Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
Request for Proposals Cover Page
Next Generation of Youth (NextGen) Workforce Development Program

The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM) has been awarded a $2.5M contract from the Gulf Coast Workforce Board/Houston-Galveston Area Council for the NextGen Workforce Development Program. Accordingly, ACAM hereby solicits proposals from qualified contractors, registered to work in the state of Texas.

RFP TIMELINE

Official Release Date: Friday, November 4, 2022 Full RFP posted at: https://acamweb.org/funding-vendor-opportunities
Optional RFP Info Session via Zoom: Thursday, November 17, 2022, 2:00 pm-3:00 pm
Registration link: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEtc-6grz4rHNQcsUNeJZB0PTyyMgJDv226
Deadline to submit questions: Friday, November 18, 2022, at 5PM CDT
Please submit questions in writing to bgorman@acamweb.org with the subject line "NextGen RFP Question(s)_Agency Name"
Answers to written questions posted: Monday, November 21, 2022 by 5:00 PM CDT
Proposals Due: Friday, December 2, 2022 by 5:00 PM CDT
Anticipated Preliminary Award Announcements: on or around December 16, 2022
Addenda and answers to questions will be posted at https://acamweb.org/funding-vendor-opportunities/

Responses to this request for proposals should be emailed to:
ACAM Resource and Program Development Director
Bren Gorman
bgorman@acamweb.org

The proposal cover sheet must be signed and dated by an authorized representative of the proposing organization.

Late proposals will NOT be accepted. Proposals must be received by the due date. If all or any portion of a response submitted is received late or is otherwise nonresponsive due to equipment failure or operator error, the response or the applicable portion of the response will not be considered. In addition, ACAM is not liable for equipment failure or operator error.

Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM)
Request for Proposals
Next Generation of Youth (NextGen) Workforce Development Program

SUMMARY

Background: The Houston-Galveston Area Council (H-GAC), the fiscal agent for the Gulf Coast Workforce Board, has awarded the Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM) funding to contract with service providers for the Next Generation Youth (NextGen) component of the Workforce Solutions system.

Purpose: NextGen will provide a comprehensive, integrated employment and education service for a minimum of 500 eligible youth ages 16-24 (under 25) to help them get a job, keep a job, or get a better job and build their skills for future job and career transitions.

Maximum Funding Available: $256,000

Grant Term: January 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023, Final report due November 5, 2023

Proposal Deadline: Friday, December 2, 2022 by 5:00pm CST

Respondents must include the following required services:

I. Statement of Qualifications
A competent contractor will possess experience administering federally funded workforce development projects. Proposals must disclose experience including number/volume of clients, types of programs administered, and résumés of all employees who might provide services under the winning contract.

II. Scope of Work
ACAM is a nonprofit organization with the mission to '*advance collaboration to create community-wide solutions for thriving nonprofits, neighborhoods and families.'* The NextGen program, funded by $2.5M in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funding through the Gulf Coast Workforce Board/Houston-Galveston Area Council (HGAC), connects out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24 that meet ACAM's eligibility requirements (e.g., living in poverty, homeless/runaway, justice system/foster system/dual status, pregnant/parenting, IDD) with wraparound case management services and job and career readiness programs. Proposers must describe tasks they would perform to comply with ACAM's eligibility and minimum standards as outlined in **Attachment 1.**

III. Proposed Cost of Services

Proposals must include your estimated cost for each activity identified in the Scope of Work. ACAM will not use lowest cost as the sole basis for selecting the best contractor.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND AND OVERVIEW

The Greater Houston region's most vulnerable youth and young adults continue to be disproportionately impacted by the multiple structural inequities exacerbated by the pandemic and the ensuing economic fallout. These disconnected youth and young adults ages 16-24 that are neither working nor in school, or underemployed and not enrolled in school, are our "opportunity youth" (OY). Even with the economy on the rebound, there is a nationwide dramatic rise in the number of OY. These OY face compounded challenges in the current labor market and could face years of adverse effects in the absence of concerted assistance. Without the individuals and systems youth traditionally rely on for food, shelter, guidance, and emotional support, these OY could be negatively impacted for the rest of their lives.

The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries (ACAM) is leading two initiatives that have mobilized key stakeholders and funneled an unprecedented amount of resources to the region to focus on and address the needs of opportunity youth (OY). Built on collaboration, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement, ACAM is uniquely positioned to implement a braided funding model leveraging the privately funded Greater Houston Opportunity Youth Collaborative (GHOYC) and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funded Next Generation of Youth (NextGen) program.

The NextGen model is informed by the Back-on-Track pilots and evaluation. The central components include:

1. Collective impact – our five-part framework includes a common agenda, shared measurement, mutually reinforcing activities, continuous communication, and backbone support,
2. Increased and enhanced services – collectively increase services and ensure a high-touch relationship focus is maintained with staff dedicated to eligibility, navigation, goal planning, and follow-up,
3. Increased access – continue to build the referral system, as well as the geographic reach of the project,
4. Barrier removal – a focus on earning opportunities, incentives, and wraparound supports will remove barriers to success and maintain engagement and retention,
5. Youth voice – including multiple ways that youth can be involved and know that they belong, are valued, and that their contributions matter.

A. PURPOSE

The Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM) seeks qualified vendor(s) to provide out-of-school youth ages 16 to 24 that meet ACAM's eligibility requirements (e.g., living in poverty, homeless/runaway, justice system/foster system/dual status, pregnant/parenting, IDD) with wraparound case management, and job and career readiness, and barrier removal services. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - Youth (Out of School) is funded by the Department of Labor (DOL) through the Texas Workforce Commission (TWC). The objective of the Request for

Proposal (RFP) process is to receive proposals from interested vendors, a formal response to the Statement of Work (SOW) outlined in this RFP to identify the most qualified contractor(s) to provide services. The submitted proposal will be used to evaluate each contractor's experience, capabilities, and qualifications to provide services that meet the needs of vulnerable youth ACAM is seeking an organization to provide services in the course of normal business within Brazoria, Harris, Fort Bend, Montgomery, Galveston and Waller Counties.

The offerors must include 1) goals for the number of outreach, screening, and clients enrolled by county 2) demonstrated capacity to provide guidance and support, work-based learning, training/credentials and wraparound barrier removal services to eligible clients to attain employment and get training to get a better job, and 3) and satisfy the requirements as outlined in this RFP. Please review the RFP timeline. Responses to questions about the proposal process will be posted to ACAM's website on the release date (https://acamweb.org/funding-vendor-opportunities/).

The objective of this RFP is to locate contractor(s) that will provide the best overall value to ACAM. While price is a factor, other criteria will form the basis of the decision. ACAM reserves the right to amend, suspend, terminate, or reissue this RFP, in whole or in part, at any stage. In no event is ACAM liable to respondents for any cost or damages incurred in connection with the RFP process, including but not limited to, all costs of preparing a response to this RFP, or any other costs incurred in reliance on this RFP. No respondent shall be entitled to repayment from ACAM for any costs, expenses, or fees related to this RFP. All supporting documentation submitted in response to this RFP will become the property of ACAM. Respondents may also withdraw their interest in the RFP, in writing, at any point in time, as more information becomes available.

B. START DATE AND CONTRACT TERM

ACAM hereby requests proposals from offerors to perform youth workforce development services, as described in the RFP, for a one-year period, with the potential of being extended up to four (4) years. The contract or contract(s) may be renewed for subsequent time periods by mutual written agreement not to exceed four (4) years. The one-year contract period is **January 1, 2023 – September 30, 2023**. Organizations are invited to submit a proposal by **<u>Friday, December 2, 2022 by 5:00</u>** pm for consideration. Proposals will be held in confidence and not released in any manner until after the contract(s) are awarded. Payments on contract(s) will be made on a reimbursement basis. The contract amount agreed upon by ACAM and the respective contractor will provide compensation for services and allowable direct service expenses. A payment schedule will be negotiated with selected contractor(s). ACAM reserves the right to offer a contract award greater or less than the amount requested in the proposal.

C. EXPECTATIONS

Contractor(s) will be selected on their ability to meet the expectations of the RFP and ensure compliance with the written guidance for the program. ACAM youth workforce development services are designed and implemented by ACAM and follows all applicable federal regulations. Selected contractor(s) shall be required to follow ACAM's program and eligibility requirements. Offerors will be selected on their ability to comply with federal, state, and local regulatory expectations. For experienced contractors, prior performance will be taken into consideration. Offerors shall demonstrate financial and staffing capacity to perform the work proposed. ACAM will verify that any offeror selected is not restricted from participation in government contracts through https://www.sam.gov and through https://ourcpa.cpa.state.tx.us/coa/Index.html. Debarred or suspended offerors from the State of Texas and/or Federal government shall not be procured.

1. SERVICES

Selected contractor must adhere to ACAM's monthly financial and performance reporting procedures, Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes and all other applicable ACAM standards. Contractor(s) will provide direct services and referrals for eligible youth including:

a. Work-based Learning
    i. Paid and unpaid work experiences that include academic and occupational education (i.e. summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship programs, internships, and on-the-job training opportunities).

b. Career Pathways and Credential Attainment
    i. Integrated Education and Training.
    ii. Occupational skill training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or targeted occupations.
    iii. High School Equivalency Preparation.
    iv. Alternative secondary school services and evidence-based dropout prevention and credit recovery strategies.

c. Guidance & Support
    i. Career counseling and exploration services that help youth and young adults prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.
    ii. Mentoring.
    iii. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction.
    iv. Skill-Building/Coaching opportunities: Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service, parenting and work behavior training, and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.
    v. Financial Coaching.
    vi. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.
    vii. Entrepreneurial Skills Training.
    viii. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. Transition planning may include, but is not limited to, programs designed to expand access to college and other postsecondary

institutions, particularly for youth facing barriers to enrollment. Activities may focus on improving academic readiness, identifying postsecondary strengths and interests, and helping with applying for college and institutional admission or financial aid.

ix. Assistance with transportation, housing, and other supportive services which enable an individual to participate in work and/or training.

x. Referrals to services that provide wrap-around support to meet the wide range of challenges faced by various youth populations.

xi. Follow-up services upon completion to ensure continued support and success in post-secondary education, training, or employment.

Contractor(s) must provide direct services to eligible clients residing in Harris, Fort Bend, Brazoria, Waller, Galveston and/or Montgomery Counties. Services shall be provided per ACAM's Guidelines and Standards and include but are not limited to:

1. Number and percent of clients that are employed or enrolled in post-secondary
2. Number and percent of clients employed after staff assistance
3. Number and percent of clients that are satisfied with services
4. Number and percent of clients that pursuing an education credential
5. Number and percent of clients that report earnings gains
6. Number and percent of clients that achieve an measurable skills gain

2. STAFFING

a. Contractor will provide a high touch case management approach to address specific barriers to client education and employment attainment. This includes, but is not limited to:
   - conducting the initial assessment that includes the client's employment screening and goals/objectives,
   - providing direct supportive counseling services to clients,
   - assisting with wraparound services to meet basic needs,
   - assisting with referrals and public benefits access,
   - a range of community outreach activities
   - conducting warm referrals to other services providers including follow up

b. Contractor will collect satisfaction feedback from youth enrolled.

c. Contractor will maintain adequate staffing to provide high quality continuous services to clients

D. STATEMENT OF WORK

The ACAM NextGen 2022-2023 goal is to enroll 500 youth annually in partnership with subgrantees and subcontractors. The historical program cost per person has ranged from $2,300 to $2,850. ACAM is seeking contractor(s) that can serve people residing in the area specified above. A cost per person that falls below this range will not benefit the proposal score. Offerors should submit proposals clearly demonstrating the capacity and experience to:

1. serve a minimum of 90 Opportunity Youth (OY) with wraparound case management, job and career readiness, and barrier removal services including those described in Section C
2. implement outreach strategies to recruit participants and establish community partnerships for referrals targeting eligible out of school youth (OSY)
3. ability to track and maintain through documentation of client services and success

The offerors must include 1) goals for the number of outreach, screening, and clients enrolled by county (Harris, Fort Bend, Waller, Brazoria, Montgomery and Galveston Counties) 2) demonstrated capacity to provide guidance and support, work-based learning, training/credentials and wraparound barrier removal services to eligible clients to attain employment and get training to get a better job, and 3) and satisfy the requirements as outlined in this RFP. Submit a proposal in response to the Statement of Work (SOW) for this RFP. The length of the submittal document, not including the signed cover letter or attachments, shall not exceed 5 pages (single sided, single spaced, using Times New Roman and 12-point font). The proposal shall state the organization's qualifications and experience to fulfill the goals and achieve the goals outlined above. Respond to each item in the order listed below. The budget and budget narrative should be included behind the responses to the statement of work and are **not** included in the 5-page limit. Lastly, include all attachments in the order listed with the cover sheet placed in front of the proposal and other attachments following the proposal.

