Heart of Texas Workforce System
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
Youth and Educational Outreach Services
Request for Proposals
RFP # 13250101
Questions & Answers
(including bidder's conference)

Question 1: What specific performance metrics will be used to evaluate the success of the program?

Answer: Please refer to the RFP document, page 8, section 3.8 Performance Measures for the listed performance measures used.

Question 2: Are there particular benchmarks or targets that we should aim for in terms of participant outcomes?

Answer: In terms of participant outcomes contractors are required to meet the performance measures listed on page 8, section 3.8 Performance Measures.

Question 3: What specific information should be included [for reporting requirements]?

Answer: Please refer to the RFP document, section 9.2 Organizational Capability, Capacity and Demonstrated Experience/Effectiveness for specific information regarding reporting requirements that must be included in the proposal.

Question 4: Is there an existing evaluation framework that we need to align with, or are we expected to propose our evaluation methodologies? If the latter, are there particular evaluation outcomes you are focusing on?

Answer: We are not requesting bidders to propose evaluation methodologies. Please refer to the RFP document, page 16, section 7.3 Evaluation Criteria.

Question 5: Is there an expected amount of funds that you are specifically looking for to be allocated/reserved at the time the contract is awarded to begin Oct 1, 2025?

Answer: Yes, please refer to the RFP document, page 4, section 3.1 Funds, Contract Term Period and Type.

Question 6: Can you please provide additional detail regarding this statement "The proposer must have the ability to secure at least 10% of the contract total”?

Answer: For example, if the contract total is $1,000,000, then the proposer must have the ability to secure at least $100,000. This requirement will be verified prior to a contract being issued to a successful bidder.

Question 7: Can you please provide clarification regarding the pricing methodology required by this statement considering an indirect cost rate is an allowable line item on the proposed budget: "All overhead costs corporate and local shall be allocated to the benefitting cost objectives (programs, cost categories, budget line items, etc.) using a direct charge method in lieu of an indirect cost rate."

Answer: If a bidder is not using an indirect cost rate, then they must use a direct charge method to allocate all corporate and local overhead costs to the benefitting cost objectives (programs, cost categories, budget line items, etc.).

Question 8: Who is/are the current provider(s)?

Answer: Communities in Schools for the Heart of Texas

Question 9: Can you clarify submission instructions?

Answer: Bidders must use the link provided to upload their proposal in PDF format in a single folder. For complete instructions, please refer to the RFP document, section 6.4 Proposal Submissions.

Question 10: Are proposers required to submit a complete electronic PDF copy of the proposal AND mail a USB copy of the proposal documents submitted?

Answer: Bidders are not required to mail a USB copy of their proposal documents. Only proposals that are submitted following the directions listed in the RFP document, section 6.4 Proposal Submissions will be considered responsive.

Question 11: How do we verify original signatures for an electronic PDF and USB submission of the proposal?

Answer: Bidders do not need to verify original signatures at the time of submission of their proposals.

Question 12: Is one complete proposal packet sufficient, or are extra copies required? If extra copies are required, how many copies?

Answer: Please refer to the RFP document, section 6.4 Proposal Submissions. Proposals are to be submitted electronically only. Copies are not required and will not be accepted.

Question 13: Do questions need to be repeated as part of each narrative response?

Answer: Repeating questions as part of each narrative response is not a requirement.

Question 14: Can WSHOT provide a copy of the current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth and Educational Outreach Services organizational chart including all staff by office location?

Answer: There are currently 14 fully WIOA-funded FTEs and 2 Educational Outreach funded FTEs.

Question 15: Can WSHOT provide salary ranges for all the current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth and Educational Outreach Services staff?

Answer: Bidders should provide their own salaries for proposed positions.

Question 16: Can WSHOT provide job descriptions for all the current Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth and Educational Outreach Services position titles?

Answer: Bidders should provide their own staffing plans when considering the program's staffing.

Question 17: Is the contracted service provider or WSHOT responsible for making any payments related to client services (ex. training, work experience, supportive services, etc.)?

Answer: The contracted service provider is responsible for all payments; this is a cost reimbursement contract.

Question 18: If contracted service provider is responsible, which specific client service payments are included and what is the process for reporting client services obligations/payments to WSHOT?

Answer: The contracted service provider provides the Board's accountant with an expenditure report early in the following month.

Question 19: If WSHOT is responsible for client service payments, what is the contracted service provider's responsibility for reporting client services payment obligations to WSHOT?

Answer: This is a cost reimbursement contract.

Question 20: Can WSHOT provide a percentage breakdown ISY and OSY served for the past 2 years?

Answer: ISY and OSY customer counts from the past 2 years have allowed for the 25% ISY and 75% OSY expenditure requirements to be met.

Question 21: Can WSHOT provide the total number of youth served by the Educational Outreach Services program?

Answer: Approximately 2,500 youth from 20 school districts.

Question 22: Can WSHOT provide number of WIOA Youth served, cost limits, and average participant costs for each of the following workforce services:

- Occupational Skills Training/ITAs
- Work Experience/Internships
- Apprenticeships
- On the Job Training
- Support Services
- Customer Incentives

Answer: The ITA limit is currently $15,000. Participant costs vary based on funding availability and number of participants.

Question 23: Can WSHOT provide policies for the following workforce services Occupational Skills Training/ITAs, Work Experience/Internships, Apprenticeships, On the Job Training, Support Services, and Customer Incentives.

Answer: Please refer to the Attachment for the Board's ITA, Supportive Services and Client Incentive Card policies.

