


WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTHEAST TEXAS BOARD POLICY LETTER







Directive:	23 - 27
Date:	July 19, 2023
Keyword(s):	TWIST, All Programs
Effective:	Immediately

TO: Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas – All Contractors
FROM: Mary Hammon, Executive Director 
SUBJECT: Determining Minimum Self-Sufficiency Levels

PURPOSE:

To provide Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Board Administrative staff (Board) and Workforce Solutions Centers Contractor (Contractor) staff with information on accessing the adjusted 100 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) guidelines for use in determining minimum self-sufficiency wage levels for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participants as well as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families/Choices (Choices), Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E & T) and Trade Adjustment Act (TAA).

REFERENCES:

-  Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act §§3(36), 127(b)(2)(C), and 132 (b)(1)(B)
-  Department of Labor Lower Living Standard Income Level
-  Federal Register May 8, 2023
-  Choices Rules and Guidelines
-  Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E & T) Policy and Guidelines
-  Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) Guidelines

BACKGROUND:

Under WIOA, training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who, among other criteria, are:

- Unlikely to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services and
- are in need of training to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) LLSIL guidelines and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (HHS) Poverty Guidelines are each updated annually. Accordingly, the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC) updates its website twice a year to reflect the new income guidelines and effective dates.

The following two income guidelines are combined and use the higher dollar amount for each family-size unit to establish WIOA low-income eligibility guidelines:

- HHS Poverty Guidelines
- DOL 70 percent LLSIL guidelines

The 100 percent LLSIL is the minimum criterion for determining whether wages from employment in the local workforce development area (workforce area) can lead to self-sufficiency.

Because the DOLETA 100% LLSIL guidelines are adjusted annually, Texas Workforce Commission updates the 100% LLSIL Table once a year to reflect the adjusted self-sufficiency levels. Attached are the minimum self-sufficiency income levels for Southeast Texas. See Attachment 1.

POLICY/PROCEDURES:

The Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas Board (Board) is utilizing the U.S. Department of Labor 100 percent LLSIL guidelines to set minimum criteria for determining whether WIOA Title I participant receive self-sufficiency wages in their workforce area. Based on the economic conditions in the Southeast Texas Workforce Area, the Board has defined as having a family income at 200% of the yearly LLSIL The Contractor must use the 2023 200% LLSIL Table to determine self-sufficiency wage levels.

To determine whether a WIOA participant is receiving self-sufficiency wages levels, the Contractor must compare the participant's current wages earned to the Board's determined 2023 Self-Sufficiency Wage Levels Table that are based on the DOLETA's 2023 100% LLSIL. Current wages are the hourly, weekly, or monthly earnings at the time of the eligibility determination. **NOTE:** Do not utilize the 26-week history of earnings used to determine WIOA low-income eligibility.

A. General

Training services may be made available to employed and unemployed customers who:

- a) Have met the eligibility requirements; and received at least one service through Individualized Career Services and have been determined to be unable to obtain or retain employment through such services.
- b) After an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and case management, by Contractor, and the customer have been determined to be in need of training services and to have the skills and qualifications to successfully complete the selected training program.
- c) Select a program of training services that is directly linked to the Board's target list or in another Board area to which the customer is willing to relocate.

All must be documented in the customer's case file.

In order to provide additional services to employed program participants using program funds including WIOA Adults, WIOA Dislocated Workers, TAA, SNAP E&T, and Choices, the Contractor must ensure that the employed individual and their families wages are below the Board's sufficient wage levels as outlined in the Chart included in this Directive or defined below for laid off workers.

For the purpose of this policy, "more intense services" are defined in the following manner:

- Choices and/or SNAP E&T post-employment services are defined in the most recent program policies and rules.
- WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers services are outlined at the Career Services Level in the most recent WIOA Guidelines.

For those Choices and SNAP E&T customers that may no longer be eligible for services but are in need of more assistance to become self-sufficient after employment is obtained, staff should refer them to programs such as WIOA (Adult, Dislocated Worker or Youth) or other partners for post-employment services. The referral is not necessary, if the customer meets the self-sufficient wage levels as determined in their financial analysis.

In order to determine if employment leads to self-sufficiency, staff must adhere to the definitions and criteria identified in sections B and C below.

B. Self Sufficiency Definition

The Board has defined “self-sufficiency” for employed customers receiving services through Choices, SNAP E&T, and WIOA Adult and Dislocated Workers and any other funding stream as appropriate. In addition, the self-sufficiency wage must comply with B1 or B2 below:

1. All Participants – Employed customers may be considered to meet self-sufficiency, if the job meets or exceeds the wage needed to become self-sufficient as identified in the Service Plan and/or the financial analysis.
2. WIOA Adults, Choices, and SNAP E&T Customers – These customers are considered self-sufficient if wages are at least 200% of the most recent LLSIL and Poverty Income Levels for the Board Area. Family income must be taken into consideration and compared against the most recent LLSIL Table.
3. WIOA Dislocated Workers – Self-sufficiency for WIOA Dislocated Workers defined as an income level on a job obtained after the layoff job that is at least 95% of the layoff wage or no less than 200% of the most recent LLSIL and Poverty Income Levels for the Board Area.