1. Provide a brief description of your organizational history and capacity to fulfill the qualifications described above, (date organization started, current total number of employees, any special accommodations/services that could be provided).
2. Describe the experience of key staff and the relevant experience of those working directly with clients ages 16-24. Describe any relevant training and/or certification(s) for any staff working on the program. For new or vacant positions, provide position descriptions.
3. Describe, if any, direct experience providing case management and/or workforce development services including experience developing relationships with service providers and employers. Describe specific ongoing experience providing services to young adults ages 16-24 including a list of prior and current experience. Provide a chart of experience including the program name, number of years of experience, indication of programs currently serving young adults, and the average number of clients served per program year. Discuss how current and prior experience prepares the proposer to provide youth workforce development services.
4. Include a description of the impact of relevant services. Please provide available past output and outcome information. If none, then please explain qualifications that prepare the proposer to provide these services and meet the stated objective and goals. Please describe how the proposer has measured the success of clients served. Include the indicators of success as well as the number and percentage who have achieved the indicator.
5. Describe your experience serving clients with high barriers to employment and any special populations.

6. Describe your proposed goals - the number of people proposed to be served and projected outcomes. Please describe how the respondent proposes to measure the success of clients served. Include the indicators of success as well as the number and percentage projected to achieve success.

E. BUDGET SUMMARY

Please submit the excel document "ACAM NextGen2 RFP Budget Template" posted with the RFP online here: https://acamweb.org/funding-vendor-opportunities/

F. REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS

Required attachments to submit with proposal in the order below. Proposals submitted without the listed attachments will be considered incomplete.

1. Proposal cover sheet signed and dated by a Certifying Representative (see attachment). This executed document shall be placed in front of the proposal. Attachments 2-6 should follow the proposal.
2. Evidence of good standing from the Texas Comptroller (Print from Link: https://ourcpa.cpa.state.tx.us/coa/Index.html)
3. Evidence of good standing from SAM (Print from Link) https://www.sam.gov
4. Résumés of key personnel including the background and qualifications of direct service staff. If positions are current not filled, please provide the position descriptions for key staff.
5. Evidence of 90-day working capital (copies of most recent 3 months of bank statements and financial statements)
6. Most recent audit

G. EVALUATION, NEGOTIATION, AND SELECTION

Evaluation: A designated committee evaluates each proposal in confidence and based on stated criteria. Points will be assigned for stated evaluation factors. A cost/price analysis will be conducted, and qualitative technical factors will be evaluated that include but are not limited to:

- Appropriateness, thoroughness, quality of the proposed work plan
- Provider experience and/or demonstrated knowledge of the youth workforce development services
- Demonstrated successful past performance
- Quality of proposed staffing
- Demonstrated capacity to meet the goals of the program
- Reasonable cost and complete budget

Negotiation:

- Negotiations may be undertaken with offerors to achieve best and final offers
- All negotiation procedures will be documented

Selection:

- Contracts must be awarded to responsible organizations whose proposals are most advantageous to the program
- All respondents will be notified of ACAM's selection in writing

H. GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR RESPONDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Purpose

The purpose of the grievance procedure is to settle any grievance between a Respondent Organization and Alliance of Community Assistance Ministries, Inc. (ACAM), as quickly as possible to assure an efficient and fair procurement.

Eligibility

A grievance may be filed by any respondent organization that claims it has been adversely affected by:

1. The score assigned by the Proposal Review Team.
2. Improper application of ACAM regulations, and procedures.

Procedure for Filing Respondent Organization Grievances

The following steps must be followed in the order given. Time limits shall begin on the first working day after the applicable occurrence, filing, appeal, response, or recommendation. Working days shall not include weekends or national holidays.

Step 1

To be considered, a grievance must be filed in writing with ACAM within 24 hours of contract award announcement on **or around December 16, 2022**. This written grievance should be sent to Bren Grman, Resource & Program Development Director at bgorman@acamweb.org. ACAM has forty-eight (48) hours from receipt of the grievance form to respond to and resolve the grievance.

Step 2

If the respondent organization is not satisfied with the proposed resolution, the respondent organization has twenty-four (24) hours to file an appeal with the ACAM Grievance Committee.

The Grievance Committee has forty-eight (48) hours to investigate, talk with the grievant, and respond in writing using the official form.

General Provisions

1. The Grievance Forms provided* should be used in pursuing a resolution of the grievance.
2. The respondent's organization may represent itself or be represented by a chosen representative when presenting the organization's grievance.

*Note: Grievance Forms are attached

NOTE: Any other attachments will not be reviewed as part of the proposal.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR THE ACAM NEXTGEN PROGRAM –
Respondent/Proposer Organization
Grievance Form

Respondent Organization: ______________________________________

Respondent Representative: _____________________________________

Job Title: ____________________________________

Organization's Address: ____________________________________

Organization's Phone Number: ____________________________________

We have discussed this complaint with ACAM staff and received his/her verbal answer on (date)________. Because this answer is unacceptable to us, we wish to file a formal complaint.

Nature of grievance. Explain how your organization was unfairly treated including names and dates. (Use additional pages if needed.)

A just and fair solution of our grievance is:

We understand that if we wish to further appeal our complaint, we have twenty-four (24) hours from response to submit a grievance form to the next level of appeal. Grievances not appealed timely are considered settled at the previous level.

Date: __________________________ Signature: _________________________________

**GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR THE ACAM NEXTGEN PROGRAM –
Proposer/Respondent Organization Grievance Form**

Response from ACAM's Grievance Committee

Respondent Organization: ______________________________________

Respondent Representative: ______________________________________

Job Title: ______________________________________

Organization's Address: ______________________________________

Organization's Phone Number: ______________________________________

ACAM's Grievance Committee Response to Respondent Organization's Complaint:

Grievances not appealed timely are considered settled at the previous level.

Date: _________________________ Signature: ______________________________

ACAM NextGen2 RFP Proposal Cover Sheet

Organization (Offeror) Name and Address	Proposal Contact
Phone Number	RFP No. **NextGen2**
Email Address	EIN OR TAX ID Number
Cage Code	Annual Budget
Unique Entity ID	# of Employees

Name & Title of Certifying Representative. Note: "Certifying Representative" means the individual who may legally submit proposals for the agency and enter into agreements (i.e. the Chairman of the Board of a social service agency). You may identify a different contact person.

Name: ______________________________________ Title: ______________________________

I hereby certify that all information stated herein, as well as any information provided in the accompaniment herewith, is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Certifying Representative	Date

The undersigned, as Proposer, certifies that the Proposer has not, either directly or indirectly entered into any agreement, participated in any collusion, or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition in connection with this contract. The Proposer certifies they have not and will not participate in the development, review, and/or selection process.

Proposal Contact Signature:____________________________ Date: _____________________

ACAM NextGen2 RFP Proposal Cover Sheet

CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION AND OTHER RESPONSIBILITY MATTERS

The undersigned certifies, to the best of its knowledge and belief, that it and its principals:

(a) Are not presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded by any Federal agency or ACAM;

(b) Have not within a three-year period preceding this proposal been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (Federal, State or local) transaction or contract under a public transaction; violation of Federal or State antitrust statutes or commission of embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, or receiving stolen property;

(c) Are not presently indicted for or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity (Federal, State or local) with commission of any of the offenses enumerated in paragraph (1)(b) of this certification;

(d) Have not within a three-year period preceding this application/proposal had one or more public transactions (Federal, State or local) terminated for cause or default; and

(e) Will submit to ACAM information about each proceeding that occurs during this Contract Term or during the recordkeeping period that:

(1) Is in connection with this award;
(2) Reached its final disposition during the most recent five year period; and
(3) Is one of the following:
  i. A criminal proceeding that resulted in a conviction, as defined below;
  ii. A civil proceeding that resulted in a finding of fault and liability and payment of a monetary fine, penalty, reimbursement, restitution, or damages of $5,000 or more;
  iii. An administrative proceeding, as defined below, that resulted in a finding of fault and liability and your payment of either a monetary fine or penalty of $5,000 or more or reimbursement, restitution, or damage in excess of $100,000; or
  iv. Any other criminal, civil, or administrative proceeding if:

    1. It could have led to an outcome described in this section (e) paragraph (3), items (i) – (iii) of this award term and condition;
    2. It had a different disposition arrived at by consent or compromise with an acknowledgment of fault on your part; and
    3. The requirement in this award term and condition to disclose information about the proceeding does not conflict with applicable laws and regulations.

(4) For purposes of section (e) of this certification the following definitions apply:

i. An "administrative proceeding" means a non-judicial process that is adjudicatory in nature in order to make a determination of fault or liability (e.g., Securities and Exchange Commission Administrative proceedings, Civilian Board of Contract Appeals proceedings, and Armed Services Board of Contract Appeals proceedings). This includes proceedings at the Federal and State level but only in connection with performance of a Federal contract or grant. It does not include audits, site visits, corrective plans, or inspection of deliverables.

ii. A "conviction", for purposes of this award term and condition, means a judgment or conviction of a criminal offense by any court of competent jurisdiction, whether entered upon a verdict or a plea, and includes a conviction entered upon a plea of nolo contendere.

Where the undersigned Contractor is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such Contractor shall attach an explanation of why it cannot provide said certification to this Contract.

The undersigned Contractor further agrees and certifies that it will include the below clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Subcontracts/Lower Tier Covered Transaction," without modification, in all subcontracts and in all solicitations for subcontracts:

"CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION – SUBCONTRACTS/ LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS"

(1) *The prospective lower tier participant/subcontractor certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals is presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal agency or ACAM.*

(2) *Where the prospective lower tier participant/subcontractor is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.*

LOWER TIER PARTICIPANT/ SUBCONTRACTOR:
Entity Name, Entity Type

By: ______________________________________ *Signature Authority Name, Title*

Date: ______________________________ *"*

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance is placed when ACAM awards the contract. If it is later determined that Contractor knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to any other remedies available to the Federal Government, ACAM may terminate this Contract for cause or default.

<u>CONTRACTOR</u>:

Entity Legal: ______________________________

By: ______________________________
Name: ______________________________
Title: ______________________________
Date: ______________________________

ALLIANCE OF COMMUNITY ASSISTANCE MINISTRIES (ACAM)
NextGen Collaborative WIOA Out-of-School Youth Services Guidelines

Out of School Youth Services

Effective October 1, 2021
Revised August 2022

Based on
Texas Workforce Commission Guidelines for WIOA YS Guidelines

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I. INTRODUCTION

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers an integrated and comprehensive range of services consisting of workforce development activities benefiting employers, job seekers, and communities. The purposes of WIOA are to:

- increase, particularly for individuals with barriers to employment, access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services needed to succeed in the labor market;
- support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems for a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system;
- improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide individuals with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages, and to provide employers with the skilled workers needed to succeed in a global economy;
- promote improvement in the structure and delivery of services through the workforce development system to better address the educational and training needs of workers, job seekers, and employers;
- increase the prosperity of workers and employers; the economic growth of communities, regions, and states; and the global competitiveness of the United States; and
- provide workforce investment activities, through state and local workforce development systems, that increase participants' employment, retention, earnings, and attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce dependency on public assistance, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skills requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

The purpose of condensing and providing the Texas Workforce Commission Guidelines for WIOA Out of School Youth Services is to provide ACAM Contractors with criteria and documentation sources for establishing WIOA Title I program eligibility for youth. This policy guidance is based on WIOA final rules spanning WIOA Titles I–IV, which were made publicly available in late June 2016. The WIOA final rules pertaining to Titles I and III were published in the *Federal Register* on August 19, 2016 and became effective on October 18, 2016.Future updates will be added to a new version of the WIOA Guidelines.

Contractors are required to document the eligibility of youth populations served with WIOA funds. These guidelines describe eligible WIOA population and provide information and procedures for documenting and verifying eligibility.

