



WS 18-09 Change 1
Effective: October 8, 2020
Financial Aid
Expires: Continuing

To: All Contractors

From: Mike Temple
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Subject: Managing Financial Aid – Financial Aid Priority Criteria

Purpose

Establish priorities that apply to certain financial aid funds.

This issuance updates and replaces issuance WS 18-09 revised July 27, 2018.

Background

Workforce Solutions uses multiple funds to provide financial aid for customers.

In addition to meeting basic eligibility and suitability requirements, Child Care and Development Block Grant dollars and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funds require the use of a priority list for awarding financial aid dollars.

Funds with Priority Criteria

Child Care and Development Block Grant (financial aid for early education/care)

1. The following customers can receive financial aid using Child Care and Development Block Grant funds at any time:
 - a. Applicants for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families cash payments;
 - b. TANF recipients who are participating with us in employment and training activities;
 - ~~c. TANF employment and training participants who are transitioning off cash payments and into unsubsidized work~~
 - c. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance (food stamp) recipients who are participating with us in employment and training activities

2. The following customers can receive financial aid using Child Care and Development Block Grant funds subject to the funds being available and, if there is a waiting list, in the following order:
 - a. Children in protective services;
 - b. Children of veterans⁴ or their spouses⁵;
 - c. Children of a foster youth^{6 & 7};
 - d. Children experiencing homelessness⁹;
 - e. Children of active duty military personnel who are unable to enroll their children in military-funded child care assistance programs;
 - f. Children of teen parents;
 - g. Children with disabilities¹⁰;
 - h. Siblings in families already receiving our financial aid for one or more children;
 - i. Families participating in Workforce Solutions career, employment or education activities that require the financial aid to successfully complete their service;
 - j. Families who have lost financial aid for a child exceeding 40 unexplained absence days and have reapplied for aid;
 - k. All other eligible families

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

1. For customers who are eligible as adults for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority goes
 - a. First, to individuals who are (i) recipients of public assistance¹, (ii) other low-income² individuals, or (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient³ in the following order of priority:
 - 1) Eligible veterans⁴ and eligible spouses⁵
 - 2) Foster youth⁶ and former foster youth⁷
 - 3) All other individuals who are (i) recipients of public assistance¹, (ii) other low-income² individuals, or (iii) individuals who are basic skills deficient³
 - b. Second, to individuals at or below the self-sufficiency⁸ income levels in the following order of priority:
 - 1) Eligible veterans⁴ and eligible spouses⁵
 - 2) Foster youth⁶ and former foster youth⁷
 - 3) All other individuals at or below the self-sufficiency⁸ income levels
2. For customers who are eligible as dislocated workers for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority goes
 - a. First to eligible veterans⁴ or eligible spouses⁵
 - b. Second to foster youth⁶ and former foster youth⁷

- c. Third to all other individuals eligible as dislocated workers
3. For customers who are eligible as youth for financial aid paid with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act dollars, priority goes
 - a. First to eligible veterans⁴ or eligible spouses⁵
 - b. Second to foster youth⁶ and former foster youth⁷
 - c. Third to all other individuals eligible as youth

Applying Priority Criteria

Child Care and Development Block Grant Funds

1. We fund assistance with child care expenses upon request for customers who meet participation requirements as TANF Applicants, TANF Choices, and SNAP E&T.
2. For all other customers, when there is a wait list, we fund assistance using the priorities described above.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

1. We fund assistance from the substantial assistance registry for eligible adults, dislocated workers or youth using the priority list.
2. We fund short-term assistance for any eligible adult or dislocated worker.

Action

Make sure staff are aware of this guidance regarding priority of service criteria for Workforce Solutions Financial Aid

Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the [Issuance Q&A](#).

Definitions

¹ Recipient of Public Assistance

An individual who is a recipient of ***income-tested or non-income-tested*** public assistance. This might include individuals with disabilities who are receiving some sort of public assistance based on their disability without regard to the individual's income.

² Low-Income

An individual who meets any *one* of the following criteria satisfies the low-income requirement for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity adult eligibility.

- Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through SNAP, TANF, or the Supplemental Security Income program, or state or local income-based public assistance;
- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current [Workforce Solutions Income Guidelines](#) for adults;
- Is a homeless individual or homeless child or youth, as defined in §41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or §725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act;
- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the National School Lunch Act (this only applies to the individual receiving the free or reduced-price lunch);
- Is a foster youth, as defined in Texas Family Code §264.101(a-1) and §264.101(d), on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made; or
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets:
 - [Workforce Solutions Income Guidelines](#) for adults, even if the individual's family income does not meet the income requirements; or
 - income eligibility criteria for payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program.

³ Basic Skills Deficient

An individual

A) who is a youth and the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or

(B) who is a youth or adult and the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

⁴ Eligible Veteran

A person who served in the active military, naval, or air service, and who was discharged or released therefrom under conditions other than dishonorable as specified at 38 U.S.C. 101(2). Active services include full-time duty in the National Guard or a Reserve component, other than full-time for training purposes.

5 Eligible Spouse

The spouse of:

- (A) any veteran who died of a service-connected disability or any member of the armed forces who died while serving on active military, naval, or air service.
- (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 line of duty by a hostile force; or
 - iii. forcibly detained or interned in 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 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs;
- (D) any veteran who died while a disability, as indicated in paragraph (3) of this section, was in existence.

Note: The spouse of a living veteran or service member (definitions B or C above) will lose his or her eligibility if the veteran or service member loses the status that is the basis for eligibility.

For example, the spouse of a veteran with a total service-connected disability will not be eligible if the veteran's disability is revised to a lower level. Similarly, a spouse whose eligibility is derived from a living veteran or service member will lose his or her eligibility upon divorce from the veteran or service member.

6 Current 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

7 Former Foster Youth

A youth up to 21 years of age, who formerly was under the managing conservatorship of DFPS, until:

- a court transferred the conservatorship;
- the youth was legally emancipated (i.e., the youth's minority status was removed by a court); or
- the youth attained 18 years of age.

8 Self-Sufficiency

Workforce Solutions defines self-sufficiency at 200% of the Federal Poverty Guidelines. ~~Self-sufficiency for a family of four is about \$48,500.~~ See [Financial Aid Income Guidelines](#) for self-sufficiency income levels based on family size.

⁹ Homeless Children

Homeless children and youths means individuals who lack a fixed, regular, and adequate nighttime residence. The term includes—

- (1) 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 the lack of alternative adequate accommodations; are living in emergency or transitional shelters; or are abandoned in hospitals.
- (2) 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.
- (3) Children and youths who are living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
- (4) 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.

¹⁰ Child with Disabilities

A child with disabilities is a child who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an 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.