Question 24: Is the contracted service provider also responsible for administering the Summer Earn and Learn (SEAL) program? If so, can WSHOT provide an estimate of the number of SEAL Youth to be served?

Answer: Yes, the contracted service provider is responsible for administering the program.

Question 25: The Budget-Form (Attachment B) contains two tabs titled, Personnel Detail: Administrative Costs, and Personnel Detail: Program Costs. While there is an explanation of Administrative Costs in RFP Section 9.5.E.a. (Budgetary Considerations), it does not provide enough detail. Can WSHOT provide examples of Administrative Costs that could be included in Personnel Detail: Administrative Costs?

Answer: Possible examples are salaries and fringes, payroll fees, travel, office supplies, insurance, etc.

Question 26: Can a contracted service provider allocate a percentage of corporate staff directly supporting WIOA Youth and Educational Outreach Services operations in WSHOT, for example, finance staff, payroll, staff, HR staff? If so, are those allocations to be included in Personnel Detail: Administrative Costs portion of the budget?

Answer: Yes. Yes.

Question 27: If operating solely within the existing WSHOT facilities/workforce centers, does the contracted service provider bear any additional expenses? If so, please provide examples of those expenses.

Answer: No.

Question 28: Will WSHOT allow office space within existing WSHOT facilities/workforce centers to be used on a temporary, short-term basis by contracted service provider corporate support staff?

Answer: Details will be negotiated during the transition period.

Question 29: Besides TWC's Work In Texas Case Management System, what other data information software/systems are the contracted service provider required to use and are those costs covered by WSHOT?

Answer: There are no other data information software/systems.

Question 30: Are there any state-imposed Technical Assistance Plans or Corrective Action Plans, currently, for WSHOT? If so, what are they and how long have they been in place?

Answer: No.

Question 31: Are there any board-imposed Technical Assistance Plans or Corrective Action Plans for the current contractor? If so, what are they and how long have they been in place?

Answer: No.

ATTACHMENTS

HEART OF TEXAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD POLICY

ID NO.:	HWD 007-99 HWD 007-99-01 HWD 007-99-02 HWD 007-99-03 HWD 007-99-04 HWD 007-99-05 HWD 007-99-06 HWD 007-99-07 HWD 007-99-08 HWD 007-99-09 HWD 007-99-10 HWD 007-99-11 HWD 007-99-12	**DATE ISSUED:**	August 31, 1999 Change 1, date 05-18-07 Change 2, date 10-21-10 Change 3, date 11-01-10 Change 4, date 11-17-11 Change 5, date 03-20-14 Change 6, date 02-18-16 Change 7, date 05-18-17 Change 8, date 10–18-18 Change 9, date 11–07-18 Change 10, date 02–07-20 Change 11, date 02–18-21 Change 12, date 11-17-22
PROGRAM:	**WIOA**	**KEYWORD:**	**WIOA, Training**

Subject: Individual Training Accounts

Discussion: The policy is being updated to address the changes in WD Letter 14-19, Change 2, to describe the requirements for procuring and contracting with training providers.

SUMMARY

Training services authorized under this policy shall be provided using Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to eligible individuals through the workforce center delivery system.

The ITA is an account established by the workforce center operator on behalf of an eligible individual. ITAs are funded with adult, dislocated worker and older youth funds authorized under Title 1 of WIOA. Individuals may use ITAs in exchange for training services for skills in targeted occupations from programs certified as Eligible Training Providers and found on the Statewide List maintained by the Texas Workforce Commission.

POLICY

The Individual Training Account is an account established by the Workforce Center and approved by the Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board on behalf of an eligible participant. It is the only method for providing classroom skill training services for WIOA program participants. Through ITAs, funds under WIOA Title 1 are used to make payment for purchasing training services from eligible providers selected by the participant in consultation with the case manager based on the plan developed after objective assessment.

Individuals must meet eligibility requirements for, and receive, Individualized Career Services prior to referral to training services. The decision to provide additional Individualized Career Services will be made on a case-by-case basis by Center staff, depending upon the needs of the participant.

In addition to meeting all eligibility requirements of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, to receive assistance for the cost of training, the following residency requirement is effective beginning October 21, 2010.

Permanent residents of the six county Heart of Texas Workforce Investment Area (Bosque, Falls, Freestone, Hill, Limestone or McLennan) are given priority status to receive funding for training.

Individuals may transition from career services to training services upon being found both eligible AND suitable for job skill training. The case file, which includes the Individual Employment Plan (IEP), is the required documentation for this decision. The case file must document the assessment data indicating the potential for the individual's success in the training and the occupation, and that the training is directly linked to a locally targeted occupation. The case file must include documentation of the determination that the individual

1. has explored multiple career options,
2. has the necessary basic skills and pre-requisite qualifications required by the training provider to enter the program of training, and
3. has been assessed as to their fit for the occupation’s work environment and demands.

Eligible participants may select a program of training that best meets their needs from among any of the appropriate eligible providers on the Statewide Training Provider List no matter the location; however, ITA and Supportive Services policy limitations apply no matter the location of the trainer. A program of training is defined as one or a sequence of courses that, upon successful completion, leads to a certificate, an associate degree, or a competency or skill recognized by employers.

ITA Process

Individuals entering the Workforce Center initially access Basic Career Services to aid them in searching for suitable employment. If an individual is unable to obtain employment through the use of the Center’s Basic Career Services and is determined eligible under a WIOA program, they may receive Individualized Career services. Individualized Career services are warranted when center staff makes the determination that an individual requires additional services above and beyond Basic Career Services to obtain or retain appropriate employment.

