Board Guidance on Covid-19 Response  
March 20, 2020

Choices

No Show/Non-Participation
Reference: Choices Guide B-304.a: Good Cause & B-800 Noncooperation
In the event that there is a need to enter a Good Cause for customers due to a No Show/Non-participation because of COVID-19:

- Mandatory to participate Scheduled and No Show/No Call
  - Timely and Reasonable Attempt (TRA) process still needs to be followed. Staff should add alternative communication methods, such as text and email, to meet participation requirements
  - If mandatory participant fails to participate or communicate with staff a penalty will need to be issued (See Choices Guide B-801.b)
  - If mandatory participant responds to the TRA and communicates with staff a good cause reason, a good cause services can be approved

- Mandatory to participate and participant calls staff to inform that they are not able to come in/complete their participation activities due to illness (self/family member), lack of employers that are open for job search purposes, and/or the participant is uncomfortable leaving home because of COVID-19, staff will enter a Good Cause in TWIST as follows:
  - Offer a Good Cause service in TWIST Service Tracking
  - Enter good cause action in the Good cause tab
  - Counselor Notes regarding good cause reason

Workforce Orientation of Applicants (WOA)
Reference: Choices Guide Section B-102.d Alternative WOA
- In order to continue providing the WOA as required, staff can do by providing an Alternative WOA:
  - Offering a WOA during non-business hours
  - Conducting a WOA by telephone
  - Instituting a computer based WOA
  - Creating a WOA video
- Boards need to determine the most efficient way to complete and return the H2588 Workforce Orientation Form to HHSC and the customer (for example mailing/emailing to the customer, faxing the completed form to HHSC from a remote location if staff is telecommuting or scheduling staff to go into the workforce center to fax to HHSC.

Assessments (TABE, etc.)
Reference: Choices Guide A-403.a: Re-determining State Time Limits & B-305: Literacy Assessment
- Staff must ensure that a Choices customer has not been given an assessment previously (please note that literacy scores do not expire).
- Choices participants who must be given an assessment:
  - Recommend that staff schedule this assessment after the COVID-19 situation and Workforce Centers are staff back to normal. Please ensure that staff enter a case note in TWIST detailing the delay in providing the assessment.
In the event that an assessment must be done in order to prevent a delay in possible training/placement in worksite, schedule the participant for the assessment at the workforce center ensuring to practice social distancing for both staff and customer.

Supportive Services

- Participants that are still participating and need supportive services, staff must make arrangements to provide the supportive services as required. For example:
  - For Boards that already assign the participants a refillable card, support services can be provided as documentation is received via, email, fax or mail
  - For Boards that do not assign a refillable card, staff can be in the office on a scheduled basis (one day a week for support service issuance). Participant appointments for supportive services should be scheduled with enough time in between appointments to ensure that there is not a large group of participants/family members in the same waiting area at one time
- Boards should only provide support services to customers that are actively participating in the program
- The decision to expand support services payments (i.e. increasing the amount, expanding what we can provide payments for, etc.) will be up to each Board, as long as it is allowable in State and Federal regulation.
- Boards will not be allowed to provide transportation in cash. That will impact the customers benefits.

Participants in Subsidized Employment
Reference: Choices Guide Section B-304.a: Good Cause

- If the worksite closes or the customer does not wish to continue in that activity for fear of COVID-19, Good Cause should be granted.

Choices EPS
Reference: Choices Guide Section B-102.d Alternative WOA, Section B-300 Assessment & Employment Planning

- Choices mandatory customers will continue to be in the Board’s Choices Full Work Rate denominator therefore Boards should continue to outreach Choices customers and provide services using technology as much as possible. These include:
  - Offering the EPS during non-business hours
  - Conducting the EPS by telephone
  - Instituting a computer-based EPS
  - Creating an EPS video
- Please refer to the No Show/Non-Participation Guidance above as needed
- In the event that the Workforce center closes due to COVID-19, how will scheduled customers be notified?
  - Workforce Center Notice Posted Outside
  - Staff should call the customer and notify them of the center closure and offer them an alternative EPS
Employment Service

Job Postings
Reference: WorkinTexas.com Basic Navigation guide: Creating Job Orders

Job orders
- Staff must ensure that new employers entering job postings are approved by BSU staff as required.

