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Final Guidance Welfare Transition Program Relocation Assistance

Of Interest To:

Workforce Florida, Inc., all Regional Workforce Boards, and other entities engaged in implementing programs under the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families Program and the Welfare Transition Program.

Subject:

Revised guidance for implementing Relocation Assistance (445.021, F.S.), which includes clarification on required data entry and eligibility for Transitional Childcare (TCC).

Background:

The Relocation Assistance Program, developed under Florida Statute 445.021, aids families who have significant barriers to finding and retaining employment in moving to communities where there are greater opportunities for attaining self-sufficiency. It is also to aid victims of domestic violence who would benefit from reduced probability of further incidents through relocation.

Program Guidance:

Relocation Assistance is available to applicants requesting Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) who meet Up-Front Diversion eligibility criteria, **or** for Welfare Transition (WT) participants currently receiving TCA who meet relocation eligibility criteria. **The Relocation Assistance Program has been implemented to assist families in relocating to a community with more opportunities for achieving self-sufficiency.**

Need to Relocate:

The Regional Workforce Board (RWB) provider will determine if a family qualifies for Relocation Assistance. Relocation Assistance may be approved if the family has a **need** to relocate as specified below:

- Is located in an area with limited employment opportunities;
- Is geographically isolated;
- Has formidable transportation barriers;
- Is isolated from their extended family; or

- Has experienced incidences of domestic violence that interfere with the participant's ability to maintain self-sufficiency.

Contributing Factors to Achieving Self-Sufficiency:

The RWB provider must determine there is a basis for believing that the relocation to a new community will contribute to the family's ability to achieve self-sufficiency. The RWB should determine the relocation appropriate for the family by ensuring one or more contributing factors are applicable. Based on F.S. 445.021, examples of **contributing factors** are:

- The Relocation Assistance applicant will not likely achieve economic self-sufficiency in the current community of residence;
- The Relocation Assistance applicant has secured a job in the community (s)he wants to relocate to which will provide increased wages or improved benefits;
- The Relocation Assistance applicant has a family support network that will contribute to job retention in another community;
- The Relocation Assistance applicant is a victim of domestic violence who will experience reduced incidents of further violence due to relocation; and/or
- The Relocation Assistance applicant can obtain education or training directly related to the individual's employment or career advancement.

Relocation Assistance Program Eligibility

The individual must be a recipient of TCA or an applicant for TCA and meet all eligibility criteria for Up-Front Diversion. The family must demonstrate a **need for relocation** and demonstrate a **contributing factor to achieving self-sufficiency** as a result of the relocation. If the Relocation Assistance applicant does not qualify for or receive TCA due to exhausting his or her time limits, the applicant is not eligible to receive Relocation Assistance using Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds under 445.021 (F.S).

Relocation Assistance Program Process

The RWB provider is responsible for the completion of the following five steps in cooperation with the Department of Children and Families (DCF) and the individual requesting Relocation Assistance.

1. Determine if the family is receiving TCA, or the TCA applicant meets TCA eligibility. The RWB provider is responsible for determining eligibility for Relocation Assistance. **If the family has met their TCA lifetime limit and is not approved for a hardship extension, they cannot receive Relocation Assistance under 445.021 (F.S.).**
2. Determine if there is sufficient information to ensure the Relocation Assistance will assist the individual in attaining self-sufficiency. The RWB provider is responsible for determining if the individual is a potential candidate and Relocation Assistance will lead to more opportunities for self-sufficiency. The individual (with the exception of TCA applicants/recipients relocating due to domestic violence) must be able to relocate to an independent living space without

relying on TCA. Therefore, the individual should be able to verify the means of obtaining a personal residence and sustaining residence in the community (s)he is relocating to.