In Individualized Career Services, a participant will undergo an objective, comprehensive assessment based on specialized testing, in-depth interviewing and evaluation of barriers to employment, and in consultation with the case manager/career counselor, will develop an Individual Employability Plan. It is during this case management phase that a participant and the case manager establish short-term and long-term goals and evaluate whether enrollment in a training program is merited and a viable option for the participant.

Determining Suitability for Training and Developing the Individual Employability Plan

Customers must show they have utilized the Basic and Individualized Career Services prior to being considered for Training Services. If through Individualized Career Services and the development of the Individual Employment Plan, it is determined that the client is unable to obtain employment that will adequately support themselves and their dependents, that the client is in need of skills most appropriately developed in a classroom training and has the literacy skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the demands of the training program, then a program of training may be considered. Financial capabilities, all testing, and interest assessment levels must be adequate to ensure success in the chosen training program and occupation.

The approach taken to participants shall be one of individual empowerment with coaching, advising, and guidance from case managers. Participants must 'own' or feel fully responsible for the choices made about their occupational future.

Because WIOA is intended to be a customer-driven system, the training services phase will be information-rich environment for the participant. The client will be given a training packet containing a list of eligible providers located in the Heart of Texas, the Heart of Texas Targeted Occupation List, information on the approved training programs offered by area providers, program cost information, pre-requisites required, ITA procedures, personal responsibility for attendance and active engagement in the training program.

They must also be informed of required communication with their case manager/career counselor throughout the training and upon employment. Based on the information contained in the training packet, the participant’s testing and interest evaluation and the determination made during the counseling session the participant should be able to make an informed choice as to the training program and the service provider that best meets their needs and to understand their obligations to Workforce Solutions for the Heart of Texas for the financial assistance.

(*Change 3*) When determining whether a participant requires training to attain or retain employment, contractors must ensure that consideration is given to a participant’s:

1. work experience;
2. skill set;
3. education (including previous training);
4. abilities;
5. barriers to employment; and
6. employment goals.

Contractors must be aware that an Individual Employability Plan (EP) provides:

1. a strategy jointly developed by the participant and a Workforce Solutions Center staff member that identifies the participant's employment goals and the appropriate combination of services to assist the participant in achieving the goals;
2. an outline of the participant's responsibilities in completing the employment goals, with any associated time frames for completion; and
3. a crucial, ongoing service planning tool updated and modified as needed to reflect the services a participant is currently receiving.

Contractors must ensure that IEPs are designed with the level of detail best suited to each participant.

Contractors may develop an IEP using any of the following:

The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST),
A local client management system,
A hard-copy form,

And must inform the Board of their selection and any changes implemented to the document.

Contractors must ensure that, at a minimum, IEPs include:

1. a specific employment goal;
2. a strategy to address barriers to employment;
3. detailed step-by-step activities and training the participant will perform and or participate in;
4. time frames for the start and completion of each activity;
5. a list of requirements that the participant must meet in order for the Board to continue to fund training and support services; and
6. specific dates on which Texas Workforce Center staff will follow up to evaluate each activity, provide additional assistance, and make any necessary adjustments.

Contractors must ensure that each IEP service is entered into TWIST using TWIST service code *68–Employability Development Plan.* Contractors must ensure that for every EP service entered, there is an EP available for monitoring review.

Priority Use of WIOA for Individual Training Accounts

The WIOA funds must be used for payment of tuition, books, fees and ancillary costs required by the training institution for enrollment in the program of training.

Clients are required to apply for other sources of funding (i.e. other agencies, Pell grants, scholarships, etc) to support themselves throughout the program of training. The Workforce Solutions Center will consider all financial support in the development of a financial plan and budget for the client's participation in the program of training. The client is required to demonstrate that they have the adequate resources to sustain themselves and/or their family during the time they are in training.

WIOA funding for supportive services may be provided only to trainees for whom an ITA is in place, and only when the need is exhibited in the financial plan and budget, or when an extraordinary circumstance occurs which jeopardizes the trainee's ability to complete the program of training and receive the degree or certificate which makes them employable.

ITA Enrollment Process

Once a determination of training is made, and the client demonstrates a high degree of interest in the training program, a commitment to completing the training, knowledge of job requirements, and probability of success, then the ITA is requested by the participant, approved by the counselor and must be approved by the Workforce Center Manager. Once awarded, the participant is given an ITA certificate. This certificate will note such criteria as the start and finish date, chosen program and institution, cost cap by semester and in total, a brief description of the items to be purchase (i.e. tuition, books, fees, uniforms, etc.) and outcome (degree, certificate, etc). A copy of this certificate will also go into the client's status file and accounting file.

The rights and responsibilities of the ITA will be explained to the client in both verbal and in written form. The participant will be given a copy of the ITA "Agreement" and will understand the importance of this training, sponsorship, the requirement for monthly contact, weekly attendance information, and grade requirements while enrolled. The client will enter into a training agreement with the expressed intentions of going to work as soon as the program is completed.

ITA Methodology

The Heart of Texas Workforce Board requires the Workforce Center contractor to obligate the total cost of an individual's approved training through an Individual Training Account (ITA). To fund the ITA, the Board requires the Workforce Center contractor to utilize an accountable voucher system in which the individual customer obtains a voucher for each semester, quarter or other segment for a sequence of courses to cover tuition, books, fees, uniforms, tools, etc. necessary for participating in the training program. ITAs may be fully funded in a single voucher if the training is conducted as a single classroom experience completed in six months or less, rather than a sequence of courses.