BSU functions should continue by using technology, such as Reviewing jobs online and call/emailing contacts if clarifications are required.

NCP Choices

Services

- NCP staff should continue to maintain required contact with NCP participants. All customer contact/services MUST be data entered in BOTH TWIST and COLTS.
- NCP Choices participants can continue to provide services and track services in TWIST and COLTS in the event the center closes, if WF services are still being provided.

Supportive Services
Reference: NCP Choices Guide B-200: Support Services

- Participants that are still participating and need supportive services, staff must make arrangements to provide the supportive services as required. For example:
  - For Boards that already assign the participants a refillable card, support services can be provided as documentation is received via, email, fax or mail
  - For Boards that do not assign a refillable card, staff can be in the office on a scheduled basis (one day a week for support service issuance). Participant appointments for supportive services should be scheduled with enough time in between appointments to ensure that there is not a large group of participants/family members in the same waiting area at one time
- Boards should only provide support services to customers that are actively participating in the program
- The decision to expand support services payments (i.e. increasing the amount, expanding what we can provide payments for, etc.) will be up to each Board, as long as it is allowable in State and Federal regulation.
  - Boards will not be allowed to provide transportation in cash. That will impact the customers benefits

Job Search
Reference: NCP Choices Guide B-106.b: Job Search

- Staff should continue to work with NCP participants using technology (Skype, telephone, email etc. and continue to provide job search assistance, for example:
  - Review/update WIT application
  - Job Match/Job referrals

No Show/Non-Participation

NCP Choices Guide B-401: Request to Remove
• In the event that there is a need to enter a Good Cause for customers due to a No Show/Non-participation because of COVID-19:
  o NCP Choices participant that is a No call/no show
    ▪ Attempt to reengagement the customer and determine reason for noncompliance. Add to all communication, alternative methods, such as fax or email, to meet participation requirements.
    ▪ After 30 days a request to remove must be submitted to OAG.
    ▪ If mandatory participant responds and communicates with staff a good cause reason, a good cause service can be approved
  o NCP Choices participant calls staff to inform that they are not able to come in/complete their participation activities due to illness (self/family member), lack of employers that are open, or not available internet access for job search purposes, and/or the participant is uncomfortable leaving home because of COVID-19, staff will enter a Good Cause in TWIST as follows:
    ▪ (91) Good Cause service in TWIST Service Tracking
    ▪ Enter good cause action in the Good cause tab
    ▪ Counselor Notes regarding good cause reason

Court Attendance
  • OAG has notified TWC that All IV-D (child support) courts are closed through March 31

Rapid Response

Orientations
*Reference: TEGL 19-16 Section:18 Rapid Response*
  • Currently, there are no restrictions when providing Rapid Response orientations virtually via a pre-recorded webinar, one on one phone call, a conference call or skype.
  • Rapid Response Coordinators need to continue to submit to State staff, the Lay-Off Notifications form, even with limited information so State staff can immediately assign a number for the impacted business
  • Rapid Response staff need to follow local guidance when delivering Rapid Response Services
  • Boards must provide information and guidance to assist employers with the following:
    ▪ UI benefits, comprehensive Workforce Solutions Office services, and employment and training activities;
    ▪ Guidance or financial assistance in establishing a labor-management committee;
    ▪ Emergency assistance adapted to the particular closing, layoff, or disaster; and
    ▪ Assistance for chief elected officials to develop a coordinated response to the dislocation event and, as needed, to obtain access to state economic development assistance.
    ▪ Direct Employers to the [Short-Term Compensation (STC) grant](https://twc.texas.gov/news/efte/oi_law_coverage_issues.html) and Shared Work Programs [https://twc.texas.gov/businesses/shared-work](https://twc.texas.gov/businesses/shared-work)
  • The TWC Unemployment Department is currently working on a COVID-19 webpage. In the interim:
    ▪ Employers can file mass claims for impacted employees
Employees can file claims on-line for unemployment

**Layoff Aversion**

*Reference: TEGL 19-16 Section:18 Rapid Response*

Some examples of layoff aversion projects that use creative strategies to address COVID-19-related effects* on businesses and workers include, but are not limited to:

- A call center environment needs to have their employees work from home/remotely in order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19. **Layoff aversion funding could be used to purchase remote access equipment that the employee would need to use from home to support their work.**