II. WIOA YOUTH

WIOA outlines a broad youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and provides a framework to support out-of-school youth (OSY).

Participant in the Youth Program

An individual is a "participant" in the WIOA youth program once all of the following has occurred:

- An eligibility determination.

- The provision of an objective assessment, which includes a review of:
  - the youth's academic and occupational skill levels; and
  - the service needs and strengths of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways.

- Development of an individual service strategy that:
  - is based on the needs of each youth;
  - identifies career pathways, including education and employment goals;
  - considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment; and
  - prescribes achievement objectives and services for the youth.

- Participation in any of the 14 WIOA youth program elements.

WIOA Youth Eligibility

To be eligible to receive WIOA youth services, an individual must:

- be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the United States;
- meet Military Selective Service registration requirements (males only);
- have a determination of school attendance to identify whether the individual is attending school; and
- meet the additional eligibility criteria for OSY, as defined by WIOA §129(a)(1)(B)–(C), and as described in the OSY subsection of this guide.

Note: Authorization to work in the United States can be verified through eligibility for unemployment benefits.

School Attendance/Determining School Status

For the purpose of determining whether an individual is OSY, school status is based on a determination of school attendance on the date of eligibility determination. Once the schoolstatus of a youth is determined that school status remains the same throughout the youth's current participation.

A youth is "not attending" school if the youth:

- has had at least 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences and on the date of eligibility determination has not returned to school;

- is not attending postsecondary school on the date of eligibility determination;
- has not registered for postsecondary school classes on the date of the eligibility determination; or
- is enrolled only in non-credit-bearing postsecondary classes.

Additionally, participation in the following programs is not considered being "in school" for the purpose of determining OSY status:

- Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA
- YouthBuild programs
- Job Corps programs
- High School Equivalency programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)
- Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)

Note: School attendance and school status determine OSY eligibility definition.

A youth is "attending school" if the youth:

- is enrolled in any of the following schools:
  - Public school
  - Charter school
  - Private school
  - Disciplinary alternative education program (DAEP);
- is homeschooled;
- is attending high school equivalency programs, including those considered to be dropout reengagement programs, funded by the public K–12 system;
- is a high school graduate who has registered for postsecondary classes, even if not yet attending postsecondary classes;
- is attending postsecondary classes; or
- is in between postsecondary school semesters and has registered for classes for a future semester or has paid all or part of the tuition for a future semester.

Note: A youth with fewer than 10 consecutive unexcused absences, or with 10 or more non-consecutive unexcused absences is still considered "attending school."

Example 1: A 17-year-old has not attended school for the last 12 consecutive school days. This individual is "not attending" if the absences are unexcused, and he or she may be considered an OSY if an additional youth barrier is met at the time of eligibility determination. This individual may be subject to the local ISD's truancy and reengagement strategies and subsequently return to school, but at the point of eligibility determination, the individual is not attending school and is therefore potentially eligible as an OSY.

Example 2: A 17-year-old has not attended school for the last 12 consecutive school days. The absences are unexcused; however, the individual has been reengaged through the K–12-funded dropout reengagement program. Because the individual is participating in the reengagement program, he or she is determined to be attending school and is therefore potentially not eligible as OSY.

Low-Income

An individual who meets any *one* of the following criteria satisfies the low-income requirement for WIOA youth services:

- Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through SNAP, TANF, or the SSI program, or state or local income-based public assistance.

- Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that, in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current combined DOL 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level and HHS Poverty Guidelines identified on the WIOA Income Guidelines web page at: https://twc.texas.gov/workforce-innovation-opportunity-act-eligibility-income-guidelines (see Attachment 1. WIOA Income Eligibility Guidelines).

- Is a homeless individual as defined in §41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994, or a homeless child or youth as defined in §725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the NSLA. While the free/reduced-price lunch low-income requirement primarily applies to ISY, if an OSY is a parent living in the same household as a child who receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch based on income level, then the OSY parent would meet the low-income criteria based on the child's qualification.

- Is a foster youth, as defined in Texas Family Code §264.101(a-1) and §264.101(d), on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made.

- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets:
  - WIOA's income requirements, even if the individual's family income does not meet the income requirements; or
  - the income eligibility criteria for payments under any federal, state, or local public assistance program

Basic Skills Deficient

An individual who meets either of the following criteria satisfies the basic skills deficient requirement for WIOA youth services:

- Is a youth who has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- Is a youth who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

Skill levels "at or below the eighth-grade level" may be determined by a grade level of 8.9 or below received on a generally accepted standardized test.

Contractor may:

- determine the method of assessment and process used to determine a youth's inability to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society; and
- based on the method of assessment or assessment tool used, set benchmarks for assessment results that determine basic skills deficiency.

Regardless of how basic skills deficiency is determined, documentation must be maintained in a hard case file and in TWIST *Counselor Notes*.

High-Poverty Area

A youth living in a high-poverty area automatically meets the low-income criterion. A high-poverty area is a Census tract, a set of contiguous Census tracts, Native American Reservation, tribal land, or Native Alaskan Village or county that has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent, as set every five years using the US Census Bureau American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year data. TWC provides Boards with the ACS High-Poverty Areas in Texas by County data on TWC's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act web page (see Attachment 2. Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) under the WIOA Eligibility (see Attachment 1. WIOA Income Eligibility Guidelines, Attachment 3. WOIA Eligibility Documentation Log, Attachment 4. WIA Eligibility Guidelines Selective Service Registration Desk Reference) heading. TWC will update the website when the US Census Bureau publishes a new ACS and will inform Boards about the changes through GovDelivery notices.

High-Poverty Areas in Texas by County: https://twc.texas.gov/files/partners/high-poverty-areas-texas-by-county-twc.xlsx (Attachment 5. TWC High Poverty Areas by County).

Out-of-School Youth

An OSY is an individual who:

- is not younger than 16 and not older than 24 years at the time of enrollment in WIOA;
- is not attending secondary or postsecondary school at the time the eligibility determination portion of program enrollment in WIOA is made; and
- has one or more of the following barriers:
  - A school dropout is an individual between the ages of 19 and 24 who is no longer attending any school (including an alternative school) and has not received a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
  - Between the ages of 16 and 18, has not received a high school diploma or high school equivalency certificate, and has not attended school for three consecutive months, excluding summer months when school is not in session (acceptable documentation includes a self-attestation documented in TWIST *Counselor Notes* and maintained in a hard case file, or a school attendance record);
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low-income individual (see **Low-Income Exception**) or lives in a high-poverty area and is either:
    - basic skills deficient, as defined by WIOA §3(5); or
    - an English language learner, defined as an individual who has a limited ability in

speaking, reading, writing, or understanding the English language, and whose native language is a language other than English; or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language (self-attestation or notes in TWIST *Counselor Notes* are acceptable documentation);
    - Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
    - Homeless; a runaway; in foster care, has aged out of the foster care system, or has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption; a child eligible for assistance under §477 of the Social Security Act (42 USC §677); or in an out-of-home placement;
    - Pregnant or parenting;
    - Disabled; or
- A low-income individual or an individual who lives in a high-poverty area, who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to obtain or retain employment. Contractors must establish definitions and eligibility documentation requirements for the "requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to obtain or retain employment" criterion of OSY eligibility.

Low-Income Exception

WIOA maintains a 5 percent low-income eligibility exception in which 5 percent of youth who would ordinarily need to be low income for eligibility purposes, do not need to meet the low-income criteria. However, because not all youth are required to be low income, the 5 percent low-income exception under WIOA is calculated based on the number of youth enrolled in a given program year who are required to meet the low-income criteria.

For example, a workforce area enrolled 140 youth, and 80 of those youth were OSY who were not required to meet the low-income criteria, 60 were OSY who were required to meet the low-income criteria. In this example, the 60 OSY required to be low income are the only youth factored into the 5 percent low-income exception calculation. Therefore, in this example, three of the 60 youth who ordinarily would be required to be lowincome do not have to meet the low-income criteria based on the low-income exception.

Youth Program Design

The design framework of local youth programs must:

- Provide for an objective assessment of each youth participant, including a review of the academic and occupational skill levels and service needs, for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategy. The objective assessment must include a review of:
    - basic skills;
    - occupational skills;
    - work experience;
    - employability;
    - interests;
    - aptitudes;
    - support service needs; and
    - developmental needs.

As discussed in 20 CFR §681.290, in assessing basic skills, Contractors must use assessmentinstruments that:
- ➢ are valid and appropriate for the target population;
- ➢ provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities;
- ➢ are appropriate, fair, cost-effective, and well-matched to the test administrator's qualifications; and
- ➢ are easy to administer and interpret results.

For purposes of the basic skills assessment portion of the objective assessment, Contractors are neither required to use assessments approved for use in the US Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS), nor are they required to determine an individual's grade-level equivalent or educational functioning level (EFL), although use of these tools is permitted. Rather, Contractors may use other formalized testing instruments designed to measure skills related gains.

In contrast to the initial assessment described above, if measuring EFL gains after program enrollment under the measurable skill gains indicator, Contractors must use an NRS-approved assessment for both the EFL pre- and posttest to determine an individual's educational functioning level. For this reason, it is recommended that Contractors always use NRS-approvedassessments when assessing the basic skills of youth.

A new assessment of a participant is not required if the Contractor determines that it is appropriate to use a recent assessment (made within the last six months) of the participant conducted as part of another education or training program. When using a prior assessment, Contractors must ensure that appropriate staff:
- ➢ receive a copy of the assessment, including results;
- ➢ ensure that the previous assessment complies with youth requirements, including academic and occupational skill-level assessments;
- ➢ include assessment documentation in the case file;
- ➢ enter comprehensive objective assessment service, TWIST code 8, using the appropriate WIOA youth fund code; and
- ➢ enter complete details in the TWIST *Counselor Note*.

- Develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy for each youth participant that:
  - ➢ is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance (as described in WIOA §116(b)(2)(A)(ii));
  - ➢ identifies appropriate career pathways that include education and employment goals;
  - ➢ considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment; and
  - ➢ prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participant; and

- Provide case management of youth participants, including follow-up services.

Contractors must ensure that Workforce Solutions Office staff:

- provide youth participants with information regarding the full array of applicable or appropriate services available through the Contractor or other providers or partners; and
- refer youth participants to appropriate training and educational programs that have the capacity to serve them either on a sequential or concurrent basis.

In order to meet the basic skills and training needs of applicants who do not meet the eligibility requirements of a particular program or who cannot be served by the program, Contractors must ensure that youth are referred for further assessment, as necessary, or referred to appropriate programs to meet the skills and training needs of the youth.

<u>Youth Program Elements</u>

Contractors must ensure that the following 14 services are available to youth participants*:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential.

2. Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate.

3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
   - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
   - Pre-apprenticeship programs—a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship programs;
   - Internships and job shadowing;
   - On-the-job training (OJT) opportunities, as defined in WIOA §3(44).

   Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate, and may take place in the private for-profit sector, the nonprofit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience in which an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA) or applicable state law, exists.

   Work experience must include an occupational education component that:
   - refers to contextual learning that accompanies a work experience;
   - includes the information necessary to understand and work in specific industries and/or occupations;
   - may occur concurrently or sequentially with the work experience;
   - may occur inside or outside the worksite;

- may be provided by the employer, or through other means.

Contractors have the flexibility to decide who provides the occupational education component.

*Per the terms of your ACAM NextGen Service Contract

Examples of occupational education may include:

- a hospital work experience in which hospital staff teaches the youth about the duties of different types of hospital occupations, such as a phlebotomist, radiology tech, or physical therapist; or
- an auto-repair shop work experience in which auto-mechanics teach the youth about building or repairing a car.

Local youth programs must expend not less than 20 percent of youth funds to provide youth with paid and unpaid work experiences.

Allowable expenditures that may be counted toward the work experience expenditure requirement may include the following:

- Wages/stipends paid for participation in a work experience;
- Staff time working to identify and develop a work experience opportunity;
- Staff time working with employers to ensure a successful work experience;
- Staff time spent evaluating the work experience;
- Participant work experience orientation sessions or employer work experience session.

4. Occupational skills training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the workforce area involved, if the programs meet the quality criteria described in WIOA §123.

   Occupational skills training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.

   Contractors must give priority consideration to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the workforce area. Such training must:

   - be outcome oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy;
   - be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal; and
   - result in attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.

5. Workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.

6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors.

