



WS 11-24
September 29, 2011
Financial Aid
Expires: Continuing

To: All Contractors

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Subject: Managing Financial Aid/Limits

Purpose

Define the financial aid available from Workforce Solutions and set limits on the dollar limit available for each customer.

This replaces Issuance 11-14 Financial Aid Assistance under \$200.00

Background

Staff uses discretion in awarding financial aid to a particular customer depending on that customer's need. This allows us the flexibility to individualize our service. As demand for our financial aid dollars has increased, we have lowered the limits of our contribution to individual scholarships so we can continue to provide support for significant numbers of customers. We believe it is time to set boundaries on all financial aid.

Financial Aid Types & Categories

- ✓ Work Support. We provide financial assistance to help people go to work (if they have offers of employment) and keep a job (if they are working).
- ✓ Work Search Support. We provide financial assistance to help people look for work.
- ✓ Education Support/Scholarships. We provide financial assistance to help people attend and complete school in one of our scholarship-supported High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations; to attend and complete basic skills training courses; or to obtain upgrade training so they can get jobs or get better jobs.

We provide financial assistance in the following categories:

- Early education or child care expenses

- Transportation related expenses
- Housing/shelter expenses
- Health care or health related expenses
- Clothing
- Tools
- Licenses
- Documents
- Education related expenses

These categories of financial aid support an individual's work, work search, or education.

Eligibility

We have two broad groupings of financial aid: under \$200 and over \$200.

- To be eligible for financial aid under \$200—generally one-time or short-term assistance for a customer who needs immediate help in searching for work or going to work—the customer must be (1) eligible for the Workforce Investment Act or be tagged in TANF/Choices or SNAP E&T and (2) have a completed job search map or employment plan in TWIST
 - Workforce Investment Act eligibility determination for this category requires a completed Work Application Addendum and a copy of a valid driver's license or other state-issued picture ID.
 - Customers tagged in TWIST as TANF/Choices or SNAP E&T and who are cooperating are eligible for assistance under \$200.
- To be eligible for financial aid over \$200, customers must be eligible for the Workforce Investment Act; and/or be tagged in TANF/Choices or SNAP E&T, and/or be eligible for Child Care and Development Block Grant assistance.
 - To receive our financial aid for all needs *except* early education/child care expenses, a customer must have a completed employment plan in TWIST that shows how the customer will use the aid to reach her employment goal.
 - To receive financial aid over \$200, customers must have completed a Workforce Solutions Financial Aid Application and been determined eligible by career office staff.

How We Document Customer Eligibility and How Our Customers Use Financial Aid

		Under \$200		Over \$200	
		Documentation	Use of Funds	Documentation	Use of Funds
Eligibility	Workforce Investment	Work Application Addendum and valid driver's license/state ID	One-time or short-term limited assistance for transportation expenses, clothing, tools/equipment, licenses, documents, test fees	Financial Aid Application	Longer term assistance for child care, transportation, housing/lodging, clothing, tools/equipment, licenses, documents and education-related expenses
	TANF/Choices, and SNAP E&T	Tagged in TWIST and actively participating		Tagged in TWIST, actively participating, and Financial Aid Application	
	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Not Available	Not Applicable	Financial Aid Application	
Plan	Workforce Investment	Job Search Map in TWIST counselor note or TWIST Employment Plan and Assessment or Employment Plan service in TWIST	One-time or short-term limited assistance for transportation expenses, clothing, tools/equipment, licenses, documents, test fees	TWIST Employment Plan and Assessment or Employment Plan service in TWIST	Longer term assistance for child care, transportation, housing/lodging, clothing, tools/equipment, licenses, documents and education-related expenses
	TANF/Choices, and SNAP E&T				
	Child Care and Development Block Grant	Not Available	Not Applicable	Employment Plan optional at customer's request	

Limits

The following chart describes the limits for financial aid by category and type of assistance. Issuance 11-11 contains the specific limits for transportation-related expenses.