3. The RWB provider must establish a written relocation plan in conjunction with the Relocation Assistance applicant. The relocation plan should include:
 - A relocation budget using the AWI WTP-0002, Relocation Budget Worksheet. The budget should include estimates for relocation expenses and employment related costs. The RWB provider should verify the information on the budget worksheet and implement procedures to prevent abuse/misuse of the Relocation Assistance payment.
 - Documentation from the individual to ensure relocation funds will be expended properly and the relocation will take place. Vouchers and purchase orders should be used to pay for relocation services when possible. The definition of documentation shall be determined locally.
 - Assurance the relocation will be successful without relying on TCA (i.e. a budget to pay on-going expenses). Individuals, except persons who relocate due to domestic violence, who receive Relocation Assistance using TANF formula funds (i.e. DCF administered funds) are not eligible to apply for TCA for six months unless an emergency arises. If a qualified emergency arises and TCA is approved, the Relocation Assistance recipient must repay the Relocation Assistance amount. Therefore, individuals who are requesting Relocation Assistance, except those who are relocating due to domestic violence, should be prepared to meet future expenses without relying on recurring TCA once the relocation has been approved.
4. The RWB provider must develop a relocation plan with individuals relocating due to domestic violence. The plan should include provisions to protect the victim(s) and their family, as well as identify programs in the new community that may assist the family. Individuals who relocate due to domestic violence are not subject to re-application restrictions. The family should be provided with contact information for the DCF office where the family is relocating, as well as how to apply for TCA benefits. The RWB provider must ensure the provisions made in the relocation plan will not place the victim(s) in danger.
5. The RWB provider must verify (and document on the AWI WTP-2279, Relocation Assistance Program Checklist) the community (in or out of the State of Florida) receiving a relocated family has the capacity to provide needed services and employment opportunities. Although the RWB provider may assign responsibility to the Relocation Assistance applicant to research and provide information regarding the receiving community, the RWB provider is responsible for verifying the information's accuracy. Enter the contact person's name, title, phone number, and address on the form. Give the individual a copy of the form so (s)he has a contact name and phone number in the new community, as well as information regarding community support services, transitional services, the RWB One-Stop Career Centers and the DCF office in the area the family is relocating to.
6. The RWB must monitor the family's relocation 90 days after the Relocation Assistance is provided. The family must relocate within 90 days of the receipt of Relocation Assistance. Monitoring the family's relocation requires at a minimum that a survey be sent to the relocated family or the RWB provider can telephone the relocated family and complete the

survey by phone. The RWB may use the attached sample survey or develop their own. The survey is used to verify the family has relocated and assess the success of the relocation, including the adequacy of services being provided in the new area. This survey should be conducted within three months of the move or sooner at the discretion of the RWB. If there is no response from the participant within a reasonable period of time, the RWB Provider is to telephone the contact name provided by the participant on form AWI 0002, page two to get additional information.

Relocation Assistance

Relocation Assistance can be provided in several ways.

- A Relocation Assistance payment is applied to the family's EBT card by DCF. The DCF provides the amount requested on the Relocation Assistance Program Checklist, AWI WTP-2279.
- Vouchers, purchase orders or other forms of payment can be made directly to vendors assisting in the relocation process (movers, moving truck company, gas cards for transportation, etc.) or vendors being utilized to make the relocation possible/successful (utilities, rent, uniforms for new employment, etc). These amounts are provided through local RWB TANF funds. The amounts are listed on the AWI WTP-2279 as well.

For individuals who are receiving TCA, the Relocation Assistance payment (provided through the DCF expended TANF dollars and applied to the EBT card) only counts toward TCA time limits in the month in which it is received. The Relocation Assistance payment amount is based on the items/expenses listed on the Relocation Budget Worksheet and on the projected temporary employment expenditures.

Procedures

Application procedures depend on whether the individual is an applicant (not receiving TCA but needs some assistance to maintain self-sufficiency) or is a WT participant (TCA recipient).

A. Relocation as a Diversion: TCA Applicant Procedures

The TCA applicant must complete the Request for Assistance (RFA) and must be determined potentially eligible for TCA.

