

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
Workforce Service Delivery
Technical Assistance Bulletin #110

Program: Temporary Assistance for Needy Families Choices and Food Stamp Employment and Training

Topic: Updates to the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's New Eligibility System and Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System

Date: January 27, 2006

This Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin provides Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information on the rollout of the Texas Health and Human Services Commission's (HHSC) New Eligibility System and the Texas Integrated Eligibility Redesign System (TIERS).

To view the rollout schedule for the New Eligibility System for your local workforce development area (workforce area), see Attachment 1 to this TA Bulletin or access www.hhs.state.tx.us/consolidation/IE/Projected_RolloutSchedule.shtml

As a result of the initiative to integrate the application and eligibility determination processes, **HHSC's policy for processing applications and determining eligibility changed effective January 20, 2006.**

Application for State Benefits

The changes will affect the application process for the following:

- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- Food Stamp Employment and Training (FSE&T)
- Medical Assistance for Families and Children
- Medicaid for the Elderly and People with Disabilities

HHSC is creating a menu of options for individuals applying for state services. In the new system, applicants using the New Eligibility System can apply for benefits by:

- calling 2-1-1;*
- faxing an application to 1-877-HHSC-TEX (447-2839);
- mailing an application to HHSC Data Processing Center, P.O. Box 14900, Midland, Texas 79711-4900;
- applying in person at an HHSC benefits office; or
- accessing HHSC's Your Texas Benefits Web site at <http://www.yourtexasbenefits.com/>

*Exception: Food stamp applications cannot be filed by calling 2-1-1. However, applicants may fill in only their name and address on the Integrated Application form and sign and submit the form to HHSC. Applicants then may call 2-1-1 to start the process

once a signed application has been received and registered by the Texas ACCESS Alliance.

Texas ACCESS Alliance

The Texas ACCESS Alliance will process called in, faxed, and e-mailed application information and then will electronically send case action information to HHSC for an eligibility determination. The Texas ACCESS Alliance's role in the New Eligibility System includes:

- handling inquiry calls;
- handling inbound mail for imaging;
- scheduling all appointments;
- accepting applications, redeterminations, and changes;
- collecting verification information in order for HHSC to determine eligibility;
- certifying Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP) applicants or referring a CHIP application to the Central Processing Center for processing of Children's Medicaid; and
- producing and sending pending information notices to HHSC customers.

Food Stamp Employment and Training

Prior to the January 20, 2006, rollout of HHSC's New Eligibility System and TIERS, Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents (ABAWDs) were referred for FSE&T services using two methods:

- an automated method between HHSC and The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST)
- a paper referral method using the *ABAWD E&T Referral/Work Requirement Verification* (Form H1822)

Statewide Referral Process for Able-Bodied Adults Without Dependents

Effective January 20, 2006, HHSC staff will no longer use Form H1822 to refer ABAWDs to Boards. Boards will receive ABAWD referrals through TWIST's outreach pool.

HHSC will modify Form H1822 so that it is no longer designed as a referral form. Additionally, Form H1822 will not contain allotment information. Two versions of the revised form will be made available to Boards:

- One for TIERS customers that contains the Texas ACCESS Alliance return address
- One for non-TIERS customers, which will need to be returned to the customer's local HHSC office

After retrieving individuals from the TWIST outreach pool, follow the instructions below to obtain allotment amounts for ABAWDs participating in a workfare activity.

Procedures for Serving Customers in TIERS or Rolled-Out Areas

- Call 2-1-1 to obtain food stamp allotment amount and the number of ABAWDs in the food stamp household.

- Send Form H1822 to the HHSC Data Processing Center to report and verify participation for newly certified ABAWDs who begin participating in FSE&T.
- At recertification, HHSC will provide the ABAWD with Form H1822 and the ABAWD must then take the form to Texas Workforce Center staff to complete.
- Texas Workforce Center staff may:
 - return Form H1822 to the ABAWD so he or she can return it to the HHSC Data Processing Center;
 - fax Form H1822 to the HHSC Data Processing Center; or
 - mail Form H1822 to the HHSC Data Processing Center

HHSC Data Processing Center
 P.O. Box 14900
 Midland, Texas 79711-4900
 Fax: 1-877-HHSC-TEX (1-877-447-2839)

Procedures for Serving Customers in Non–Rolled-Out Areas

- Contact the local HHSC office using locally established procedures to verify food stamp allotment and number of ABAWDs in the case.
- Continue to send Form H1822 to the local HHSC office to report and verify participation for newly certified ABAWDs who begin participating in FSE&T.
- At recertification, HHSC will provide the ABAWD with Form H1822 and the ABAWD must then take the form to Texas Workforce Center staff to complete.
- Texas Workforce Center staff may:
 - return Form H1822 to the ABAWD so he or she can return it to the local HHSC office;
 - fax Form H1822 to the local HHSC office; or
 - mail Form H1822 to the local HHSC office.

Reporting Benefit and Status Changes

Changes may be reported by calling 2-1-1 or by mailing or faxing the changes to the HHSC Data Processing Center. Changes cannot be reported using the Internet.

HHSC field offices will be strategically located across the state. The new call centers will be located in Austin, Midland, San Antonio, and Athens. To find out the call center contact for your workforce area, dial 2-1-1, or mail or fax your request to:

HHSC Data Processing Center
 P.O. Box 14900
 Midland, Texas 79711-4900
 Fax: 1-877-HHSC-TEX (1-877-447-2839)

Visit HHSC’s Web site for office locations, maps, and frequently asked questions at <http://www.hhs.state.tx.us/consolidation/IE/IE.shtml>

TIERS Reference Guide

TIERS is a part of HHSC's efforts to modernize its eligibility system. TIERS will replace the Systems for Application, Verification, Eligibility, Referral and Reporting (SAVERR).

On October 5, 2005, TWC released the updated TIERS Reference Guide along with a recorded Live Meeting session to provide Texas workforce system partners with information about TIERS, TIERS concepts, and how to navigate in TIERS. The TIERS guide and the Live Meeting Session are designed to help appropriate staff search, access, navigate, and obtain customer information relating to workforce services, including status and history regarding TANF and FSE&T.

- ◆ The updated TIERS Reference Guide and Live Meeting recording link is located on TWC's Training and Development's Intranet at http://intra.twc.state.tx.us/intranet/train/html/resources_guides_tiers.html.
- ◆ For TIERS issues, including system resets, password resets, outages and unavailability, functionality questions, and software defects, contact the Texas ACCESS Alliance help desk at (512) 533-3890 or (800) 214-4175.

If you have questions, please contact the assigned contract manager for your local workforce development area.

