# Desk Aid - Serving Individuals Experiencing Homelessness

Workforce Solutions provides service for individuals experiencing homelessness in the Gulf Coast region. The e-learning, Connecting the Dots, discusses many of the challenges individuals experiencing homelessness encounter and how Workforce Solutions staff can help. All staff must complete the e-learning.

# Service for Any Customer Experiencing Homelessness

## Employment Assistance

For any customer requesting employment assistance that have identified themselves as experiencing homelessness:

1. Using discretion, ask if the customer is already working with or needs to be connected to shelter resources or homeless services.
2. If they do, refer them to a local agency (i.e. shelter, homeless service provider, community based organization, faith based organization) that will help individuals experiencing homelessness.
   * You may contact a Workforce Solutions Regional Team Navigator if you need help connecting to homeless service providers and shelter resources in your area.
3. Complete the fields in TWIST located in the “Characteristics” tab under “Intake Common”.

## Assessment

Be sure to fully assess the customer’s workforce needs and provide service as appropriate. Many customers experiencing homelessness have skills and experience and may need additional assistance to remove employment challenges and regain their confidence.

1. Discover new or hidden employment opportunities using job development techniques
2. Refer customers to job readiness seminars to help them improve computer literacy skills, develop resumes and sharpen interviewing skills
3. Offer work-based learning opportunities (e.g. on-the-job training, work experience) to help customers develop employability and technical job skills.
4. When necessary, contact a Workforce Solutions Regional Team Navigator as described in 17-09 or a shelter directly to advocate for a customer to job search and/or work past curfew.

## Financial Aid

Customers experiencing homelessness may request financial aid for help with job search. Refer to [Financial Aid Limits by Type of Assistance](http://www.wrksolutions.com/staff-resources/performance-improvement/desk-aids) chart.

## Documents to Support Eligibility

Customers must complete a financial aid application and provide documents to satisfy eligible to work status. Individuals experiencing homelessness may not have all the documents we require to support eligibility. We should help customers obtain appropriate documents if necessary.

### Note:

Workforce Solutions can provide financial aid support to customers experiencing homelessness who have not provided all required eligibility documents if they (1) demonstrate their connection to a homeless service agency; (2) complete a financial aid application and meet preliminary income eligibility; and (3) are in the process of obtaining additional documents to complete eligibility.

If the customer does not provide the appropriate eligibility documentation within 90 days, we must close out their TWIST record and discontinue financial aid.

## Career Office Role

Career office staff must:

* 1. Gather customer’s information and determine eligibility
  2. Complete the fields in TWIST located in the “Characteristics” tab under “Intake Common”
  3. Scan customer’s financial aid application and documents into DocuWare. Label the documents with the “Community Partner FA-Tracking” label.
  4. Document the customer’s self-certification of the missing documents in TWIST counselor notes (Subject Line – Documents Missing)
  5. Include action items in the customer’s TWIST service plan to obtain the appropriate documents within 90 days
  6. Provide service and follow-up as appropriate
  7. When the customer returns with the requested eligibility documents, enter a new counselor note – (Subject Line – Documents Received) and scan the documents into DocuWare using the “Community Partner FA-Tracking” label.

## Tracking Unit Role

Upon receiving the financial aid application, tracker staff should:

* 1. Open the appropriate fund(s) for which the customer qualifies under Program Detail and open/ track services as appropriate under Service Tracking.
  2. Tracker staff may open a fund under Program Detail if the customer needs additional time to obtain required eligibility documents.
  3. Run counselor note reports to determine if customers have returned with the required eligibility documents within 90 days. If not, close TWIST record.
  4. For full tracking instructions, see [Tracking Unit Responsibilities](#_Tracking_Unit_Responsibilities) in The Way Home: Income Now section.

### *Note:*

***If a customer requests assistance with financial aid for childcare, Trackers will relabel the customer’s financial aid application in DocuWare to: ChCare – New FA App – Spec Cat. Staff at the Support Center will process the application for childcare financial aid as a priority category and notify the customer of their eligibility.***

# Coordination with The Way Home

Led by Houston's Coalition for the Homeless, The Way Home is a collaborative initiative comprised of homeless provider agencies, local government, and other community organizations to develop key strategies to prevent and end homelessness.