- § A business whose employees use specific software or computer applications asks their employees work from home/remotely in order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19. **Layoff aversion funding could be used to purchase the software/programs that the employee would need to use from home to support their work.**

- § Due to decline in business/revenue, a company is reducing the hours of three or more employees, and the employer may be eligible for Texas’s “work share” Unemployment Insurance assistance program. Between the employee’s pay and UI benefits, the employee is still collecting less income than usual, and is having difficulty paying bills, mortgages, etc. **Layoff aversion funding could be used to supplement the employee’s income and benefits.**

- § In order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19, a company that usually runs two shifts of workers adds a third shift, so that fewer employees are on onsite at any given time. **Layoff aversion funding could be used to offset related costs to the employer or workers.**

- § A small business needs their employees to be at work, on site, but cannot afford frequent deep cleaning to help prevent potential exposure to COVID-19. **Layoff aversion funds could be used to pay for a cleaning/sanitization service.**

*Note: Layoff aversion funds can always be used to support creative approaches and strategies; other business/employee needs could be substituted for COVID-19-related language in the examples above.

**RESEA**

**Orientations**

*Reference: RESEA Program Guide: RESEA Services Details, RESEA Orientation*

- The last RESEA list (until further notice), was pulled by UI on March 9th, 2020. RESEA customers from that list should be scheduled at least 21 days from March 9th and based on based on schedules already set by each Workforce Center, these RESEA orientations could go out weeks.

- If you already have RESEA customers scheduled for an orientation:
  - Consider providing Orientations/Required Services by other than face to face. USDOL has encourage flexibility in RESEA service delivery. Boards have the flexibility to provide RESEA orientations AND required services via telephone, FaceTime, Skype or other remote options as necessary.
If Customer is a NO Show for their RESEA Orientation:

- Workforce Center staff will not penalize any RESEA customer that does not show up for their scheduled appointment.
- Workforce Center staff will Exempt all customers that do not show up to their scheduled RESEA Orientation Appointment.

- Information on exemptions can be found at: IT Liaison page: Program Specific Resources entitled Managing RESEA Job Seekers (Individuals) in WorkInTexas.com. and RESEA guide effective November 22, 2019, RESEA Orientation.

https://twc.texas.gov/development/wit/wit_staff_rec.html

SNAP E&T

No Show/Non-Participation due to COVID-19

Reference: SNAP E & T Guide B-113: Noncooperation with SNAP E & T Requirements

- In the event that there is a need to enter a Good Cause for customers due to a No Show/Non-participation because of COVID-19:
  - Mandatory to participate Scheduled and No Show/No Call
    - Timely and reasonable attempt process still needs to be followed. Add to communication, alternative ways to meet participation requirements
    - If mandatory participant fails to participate or communicate with staff a penalty will need to be issued (See SNAP E & T Guide B-113)
    - If mandatory participant responds to the TRA and communicates with staff a good cause reason, a temporary interruption can be approved
  - Mandatory to participate and participant calls staff to inform that they are not able to come in/complete their participation activities due to illness (self/family member), lack of employers that are open, or not available internet access for job search purposes, and/or the participant is uncomfortable leaving home because of COVID-19, staff will enter a temporary interruption.

Temporary Interruption for no show/non-participation

Reference: SNAP E & T Guide A-400: Temporary Interruption

- If there is a need for a temporary interruption due to COVID-19, staff should grant Good Cause as follow:
  - Temporary Interruption approved = (91) Good Cause service in TWIST Service Tracking
  - Enter good cause action in the Good cause tab
  - Counselor Notes regarding the temporary interruption reason

Supportive Services

SNAP E & T Guide B-200: Support Services

- Participants that are still participating and need supportive services, staff should make arrangements to provide the supportive services as required. For example:
  - For Boards that already assign the participants a refillable card, support services can be provided as documentation is received via, email, fax or mail
  - For Boards that do not assign a refillable card, staff can be in the office on a scheduled basis (one day a week for support service issuance). Participant appointments for supportive services should be scheduled with enough time in between appointments to
ensure that there is not a large group of participants/family members in the same waiting area at one time

- Support services will not be provided to participants while they are in Good Cause or under suspended work requirements