   Leadership development opportunities are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors, such as:
   - exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities;
   - community and service learning projects;
   - peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
   - organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training;
   - training in decision making, including determining priorities and problem solving;
   - citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training;
   - civic engagement activities that promote the quality of life in a community; and
   - other leadership activities that place youth in a leadership role such as serving on youth leadership committees, such as the NextGen Youth Advisory Committee.

   Positive social and civic behaviors are outcomes of leadership opportunities that are incorporated by Boards as part of their menu of services and that focus on areas that may include the following:
   - Positive attitude development;
   - Self-esteem building;
   - Openness to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds;
   - Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol and drug free;
   - Maintaining positive social relationships with responsible adults and peers and contributing to the well-being of one's community, including voting;
   - Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success;
   - Avoiding delinquency;
   - Postponing parenting;
   - Responsible parenting, including child support education;
   - Positive job attitudes and work skills; and
   - Keeping informed in community affairs and current events.

7. Support services, as defined in WIOA §3(59), which enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities. These services include, but are not limited to, the following:
   - Linkages to community services;
   - Assistance with transportation;
   - ~~Assistance with dependent care~~;
   - Assistance with housing;
   - Needs-related payments;
   - Assistance with educational testing;
   - Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities;
   - Referrals to health care;
   - Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools,including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear;
   - Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and

certifications.

8. Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation.

   Adult mentoring for youth must:
   - be a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities in which the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the youth;
   - include a mentor who is an adult other than the assigned youth case manager; and
   - at a minimum, match the youth with an individual mentor with whom the youth interacts on a face-to-face basis. Group mentoring activities and mentoring through electronic means are allowable as part of mentoring activities.

   Mentoring may include workplace mentoring in which the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company.

9. Follow-up services for not fewer than 12 months after the completion of participation.

   Follow-up services are critical services provided after a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services for youth may include:
   - leadership development opportunities and support services;
   - regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems;
   - assistance in securing better-paying jobs, career pathway development, and further education or training;
   - work-related peer support groups;
   - adult mentoring;
   - supportive services;
   - financial literacy education;
   - services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
   - services necessary to ensure the success of youth participants in employment and/or postsecondary education.

   Contactor must attempt to provide all youth participants with some form of follow-up services for a minimum duration of 12 months. Follow-up services may be provided beyond 12 months at the Contractor's discretion. The types of services provided and the duration of services must be determined based on the needs of the individual, and therefore, the type and intensityof follow-up services may differ for each participant. However, follow-up services must include more than only a contact attempted or made for securing documentation in order to report a performance outcome.

At the time of enrollment, a youth must be informed that follow-up services will be provided for 12 months following exit. If a youth cannot be located or refuses follow-up services, discontinue attempts to provide follow-up services and document in TWIST *Counselor Notes*.

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth.

    Comprehensive guidance and counseling is individualized counseling to participants that includes career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs, as appropriate. When referring participants to necessary counseling that cannot be provided by the Board, the Board must coordinate with the organization it refers to in order to ensure continuity of service.

11. Financial literacy education.
    The financial literacy education program element may include any of the following activities that:
    - support the ability of participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts, and make informed financial decisions;
    - support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards;
    - teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information, how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit;
    - support a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;
    - educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and in other ways understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data;
    - support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English-speaking participants, including providing support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials; and
    - support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling.

    When providing any of the financial activities listed above, Contractor must ensure that the financial education provided is age-appropriate and timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings.

    The Financial Literacy Guide (see Attachment 6. Financial Literacy Guide) is provided for financial institutions interested in enhancing youth financial capability by partnering with youth employment programs. It describes how and why financial institutions engage in helping youth achieve greater financial well-being and employment success.

Additionally, Contractors may implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable participants to attain greater financial health and stability by using high-quality, age- appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, when possible, timely andcustomized information, guidance, tools, and instruction.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training.
Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business. Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, including, but not limited to, the ability to:
- take initiative;
- creatively seek out and identify business opportunities;
- develop budgets and forecast resource needs;
- understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and
- communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.

Approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurial skills include, but are not limited to, the following:
- Entrepreneurship education that introduces the values and basics of starting and running a business. Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of businessstart-up and operation.
- Enterprise development, which provides support and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas.
- Experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a business. These programs may involve the development of a youth-run business that young people participating in the program work in and manage, or they may facilitate placement in apprentice or internship positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the workforce area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

Numerous tools and applications can be used to provide youth with relevant labor market and career information. Labor market information (LMI) tools can be used to help youth and young adults make appropriate decisions about education and careers. LMI tools identify in-demand industries, occupations, and employment opportunities, and provide knowledge of job market expectations including education, skills requirements, and potential earnings.

WIOA youth program providers are encouraged to use readily available online career exploration tools to help youth assess their abilities and interests and find related employment information. Suggested online tools that connect youth to self-service LMI tools include Texas Reality Check, Texas Career Check, My Next Move, and Get My Future.

Career awareness activities include providing information on a variety of careers and occupations available, their skill requirements, working conditions and training prerequisites, and job opportunities across a wide range of industry sectors.

Career counseling or guidance may include advice and support in making decisions about what career paths to take, providing information about résumé preparation, interview skills, potential opportunities for job shadowing, and the long-term benefits of postsecondary education and training (for example, increased earning power and career mobility).

14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

    Postsecondary preparation and transition activities and services prepare youth for advancement to postsecondary education after attaining a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

    Postsecondary education includes many kinds of education and training programs, including technical college degree and certification programs, apprenticeships, two- and four-year public and private colleges and universities, trade schools, and more.

    Transition planning may include, but is not limited to, programs designed to expand access to college and other postsecondary institutions, particularly for youth facing barriers to enrollment. Activities may focus on improving academic readiness, identifying postsecondary strengths and interests, and helping with applying for college and institutional admission or financial aid.

    Common activities include, but are not limited to:

- individualized career planning;
- career shadowing;
- postsecondary education options exploration, including technical schools, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and registered apprenticeship programs;
- postsecondary education admissions counseling;
- postsecondary education application assistance;
- postsecondary education financial aid assistance;
- fields of study guidance;
- postsecondary education campus visits;
- postsecondary education entrance exam (SAT/ACT) preparation; and
- study skills workshops and parent support workshops.

Resources for such activities may include school counselors, teachers and parents, graduatesand current students, and employers, as well as career exploration programs, and library andonline career information.

Boards have the discretion to determine what specific program services a youth participant receives based on each participant's objective assessment and individual service strategy. Boards are not required to provide every program service to all youth participants.

Program Expenditures for Youth Work Experience

Under WIOA, not less than 20 percent of local youth funds must be used to provide youth with paid and unpaid work experiences that have occupational education as acomponent of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:

- Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities;
- Pre-apprenticeship programs—a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship program;
- Internships and job shadowing;
- On-the-job training (OJT) opportunities, as defined in WIOA §3(44).

Boards must track program funds spent on paid and unpaid work experiences, including wages and staff costs for the development and management of work experiences, and report such expenditures as part of the local WIOA youth financial reporting.

Incentives for Youth

Under 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) §681.640, incentive payments are allowed for youth participants if the incentives are connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in a program directly tied to education, training, or the successful completion of a work experience that occurs during program participation. Refer to WD Letter 15-19, issued May 21, 2019, and entitled "Guidelines for the Provision of Incentives for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth and Choices, including NCP Choices Participants," for more details on incentive payments for youth participants.

Contractors must develop guidelines and strategies that align with the local program's organizational policies governing the award of incentives and must ensure that WIOA-funded incentive payments are:

- tied to the goals of the specific program;
- outlined in writing before the commencement of the program;
- aligned with the local program's organizational policies;
- based on the availability of funds; and
- provided in accordance with the Cost Principles contained in 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance).

Federal funds must not be spent on entertainment costs. Therefore, incentives must not include movie or sporting event tickets or gift cards to movie theaters or other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment.

Incentive payments for youth participants must be considered on a case-by-case basis. Such payments are not guaranteed, and participants are not entitled to receive them. Incentives may be provided to youth if they comply with the requirements of 20 CFR §681.640.

Examples of an achievement of milestones may include:

- attainment of a high school diploma or a Texas Certificate of High School Equivalency;
- completion of an industry recognized certificate/credential or occupational skills training;
- receipt of an associate's or bachelor's degree; or
- successful completion of a work experience.

While incentives may be provided for successful completion of a work experience, Contractors must ensure that incentives are not tied to the "academic or occupational education component" of a work experience.

Note: WIOA funds may not be used to fund incentives for completing job readiness training or classes; however, Contractors may leverage private funds for incentives that WIOA cannot fund.

ACAM NextGen Eligibility Guidelines

Selections from "A Blended Learning Course" for NextGen WIOA Out-of-School Youth Services

Workforce Solutions is an equal opportunity employer/program.
Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. (Please request reasonable accommodations a minimum of two business days in advance.)
Relay Texas Numbers: 1.800.735.2989 (TDD), 1.800.735.2988 (voice), or 711

DETERMINING ELIGIBILITY FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL AID

Workforce Solutions (WS) may provide financial aid as part of a plan for someone to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. Financial aid comes in the form of:

- Education Support – assistance to help customers obtain education or training to meet the expectations of employers in the Gulf Coast region. Education support can include scholarships, tuition, books, and fees for career training, career advancement training or basic education.
- Work Support – assistance to help customers accept a job offer or keep a job.
- Work Search Support – assistance to help customers look for work.

Work support and work search support can include childcare, transportation, equipment, uniforms, and certification expenses.

Workforce Solutions financial aid is available for people who need help meeting their employment goals and are unable to get the assistance from other community resources. Partner managers may allow exceptions to the limits when the customer has extraordinary circumstances documented in the employment plan and TWIST Counselor Notes.

Who Can Receive Financial Aid

We offer financial aid to customers who need help to:

- Continue working.
- Obtain and complete education or training to go to work; and
- Find or take a job or get a promotion.

Customers who receive assistance must be eligible for the dollars that fund Workforce Solutions Financial Aid. Eligibility depends on many factors that may include family income or support, age, labor force status, proficiency in basic skills, and receipt of public assistance.

Before we provide financial aid, we must determine eligibility for one or more of the fund sources we use. Additionally, we must establish that the customer needs the assistance to attain their employment goals and address the availability of other community resources.
We offer substantial assistance for longer-term needs associated with completing a Workforce Solutions employment plan and is not a one-time grant of financial support to an individual or family. Substantial assistance applies when we believe it is necessary to invest more time and dollars over a longer term to help a customer meet t their employment goals or maintain employment. Substantial assistance for work search and education is part of an extended relationship between Workforce Solutions and the customer. Workforce Solutions and the customer must be engaged in career planning or extended, intensive work search activities. Substantial assistance may be more than one time, occur over months or years, and be related to different customer needs.

Financial Aid Types and Categories Our financial aid types include:

1. Work Support – assistance to help customers accept a job offer or keep a job.

2. Work Search Support – assistance to help customers look for work.
3. Education Support – assistance to help customers obtain education or training to meet the expectations of employers in our region.

Our financial aid categories include:

- Education (Scholarships)
- ~~Short-Term Dependent Care~~
- Transportation
- Clothing
- Tools
- Licenses
- Documents

The money used to provide financial aid support to customers comes from WIOA Out of School Youth ONLY for NextGen.

Education (Scholarships)

Scholarships for work search and education are part of an extended relationship between Workforce Solutions. Scholarships are intended to help customers who need more time and assistance over a longer term, months, or years, to meet employment goals, complete education goals, and maintain employment. A

Workforce Solutions scholarship is awarded to a customer for:

- Education support
- Work support
- Work search support

When a customer requests WS financial aid to attend school or training the following limits apply:

- High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations
  Staff use the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list to guide offers of Workforce Solutions' financial aid and promote the occupations to all customers.

  The occupations on the High-Skill, High-Growth Occupations list represent good careers with higher-than-average wages, skill levels and employment opportunities for the next 10 years. Workforce Solutions will provide scholarship support to any occupation on this list, provided the vendor and program is on the Eligible Training Provider List.

- Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL)
  The WS ETPL is a list of all state approved programs of study which WS scholarships may support. To provide a scholarship for a program of study it must be listed on the Workforce Solutions ETPL, found at www. wrksolutions.com > For Individuals > Training & Education

- Scholarship Award Limits
  Workforce Solutions scholarships can be used for tuition, fees, books, and supplies toward training and education. Scholarships are limited to:
  - Up to $3,000 in a 12-month period for basic skills training
  - Up to $6,000 in a 12-month period for occupational skills training

    - Up to $6,000 in a 12-month period for Career Advancement Training

- Bachelor's Degree

For educational programs that award a bachelor's degree, you can award scholarships to help finance only the last two years of the program of study.

- Master's Degree in Nursing
  You can award a WS scholarship to individuals for all courses required to complete a master's degree in Nursing if they commit to teaching for at least two years in a program which leads to initial Registered Nurse licensure in the Gulf Coast region when they graduate.

~~Short Term Dependent Care~~

~~Short-term Dependent Care is to remove barriers for 16 to 24-year-old young adults who have dependents and need dependent care to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job. Short-Term Dependent Care (STDC) is not a substitute for WFS Financial Aid Childcare. Rather, short-term dependent care is barrier removal service to be recorded as a supportive service NOT as childcare in TWIST. All enrolled clients who need childcare should make every attempt to access childcare through the WFS Financial Aid process.~~

~~Short-term Dependent Care is allowed in 4-week (20 generally working days) increments. Childcare must begin on Monday of the week. *Special cases will be determined.~~

~~STDP is not a long-term commitment to cover dependent care costs and must be renewed every 4 weeks. For example, customers participating in WBL, OJT or Scholarship training. If a customer stops participation in any of the above programs, STDP cannot be renewed.~~

Transportation

Workforce Solutions supports transportation expenses that are reasonable and necessary. We may provide short-term assistance to a customer requesting personal transportation expenses if the customer has a job or job offer and needs the assistance to work.

Transportation assistance is available in the following categories:
Personal Transportation Expenses Gas

- Bus Fare/Passes
- Other personal transportation

Vehicular Transportation Expenses

- Car Repair and Maintenance
- Consumable (i.e., tires, batteries)
- Vehicle Safety Inspection
- Liability Car Insurance
- Vehicle Registration

How We Decide What Financial Aid to Offer

Customer Request. Often customers ask us for financial aid. We evaluate a customer's request based on our understanding of their need to get a job, keep a job, or get a better job and our guidelines for providing financial aid.

Staff Suggestion. Based on our assessment of the customer's, we may suggest financial aid to a customer to support completion of his or her employment plan.

Action

1. Make sure staff is aware of the Financial Aid Limits by Type of Assistance Chart for the category and amount of financial aid available to our customers. Managers and supervisors must regularly check the information staff enters to track these limits.
2. Ensure staff enter information into case motes
3. Make sure each staff who works with customers has sufficient knowledge of the system to direct customers to the person/s who can best meet the customer's request.

Supporting and Recording Financial Aid Decisions

Before we provide financial aid, we must determine eligibility for one or more of the fund sources we use. Additionally, we must establish that the customer needs the assistance to attain their employment goals and is unable to obtain assistance from other community resources. Workforce staff must enter counselor notes that support the eligibility determination and the need for the assistance.

We record services in WIT and TWIST to track how Workforce Solutions is helping the customer. If we provide financial assistance, we also record the assistance and the amount of assistance in the Support Services tab in the Service Tracking Menu item in TWIST.

Use Counselor Notes to support the decision that Workforce Solutions is the best option, among community resources, to help the customer meet the need. Consider the availability of other community resources and whether the customer can access those resources in time to meet their need.

Supporting and Recording Substantial Assistance

A. Assessment – An assessment is critical to helping the customer identify their employment goals and figure out how to achieve those goals, with or without assistance from Workforce Solutions.

   The assessment is used to support the need for the substantial financial, assistance, to develop an employment plan to help the customer achieve their goals and identify WIOA priority criteria. We work with the customer to reassess needs and develop modified employment plans as the need arises. We use:

   - Service 62 – Initial Assessment to record assessment services provided before eligibility determination
   - Service 08 – Comprehensive Assessment to record continued assessment after the eligibility determination

Note: The customer has the right to choose the occupation and training provider. We provide information to help the customer make an informed choice. We do not choose the occupation or the training provider for the customer.

If the customer is interested in assistance with education and/or training:

1. Review and discuss Labor Market Information to show demand for persons with skills and expected wages for related occupations.
2. Schedule or arrange tests and assessments as necessary. Discuss their financial aid needs and how financial assistance will help meet their employment goals.
3. Discuss and, if appropriate, provide FAFSA website for the customer to get information and to submit a free application for federal student aid. Note: There is no requirement to use federal grants before applying Workforce Solutions Financial Aid to support education or training.
4. Help the customer identify other sources of timely assistance in the community, if available.
5. Discuss the customer's ability to meet financial obligations during training.
6. Determine suitability by checking for the customer's:
    - understanding their chosen occupation (may include awareness of hours, working conditions, wages, physical demand, character qualifications, etc.),
    - readiness to enter and complete the training,
    - ability to meet scholastic and financial obligations during training, and identification of barriers that may prevent them from being successful in that field.

B. Employment Planning – organizing Workforce Solutions service and financial aid to help reach employment/career goals

1. Begin developing the employment plan (to the extent you can based on your discussion); include steps both you and the customer will take before your next meeting, such as career exploration, assessment appointments, wage/demand research, gathering documents, creating a budget, finding a part-time job, locating other resources, etc.
2. Ask the customer about their employment goals and discuss specific steps along the customer's path to achieve those goals. Can the customer obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment? If not, then discuss how Workforce Solutions can help the customer meet their goals through classroom training and/or workbased training.

C. Completing the Financial Aid Application

When you determine the customer is suitable for financial assistance from Workforce Solutions, note this in TWIST Counselor Notes and explain to the customer the process for completing the online Financial Aid Application. Assist them with the collection of required documents as appropriate. Do not advise the customer regarding their eligibility for Workforce Solutions funds.

When the Financial Aid Support Center determines the customer is eligible for financial assistance from Workforce Solutions, continue assessment as appropriate.

D. Choosing an Eligible Training Provider/Adult Education Provider
Workforce Solutions will provide scholarship support to any occupation on the High-Skill, High- Growth list, provided the vendor is in the Eligible Training Provider List.
Next Gen staff must:
1. Review the High Skill/High Growth occupations list.
2. Review and discuss the approved vendors/schools on the Eligible Training Provider List.
3. Review the training provider report card.
4. Document the selection of the program of study in TWIST Counselor Notes.

E. Completing TWIST Counselor Note
Use TWIST Counselor Notes to summarize your conversations with customers and to support the service we provide.

TWIST Counselor Notes must include:
1. Initial and ongoing assessments;
2. Summary of eligibility for Workforce Solutions funds including WIOA priority criteria;
3. An explanation as to why the customer is unable to obtain timely assistance from other community resources and determination that Workforce Solutions is the appropriate source for the requested assistance;
4. A statement that the customer is suitable for the financial aid requested;
5. A description of the reason the customer is unlikely to return to the previous industry/occupation for dislocated worker status or the reason the customer needs additional assistance for the Board Designated Youth challenge, as appropriate;
6. Enrollment in courses that support the customer's training objective (ascertain start date of training);
7. Confirmation/documentation of the date the customer started training;
8. Results of the monthly contacts with the customer (e.g. academic progress, need for additional assistance, etc.);
9. A statement identifying the customer is co-enrolled under multiple funds, if applicable; and
10. Documentation of verification that a customer receives service and/or purchases items (i.e. roof of checks, vendor payments, vendor receipts or vouchers provided), and/or (i.e. photo of receipt, copy of online or in-store receipt)

F. Data Entering Substantial Assistance in
TWIST TWIST data entry must include:
1. Program Detail
2. Service Tracking
   - Objective Assessment (service code 8)
   - Employability Development Plan (service code 68)
   - Training Service (Occupational (service code 01), OJT (service code 03),Work Experience (service code 50), etc.)
   - Support Services information, as appropriate. When completing the Comments: tab, always include a reference to the service related to the

support service provided. For

example – Refers to 08 service dated 6/10/2017. This may be an objective ssessment, an employment plan or a training service such as occupational skills training, OJT, etc.

3. Counselor Notes to support service provided to the customer.

G. Following Up on an Employment Plan

1. Update the Employment Plan whenever the customer is requesting a new type or category of financial assistance. Counselor notes must support the decision to provide requested assistance by justifying the need for the assistance and addressing the availability of community resources to meet the customer's need.
2. Review the employment plan periodically (at least once a quarter) with the customer to determine if the employment plan should be adjusted. Record the results of these reviews in TWIST Counselor Notes and update the plan in TWIST, as appropriate.
3. Monthly contact with the customer is required. Confirm the customer is continuing to meet the goals and actions identified in the employment plan. Document monthly contact in counselor notes.

Desk Aids

Eligible Training Provider

List Next Gen Process Map

Determining Eligibility for Workforce Solutions Financial Aid

Validating-Entering-Qualifications-for-Financial-Aid.pdf - a list of documentation which serves as verification of eligibility criteria.

Workforce Solutions Financial Aid Application Instructions – use to guide the completion of the Financial Aid Application

Creating a Customer Record in TWIST

Using Docuware

Touchpoint Management – Assessment tool

Employment Income Verification – document for verification of

employment Financial Aid Limits Chart – used to determine eligibility for

WIOA Next Gen

High Skill, High Growth Occupations - guide offers of Workforce Solutions' financial aid and promote the occupations to all customers.

High Poverty Census Track

Service Cluster and

Definitions Service Matrix

Desk Aid

Counselor Notes

Training Guides for Supervisors

Next Gen Exit – Request form for entering follow-up services

VALIDATING AND ENTERING QUALIFICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL AID

Documentation verified in the TIERS system, sss.gov, or WIT must be stored in the document management system with other documentation. Documentation verified in TWIST does not need to be printed for the file. Indicate the method of verification in a TWIST Counselor Note.

Information should be recorded in Intake Common. If a Program Detail exists, also record on corresponding Program Detail screen.

NOTE: Other documentation sources may appear in the TWIST Documentation Source drop-down menu; however, the only allowable sources are those listed here.

General Eligibility			
Criteria	**Qualification**	**Documentation**	**Twist Screens**
Age	**Out-of-School Youth: Age 16-24** **At time of eligibility determination**	☐ Birth certificate (preferred) ☐ Official record showing date of birth ☐ Baptismal record ☐ DD-214, DD-215 Transfer/Discharge/Disability ☐ Driver's license ☐ Federal, state, or local government identification card ☐ Hospital record of birth ☐ Passport ☐ Public assistance/social service records ☐ School records ☐ School identification card ☐ Work permit ☐ Native American tribal document ☐ Other official document issued by a federal, state, or local government agency, such as discharge documents from the Texas Department of Criminal Justice with date of birth included	Intake Common-Identity

VALIDATING AND ENTERING QUALIFICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL AID

General Eligibility			
Criteria	**Qualification**	**Documentation**	**Twist Screens**
Selective Service Registration	**Males 18 years and older, born on or after 1/1/1960, must register for Selective Service no later than the day before their 26th birthday**	☐ Selective Service System letter/registration letter ☐ Internet verification/registration (http://www.sss.gov referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes) ☐ Telephone verification (847) 688-6888 or toll free 1-888-665-1825 referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes) ☐ DD-214, DD-215 Transfer/Discharge/Disability ☐ Self certification, including any required documentation, maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes	Intake Common-Characteristics
Resident of the Workforce Board Area *Required for both WIOA and Child Care eligibility.*	**Applicant is a resident of the Gulf-Coast 13-County region**	Documentation source must match the address on the customer's financial aid application. ☐ Copy of current utility bill ☐ Pay stub (if address is printed on stub) ☐ Rent receipt (showing current address) ☐ Lease agreement ☐ Mortgage statement ☐ School record showing proof of residency (in the Gulf Coast 13-county region) ☐ Section 8 Award letter ☐ Public assistance/social service records ☐ Financial aid application to document address and one of the above documents sources from the owner/lessee **OR** ☐ Homelessness determination – discussion documented in TWIST ***Note:*** *Managers and Supervisors may review and accept alternative documentation, including Self certification, when the preponderance of evidence points to the customer meeting the eligibility criterion.*	Intake Common-Identity (address) Counselor Notes - for Homeless determination