1. The applicant will be required to initiate the WT Work Registration process during the application process, which includes being engaged in a work activity. For the purposes of Relocation Assistance, if the applicant has not secured employment, the applicant should be engaged in the process of securing employment in the area (s)he may wish to relocate to.
2. The applicant should complete the diversion process through the RWB provider. Applications for Relocation Assistance will be scheduled on a "fast track" similar to Up-Front Diversion. Complete the Up-front Diversion Pre-Screening Form, AWI WTP-2073A, to determine if the family has a situation that can be resolved by Relocation Assistance as a diversion instead of on-going TCA. Complete the AWI 0005, Eligibility Form for TANF Funded Services, to ensure the family meets TANF eligibility requirements. Screen the applicant for potential TCA eligibility by completing the Diversion Service Worksheet, AWI WTP 2073B.

- The RWB provider should approve or deny the Relocation Assistance within fourteen calendar days from the date of the RFA.
 - **If the applicant has not completed the process or has not demonstrated a need for relocation and ability to sustain residence in the community of relocation by the fourteenth day:**
 - A. The relocation assistance (Section B, AWI WTP-2279) should be denied and forwarded to DCF;
 - B. The application for TCA will be processed by the DCF ESS; and
 - C. The applicant must complete the WT Work Registration Process, and the WT Overview and Work Activity Referral CF-ES 2096 should be forwarded to DCF once the WT Work Registration process is complete.
3. The applicant should begin the Relocation Assistance planning process.
- The applicant should begin the budgeting process and complete the Relocation Budget Worksheet, AWI WTP-0002 as soon as possible. If the applicant indicates (s)he is interested in relocation during the work registration process, (s)he may begin to complete the required Relocation Assistance paperwork.
 - If the applicant has not secured employment in the community (s)he would like to relocate to, the applicant should continue the job search process to secure employment.
 - The relocation applicant should begin to secure a living space in the area (s)he is moving to. An applicant who is relocating due to domestic violence may not be able to secure independent housing. The applicant may provide information for temporary residence in a protective shelter or with a family member. Relocation applicants who are not moving due to domestic violence must secure independent housing.
 - The applicant should begin to locate support service agencies (transportation assistance, childcare assistance) in the area (s)he is requesting to relocate to.
 - The RWB provider should complete Section A of the Relocation Assistance Program Checklist (AWI WTP-2279). Print individual's name, social security number, case #, RFA date, etc. Also, check the appropriate line indicating that the individual is an applicant.
4. The RWB provider, in conjunction with the applicant, should begin to determine barriers to employment that are preventing the applicant from becoming self-sufficient. **The applicant must be able to demonstrate that relocating to the new area will increase the likelihood of obtaining employment, job retention and self-sufficiency. The RWB provider should review the relocation request to ensure the individual meets one or more of the contributing factors to achieving self-sufficiency have been met.** The RWB provider must complete Section B of AWI WTP-2279.