# The Way Home: Income Now

Workforce Solutions works with The Way Home Coordinated Access system in Fort Bend, Harris, and Montgomery counties to provide service to individuals experiencing homelessness. Customers may also refer to this service as “Income Now”.

The Way Home generates referrals for individuals experiencing homelessness through its Coordinated Access system and sends these referrals to the appropriate career office in Fort Bend, Harris, and Montgomery counties.

In addition to the instructions above regarding [service for any customer experiencing homelessness](#_Service_for_Any), staff are instructed to take the following additional steps when receiving referrals through The Way Home’s Coordinated Access/Income Now.

## Referrals from Coordinated Access/Income Now

The Way Home’s Coordinated Access system will email offices in participating counties with referral information.

* 1. Referral emails will go to the office’s group email address (e.g. [conroe@wrksolutions.com](mailto:conroe@wrksolutions.com)).

## Career Office Responsibilities

1. Office Managers must ensure that they (1) designate staff to check and receive referral emails, (2) scan referrals into DocuWare using the “Community Partner Referral-Tracking” label, (3) add the referral information on the tracking spreadsheet on SharePoint and (4) contact these customers within 1 business day.
2. Serve referred customers when they visit the career office or have a virtual appointment.

* If customer does not bring a referral form, staff can request the designated point of contact check their office’s group email, TWIST, or with their tracking unit to verify the referral from The Way Home’s Coordinated Access system.

1. Customer outreach must be attempted multiple times (if the first attempt is not successful)
   1. First attempt must occur within one business day and a message must be left if possible
   2. Outreach must be attempted at least two more times within a week
   3. If more than one contact method is available, each contact method must be attempted at least once
   4. All outreach attempts (including method of outreach and whether a message was left) should be documented in counselor notes
2. Enter Counselor Note
   1. Ensure steps listed for Career Office Role in the [service for any customer experiencing homelessness](#_Service_for_Any) section of this desk aid have been completed
   2. If customer is contacted and an orientation is conducted, enter the subject line – Income Now Orientation
   3. If customer is contacted and declines services, enter subject line – Income Now Declined
   4. If customer is not contacted, enter the subject line – Income Now Attempt to Contact
3. Once contact is made or all attempts are exhausted, update the referral tracking spreadsheet accordingly

### Note:

Some individuals experiencing homelessness may visit offices for employment assistance without being referred by The Way Home’s Coordinated Access system. Provide assistance as described in the [service for any customer experiencing homelessness](#_Service_for_Any) section of this desk aid.

## Career Office Referrals

Walk-in customers who did not receive a referral through The Way Home’s Coordinated Access system may need to be connected to shelter or housing resources:

* + 1. Using discretion, ask if the customer needs shelter resources
    2. If the customer does not want to work with a shelter hub facility, provide workforce services as described in the [service for any customer experiencing homelessness](#_Service_for_Any) section of this desk aid.
    3. If the customer does want to work with a shelter hub facility, refer them to one of the Coordinated Access shelter hubs below or to The Way Home.
       - Send an email to [ca@homelesshouston.org](mailto:ca@homelesshouston.org):
       - Subject – Referral for Coordinated Access Intake
       - Include the customer’s name, contact information, and a brief description of the customer’s circumstances to include their living situation.
       - If a customer does not have contact information, help them create an email account and show them how to check for new emails.
    - Shelter Hub Facilities – (see [The Way Home Resource Guide](#_The_Way_Home) for location and contact information)
* The Covenant House (children and young adults)
* Star of Hope Women and Family Shelter at Cornerstone Community
* Star of Hope Men’s Development Center

## Tracking Unit Responsibilities

Tracking units must request tracker training and access to the Homeless Management Information System (HMIS) through their LISO.