VALIDATING AND ENTERING QUALIFICATIONS FOR WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS FINANCIAL AID

General Eligibility

Criteria	Qualification	Documentation			Twist Screens
		List A ***Documents that Establish Both Identity and Employment Eligibility***	**List B** ***Documents that Establish Identity***	**List C** ***Documents that Establish Employment Eligibility***	
Eligible for Employment in the U.S.	**Authorized to Work in the U.S.** Requires: Authorization to Work checklist **AND** One item from list A **OR** One item from both list B and list C All items must be current and unexpired	☐ U.S. passport or U.S. passport card ☐ Permanent resident card or alien registration receipt card (INS Form I-551) ☐ Foreign passport that contains a temporary I-551 stamp or temporary I-551 printed notation on a machine-readable immigrant visa ☐ Employment Authorization Document that contains a photograph (INS Form I-766) ☐ In the case of a nonimmigrant alien authorized to work for a specific employer incident to status, a foreign passport with Form I-94 or Form I-94A bearing the same name as the passport and containing an endorsement of the alien's nonimmigrant status, as long as the period of endorsement has not yet expired and the proposed employment is not in conflict with any restrictions or limitations identified on the form ☐ Passport from the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) or the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) with Form I-94 or Form I-94A indicating nonimmigrant admission under the Compact of Free Association Between the United States and the FSM or RMI	☐ Driver license or ID card issued by a state or outlying possession of the United States provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address ☐ ID card issued by federal, state, or local government agencies or entities, provided it contains a photograph or information such as name, date of birth, gender, height, eye color, and address ☐ School ID card with a photograph ☐ Voter registration card ☐ U.S. Military card or draft record ☐ Military dependent's ID card ☐ U.S. Coast Guard Merchant Mariner Card ☐ Native American tribal document ☐ Driver license issued by a Canadian government authority • For persons under age 18 who are unable to present a document listed above: ☐ School record or report card ☐ Clinic, doctor, or hospital record ☐ Day care or nursery school record	☐ Social Security account Number card other than one that specifies on the face that the issuance of the card does not authorize employment in the United States ☐ Certification of Birth Abroad issued by the Department of State (Form FS-240) ☐ Certification of Report of Birth issued by the Department of State (Form DS-1350) ☐ Original or certified copy of a birth certificate issued by a state, county, municipal authority, or territory of the United States bearing an official seal ☐ Native American tribal document ☐ U.S. Citizen ID Card (INS Form I-197) ☐ ID Card for Use of Resident Citizen in the United States (INS Form I-179) ☐ Employment Authorization Document issued by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security ☐ Screen-print of Unemployment Insurance screen Current Claim Status ☐ Unemployment Insurance award letter ☐ Expedited Eligibility through TAA ☐ Expedited eligibility for an RESEA customer outreached within the last ten (10) weeks.	Intake Common-Characteristics

Youth Out of School ***Note:*** *School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.*			
Criteria	**Qualification**	**Documentation**	**Twist Screens**
General Eligibility	*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*		
School Attendance/ Status	**Out of School (16- 24)** *School status is based on a determination of school attendance on the date of eligibility determination.*	☐ School record(s) ☐ Self certification maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes ***Note:*** *A youth is "not attending" school if, on the date of eligibility determination, the individual:* • *Has had at least 10 consecutive days of unexcused absences and has not returned to school;* • *Is not attending postsecondary school;* • *Has not registered for postsecondary school classes; or* • *Is enrolled only in non-credit-bearing postsecondary classes.*	Program Detail-Program Summary
Youth Challenges to Employment *Economic Eligibility is not required, unless otherwise noted*	**Homeless or Runaway**	☐ WIT record or Self certification appearing in TWIST from WIT ☐ Customer statement to staff entered in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Self certification maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Written statement from an individual or social service agency providing residence shelter referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes and maintained in the document management system	Intake Common-Characteristics
	Foster Care Youth or Aged Out of Foster Care	☐ Self certification maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Statement made to staff referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes	Intake Common-Characteristics

Note: *Participation in the following programs is not considered being "in school" for the purpose of determining ISY/OSY status:*

- *Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA*
- *YouthBuild programs*
- *Job Corps programs*
- *High School Equivalency programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)*
- *Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)*

Youth Out of School

Note: *School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.*

Criteria	Qualification	Documentation	Twist Screens
General Eligibility	*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*		
Youth Challenges to Employment (cont.) *Economic Eligibility is not required, unless otherwise noted*	**Pregnant or Parenting** *Age is not a factor*	**Pregnant:** ☐ Customer statement to staff noted in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Staff observation noted in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Self certification maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes **Parenting:** ☐ Birth certificate (preferred) ☐ Baptismal record ☐ Hospital record of birth ☐ Public assistance/social service records ☐ School records ☐ HHSC TANF or SNAP screen-print showing the individual and child ☐ Other official document issued by a state or local government agency or court which demonstrates the individual is the child's parent or legal guardian, such as a copy of a signed Acknowledgment of Paternity form that has been filed with the Bureau of Vital Statistics or a copy of legal documents indicating guardianship or adoption ☐ Stepparent - Copy of an official document issued by a state or local government agency or court that names the child and the child's parent such as a birth certificate or adoption record and proof of marriage to the child's parent such as their marriage certificate or common law marriage certificate	Intake Common-Characteristics
	Offender	☐ Statement made to staff and referenced on the Program Detail Characteristics tab and in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Self certification maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes ☐ Documentation from criminal justice system (juvenile or adult) ☐ Telephone/written verification with court representatives	Intake Common-Characteristics

<table>
<tr><th colspan="4">Youth Out of School
Note: School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.</th></tr>
<tr><th>Criteria</th><th>Qualification</th><th>Documentation</th><th rowspan="2">Twist Screens</th></tr>
<tr><td>*General Eligibility*</td><td colspan="2">*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">**Youth Challenges to Employment (cont.)**
Economic Eligibility is not required, unless otherwise noted</td><td>**Disabled, including Learning Disabilities**</td><td>☐ Self certification maintained in the document management system and referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes</td><td>Intake Common-Disability/ Medical
Program Detail –Exemptions</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Of school age (6-18), but has not attended school in most recent school year calendar quarter***
**Last three month period*</td><td>☐ School records
☐ Self certification referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes and maintained in the document management system.</td><td>Intake Common-Education</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Dropout**</td><td>☐ Self certification referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes and maintained in the document management system.
☐ School attendance record
☐ School dropout letter
☐ Telephone/written verification from official source</td><td>Intake Common-Education</td></tr>
</table>

Youth Out of School ***Note:*** *School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.*			
Criteria	**Qualification**	**Documentation**	**Twist Screens**
General Eligibility	*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*		
Youth Challenges to Employment (cont.) *Must also be economically eligible*	**Has high school diploma** **AND**	**High school diploma:** ☐ School records ☐ Copy of diploma	Intake Common - Education
	Is basic skills deficient *Scored 8.9 or below on standardized test (TABE)* **OR**	**Basic skills deficient:** ☐ Assessed by generally accepted standardized test (TABE) ☐ School Records	Intake Common - Characteristics
	Is an English Language Learner **AND**	**English language learner:** ☐ Self certification referenced in TWIST Counselor Notes and maintained in the document management system.	Intake Common - Characteristics
	IS Economically Eligible	**Economically Eligible** ☐ Use one method to prove economic eligibility from pages 22-24	Intake Common

<table>
<tr><th colspan="5">Youth Out of School
Note: School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.</th></tr>
<tr><th colspan="2">Criteria</th><th>Qualification</th><th>Documentation</th><th rowspan="2">Twist Screens</th></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">General Eligibility</td><td colspan="2">Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">Youth Challenges to Employment (cont.)

Must also be economically eligible</td><td rowspan="3">Board Designated Categories</td><td colspan="3">Individuals who are economically eligible and require additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment. Must also be economically eligible. For each qualification, explain why the customer needs the additional assistance in TWIST Counselor Notes.</td></tr>
<tr><td>An individual, determined by a public or private agency as requiring additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and retain employment</td><td>☐ Letter from child study team stating specific disability
☐ Medical records
☐ School records
☐ Referral from a public or private agency (i.e., WFS)
☐ Copy of test results</td><td>Program Detail-Exemptions

Counselor Notes</td></tr>
<tr><td>A dependent member of a single parent family.</td><td>☐ Document family and relationship
☐ Self certification / Financial aid application</td><td>Intake Common - Family</td></tr>
</table>

Youth Out of School

Note: *School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.*

Criteria		Qualification	Documentation	Twist Screens
General Eligibility		*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*		
Youth Challenges to Employment (cont.) *Must also be economically eligible*	Board Designated Categories	**Lacks a significant work history[*] and needs additional assistance to secure and retain employment.** [*]*Has not worked for same employer, full or part-time, for a minimum of 3 of the last 12 months*	☐ Wage records ☐ Self certification documented in TWIST Counselor Notes and maintained in the document management system	Intake Common - Employment Status Counselor Notes
		Failed all or part of the standardized test required for graduation and needs additional assistance to complete an educational program	☐ School records ☐ Copy of test results	Intake Common - Education Counselor Notes

Youth Out of School

Note: *School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.*

Criteria	Qualification	Documentation	Twist Screens
General Eligibility	*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*		
Economic Eligibility *Only one qualification required*	**Individual Status/ Family Size** Required in conjunction with Individual/ Family Income or to document a member of a family receiving public assistance to demonstrate low-income	☐ Self certification per the Financial Aid Application ☐ Birth certificate ☐ Decree of court ☐ Divorce decree ☐ Court Documents ☐ Marriage certificate Note: A customer with a disability can be considered a “family of one” if his/her family income exceeds the income guidelines.	Intake-Common Family Tab*
	Income Determine family size. Then, use the family size to determine low income *Note: Not required if using TANF, SNAP, SSI, Homeless, School Lunch, Lives in a high poverty census area, OR Foster Care to determine low income*	☐ Alimony agreement ☐ Award letter from Veterans Affairs ☐ Bank statement ☐ Compensation award letter ☐ Employer statement/contact ☐ Family or business financial records ☐ Pay stubs ☐ Pension statement ☐ Public assistance records/printout ☐ Quarterly estimated tax for self-employed persons (Schedule C) ☐ Unemployment Insurance documents and/or printout ☐ Court award letter ☐ Self-employment verification form ☐ Other official document issued by a federal, state, or local government agency such as the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, indicating monetary amount of assistance	Intake-Common Income

**Based on the WIOA definition of family.*

Youth Out of School

***Note:** School attendance and school status determine which eligibility definition (ISY or OSY) may apply.*

Criteria	Qualification	Documentation	Twist Screens
General Eligibility	*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*		
Economic Eligibility (cont.) *Only one qualification required*	**An individual or family member* who is receiving TANF or has received TANF in the last 6 months**	☐ TWIST TANF History screens ☐ Copy of HHSC records (TIERS) ☐ Copy of out-of-state HHSC/public assistance documentation ☐ Documentation of receipt of TANF from an authorizing/distributing agency	Intake-Common Public Assistance
	An individual or family member* who is receiving SNAP or has received SNAP in the last 6 months.	☐ TWIST SNAP History screen ☐ Copy of HHSC records (TIERS) ☐ Documentation from an authorizing agency of receipt of SNAP ☐ Telephone verification from HHSC	Intake Common-Public Assistance
	An individual or family member* who is receiving SSI or has received SSI in the last 6 months	☐ Copy of authorization to receive cash public assistance ☐ Public assistance record ☐ Social Security benefits letter ☐ Telephone verification	Intake Common-Public Assistance
	An individual or family member* who is receiving other public assistance or has received other public assistance in the last 6 months	☐ Authorization to receive cash public assistance ☐ Public assistance check ☐ Medical card showing cash grant status ☐ Refugee assistance records ☐ Local cash assistance program	Intake Common-Public Assistance

**Based on the WIOA definition of family.*

***Note:** Participation in the following programs is not considered being "in school" for the purpose of determining ISY/OSY status:*
- *Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA*
- *YouthBuild programs*
- *Job Corps programs*
- *High School Equivalency programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)*
- *Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)*

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<tr><td>*General Eligibility*</td><td colspan="2">*Must meet and document all General Eligibility (see pages 1-2)*</td></tr>
<tr><td rowspan="3">**Economic Eligibility (cont.)**
Only one qualification required</td><td>**Foster Child**</td><td>☐ Official document issued by a federal, state, local government agency
☐ Court records</td><td>Intake Common-Characteristics</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Lives in a high poverty area**</td><td>☐ Proof of address
AND
☐ Internet verification of Census Track low income status - refer to the desk aid located here:
https://www.wrksolutions.com/Documents/Staff/deskaids/High-Poverty-Census-Tracts.pdf</td><td>Intake Common - Characteristics</td></tr>
<tr><td>**Receives or is eligible to receive free or reduced priced lunch.**</td><td>☐ School Records
Note: *Out-of-school may use this qualification if the youth is:*
• *a parent,*
• *living in the same household as a child receiving or eligible to receive free or reduced-price lunch, based on income.*</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Note: *Participation in the following programs is not considered being "in school" for the purpose of determining ISY/OSY status:*

- *Adult education programs provided under Title II of WIOA*
- *YouthBuild programs*
- *Job Corps programs*
- *High School Equivalency programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)*
- *Dropout reengagement programs (not funded by the public K–12 system)*

DEVELOPING EMPLOYMENT PLANS

The purpose of an employment plan is to collaborate with your customer to create a path towards building a successful work life. You may begin developing the employment plan using one or more of the tools listed below:

- Initial Interview
- Work Application and Addendum
- Work Search Assessment Desk Aid
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Job Search Map
- Back to Work Agreement

For the most current versions of these documents, go to:
www.wrksolutions.com > Staff Resources.

