

POLICY

CATEGORY:	Workforce Programs- Choices	No: 4.2.100.03
SUBJECT:	Service Strategies	
SUPERSEDES:	4.2.100.02 dated May 21, 2019	
EFFECTIVE:	September 26, 2024	
BOARD APPROVAL:	September 25, 2024	
DATE OF LAST REVIEW:	September 12, 2024	

I. PURPOSE:

To establish criteria and provide guidance on the implementation of strategies in providing Choices Eligible services in the Coastal Bend area.

II. DEFINITIONS:

Applicant – an adult or a teen head of household in a family who applies for TANF cash assistance, who previously did not leave TANF in a sanctioned status.

Choices Eligible – an individual eligible to receive Choices services including an adult or teen head of household who is an applicant, conditional applicant, recipient, non-recipient parent, former recipient, or sanctioned family.

Concentrated Services – job placement services concentrated on Choices Eligible participants approaching their state or federal time limit such as targeted outreach and targeted job development.

Conditional Applicant – an adult or teen head of household in a sanctioned status, but who is reapplying for TANF cash assistance that must demonstrate cooperation with Choices program requirements for four consecutive weeks.

Extended TANF recipients – a recipient who receives TANF cash assistance past the 60-month federal time limit because of a hardship exemption.

Former TANF Recipient – an adult or teen head of household who no longer receives TANF cash assistance because of employment.

Risk of returning to TANF cash assistance – he or she is a SNAP recipient or receives Commission-funded child care.

TANF – Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

Time limits – the number of months certain individuals can receive TANF benefits. State time limit of 12, 24, or 36 months is based on an individual's education and work history and Federal is a 60-month lifetime limit.

III. POLICY STATEMENT:

Workforce Solutions Coastal Bend shall coordinate all career center services to implement a system that promotes self-sufficiency among Choices Eligible participants.

Strategies to provide Choices Eligible services shall demonstrate:

- Concentrated efforts to immediately engage applicants in workforce career center services and informs customers of all available support services, including TANF applicant child care;
- Applicants and conditional applicants make an informed decision of their options to withdraw from TANF, continue with TANF certification, or apply for One Time TANF based on information provided;
- Outreach methods, appointment letters, and facilitation techniques specific to each Choices Eligible in an effort to motivate and engage more customers that want to participate rather than have to participate;
- A standardized Work First design which engages Choices Eligible participants *immediately* with activities that promote employment outcomes such as sharing labor market information, registering in WorkInTexas.com, providing job leads, having employers on site who hire, and a written appointment to start structured job readiness activities;
- Job readiness activities should prepare Choices-eligible participants for job searching and successful employment retention. These activities should include completing job applications, developing essential (soft) skills, resume writing, and interview preparation. Scheduling should be based on participant assessments. Those with limited job search and employment experience should have job readiness activities scheduled alongside job search activities. Assessments are built on strengths instead of barriers and is an ongoing process, not a one-time event;
- Family Employment Plans (FEP) are developed to anchor a commitment from the participant and used as a planning document for *continuous* engagement of work activities with scheduled services that promote the plan and keep the participant productive;
- Promotion of fewer workshops offered more frequently, focused on the participant not the program, and with topics such as WorkInTexas.com, Job Search, Applying for Jobs Online and Interviewing;
- Job clubs provide network opportunities along with job search topics. Choices staff will provide Choices Eligible participants with job referrals in WorkInTexas.com;
- All Career Center staff, to include the Business Service Unit (BSU), support the Choices staff to provide Choices Eligible participants with job referrals, employment opportunities, job development, job fairs and hiring events with targeted occupations specific to the Choices population;
- Incentives are provided to Choices Eligible participants in an effort to improve employment, training, and education outcomes;
- Post-employment services will be monitored the length of time the Choices Eligible participants receive TANF cash assistance to ensure hours of employment required are reported at least monthly.
- Post-employment services are provided to applicants, conditional applicants, and former

recipients who have obtained employment but require additional assistance in retaining employment based on family circumstances and the risk of returning to TANF cash assistance.

- Financial Literacy Training is provided to enhance financial skills.
- Choices Eligible participants with disabilities include reasonable accommodations to allow access and participate in services, where applicable by law.
- Concentrated job placement services will be targeted to Choices Eligible participants approaching their state or federal time limit irrespective of any extension of time due to a hardship exemption for recipients who 1) have six months or less remaining of their state TANF time limit, 2) have twelve months or less remaining of their 60-month federal TANF time limit and 3) are extended TANF recipients.

Contracted service providers may determine an organizational structure for providing services to Choices Eligible participants. Choices services shall be provided by staff that are continuously trained in order to demonstrate competency in required and specialized job functions such as facilitation, outreach, and case management.

IV. PROCEDURES:

The contracted service provider shall develop operating procedures that comply with this policy.

V. RELATED POLICY INFORMATION:

Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (Public Law 109-71) 45 C.F.R. Parts 261
TWC Choices Rules, 40 TAC, Chapter 811 TWC Choices Guide, March 2024
Texas Labor Code, Rule 302.0027, Financial Literacy Training

VI. RESPONSIBILITIES:

The Board Contract Manager must ensure that appropriate staff is apprised of and complies with the requirements in this policy.

The contracted service provider shall ensure that appropriate procedures are implemented, and that relevant staff receive training regarding the requirements of this policy.

VII. FORMS AND INSTRUCTIONS: N/A

VIII. DISTRIBUTION:

- Board of Directors Board Staff Service Provider Staff

IX. SIGNATURES:

<u><i>Ricardo Muñoz</i></u> Reviewed by EOO Officer	<u>9/26/2024</u> Date
<u><i>Ken Treviño</i></u> Executive Director	<u>09/26/2024</u> Date