All approved training must be a Training Program on the Statewide Training Provider Certification System listing and the ITA should conform to the costs provided by the institution on that system.

As long as the training is being provided by a local community college, the training costs listed in ETPS can be used for the ITA. ITAs used to pay for training provided by proprietary schools or community colleges located outside of the WDA will be limited by the following chart. Contractors may use ITAs for training programs located outside the Heart of Texas they meet the following requirements:

1. The training program is listed on the statewide ETPL in Texas.
2. The training program aligns with local target occupations or target occupations in an area to which the participant is willing to commute or relocate.
3. The ITA is used in accordance with other existing TWC guidance.

Any deviation from the cost in the ETPS must be noted and approved not only through the Center process, but also by the HOTWDB ***Contract Manager.***

Contact Hours	College Credit Hours	Earned Credential	Maximum Value of ITA
Less than 200	0	None	$3,200
200 - 250	0	Meets Licensure Requirements or Industry Recognized Certification	$4,500
200 – 1000	1 - 40	Meets Licensure Requirements or Industry Recognized Certification	$6,500
1001-1999	41-59	Meets Licensure Requirements or Industry Recognized Certification	$9,000
2000+	60+	Associate Degree (non-healthcare related)	$13,500
2000+	60+	Associate Degree (healthcare related)	$17,500

Registered Apprenticeship

Contractors can use an ITA to cover the initial expenses required for first-year students of a registered apprenticeship program that supports a targeted occupation. These initial expenses are defined as books, tools, supplies, gloves, boots, etc. that are needed to begin classes and/or on the job training.

Items Covered	Maximum Value of ITA
Books, tools, equipment, supplies, boots, gloves, etc., needed to begin apprenticeship training.	Up to $1,000

The Board may grant a waiver to these ITA maximums if both of the following conditions exist:

1) The published entry level wage for the occupation is at least five times the cost of the training (e.g. $6,500 x 5 = $32,500);

   AND

2) No other program for training in the selected occupation is available on the Statewide Certified Training Provider System within a reasonable commuting distance for the maximum or less as provided in the above chart.

ITA Assurances

1. Funds established for ITAs may not be used for any other purpose except tuition, fees, supplies, uniforms, and tools required by the course or program.

2. Funds will be utilized to pay for each course only one time. If the student retakes a course from which he/she withdrew, or he/she did not pass, the student must bear the expense.

3. The amount of funds authorized for an Individual Training Account will be commensurate with the service provider's cost (tuition, books, and fees) at the time of enrollment into the program of training.

4. A client is allowed a maximum of two years (six trimesters, or four semesters and up to four summer sessions) for a training program to be completed.

5. Only training providers that are on the list of eligible providers may redeem ITAs for payment. Providers will be reimbursed for ITA expenses no later than 30 days after receipt of the bill.

6. The Workforce Center Manager has the right to cancel an ITA for a participant's failure to participate, make acceptable progress toward completion, or for violation of the ITA agreement. Upon cancellation of an ITA, the client will be notified of the termination date and reason/s for cancellation, and will be counseled on existing employment alternatives, if any. The Workforce Center Manager or case manager will also be responsible for notifying the Board staff and the applicable Service Provider of the action.

7. The student must supply a copy of his/her financial aid package prior to approval and issuance of an ITA to demonstrate their ability to support themselves and their dependents while in the program of training.

8. WIOA funds are not used to pay training costs:
   - for any portion or term of training for which the participant has signed a loan as part of financial aid; or
   - that were paid by the participant (or another source) before WIOA program registration.

Board Contracted Training Providers

To address identified training needs, the Board can conduct a procurement and contract with an institution of higher education and/or other provider of training services. The Board will only contract with training entities that are appropriately licensed or regulated and the contracts will not limit consumer choice. The contract will also require that any training provided will be linked to occupations on the Board's Target Occupations List.

EFFECTIVE DATE for Change 12: 11/17/22

HEART OF TEXAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD POLICY

ID NO.:	HWD 008-04 HWD 008-04-01 HWD 008-04-02 HWD 008-04-03 HWD 008-04-04 HWD 008-04-05 HWD 008-04-06 HWD 008-04-07	**DATE ISSUED:**	January 31, 2004 Change 1, date 09-01-06 Change 2, date 09-01-08 Change 3, date 07-17-10 Change 4, date 05-15-14 Change 5, date 02-16-17 Change 6, date 05-18-17 Change 7, date 05-21-18
PROGRAM:	WIOA, TANF Choices, SNAP E&T	**KEYWORD:**	**Supportive Services**

Subject: **Revision of the Comprehensive Supportive Services Policy for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families - Choices, and SNAP Employment and Training Programs**

References: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA)
WIOA Final Regulations (Title 20 CFR 663.800 – 663.810 and Title 20 CFR 664.440)
Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996
Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Final Regulations (45 CFR, Part 265)
Texas Workforce Commission Choices Rules: 40 TAC Chapter 811
Farm Security and Rural Investment Act of 2002
United States Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, Rules and Regulations, as amended June 19, 2002

Discussion: Due to changes in performance measures and the resulting need to assist youth in maintaining their enrollment in educational activities post exit the policy needed updating.

