes first.
4. Provide a suspension only if the customer requests a suspension.

This guidance is effective *at* the customer's next scheduled eligibility redetermination for Choices and SNAP E&T financial aid:

1. The 12-month eligibility period begins on the date the Choices or SNAP E&T customer is re-determined for participation.
2. Begin the 12-month eligibility period for Choices or SNAP E&T financial aid if the parent is participating in Choices/SNAP E&T at the scheduled redetermination.
3. Begin the 12-month eligibility period for Transitional or At-Risk financial aid if the parent is not participating in Choices or SNAP E&T but is determined eligible for Transitional or At- Risk.
4. End financial aid if the parent is not participating in Choices or SNAP E&T and is not eligible for Transitional or At-Risk.

F. Existing Texas Department of Family and Protective Services—Funded General Protective Cases

For DFPS- funded General Protective child care cases in care *prior* to October 1, 2016:

1. The 12-month eligibility period begins on the most recent date prior to October 1, 2016, that DFPS authorized child protective services financial aid.
2. Upon the termination of DFPS funding, financial aid must continue using Workforce Solutions funds for the remainder of the 12-month eligibility period.

## Action

1. Make sure staff are familiar with the procedures and guidance provided above.
2. Regularly review the Questions and Answers document related to this issuance that will be posted at [wrksolutions.com](http://wrksolutions.com).
3. Make sure staff knows how to help a customer use the Child Care Automated Attendance tracking system.

## Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the [Submit a Question](#) link.