The purpose of employment planning is to:

- Assess your customers' strengths, challenges and goals.
- Map out a path that leads to self-sufficiency or perhaps a better job or career. The employment plan serves as a written agreement between Workforce Solutions and the customer to determine and document the actions required to gain employment.
- Help you and the customer set goals with specific action steps for meeting those goals. The plan also includes timelines for completing steps and the support services required to take those steps.
- Create a joint effort between you and your customer. It includes both customer and staff responsibilities and commitments.
- The employment plan is a "living document," which means that it can and should be changed to accommodate changes in activities and schedules (such as moving from job search to community service).

- As you and your customer begin developing the plan, remember to focus on the ultimate goal of employment. Getting a job could be just one or two steps down the path or it may be something of a “hike” to get there. Regardless, make sure you and your customer understand the connection between each action step and the ultimate goal of employment.
- Leave room for adaptations and additions as new situations arise. As certain activities are completed, you and the customer may realize more steps are necessary.
- Avoid the urge to create “cookie cutter” employment plans. Tailor each plan to fit each customer’s unique needs.
- Be patient; this may be the first time your customer has pursued a systematic approach to meeting goals.

As you begin developing a plan of action, always start with the positives first. What strengths does the customer bring to the table? What good things are happening in her life? Where do her opportunities lie? The entire tone of the planning process must be upbeat and positive. You want the customer to leave the session feeling hopeful and confident about her future.

Elements of a jointly prepared and agreed-upon employment plan include:

- Assessment of strengths and opportunities
- Goals
- Action Steps
- Timelines
- Support Services

Finally, once you and the customer agree on the employment plan and it is complete, you and the customer must sign it. A copy should be given to the customer for her records and placed in her electronic file.

Goal Setting

People can be overwhelmed when asked to write down their goals. Where do they start? For many customers, getting to the center today was an accomplishment. In fact, their presence may represent days and weeks of convincing themselves to do something to improve their situation. Many people have a hard time setting goals because their problems get in the way of their vision. You can have a substantial impact on your customer's success by helping him/her break problems down into manageable parts. This allows the customer to look beyond the "wall of problems" to imagine how things can be in the future.

Everyone faces challenges from time-to-time. Your job is to help the customer work through this phase of her life by capitalizing on her strengths and tapping into all available support services. Always start with the positive first. Does she have a work history? Good education? Strong family support? A network of friends? Local community or religious resources? Don't forget to point out all the services available through Workforce Solutions, including your help and guidance! Next, talk to your customer about working together to plan for success.

For example, suppose your customer has always dreamed of being a Registered Nurse. Children, marriage and money problems have suppressed that dream for some time. An eager college graduate may dream of being a teacher, but doesn't think a teacher's salary will pay off his/her college loans. A middle-aged veteran has always wanted to open a radiator shop, but doesn't think he has the business acumen to pull it off. Be an advocate for your customers by encouraging them to set aside their problems long enough to identify their long-term employment goals. Remind them of the benefits of goal setting:

- Putting goals in writing gives them meaning and a sense of importance. It provides focus and promotes accountability; it's hard to ignore something you wrote down in your own words.
- Goals make us get busy addressing problems and carving out solutions. There's no time to dwell on the negatives.
- Goals carve a path from where we are to where we want to be. No one wants to wander aimlessly or "jump through hoops" just to end up in the same place.
- Goals are something to look forward to – a future. Having something to work toward motivates us to change.

- Following a path means we can stop and see where we are, where we were, how far we have come, and how far we have to go. Progress and advancement encourage us to keep going.

Once you and the customer have established the long-term employment goal, it's time to design the path that will get the customer there. Do this by developing short-term goals or objectives. Short-term goals prevent a customer from being overwhelmed or confused by how far he/she has to go. They also allow for small victories along the way. Short-term goals are different for everyone and depend on the nature of the long-term goal. Short-term goals should include:

- Actions required
- Timelines for reaching objectives
- Reality checks
- Strategies for overcoming identified barriers
- Support services needed

Finally, employment plans serve as a tool to guide you and your customer through the service process. Print a copy of the plan for the customer. Refer to the plan each time you are in contact with the customer. Tell the customer it's okay to call you to report on progress. Check for – and address – inconsistencies between the customer's actions and his/her goals. Let the plan be your guide for discussion as you address these inconsistencies with your customer. Celebrate small steps along the path.

When to Use an Employment/Service Plan

It is required to use the TWIST Service Plan when assisting customers:

- Receiving any substantial financial aid or service and tagged in TWIST under any fund source.
- Tagged as Choices who move into any other activity other than job search or employment.
- Tagged as SNAP E&T ABAWD who move into any other activity other than job search or employment.
- Unemployment recipients tagged as Rapid Re-employment claimants.

Entering the Employment/Service Plan in TWIST

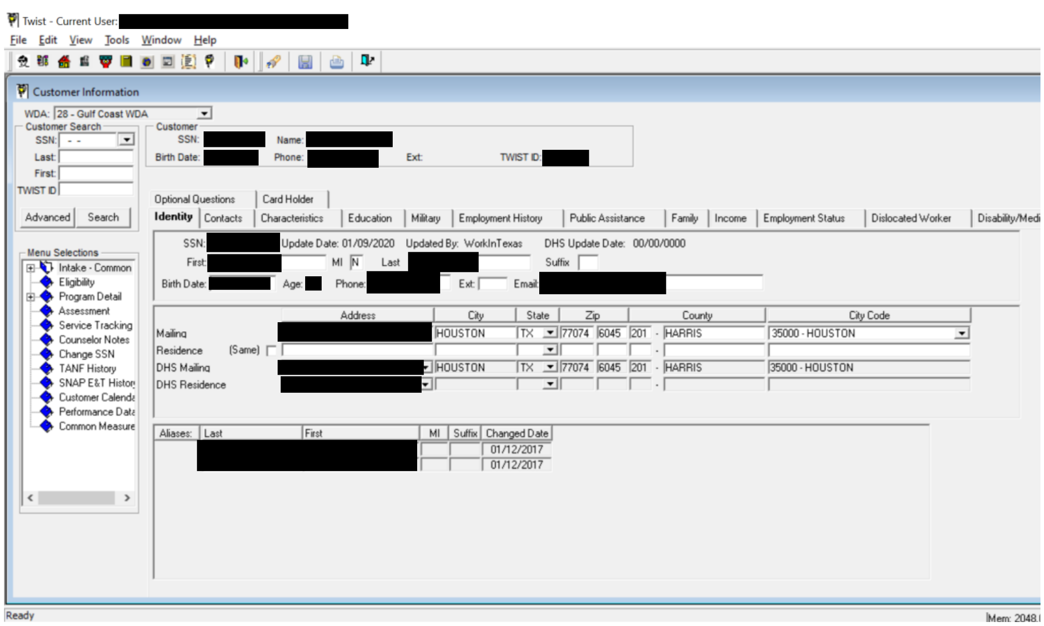
You must enter the Service Plan in TWIST and it must be kept up-to-date. Changes in services or actions must be included, and they must complement and agree with your counselor notes.

The Service Plan you enter in TWIST documents the customer's:

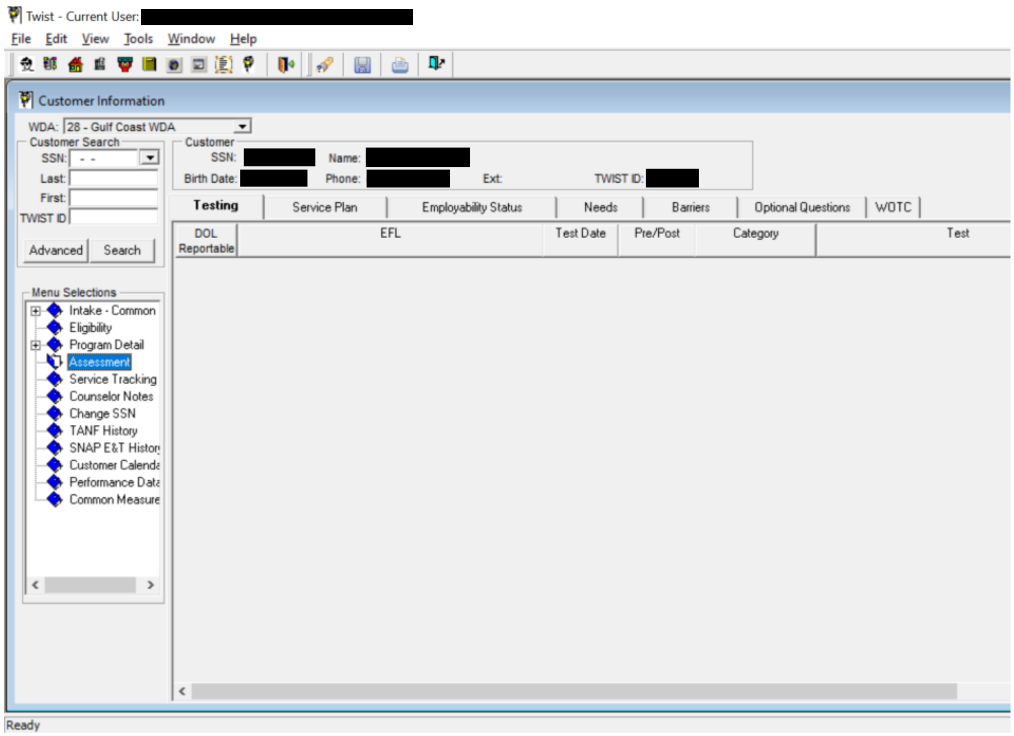
- Overall goal
- Interim goals that need to be completed before achieving overall goal, and
- Actions necessary to complete the interim goals

The overall goal is always a specific occupation. Interim goals must be clearly stated and specific actions should be identified to achieve each interim goal. Interim goals and actions should also address challenges to employment, if necessary.