Contents:

Section I. Supportive Services Policy Overview

A. Supportive Services are those financial or physical accommodations that are reasonable and necessary for an individual to successfully participate in workforce activities and employment authorized under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families) Choices, or SNAP Employment and Training.

B. WIOA Dislocated Workers, Adults, and Youth receiving and/or enrolled in Career Services, Training or Post-Program Services may be eligible for Supportive Services if they are unable to obtain assistance from other programs providing such services.

C. ***1***. Individual Supportive Services needs are initially assessed at program enrollment. All efforts to meet identified Supportive Services needs begin with referral to other appropriate community sources. Such sources must first be exhausted by the participant and documented in the case file and TWIST before workforce funds may be authorized. Therefore, a case management staff with thorough understanding of the resources and services available from other agencies is imperative.
2. In addition, individuals in WIOA funded Training Services must apply for student financial aid to be considered for Supportive Services unless the training institution or program does not have aid available. All financial aid awarded must be considered when calculating Supportive Service needs.

D. ***1.*** Support may be provided for goods and/or services that promote job retention, effective job searching, or to assist a customer meet participation or attendance in an activity that leads to employment. Payments must be defined as work related and are allowed as long as the customer remains in one of the aforementioned customer groups. Documentation must be in TWIST for authorization of payments.
2. Individual participant's extent of need for Supportive Services must be identified during the development of the appropriate service plan. To the extent possible, similarly situated participants will receive similar Supportive Services. A participant's Supportive Services needs must be reviewed for changes in status when transferring from one allowable activity of the enrolled program to another activity, and at least every ninety days or as required by the specific program.

E. Generally, Supportive Services may include transportation, child care, dependent care, housing and utility assistance, job search expenses, training or work-related expenses, and one-time emergency assistance with documented need. Supportive Services are limited:
1. to expenses incurred by the participant and directly related to sustaining participation in WIOA, TANF-Choices, and/or SNAP E&T activity/ies, and/or

2. to expenses incurred and necessary to retain employment during post-program period.

F. Supportive Services may be provided to WIOA In-school youth to retain part-time employment during active participation, and/or to stay in school during the 12-month post-program follow-up period.

G. Supportive Services are not to be a regular part of a participant's financial plan, except in the instance of child care and/or transportation. Child care and transportation assistance notwithstanding, Supportive Services are one-time, short term or emergency assistance. For emergency assistance, the participant must provide the case manager with their plan to prevent recurrence of an emergency condition and this must be documented in TWIST.

H. Supportive Services are available to:

- unemployed participants,
- any participant whose family income is documented as below the established Lower Living Standard,
- employed participants needing assistance to retain their job,
- former TANF recipients and post-program WIOA participants for up to 12 months,
- unemployed TANF applicants and former recipients may receive short-term, nonrecurring" assistance for up to four months.

I. All payments must be documented in TWIST including justification and documentation.

J. Receipts are required for all reimbursements.

K. Allocations for services in the Heart of Texas Workforce Development Area are inadequate to equitably provide Needs Based Payments as allowed under WIOA, and, therefore, such payments are not available through any Heart of Texas Workforce Center to any participant.

L. ***1.*** The Heart of Texas Workforce Development Board expects specific Supportive Services standard operating procedures and systems to be developed and implemented by Heart of Texas Workforce contractors. These must include but not be limited to:

- ➢ Financial need evaluation;
- ➢ TWIST data collection and data entry requirements;
- ➢ Documentation requirements;
- ➢ Timelines/signatures for approval, authorization, payment;
- ➢ Reimbursement to customers v. advance payment;
- ➢ Case review;

- ➢ Termination of Supportive Services;
- ➢ Extenuating circumstance case consideration.

2. Workforce contractors must submit procedures and forms to Board staff for review prior to the beginning of the Program Year, when revisions are made, or within 30 days of the effective date of this policy.

<u>Section II.</u> <u>Policy Governing Allowable Supportive Services While Participating in Workforce Services Other than Training</u>

A. The following provides descriptions of allowable Supportive Services for which assistance to individuals may be provided. However, allowability does not imply entitlement. Need and availability of funds must be the basis for contractor procedures to authorize Supportive Services.

B. ***1.*** To establish and maintain eligibility for Supportive Services while participating in career services, the participant must be actively seeking employment, maintain service activity, and maintain reasonable and frequent contact with assigned case manager, weekly or monthly in accordance with program requirements.

2. Alternate sources of assistance must first be exhausted, and, based on assessment of the customer's present circumstances; contractors maintain the authority to provide a partial amount requested for a Supportive Service or to refuse payment. All decisions for partial or no payment must be documented in TWIST.

3. Unemployed sanctioned families and conditional applicants must show one month of demonstrated cooperation before Supportive Services (other than Child Care) can continue. After successfully demonstrating cooperation, Supportive Services can continue for conditional applicants and sanctioned families as long as their TANF case has not been denied.