工作或工作经验

参考：SNAP E & T Guide A-400: Temporary Interruption

如果参与者告知他们不能参与，或出于Covid-19的原因，或如果站点因Covid-19而关闭，工作人员将提供临时中断。

- 如果有需要因Covid-19而提供临时中断，工作人员应遵循以下程序：
  - 临时中断批准 = (91) Good Cause service in TWIST Service Tracking
  - 在Good cause tab中输入Good cause action
  - 就临时中断原因向咨询师提供Note

SNAP E&T EPS

参考：SNAP E & T Guide B-302: Outreach

- 一般人口客户不需要由委员会进行外展。
- 100%的ABAWDS必须被外展和EPS可能在可能的情况下使用技术提供。这些包括：
  - 在非营业时间提供EPS
  - 通过电话进行EPS
  - 通过SKYPE, Microsoft Teams或在线演示创建EPS视频

- 请参阅No Show/Non-Participation Guidance以上内容

- 在工作中心因COVID-19而关闭的情况下，工作人员应：
  - 确保在中心外张贴工作中心通知
  - 电话通知客户，并向他们提供替代EPS

注：根据2020年3月19日由国会通过的第6201号决议：

- 当地中心工作人员不得再外展/安排任何新的SNAP E&T EPS会面或对任何SNAP E&T客户进行处罚，因为他们没有参加/未能参加。
- 工作人员可以关闭这些案件并在TWIST中创建案例注释说明关闭原因是因为Covid-19响应。
- 暂停计数联邦时间限制在任何被宣布为公共卫生紧急情况的月份。

贸易调整援助（TAA）

要求联系/案例注释用于继续UI/TRA福利

参考：贸易调整援助（TAA）指南A-104: 报告
• State TAA staff have the ability to enter case notes in TWIST in the absence of the local areas’ ability to do so. In order to facilitate this:
• Local staff should communicate via emails and skype with students and training providers to gather the information regarding assessments, enrollment details, number of credit hours, semester dates, & training status (full time or part time) and send this information with a request for State staff to enter the actual waiver.

Reemployment Plans (REP)
• Local staff should communicate via emails and skype with students and training providers to gather the information regarding assessments, enrollment details, number of credit hours, semester dates, & training status (full time or part time), training costs, etc. In the event local staff are not able to enter approval details into TWIST, please notify State staff.
• State staff will continue to review all training requests above $25,000.00 and requests for denial of training via email submissions from the Board area, no need for a change in the current process.

Relocation/Job Search Assistance
Reference: TAA Guide D-100: Job Search and Relocation Allowances
• Job Search and Relocation allowances are processed via DocuSign, and managed at the state level, there is no need for a change in the current process.

Waivers
• This will not require a change to the current process. Waivers and counseling notes in TWIST will continued to be reviewed by UI for the purpose of TRA benefits.
• Local staff must continue to maintain monthly contact during Waiver period
• In the event local staff are not able to document the Waiver details and Counseling Notes in TWIST, please notify State TAA staff through email taa@twc.state.tx.us

Monthly Contact
Reference: WD Letter 06-13 Documenting Services and Participant Contact in The Workforce Information System of Texas Counselor Notes
• Local staff may communicate via emails and skype with students and training providers to gather the information needed to comply with the required monthly contact (during waiver periods, training, benchmarking).
• In the event local staff are not able to document Counseling Notes in TWIST, please notify State TAA staff through email taa@twc.state.tx.us

TAA Eligibility
Reference: TAA Guide C-100
• State TAA staff will continue to determine TAA eligibility. TAA eligibility is available in TWIST as usual. There will be no need a change in the current process.

Trade Impacts
• As local areas begin receiving questions regarding the petition process or eligibility for trade, please be aware of the following:
  o The first step in the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) petition process is to determine whether to file a petition. The following questions are designed to help in making the decision:
    ▪ Did the company shift production or services to a foreign country?
    ▪ Did foreign imports or supply of services cause a decline in sales or production for the company?
    ▪ Was the company a downstream producer or service supplier of a Trade-certified company?
    ▪ Was the company identified by the International Trade Commission (ITC) as having “injury” or “market disturbance” in the Federal Register?