NOTE: For WIOA Dislocated Workers, family income does not have to be taken into consideration, only the participant’s income. If 95% of the layoff wage is lower than 200% of the most recent LLSIL, staff should use 200% of the LLSIL to determine self-sufficient wage level for a family of one.

C. Calculation Parameters and Methodology

Once a participant in programs such as TAA, WIOA Dislocated Worker Services, WIOA Adult Services, SNAP E&T and/or Choices become employed, staff must determine whether the individual meets the Self-Sufficiency **prior** to the receipt of more intense services. This determination will be based on current weekly, monthly, or annual earnings of the participant using the attached Self-Sufficient Wage Chart.

The self-sufficiency requirement may be waived in situations where a customer is employed in a temporary job for three months or less. The employer must document the temporary nature of the job (i.e., telephone verification from employer, employer statement, applicant statement, customer self-attestation, etc.).

The following parameters and methodology must be adhered to when determining a self-sufficient wage:

- The self-sufficiency will be determined based on current earnings. Projections should not be used.
- The self-sufficient wage level may be calculated in various increments including weekly, monthly, yearly, etc. (See Chart to assist with calculations when using the LLSIL to determine self-sufficiency.)
- Documentation of wages and the self-sufficiency calculation must be in the customer’s case file. Documentation of wages may include check stubs, employer verification, applicant statement, etc.

- For those customers that are receiving services through programs which allow either the 200% or the 95% wage method to calculate self-sufficiency, staff may determine which method will be used. The method used should be documented in the customer's case file.

Note: No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Board and Contractor must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this Directive and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by "must" or "shall."

RESCISSION:

The information included in this Directive supersedes and rescinds the following Directive and its attachments:

- Policy Directive 22-17 Change 1, issued February 27, 2023, and entitled, "Determining Minimum Self-Sufficiency Levels."

ACTION REQUIRED:

The Contractor must:

- Ensure that appropriate staff is comprised of and complies with the requirement in this Directive.
- WIOA Title I participants who are determined ineligible for intensive services on or after May 8, 2023, should be re-evaluated based on the information contained in the Board's 2023 Self-Sufficiency Wage Levels Table.
- Adhere to the policy that outlines General Information, Self Sufficiency Definition and Calculation Parameters and Methodology in accordance with the Board's SSWL Table.
- Update the Self-Sufficiency Wage Worksheet for usage based on the current guidelines outlined in this policy. The worksheet must be retained in customer's case file.

It is recommended that Contractor retain the following information for monitoring purposes:

- Policy Directive 22-17, Change 1
- 2022 Self-Sufficiency Wage Levels Table
- DOLETA's 2022 100% LLSIL

INQUIRIES:

Please direct all comments and inquiries pertaining to this policy to Eva Cezar Hebert via email: eva.hebert@setworks.org

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1: Workforce Solutions Southeast Texas 2023 Self Sufficiency Wage Level Table

ATTACHMENT 1

WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS SOUTHEAST TEXAS BOARD AREA

2023

200% Self Sufficiency Wage Levels Table

FAMILY SIZE	DOLETA 2022 100% LLSIL	DOLETA 2023 100% LLSIL	BOARD 2023 ANNUALLY 200%	BOARD 2023 MONTHLY 200%	BOARD 2023 WEEKLY 200%	BOARD 2023 HOURLY WAGE 200%
1	\$14,832	\$15,588	\$31,176	\$2,598	\$600	\$14.99
2	\$24,302	\$25,541	\$51,082	\$4,257	\$982	\$24.56
3	\$33,355	\$35,056	\$70,112	\$5,843	\$1,348	\$33.71
4	\$41,180	\$43,280	\$86,560	\$7,213	\$1,665	\$41.62
5	\$48,602	\$51,081	\$102,162	\$8,514	\$1,965	\$49.12
6	\$54,843	\$59,742	\$119,484	\$9,957	\$2,298	\$57.44
7	\$65,083	\$68,403	\$136,806	\$11,401	\$2,631	\$65.77
8	\$73,324	\$77,065	\$154,130	\$12,844	\$2,964	\$74.10
9	\$81,564	\$85,726	\$171,452	\$14,288	\$3,297	\$82.43
10	\$89,805	\$94,387	\$188,774	\$15,731	\$3,630	\$90.76
Greater than 10	Add \$8,241 For each family member greater than 10	Add \$8,661 For each family member greater than 10	Multiply by 200% DOLETA's 2023 LLSIL Amount	Divide Annual Self-Sufficiency Amount by 12	Divide Annual Self-Sufficiency Amount by 52	Divide Annual Self-Sufficiency by 2080