C. Supportive Services allowable for customers of TANF Choices, SNAP E&T, WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth in Workforce Services include:

1. Transportation

a. A customer may be provided assistance with transportation to activities in the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or the Family Employment Plan (FEP). In determining transportation allowances, case managers must evaluate individual customer situations, availability of transportation resources, and the most appropriate and economical method of meeting transportation needs.

b. Public transportation is considered most appropriate when available, and when it meets the requirements of a customer schedule and activity location. Case managers may provide customers bus tokens or passes, or may pay for other forms of public transportation at rates published by the transportation provider.

d. For customers using personal automobiles who need assistance with gasoline expense, transportation allowances shall not exceed $20 per day. Actual assistance must be based on the mileage from participant's residence to the location of the activity.

e. Payments must be documented in TWIST, and may continue as long as the customer maintains satisfactory participation and/or progress in the assigned activity. The customer will not be paid for days of non-participation or when the required customer activities are not attended. In the case of youth, mileage expense can be paid to a parent or other adult responsible for transporting the youth to activity/ies.

f. **Transportation allowances are to be paid in advance to remove the immediate barrier to participation.** Case managers must determine any necessary adjustments for absences or non-participation and may deduct the amount from the immediate subsequent payment or delay issuance of the next bus pass or gas card or other reasonable means to ensure that the transportation assistance is justified by participation in activities.

g. Costs associated with unforeseen repair of a personal vehicle may be considered for reimbursement not to exceed a cumulative total of **$1,200** per **12-month period** of active participation, if the vehicle is the only transportation available to the participant and disrepair will result in the customer no longer attending activity/ies with the following caveats:

- i. Authorization for the repairs must be signed by the case manager, the case manager's supervisor and the financial officer at the workforce center.
- ii. Participant must provide proof of ownership of the vehicle prior to approval of the repair.
- iii. A legitimate estimate must be submitted at the time of the request for repair, with reimbursement made on the final invoice or receipt, which must be provided to the case manager within 10 working days of the completion of repair work. Prepayment for the repairs is not allowed. These documents must be maintained in the customer file and a proper notation made in TWIST.
- iv. A waiver of the cumulative total cap ($1,200) may be approved ONLY by the Financial Manager or Project Manager for accountability. This individual must sign an approval form or memo designed by the one stop operator and when signed, must be maintained in the customer's file and notated in TWIST.

h. Assistance with the payment of automobile liability insurance for a personal vehicle may be considered for reimbursement not to exceed a cumulative total of $1,000, if the vehicle is the only transportation available to the participant and will result in the customer no longer attending activity/ies with the following caveats:

Authorization for liability insurance payments must be signed by the case manager, the case manager's supervisor and the financial officer at the workforce center. Monthly liability insurance payments can be made for up to six months or until the $1,000 maximum is met.

i. Participant must provide proof of ownership of the vehicle prior to any payment for insurance. Reimbursement shall be made upon receipt of proof of payment which must be provided to the case manager within 10 working days.

ii. Payment of liability insurance is not allowed for SNAP E&T customers as per WD Letter 06-17.

i. Costs for vehicle Registration or State Inspection are NOT allowed.

j. Car payments are NOT allowed.

k. School district bus transportation should be used whenever possible for transporting in-school youth to WIOA activities off-campus.

l. Receipts must be obtained for all reimbursements. Receipts will be maintained in the case file. Contractors must include the review of receipts as part of their usual monitoring reviews.

m. Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) participants who are co-enrolled in WIOA are eligible for dislocated worker-funded support services. However, if a Trade-certified worker lacks the job skills required to secure suitable employment and is required to commute more than 50 miles for occupational training, federal regulations dictate that TAA-funded transportation and subsistence payments:

- are not subject to any caps; and
- must not be used for expenses such as vehicle repairs, car insurance, registration, or consumables.
- As described in the TAA Guide

2. Housing and Utilities

a. Assistance with the payment of housing/rental or utility expenses may be provided to a participant who is active in a workforce program activity. Only one payment of a type, i.e. water, gas, electricity, will be provided in a six-month period; that payment can be for up to three months of expenses which are in arrears. To receive this assistance, a letter stating that eviction or shut off is eminent, a shut off or eviction policy substantiating that shutoff or eviction is imminent, or a notice of eviction or utility shut-off must be submitted to the case manager and documented in TWIST. Payment of late and/or cutoff fees is allowable if the payment is a requirement to prevent shutoff or eviction or to reestablish services**.** Allowable assistance includes full or partial payment of monthly rent on leased housing, electric bill, gas bill, water bill, or local land line service phone bill, charged to the residence of record of the participant. Case managers must scan a copy of the documentation into the customer's file and make appropriate notes in TWIST.

b. Temporary shelter may be secured and paid for to assist homeless individuals participate in workforce services. Such assistance may continue for up to three months and requires Board staff approval.

c. On-campus or training-related housing is allowed for WIOA customers who live more than 50 miles from the campus where enrolled in full-time training or short-term training (short term training is of a duration no more than six weeks of full-time training – at least four hours per day, five days per week) that requires daily attendance. It is also allowable for persons who are homeless or living in a shelter and who cannot attend school without living arrangements. Other situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis.

***3.* Health and Medical Services**

a. The purchase of eyeglasses**,** hearing aids or other medical items necessary to succeed in training and employment is allowable.

b. WIOA may pay for immunizations and tests required for admission to a training institution that cannot be obtained through the customer's personal medical insurance or a public health organization. While no dollar limit is placed, payments must be reasonable and customary for the particular service. Supportive Services will not pay for health or accident insurance.

c. Approval for these services may be granted ONLY by Financial Manager or Project Manager for accountability_. This individual must sign an approval form or memo designed by the Center System Contractor that must be scanned into the customer's file and notated in TWIST.

4. Relocation Assistance

Relocation assistance is provided to TANF Choices or WIOA customers who obtain employment in another area, and who are financially unable to move and begin work. The amount of assistance may not exceed **$500**. Relocation assistance is limited to truck rental or automobile mileage, bus tickets, and hotel/motel costs for up to three nights. Employment and relocation expenses shall be reimbursed upon submission of verifiable receipts. Such documents shall be scanned into the participant's file and documented in TWIST.