5. The RWB provider must review with the applicant the relocation budget, as well as documentation to support the relocation budget to ensure accuracy. The RWB should develop a local operating procedure regarding the documentation and service selection process regarding the Relocation Assistance Program.
 - The Relocation Budget Worksheet, AWI WTP-0002, should be completed with the applicant and retained by the RWB provider.
 - The provider will discuss with the applicant the feasibility of relocating.
 - The relocation amount must be calculated and entered on the AWI WTP-0002. Specify on the AWI WTP-0002 the amount to be applied to the EBT card and the amount to be provided through local funds. Relocation amounts may include:
 - The cash payment amount provided by DCF on the EBT card; and
 - The amount provided by RWB TANF funds through vouchers, purchase orders, checks and other locally approved methods.
7. The RWB provider should contact the receiving community to verify support services to assist the applicant in retaining employment are available.
8. The RWB provider should ensure the contact information to conduct the follow-up is available.
 - The participant must provide a contact name and phone number on the AWI WTP-0002.
 - The applicant should provide a forwarding address to the RWB provider. The information should be entered on the AWI WTP-2278, Relocation Transfer Letter.
9. The RWB should approve or deny the application for Relocation Assistance. The approval or denial should be indicated on the AWI WTP-2279 under Section B.
 - For approval or denial, a copy of the AWI WTP-2279, the RFA used to refer the applicant and the AWI WTP-0002, must be forwarded to DCF. The originals of all documents must be retained in the case file.
 - If the relocation application is approved, the payment utilizing TANF formula funds will be forwarded according to DCF procedures. Amounts utilizing local RWB TANF funds should be distributed according to local operating procedures. The applicant must be given a copy of the Relocation Assistance Program Transfer Letter to take to the receiving community.
 - If the Relocation Assistance is denied, the application for TCA assistance should be processed by the ESS.
 - If the Relocation Assistance is denied, the individual is an applicant for TCA. Therefore, the individual should complete the WT Work Registration process.

B. Procedures for TCA Recipients/WT Participants

1. The TCA recipient informs the RWB provider (s)he is interested in the Relocation Assistance. Initiate the screening process by using the AWI WTP-2279, Relocation Assistance Program Checklist to determine if the family has a situation that can be resolved by Relocation Assistance instead of on-going TCA. The determination must reflect whether the Relocation Assistance will enable the TCA recipient to obtain and/or retain employment.
 - Because the family is receiving TCA, DCF does not have a time standard to meet regarding the application process. Therefore, fourteen calendar days is not a requirement for the completion of the Relocation Assistance process. The RWB should develop a local operating procedure (LOP) to establish time standards appropriate for the process. The LOP should be in writing
 - To substantiate any case action;
 - To document decision making guidelines;
 - To avoid differential treatment; and
 - To provide documentation of procedures in the event a grievance is filed.
 - The RWB provider should complete Section A of the Relocation Assistance Program Checklist (AWI WTP-2279). Print TCA recipient's name, social security number, FLORIDA case number, etc. Also, check the appropriate line indicating the individual is a TCA recipient.
 - If the TCA recipient has not completed the process and/or has not demonstrated a need for Relocation Assistance and an ability to sustain residence in the community of relocation by the end of the locally defined time period, the relocation application should be denied (except for families relocating due to domestic violence). The LOP should determine how the TCA recipient may request the completion of the Relocation Assistance process or to initiate a new Relocation Assistance process.
 - The documentation regarding the denial must be retained in the TCA recipient's hard file.
 - Because the relocation applicant is receiving TCA and cash assistance approval is **not pending** on the decision to approve or deny Relocation Assistance, DCF does not have to be notified of the denial.
2. The TCA recipient is responsible for taking an active role in the Relocation Assistance application process. The TCA recipient may need guidance regarding the completion of documents, budgeting for relocation, budgeting to meet ongoing expenses once relocated, securing a living space and applying for employment in the receiving area. The TCA recipient/relocation applicant should begin the relocation process.
 - The Relocation Assistance applicant should begin the budgeting process and start to complete the Relocation Budget Worksheet, AWI WTP-0002.
 - The Relocation Assistance applicant should continue the job search process to secure employment in the area (s)he would like to move to.

