

Program Notice: PN-9

SUBJECT: COVID-19 TEMPORARY PROGRAMMATIC WAIVERS

EFFECTIVE: See Individual Sections for dates

Background and Vision:

In response to COVID-19 concerns, the Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC) is authorizing temporary flexibility with the programmatic requirements outlined below to assist WorkSource Columbia Basin and Tri-Cities (TC) Future during the “Governor’s Safe Start Washington – Phased Reopening County-by-County” approach. This temporary waiver may be modified or revoked at the discretion of the BFWDC. The following programmatic requirements shall be waived until further notice:

A. Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Eligibility Application

1. Effective 03/04/21: Verbal self-attestation is allowed to document the case manager, and applicant conducted the eligibility determination and registration verbally by phone with the case manager case-noting the following in the ETO management information system:
“Verbal self-attestation was necessary due to a one-stop office closure caused by COVID-19. I attest that I provided the Equal Employment Opportunity and Complaint and Grievance Procedures and WIOA Title I-B Program Data Collection Certification statements to [applicant name] on [date] and [applicant name] attested to understanding the information”. Per Department of Labor (DOL) guidance, verbal self-attestation shall be used as the last resort.
2. Previous guidance issued - Effective 11/1/20: Required participant signatures for the Efforts to Outcome (ETO) WIOA Eligibility Application shall be located on the WIOA Eligibility Application Remote Signature Document. Case notes shall document, “Due to COVID-19, the participant electronically signed the WIOA Eligibility Application Remote Signature Document in place of the WIOA Eligibility Application signature page.”
3. Previous guidance issued 4/2/20 - 10/31/20: Participant signatures on the WIOA Eligibility Application are not required. Case notes shall document, “Due to COVID-19, the participant electronically signed the Enrollment Intake Form in place of the WIOA Eligibility Application signature page; the employment specialist and the participant have reviewed all forms.”

B. Enrollment Eligibility Exception

1. Effective 4/29/20: Verbal self-attestation can be used to document eligibility criteria such as Date of Birth and Legally Entitled to Work in the United States when in-person engagement is not possible due to the COVID-19 emergency. *Eligibility exceptions shall be used as a last resort.*

2. Review [WIN 0109](#) for additional guidance, case note requirements, and waiver rescindment dates.

Note: Effective 11/8/21, the Enrollment Eligibility Exception does not apply to Data Element Validation (DEV) requirements. DEV requires the collection of source documentation even when it was not used to document eligibility criteria. Refer to [Data Element Validation Policy 2021-01](#) for additional guidance.

C. BFWDC Assessment Policy 2015-09, WorkKeys Assessments

1. Effective 4/2/20: Assessments are not required prior to training for individuals who possess a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED), college transcript showing satisfactory grades, or have held steady employment. Supporting documentation must verify that an assessment is not required.

D. BFWDC Support Services and Needs-Related Payments Policy 2015-02, Supportive Service Expenditures:

1. Effective 6/3/21: Past-due mortgage payments for up to two (2) previous months may be paid but cannot include expenses incurred before the program enrollment date.
2. Effective 6/3/20: Food may be provided as a supportive service to WIOA Youth program participants to assist or enable them to participate in employment and training activities. Case notes shall document coordination with other community partners to ensure that WIOA supportive services are provided only when they are not otherwise available. Review [WIN 0111](#) for additional guidance, case note requirements, and waiver rescindment dates.
3. Effective 4/2/20: Past-due utility and rental expenses for the previous month(s) may be paid but cannot include expenses incurred before the program enrollment date.

E. Program Notice-8 CASAS for Basic Skills Assessment

1. Effective 5/5/20: CASAS testing to document Basic Skill Deficiency in WIOA Title I Programs is temporarily suspended. To identify other documentation options allowed, see Attachment A of [WIN 0107](#).

The subrecipient shall continuously check the [Workforce Professional Center](#) website for [WorkSource Information Notices](#) (WIN) waiver extension and rescission dates. All pre-existing programmatic requirements shall be followed during the “Governor’s Safe Start Washington – Phased Reopening County-by-County” approach. Failure to follow existing eligibility policies during this period may result in disciplinary action and/or waiver termination.