1. Throughout the week, tracking units should download reports from HMIS of new referrals to their organization’s career offices and tag them.
2. Tag customers in TWIST as Income Now by adding the appropriate Office 5 information below to an (1) existing fund/service; (2) a new fund/ service for which the customer is eligible or; (3) a Onestop fund/ service if the customer is not eligible for any of other funds/ services (we do not provide financial aid for a Onestop service):

* If the customer is already participating in an existing funded service (i.e. WIOA, TANF, SNAP) – (1) add the appropriate Office 5 information from [Table 1](#_Table_1) below to an existing fund and service.
* If the customer is eligible for a funded service (i.e. WIOA, TANF, SNAP) – (1) open the appropriate fund under program detail; (2) open the appropriate service under service tracking; and (3) add the appropriate Office 5 information from [Table 1](#_Table_1) below to the fund and service.
* If the customer is ineligible for a funded service – (1) Use ES under program detail; (2) open a Onestop service under service tracking from [Table 2](#_Table_2) below; (3) add the appropriate worksite information from [Table 3](#_Table_3) below; and (4) add the appropriate Office 5 information from [Table1](#_Table_1) below to the ES fund and Onestop service. We do not provide financial aid for a Onestop service.
* **Duplicate monthly service as appropriate**

# TWH: Jobs

In addition to providing assistance as described in the [service for any customer experiencing homelessness](#_Service_for_Any) and [The Way Home: Income Now](#_The_Way_Home:) sections of this desk aid, the following steps must be followed when receiving referrals for TWH: Jobs.

## Referrals for TWH: Jobs

Rapid Rehousing and other Coalition for the Homeless partners refer individuals experiencing homelessness that are work ready to the TWH: Jobs initiative by submitting a referral email to [thewayhome@wrksolutions.com](mailto:thewayhome@wrksolutions.com).

* 1. Upon receipt of referral, the Workforce Solutions Regional Team Navigator will update TWH: Jobs spreadsheet on SharePoint and forward the referral to the career office nearest to the customer.
     + Spreadsheet will include the customer’s name, contact information and which career office customer resides closest to.
* A copy of the referral form from Rapid Rehousing or other Coalition for the Homeless partner must be included in the email.
* These referral emails will go to the office’s group email address (e.g. [conroe@wrksolutions.com](mailto:conroe@wrksolutions.com) ). Email subject line should be: TWH: Jobs<Customer Last Name>

## Career Office Responsibilities

1. Office Managers must ensure that they (1) designate staff to check and receive referral emails and (2) Contact these customers within 1 business day.
2. Upon contact, staff must provide information on Workforce Solution services, complete an assessment, and if the customer has not already been determined eligible for Workforce Solutions financial aid, assist the customer with completing a financial aid application and then provide applicable services as described in the [service for any customer experiencing homelessness](#_Service_for_Any) and [The Way Home: Income Now](#_The_Way_Home:) sections of this desk aid.

* Copy of the referral form from Rapid Rehousing or other Coalition for the Homeless partners must be attached to the financial aid application when submitting to the Tracking Unit for processing.
* If the customer has previously been determined eligible for Workforce Solutions financial aid, staff would only scan the TWH: Jobs referral form into DocuWare using the “Community Partner Referral-Tracking” label

1. Once customer determined eligible for financial aid, career office staff will help the customer proceed with a work-based learning assignment.

## Tracking Unit Responsibilities

1. Tag customers in TWIST as TWH: Jobs by adding the appropriate Office 5 information below to an (1) existing fund/service; (2) a new fund/ service for which the customer is eligible or; (3) a Onestop fund/service if the customer is not eligible for any of other funds/services (we do not provide financial aid for a Onestop service):

* If the customer is already participating in an existing funded service (i.e. WIOA, TANF, SNAP) – (1) add the appropriate Office 5 information from [Table 1](#_Table_1) below to an existing fund and service.
* If the customer is eligible for a funded service (i.e. WIOA, TANF, SNAP) – (1) open the appropriate fund under program detail; (2) open the appropriate service under service tracking; and (3) add the appropriate Office 5 information from [Table 4](#_Table_4) below to the fund and service.
* If the customer is ineligible for a funded service – (1) Use ES under program detail; (2) open a Onestop service under service tracking from [Table 2](#_Table_2) below; (3) add the appropriate worksite information from [Table 3](#_Table_3) below; and (4) add the appropriate Office 5 information from [Table 1](#_Table_1) below to the ES fund and Onestop service. We do not provide financial aid for a Onestop service.
* Duplicate monthly service as appropriate