Financial Aid Limits by Category

Financial Aid Category	Financial aid over \$200				Financial Aid under \$200			
	Type of Financial Aid			Limits	Limits	Type of Financial Aid		
	Work Support	Work Search Support	Education Support			Work Support	Work Search Support	Education Support
Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked			All limits apply to a 12-month period of time	All limits apply to a 12-month period of time	Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked			
Child Care	X	X	X	<p>No individual customer limit</p> <p>The costs of these services are <u>not</u> included under the cap for a WFS scholarship. You may award child care financial aid in excess of the scholarship limit</p>	Not Applicable			
Transportation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Expenses – Gas, bus fare/passes, other • Vehicular Expenses – Car repair/maintenance, Consumables, Vehicle safety inspection, Car insurance, Vehicle registration 	X	X	X	<p>Personal expenses are limited to \$200/month with exceptions approved by an office manager for customers in school or working</p> <p>Customers engaged in work search may not receive more than \$20 a week in bus passes or cash substitutes.</p> <p>Vehicular expenses are limited to \$1,000 in a 12- month period</p> <p>Transportation costs are <u>not</u> included under the cap for a WFS scholarship. Customers with WFS scholarships may receive transportation assistance in addition to the scholarship.</p>	<p>Personal Transportation (travel) expenses are limited to \$20 for customers who are <u>not</u> required to work with us to maintain a benefit.</p> <p>Personal transportation expenses are included in a limit of \$200 total financial aid for co-operating TANF and SNAP E&T customers without a financial aid application</p>	X	X	

Financial Aid Limits by Category

Financial Aid Category	Financial aid over \$200			Financial Aid under \$200				
	Type of Financial Aid			Limits	Type of Financial Aid			
	Work Support	Work Search Support	Education Support		Work Support	Work Search Support	Education Support	
Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked			All limits apply to a 12-month period of time	All limits apply to a 12-month period of time			Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked	
Housing/Lodging <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emergency payments for eviction notices (mortgage/rent payments, utilities, telephone or cable) Short-term or temporary lodging or shelter 	X	X	X	\$1,000 limit in any 12-month period Short-term lodging as a part of a required curriculum may be included in a scholarship when it is required by the school for all students in a particular program. Workforce Solutions does not pay housing expenses for students.	Not Applicable			
Health Care or Health-Related <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Immunizations Physical Exams Vision/corrective lenses Prescription safety glasses Drug tests Tattoo removal 	X	X	X	\$250 limit in any 12-month period Education support is limited to students receiving a Workforce Solutions scholarship These costs are included as part of the scholarship when they are required by the school for all students in a like curriculum	Not Applicable			
Clothing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work clothes, uniforms for work or training Interview clothes Shoes, boots, safety boots 	X	X		\$200 limit in any 12-month period Education support is limited to students receiving a Workforce Solutions scholarship These costs are included as part of the scholarship when they are required by the school for all students in a like curriculum	Work and interview clothes costs are included in a limit of \$200 total financial aid without a financial aid application for a customer who needs the help to work or effectively look for work.	X	X	

Financial Aid Limits by Category

Financial Aid Category	Financial aid over \$200				Financial Aid under \$200			
	Type of Financial Aid			Limits	Limits	Type of Financial Aid		
	Work Support	Work Search Support	Education Support			Work Support	Work Search Support	Education Support
	Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked					Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked		
Tools and Equipment	X	X	X	<p>\$500 limit in any 12-month period</p> <p>Education support is limited to students receiving a Workforce Solutions Scholarship</p> <p>These costs are included as part of the scholarship when they are required by the school for all students in a like curriculum</p>	<p>All limits apply to a 12-month period of time</p> <p>Tools and Equipment costs are included in a limit of \$200 total financial aid without a financial aid application for a customer who needs the help to go to work or effectively look for work</p>	X	X	
Licenses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application or renewal fees • Testing • Certification • Immigration document renewal fees • Background checks • TWIC 	X	X	X	<p>Limited to a one time (12 month) reasonable payment for the particular expense</p> <p>Education support is limited to students receiving a Workforce Solutions scholarship</p> <p>These costs are included as part of the scholarship when they are required by the school for all students in a like curriculum</p>	<p>All limits apply to a 12-month period of time</p> <p>License costs are included in a limit of \$200 total financial aid without a financial aid application for a customer who needs the help to go to work or effectively look for work</p>	X	X	