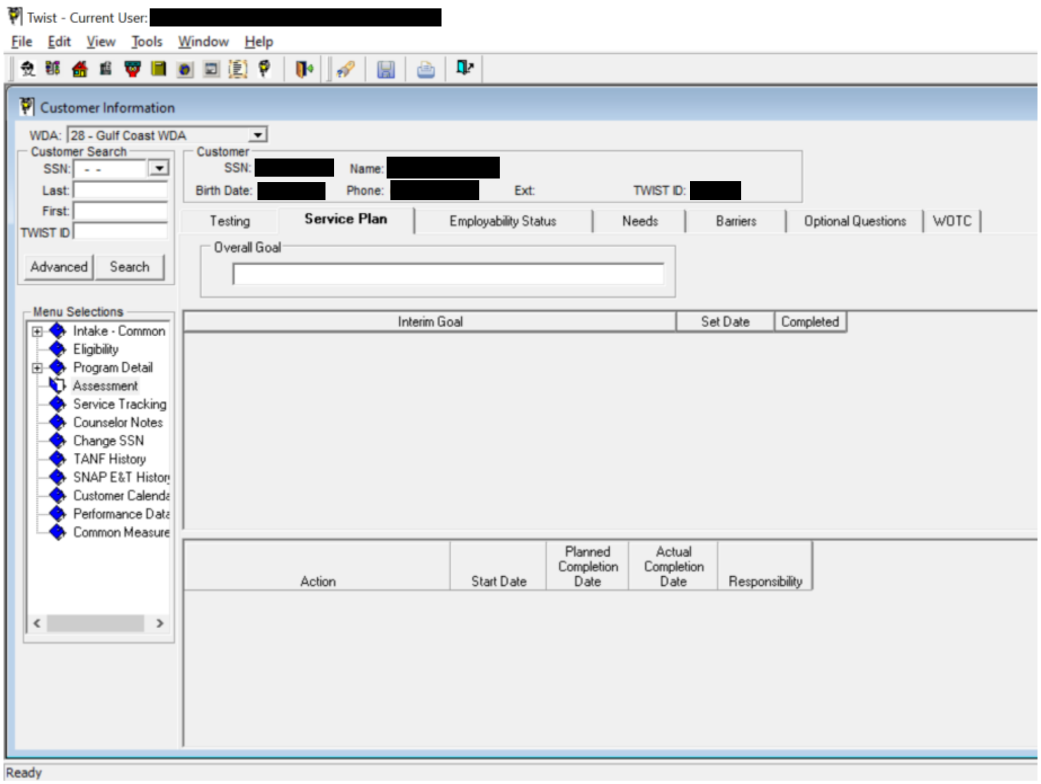
1. Logon to TWIST.
2. Click on the **Customer Information Icon**.
3. Conduct a customer **Search**. The customer information displays.



4. Select **Assessment** from the left menu. The Assessment screen displays.



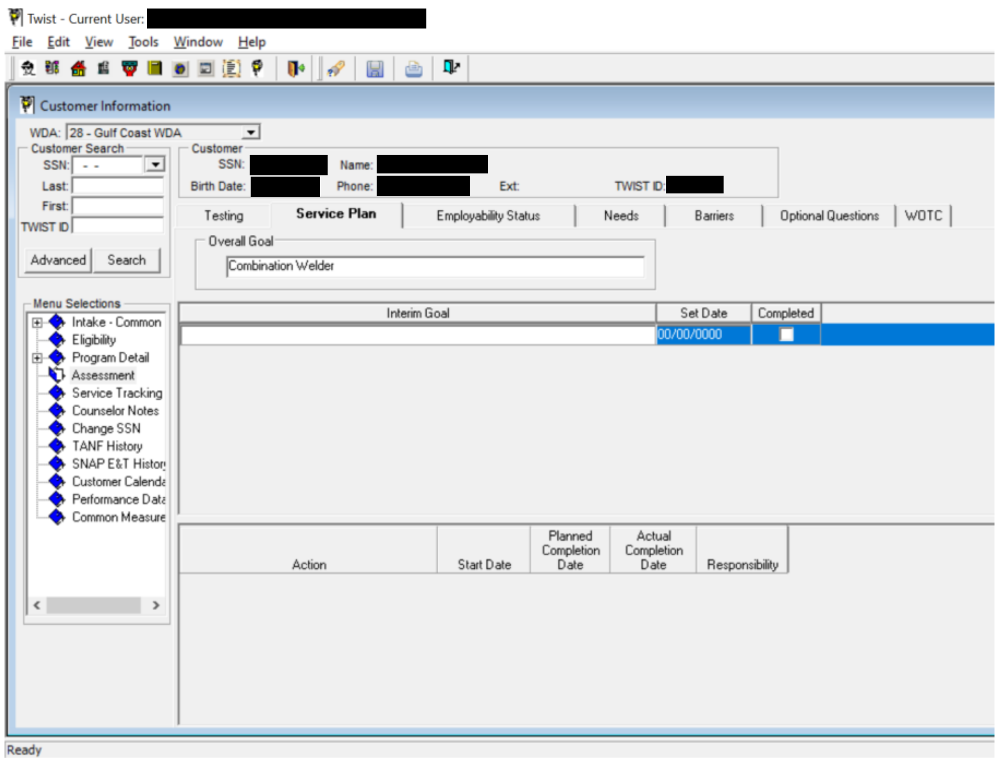
5. Click on the **Service Plan** tab.



6. Type in the **Overall Goal**.

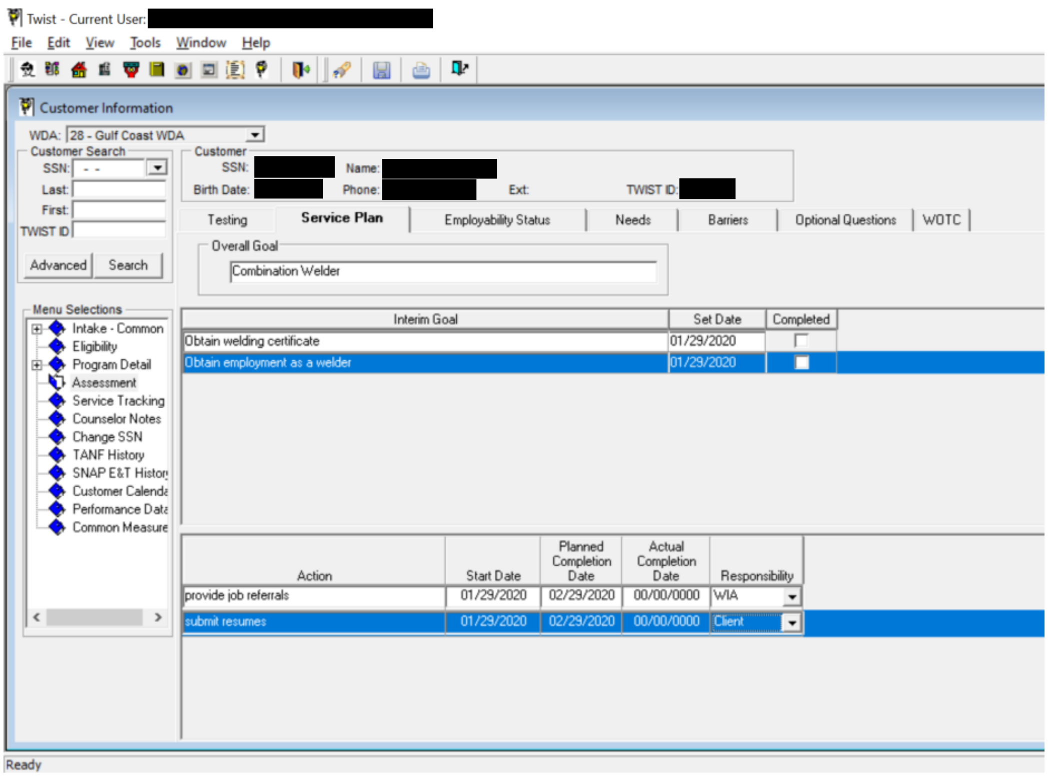
7. Right click in the grey area under the Interim Goal field. Select Add.

8. Type in an **Interim Goal(s)** that the customer needs to meet before achieving her overall goal. Use the date the interim goal was set as your Set Date. Click on the **check box** if the interim goal was completed.



9. Right click in the grey area below the Action field. Select **Add**.

10. Add **Actions** needed to reach interim goals. Type in the **Start Date** of the action to be taken. Type in the **date of Planned Completion**. Type in the **Actual Date of Completion** when the action is complete. Click on the drop down arrow to the right of **Responsibility** and select the person whose responsibility it is to see that the action is completed.



NOTES

ACTIVITY:
Planning for Success

Directions: Working in groups, read the scenarios provided below. Develop an Employment Plan for one individual that includes strategies for facing challenges. Be prepared to share your results with the total group.

Scenario #1 – Melinda Gonzales

Melinda is a 28-year old single parent with two children, ages 5 and 3. Her long-term employment goal is to become a nurse, because she has always enjoyed helping other people. Before her children were born, Melinda held positions as an administrative assistant (2 years) and a receptionist in a doctor's office (3 years). She has a high school diploma but has not worked for almost 6 years. A recent divorce has caused her to seek a full-time job so that she can stay in the small house the couple owned. Melinda's ex-husband is current with child support payments, but the income is not enough to support her living and vehicle expenses.

Scenario #2 – Leah Cameron

Leah came into the office in response to a voice message that was left for her in regards to a rapid re-employment/back to work orientation. Leah has been receiving unemployment benefits for the past six months and is fearful that she will exhaust all of her benefits soon. She is having a difficult time obtaining new employment since being laid off. Her company closed its operations in the United States and will reopen across seas. She worked as a Loss Prevention Officer for the company for eight years and worked her way up to earning six figures. Leah has a high school diploma and took some college classes occasionally over the past four years, towards a degree in supply chain management. In order to be self-sufficient, Leah estimates that she needs to make at least $75,000 - $80,000 a year. She is weighing her options on getting serious about completing her degree in supply chain management and is in the process of figuring out how to downsize for the meantime.

Scenario #3 – Jack Williams

Jack is a 35-year old unmarried ex-offender who has been referred to your services by the courts. His work history includes a long series of low-paying jobs in the retail and service industries (stocking groceries, working in a warehouse facility, gas station attendant, etc.) as well as an 18-month incarceration for a drug related felony. Jack dropped out of school in 11th grade, and his interpersonal skills are poor. Jack claims that he is "clean" and has not used drugs for almost 2 years. He lives with his girlfriend in her apartment and relies on her car for transportation.

Scenario #4 – Juanita Evans

Juanita entered a Workforce Solutions career office and asked for help in finding and getting a full-time job. She has a 2-year Associate's degree from a local community college and is a registered Pharmacy Technician. Juanita is 40 years old; she is married and has 3 children who are all of school age. Although she has had several part-time jobs in the past 10 years, the employment has been intermittent. Juanita's husband was laid off from his construction job 9 months ago and has been unable to find employment. She claims that he is "down" and increasingly frustrated by interviews that seem to go nowhere. In fact, he has begun drinking heavily to drown his problems. Juanita is hoping to make things better at home by finding a full-time job. She was late for her second appointment with you, because her husband didn't show up to watch the children. You notice a fairly large bruise on her left arm.

Scenario #5 – Jacob Jackson

Jacob is a 28- year old disabled veteran seeking full-time employment. He lost his right arm as a result of a road-side bomb attack in Iraq. Prior to being called to serve in Iraq two years ago, he was a certified maintenance electrician in the army. Jacob joined the army at age 18, as soon as he finished high school. He seems to have a positive attitude and has informed you that he likes working with people.

Scenario #6 – Gary Kraft

Gary came into the office for assistance in looking for work. He is an experienced Chef and was recently laid off from his position at Manna's Restaurant. He has 15 years' work experience as a Chef, which includes two years on a Navy crew ship as a Chef, therefore, he has a TWIC card as well as Basic Safety Plus certification. Gary loves to cook, but is open to other positions where he can use his credentials. He prefers to work the early shift and is looking for full-time employment. He prides himself on working hard and is uneasy about not being stable. He heard from his son that Workforce Solutions might be able to help. While looking through his WIT application, you notice that he is a rapid-reemployment profiled claimant.

NOTES

Examples of interim goals and action steps include:

Interim Goal	Action Steps
Secure child care to stay employed	Complete a WS Financial Aid application Gather any necessary documents Research and select caretaker/facility
Secure funding for school	Complete the FAFSA Research scholarships/grants Complete a WS Financial Aid application Gather necessary documents
Begin job search	Research potential employers Reach out to network Search online Apply for jobs Go to Dress for Success for interview clothes Prepare for interviews
Prepare for job search	Identify skills/training Write resume Prepare answers to commonly-asked interview questions Decide salary/benefits/location requirements Attend job search workshops Complete a master application
Change careers	Determine preferences and needs Identify skills Conduct career exploration Network
Apply to nursing school	Research options for school Register for testing Complete application

Example Employment Plan

Overall Goal: ______________________________

Interim Goal: ______________________ Set Date: __________ Completed: [ ]

	Start Date	Planned Completion Date	Actual End Date	Responsibility
A. Action:				
B. Action:				
C. Action:				

Interim Goal: ______________________ Set Date: __________ Completed: [ ]

	Start Date	Planned Completion Date	Actual End Date	Responsibility
A. Action:				
B. Action:				
C. Action:				

Interim Goal: ______________________ Set Date: __________ Completed: [ ]

	Start Date	Planned Completion Date	Actual End Date	Responsibility
A. Action:				
B. Action:				
C. Action:				