# Table 1

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| Office 5 (for any fund/ service) – select from the following |
| * 2047 – INCOME NOW – Covenant House * 2048 – INCOME NOW – Star of Hope - Men’s facility * 2049 – INCOME NOW – Star of Hope - Women’s facility * 2081 – INCOME NOW – General * 3009 – The Way Home (Used for TWH: Jobs Initiative) |

# Table 2

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| Service Tracking for Onestop funded service |
| * Service Category – 14 (Case Management) * Service Code – 99 (Local Tracking) * Fund – 1 (Onestop) |

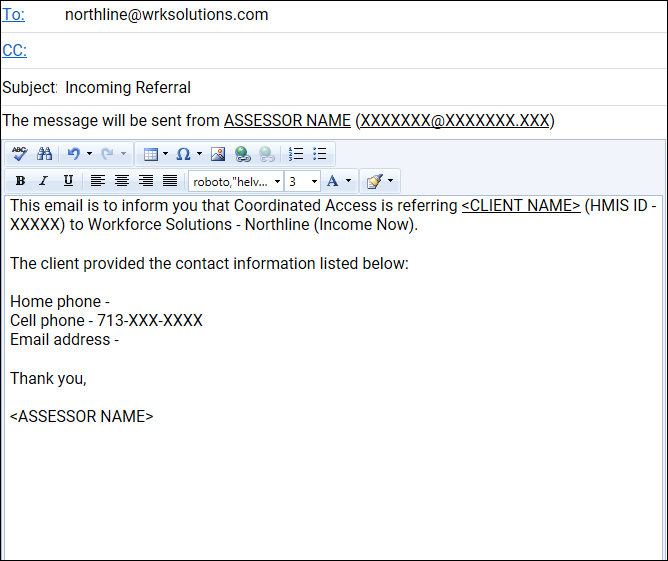
# Table 3

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| Worksite Codes – For Onestop funded service. Add the appropriate worksite code according to the service(s) provided |
| * SVC0001 – Assessment * SVC0002 – Case Management * SVC0003 – Job Search * SVC0004 – Attending HS/GED Program * SVC0005 – Completed HS/GED Program * SVC0006 – Attending Non-WS Training * SVC0007 – Completed Non-WS Training * SVC0008 – No longer in contact * SVC0009 – Follow-up |

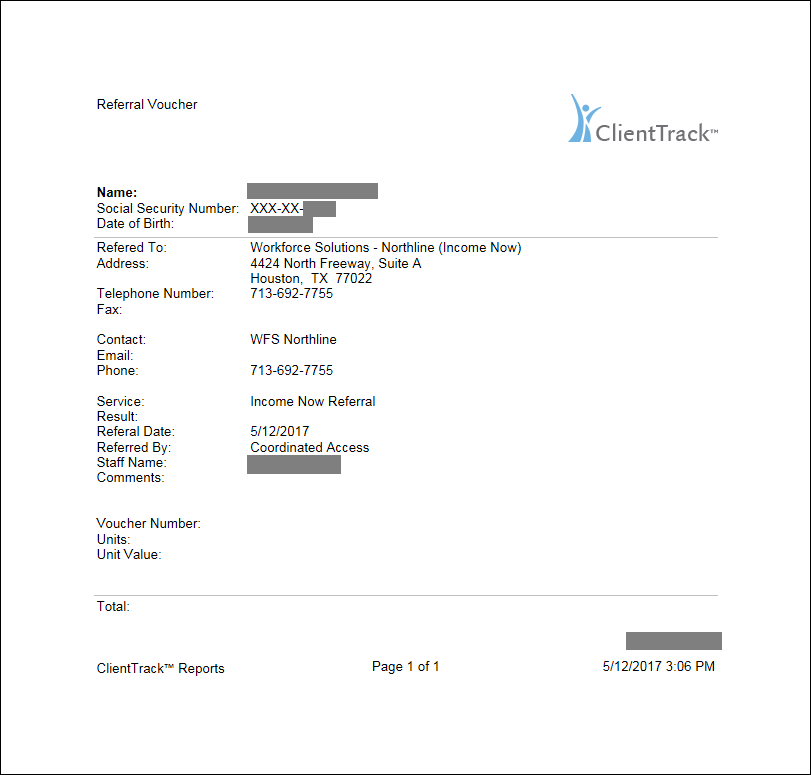
# Table 4

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| Service Tracking for Work Based Learning (Subsidized Employment) |
| * Service Category – 14 (Case Management) * Service Code – 99 (Local Tracking) * Fund – 1 (Onestop) * Sub-Fund – 77 (Innovative Projects for Targeted Populations) * Office 5 – 3009 (TWH: Jobs) |