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Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees to obtain documents for job search, education or work requirements • Birth Certificates • School records • Passports 	X	X	X	<p>All payments must be reasonable and needed by the customer to get a job or keep a job or stay in school</p> <p>Education support is limited to students receiving a Workforce Solutions scholarship</p> <p>These costs are included as part of the scholarship when they are required by the school for all students in a like curriculum</p>	X	X			

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	Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked			All limits apply to a 12-month period of time	Financial aid applies to customers in the categories marked			All limits apply to a 12-month period of time
Education <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition • Fees (including testing, parking, & other ordinary school fees) • Books • Internet connections • Supplies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Pens, paper, pads ○ Laptops, computers, iPads, iPads, printers, scanners, thumb drives, cables, software, computer upgrades ○ DVD/CD-RW ○ Calculators ○ Smart phones ○ Back packs, laptop bags, carry alls • Any of the other types of financial aid listed in this chart • Other expenses required by the school of all students in a like curriculum 			X	<p><u>The costs of these services are included in the total available for a Workforce Solutions scholarship</u></p> <p>\$3,000 for basic skills training \$6,000 for occupational skills training</p>				X

Tracking Limits by Category

Financial Aid Management System (FAMS) does not yet track financial aid by customer and category. FAMS currently tracks each customer's financial aid by the payment method (such as a Wal-Mart card, a Chase card, check, voucher, etc.) and a TWIST counselor note identifies the type and category of financial aid and justifies the need for it.

Because the rules in this issuance require us to immediately begin limiting customers' financial aid, we are putting in place establishing a manual process for tracking. We anticipate making adjustments to FAMS within 12 to 18 months that will automate the financial aid limits tracking.

- Remember that (1) each category of financial aid (excepting early education/child care expenses) has a limit per customer and (2) we only provide aid for the categories shown in this issuance.

Manual Tracking Process. Beginning on **10/03/11**, all career offices must check FAMS and TWIST before approving any financial aid for a customer. *This includes financial aid under \$200.*

1. If there is not a Tracking Financial Aid workbook attached to the customer's FAMS record and she or he has received any financial aid in the last 12 months, complete the entire workbook for every category and attach it to your customer's FAMS record.
 - Instructions for the Tracking Financial Aid workbook are in the workbook. Instructions for attaching a document in FAMS are included as an attachment to this issuance.
2. If there is a Tracking Financial Aid workbook attached, retrieve the workbook and determine:
 - a. If the customer has not received aid in the requested category – then enter the financial aid in that category and be sure to note the date the assistance in that category began.
 - b. If the customer has received aid in the requested category in the last 12 months but not exceeded the limit – then update the customer's financial aid in that category.
 - c. If the customer has received aid in the requested category and has reached the limit within the 12-month time frame – then explain to the customer that we cannot provide further financial aid in this category and help him or her find alternate funding.
 - d. Attach the revised document back to FAMS.
3. When the date that the customer first received financial aid in a particular category is more than 12 months ago, she begins a new 12-month period for that particular category. The customer now has the full amount of the limit for the particular category available if she needs it during the new 12-month period.

- a. Add a second page to the category worksheet and begin that page with the date that she receives financial aid. This establishes the beginning of the new 12-month period.

Action

- Make sure staff is aware of the limits for each type and amount of financial aid available to our customers.
- Make sure the spreadsheet, and instructions for attaching it in FAMS, are available to the appropriate staff including managers and supervisors of any staff expected to use the sheets.
- Assure that staff responsible for using the Tracking Financial Aid spreadsheet knows how and when to put information into the spreadsheet, understands the formulas, and is able to replicate the sheets when a customer's begins a new 12-month limits period.
- Make sure managers and supervisors regularly check the information staff enters to track these limits. Financial aid awarded to a customer in excess of a limit is a disallowed cost.
- Implement this Issuance on **10/03/11**

Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the Issuance Q&A at <http://wrksolutions.com/staff/policiesandprocedures.html>.

Attachments

1. Tracking Financial Aid Limits Workbook with instructions for attaching the Workbook to the customer record in FAMS
2. How to attach a document in FAMS