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| **WS 13-06 Revised** |
| **October 15 ,2013** |
| **Financial Aid** |
| **Expires: Continuing** |

To: All Contractors

From: Mike Temple

David Baggerly

Lucretia Hammond

Subject: Managing Financial Aid/Limits

Purpose

Change the process for staff to track financial aid limits by customer and category.

Background

For some time we have offered many customers up to $200 a year in short term financial aid when we believe it will help them to return to work quickly. We provide most financial aid under $200 without requiring a financial aid application.

We always require customers requesting financial aid over $200 to complete a financial aid application. Sometimes a customer asks for financial aid under $200 in a category of aid where the limit is less than $200. If the customer wants us to consider this request, he/she must complete a financial aid application.

We must track each customer’s financial aid by category to assure he/she completes and application when one is required and does not exceed the limit for financial aid in the requested category.

Change

Staff is no longer required to complete the spreadsheet attached in FAMS to record each customer’s financial aid by category. Staff must check the customer’s FAMS record to assure we do not approve financial aid that exceeds the customer’s categorical limit.

Limits on Financial Aid under $200

Effective immediately we will provide short-term financial aid for TWIC cards and personal transportation only to customers who have a job or job offer and need the assistance to work and to customers who are required to work with us in order to maintain a benefit such as TANF or SNAP.

Customers who request payment for a TWIC card or one-time $20.00 transportation assistance must give our staff member the name and contact information of their employer. Staff will enter this information in a counselor note when we provide the financial aid. If the staff member questions the validity of the customer’s information, the staff member will contact the employer to verify it and add a summary of the employer contact to the counselor note.

*Note: Enter the employment information into TWIST/Performance Detail/Employment Outcomes. Indicate that the customer provided the information. Do not contact the employer unless you to not believe the information is true.*

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 unless the customer is employed or has a job offer
  + 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 call center staff.

Reviewing Limits by Category

Financial Aid Management System (FAMS) does not yet total 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 by category and support type. A TWIST counselor note states the type and category of financial aid and justifies the need for it.   
  
Because the rules in this issuance require us to limit customers’ financial aid by category, staff must review customer records in TWIST and FAMS before approving a customer’s financial aid. We are working on FAMS enhancements that will allow the system to keep track of aid by customer, date and category.

* 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.
* Remember that each category of financial aid under $200 is part of a *total* short-term limit of $200 for customers we have not been determined eligible for assistance over $200 using the financial aid application.
* 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 her/him find alternate funding.
* When the date that the customer first received financial aid in a particular category is more than 12 months ago, she/he begins a new 12-month period for that category. The customer now has the full amount up to the limit in the requested r category.

Action

* Make sure staff understands how to check FAMS to determine when a customer needs a financial aid application and when an addendum is sufficient.
* Make sure staff understands how to check FAMS to determine when a customer reaches her/his limit on financial aid by category during a 12-month period
* Make sure staff understands that we will not provide short term financial aid for TWIC cards or a $20 gas card to any customer who cannot provide contact information about her/his job or job offer.
* Make sure staff understand what to enter into TWIST counselor notes when we provide financial aid for TWIC and personal transportation for work support.
* Make sure staff is aware of the limits for each type, category and amount of financial aid available to our customers.
* 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.

Questions

Staff should ask questions of their supervisors first. Direct questions for Board staff through the Issuance Q&A at <http://www.wrksolutions.com/staff-resources/system-resources/contract-management>