A petition must be filed with the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Office of Trade Adjustment Assistance (OTAA). If the petition is certified, trade-affected workers will be eligible to individually apply for TAA. Petition form and filing instructions are available on DOL’s website. https://www.etareports.doleta.gov/petition/index.cfm?reset=true

A petition may be filed by any of the following:
  • Group of at least three coworkers from the same firm at the same job location
  • Union official
  • Company official
  • State or local agency representative at the Workforce Solutions Offices

Unemployment Benefits

WorkInTexas.com Registration and Work Search Requirements
Reference: Governor’s Declaration and TWC Press Release
  • In response to the COVID-19 disaster declaration, work search requirements have been waived for unemployment benefits claimants in Texas. This applies to all claimants.
  • This includes any requirement previously in place for claimants to register in WorkinTexas.com.
  • TWC’s UI department is setting work search exemptions for all new claimants. Existing claimants are being informed of work search exemption when they file their next payment request.
  • Governor Abbott has waived the waiting week for all new claimants.
  • Following the end of this disaster, claimant work search requirements will be reinstated. At that time, all claimants will receive written notification that will include:
    o Work search requirement amount, and
    o Effective date of requirement (14 days after change)

WIOA
Customer Contact Requirements
Reference: WD Letter 06-13 Documenting Services and Participant Contact in The Workforce Information System of Texas Counselor Notes
  • As required to ensure WIOA case does not exit, please continue to enter case notes in TWIST regarding customer contacts and ensure that service activity in TWIST are reflective of the participant’s activity.
• Staff can run a Caseload Report (TWIST WEB report, “76-Case Load Report”) in order to identify their active WIOA participants.
• Staff may contact customers though other than face to face contact such as telephone, email and Skype.

Support Services
Reference: WIOA Guide: II. Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers and V. WIOA Youth, Program Elements
• For customers that are still in school/working and need supportive services in order to participate in the activity:
  o Recommend that customers and staff provide required documentation by:
    ▪ Fax or Email
    ▪ On a specific day and time that center may be open with skeleton crew staff appointments made with customers 30 minutes apart or within a reasonable timeframe to come into the center.
    ▪ Possibly create a system where customers wait in the vehicle and staff can bring out the support service to their vehicle. Consider reloadable cards with staff purchase tracking.

WIOA funded Services - Training, and Work Experience
• Participant still attending Training/Worksite - Staff may contact the training provider and worksite employer through phone and email in order to obtain information on participant’s progress.
  o Timesheet and progress reports can be scanned by the service provider/employer and submitted through email to the workforce center staff.
• Participant is no longer able to attend Training/Worksite
  o When training/education site, including Work Experience is interrupted due to COVID-19, A Planned Gap in Service should be used even if the Gap is shorter than the required 90-day duration. In addition, Planned Gap can be used for participants involved in non-training or education services such as job readiness, job search etc. This will avoid the Period of Participation (POP) closing and eligibility needing to be redetermined.
  o For paid work experiences, transitional jobs, OJTs: may be useful to be prepared to transfer to other available sites as applicable.
• Detailed Case Notes should be entered for all changes/updates

WIOA Assessments (TABE, etc.)
• Neither TWC nor the Law require an assessment prior to being placed in training.
• Some Boards may have this in policy or a procedure and some providers may require assessments prior to starting training.
• Assessments that are needed to determine Priority of Service cannot be waived, however arrangements can be made to ensure staff are practicing social distancing for the protection of the staff and the participant.
• Youth are required to be assessed for Basic Skills for eligibility purposes.

**General Notice**

In general, for any outreach correspondence (for example Choices/SNAP E&T EPS) please add a statement to your correspondence that informs customers not to come into the center if they are not feeling well or think they could have been exposed. For example:

Your health and safety is our priority. If you are feeling unwell, have been in contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19, please do not come into the center. Instead, please call us at XXX-XXX-XXXX so that we can make arrangements to work with you remotely.

**Helpful Links**

• Information for COVID-10 for Employers and Jobseekers

Sample Notice:
Your Health and Safety = Our Top Priority

If you have...

• Been in contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

• Concerns that you may have been in contact with an individual who has been diagnosed with COVID-19;

• Been feeling unwell.

We ask that you please work with us remotely.

Call us at XXX-XXX-XXXX rather than stopping by in person.

We want to ensure you get the best service possible and keep our community healthy.

TEXAS WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS

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