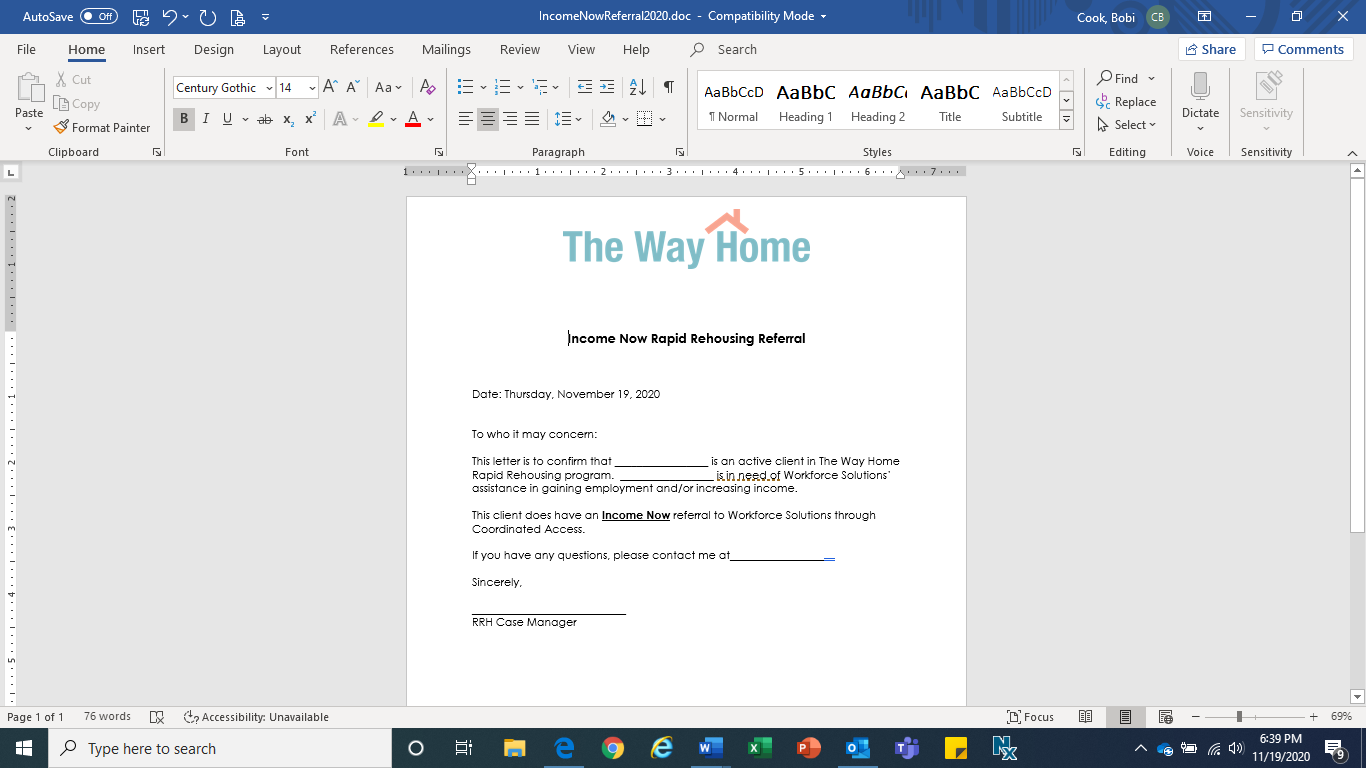
# Example Referral Email from Coordinated Access



# Example #1 - Income Now Referral from Coordinated Access



# Example #2 - Income Now Referral from Coordinated Access



# The Way Home Resource Guide

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