5. Child Care

All Child Care Program Rules and Policies apply to participants in need of Child Care Services. During assessment, customers in need of child care are to be evaluated for eligibility under the specific and appropriate Program Rules and Policies, and if found eligible, referred to the Child Care Services contractor to arrange care. Care should be arranged to commence by the first scheduled activity of the participant. Contractors must notify Child Care Services on the same day that services, eligibility, or participation ends as per childcare requirements.

6. Dependent Care

WIOA Supportive Services can be used to pay for dependent care for an individual (other than a child) for whom the customer has custodial care and requires supervised care during the time the customer attends workforce activities. (Sufficient documentation must be provided.)

6. GED Exam Fees

GED Exam fees may be paid for customers in CHOICES, SNAP E&T and/or WIOA. The customer must demonstrate readiness to take the GED exam by attaining sufficient scores on the official GED practice test, or by notice from the instructor of record that monitored progress indicates readiness. Customers can have four tests paid for with the option for a fifth with written Board staff approval. Payments up to the amount charged to other customers of the GED test centers may be paid. These charges should cover the actual cost of testing, any national or state processing fees, and the cost of the certificate. Exams required for admittance to a post-secondary training institution may be paid for with WIOA funds for one administration of the examination.

7. ***Job Search Related Expenses***
Customers hygienic or presentation needs may be provided for upon start of the job search process. These may include, but are not limited to a haircut, interviewing outfit, tattoo removal, or other items identified and justified by the case manager and documented in TWIST, not to exceed $100. Out-of-area Job Search expenses may be provided to include transportation to job interviews and overnight accommodations and meals not to exceed approved State of Texas travel guidelines with a maximum cumulative total of $250. All expenses must be verified and documented in TWIST, and in accordance with contractor procedures.

8. ***Work Related Expenses***
When a customer secures employment, and is in need of assistance the following may be provided in advance or as a reimbursement, based on the individual's needs for the job. Work-related expenses are also allowable when an individual participates in community service and/or work experience activities. SNAP E&T customers may receive work related expenses to accept a verified job paying no less than the federal minimum wage. Covered expenses may include but are not limited to transportation related items, uniforms, boots, shoes, tools, etc., and the cost of required examinations or certificates necessary for employment. TANF Choices customers may receive a work-related expenses to accept (or retain) a specific and verified job paying no less than the federal minimum wage. Work related expenses include, but are not limited to, tools, uniforms, equipment, transportation, car repairs, housing, moving expenses, and the cost of required examinations or certificates necessary for employment. WIOA adults, dislocated workers and youth may receive work related expenses to accept (or retain) a specific and verified job paying no less than the federal minimum wage. Work related expenses include, but are not limited to, tools, uniforms or other clothing, equipment, transportation, car repairs, housing, moving expenses, and the cost of required examinations or certificates necessary for employment.

    - Choices work-related expenses may cover other costs associated with ownership of a vehicle. These associated costs may include repairs, fees and inspections.

9. ***Relocation Assistance***
Relocation Assistance is provided to TANF Choices or WIOA customers who obtain employment in another area, and who are financially unable to move and begin work. The amount of assistance may not exceed **$500**. Relocation assistance is limited to truck rental or automobile mileage, bus tickets, and

hotel/motel costs for up to three nights. Employment and relocation expenses shall be reimbursed upon submission of verifiable receipts. Such documents shall be scanned into the participant's file and documented in TWIST.

Section III. Policy Governing Allowable Supportive Services While Participating In Workforce Training Services

A. To establish and maintain eligibility for Supportive Services while participating in WIOA training services, participants must be enrolled with a certified training provider. Supportive Services allowable for customers of WIOA Adult, Dislocated Workers and Youth in Training Services include:

1. **Any Supportive Services for which there is demonstrated need under Section II of this policy.**

2. **Health and Medical Services**

a. The purchase of eyeglasses**,** hearing aids or other medical items necessary to secure and maintain employment is allowable.

b. WIOA may pay for immunizations and tests required for admission to a training institution that cannot be obtained through the customer's personal medical insurance or a public health organization. While no dollar limit is placed, payments must be reasonable and customary for the particular service. Supportive Services will not pay for health or accident insurance. The purchase of eye glasses, hearing aids or other medical items necessary to succeed in training and employment is allowable.

c. Approval for Health and Medical Services financial support may be granted ONLY by the manager with the highest authority of the. This individual must sign an approval form or memo designed by the Center System Contractor that must be scanned into the customer's file and notated in TWIST.

3. On-campus or training-related housing

On-campus or training-related housing is allowed for customers who live more than 50 miles from the campus where enrolled in full-time training that requires daily attendance. It is also allowable for persons who are homeless or living in a shelter and who cannot attend school without living arrangements. Other situations may be considered on a case-by-case basis in accordance with contractor procedures.

4. Per-diem for meals

Per-diem for meals may be provided based on individual situations such as living on-campus, attending schools requiring special living arrangements outside their regular place of residence, or commuting to a training location requiring eight hours or more of time in that location on any single day. Such participants may receive meal assistance at a rate of $10 per training day. The daily rate of assistance may also be paid for weekends and holidays when training is not conducted, when the customer remains at the campus location. If the attendance record indicates the trainee has missed days of training for any reason other than illness or jury duty, Workforce staff must reduce the participant's next payment at the daily rate for each day missed.

B. Priority for Supportive Services for customers participating in WIOA approved training is for those enrolled in training with a Certified Training Provider within the six county Heart of Texas Workforce Development Area. Customers enrolled with a Certified Training Provider located outside the Heart of Texas Workforce Area are eligible for Supportive Services on a case-by-case basis in accordance with contractor's procedures and to the extent that funds are available.

Section IV. Policy Governing Allowable Supportive Services During the Post-Program Period Following Successful Completion of Program Services

A. WIOA customers may continue to qualify for needed Supportive Services during the 12-month post-program period.

1. To qualify for continuing assistance, employment and/or enrolled in education or training and reasonable **monthly** contact with assigned post-program case manager must be maintained. Financial need for continuation of WIOA Supportive Services must be evaluated every 60 days, and individuals who neglect to schedule such a review shall cease receiving Supportive Services assistance. In any case, contractors may provide a reduced level of assistance or refuse payment requests made by the individual based on evaluation of the customer's current financial circumstances.

2. TANF applicants and former TANF recipients are eligible to receive job retention Supportive Services for up to 12 months. Unemployed TANF recipients may continue to receive short-term, nonrecurring support services for up to four months. Services that are provided longer than four months are defined as assistance, trigger time limits, and are not allowable expenditures.

B. All decisions to maintain, reduce or terminate Supportive Services must be entered in TWIST and documented in case notes.

EFFECTIVE DATE for Change 7: 5/21/18

HEART OF TEXAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD POLICY

ID NO.:	HWD 005 -10, **Change 1**	**DATE ISSUED:**	March 18, 2010 June 21, 2010
PROGRAM:	TANF, WIA	**KEYWORD:**	Incentive Cards for Clients, Controls

Subject: Definition and limits on awarding incentive cards to clients for achieving objectives. Change 1

Purpose: To allow the Workforce Solutions Center contractor to provide limited incentives to clients for achieving certain objectives of their employability plan. In accordance with HWD 004-07 Change 2, entitled Policy Development and Approval by the Board, the language in WD Letter 27-08, Change 1 is added to this policy and adopted by the Board. The Board shall comply and conform to all requirements within that directive.

References: TWC Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts, Chapter 2
WD Letter 53-09, issued December 23, 2009
WD Letter 27-08, issued October 23, 2008
WD Letter 27-08, Change 1 issued June 18, 2010
WD Letter 59-06, Change 1 issued February 2, 2007

Discussion: Under federal and state law, nonmonetary incentives are allowable for certain eligible participants; however, the issuance of such, must be carefully safeguarded to prevent fraud and abuse. Therefore, the Board establishes this policy to provide contractors guidance for procedures on their use. In addition, the Board ensures that:

- policies in Chapter 2 of the Financial Manual for Grants and Contracts are followed to ensure effective internal control and accountability for all grant and sub-grant cash, real and personal property, and other assets;
- all such property is adequately safeguarded and used solely for authorized purposes; and
- if it is determined that such property is missing, the procedures detailed in WD Letter 59-06, Change 1, issued February 2, 2007, and entitled "Requirements for Reporting, Fact-Finding, and Prosecution of Fraud, Waste, Theft, and Program Abuse Cases, and Collection of Overpayments: Update" are followed.

Policy: The Board authorizes contractors to award incentives only if the Board contract manager is notified 60 days prior to implementation of such awards, and absolutely not before review and written acceptance of step by step procedures by both the contract manager and the Quality Assurance staff at the Board.

The contract manager shall test the system a minimum of five random times during the first quarter of operation to ensure that procedures are being implemented appropriately, and may test the system at will beyond the first quarter.   Board fiscal monitor shall review and test Workforce Solutions Center incentive card controls as part of the annual fiscal monitoring.

If at anytime it is found that procedures are being violated, the Board can unilaterally suspend the authority of the contractor to award incentives to customers and take possession of remaining inventory with no reimbursement/compensation to the contractor.

To avoid real, or the impression of, collusion, the Board contract manager shall require the contractor to periodically change the staff responsible for the inventory of incentive cards with a controlled turnover process.

Absolutely no cash or check incentives can be offered to WIA and Choices participants.

Procedural Requirements: Control measures must ensure a distinct separation of duties regarding the acquisition, safekeeping, and accounting of incentive cards.

The contractor procedures shall define steps that ensure:

1. the specific objective/s that must be achieved to qualify for an incentive;
2. the frequency with which an incentive may be earned, as well as other definitions and limitations;
3. purchased incentive card quantities are verified by denomination and signed for when received by a staff other than the person who procured the order;
4. incentive cards are disbursed in the presence of two staff members or, if this is not possible, that a clear separation of duties exists with, for example, a case manager issues a voucher for the incentive card and a separate Workforce Solutions Center staff member issues the incentive card;
5. a receipt log is maintained on file that:
   - documents the number of incentive cards, the card numbers, and their denominations; and
   - is signed by both the issuer and the awardee when an incentive card is dispensed;
   - only the named awardee may collect and sign for an incentive card (no proxies);
6. staff with incentive cards in their possession performs a physical inventory of the cards at the beginning and end of each business day;
7. the receipt log is reconciled each month to an accounting system (such as a general ledger or a subsidiary ledger), and includes reconciliation of the inventory including the number of incentive cards on hand and cards issued by card number and denomination;
8. incentive cards are maintained in a secured and locked area at all times; and
9. access to incentive cards is limited to designated staff.

Effective Date: March 18, 2010; Change 1, June 21, 2010.