- The Relocation Assistance applicant should begin to secure a living space in the area (s)he is moving to. A TCA recipient relocating due to domestic violence may not be able to secure independent housing. The relocation applicant may provide information for temporary residence in a protective shelter or with a family member. Relocation applicants who are not relocating due to domestic violence must secure independent housing.
 - The Relocation Assistance applicant should begin to locate support service agencies (transportation assistance, childcare assistance) in the area (s)he is requesting relocation to.
 - The RWB provider, in conjunction with the Relocation Assistance applicant, should begin to determine barriers to employment preventing the participant from becoming self-sufficient. (S)he must be able to demonstrate that relocating to the new area will increase the likelihood of obtaining employment, job retention and self-sufficiency. The RWB provider must complete Section B of AWI WTP-2279.
3. The RWB provider must review with the relocation applicant the relocation budget and documentation to support the relocation budget to ensure accuracy. The RWB should include in the LOP information regarding the documentation and service selection process.
 - The Relocation Budget Worksheet, AWI WTP-0002, should be completed and retained by the RWB provider.
 - The RWB provider and the relocation applicant should discuss the feasibility of relocating.
 - The Relocation Assistance amount must be calculated and entered on the AWI WTP-0002 form.
 4. The RWB provider should contact the receiving community to verify the community has support services to assist the relocation applicant in retaining employment.
 5. The RWB provider should ensure the contact information to conduct the follow-up is available.
 - The relocation applicant must provide a contact name and phone number on the AWI WTP-0002.
 - The relocation applicant should provide a forwarding address to the RWB provider. The information should be entered on the AWI WTP-2278, Relocation Transfer Letter.
 6. The RWB provider should approve or deny the application for Relocation Assistance. The approval or denial should be indicated on the AWI-WTP 2279 under Section B.
 - If approved, a copy of the AWI WTP-2279 and the AWI WTP-0002, must be forwarded to DCF. The originals of all documents must be retained in the case file.

- The amount approved by the RWB provider utilizing TANF formula funds will be forwarded according to DCF procedures. The amount approved by the RWB utilizing local RWB TANF funds should be distributed according to local operating procedures. The relocation recipient must be given a copy of the Relocation Assistance Program Transfer Letter to take to the receiving community RWB provider.

Right to Withdraw

If the Relocation Assistance applicant decides not to relocate, the RWB Provider will check the withdrawn category on the bottom portion of Section B of the AWI WTP-2279 form and enter the date the applicant withdrew the Relocation Assistance request. The withdrawal request should be completed prior to the Relocation Assistance payment being applied to the EBT card and local TANF funds being expended by the vendors. The withdrawal paperwork must be forwarded to DCF and a copy retained in the case file.

Monitoring Relocation

Ninety days after the Relocation Assistance payment/services is provided to the family, the RWB Provider is required to monitor the family's relocation. Monitoring the family's relocation means, at a minimum, sending a survey to the family to assess the quality and adequacy of services being provided in the new area, as well as, determine if the family relocated.

The family is required to relocate within 90 days of receiving the Relocation Assistance funds. The definition of "receiving funds" is as follows:

- For the purpose of amounts placed on the Electronic Benefits Transfer (EBT) card, the 90 days starts from the date the funds are applied to the card.
- For the purpose of amounts provided through payments to vendors (RWB TANF funds), the 90 days starts five days from the date the payment was mailed to the vendor. The RWB must retain appropriate documentation to verify the date the payment was mailed.
- For the purpose of amounts provided through payments to vendors that the participant directly delivers (RWB TANF funds), the 90 days starts from the date the payment is provided to the participant. The RWB must retain appropriate documentation to verify the date the payment was provided to the participant.

Multiple Relocation Assistance Requests

The number of times a family may apply for Relocation Assistance is not limited. However, any subsequent relocation application must be evaluated to determine why the previous relocation was not successful and should be a factor in determining the appropriateness of future Relocation Assistance.

Relocation and Childcare

WT childcare referrals may be provided to recipients of TCA to comply with the WT program requirements and work activity requirements based on funding availability and RWB local operating procedures. Applicant childcare is available for 30 days for TCA applicants who are requesting a diversion. Applicant childcare is available for participation in the WT Work Registration process, job search, the TCA application process and other locally defined purposes. Applicant childcare is available based on funding availability and RWB local operating procedures.

Transitional Childcare. Obtaining employment is a critical component of the Relocation Assistance process. According to Florida Statute 445.021 (c), individuals who relocate are eligible for TCC. According to the Florida State TANF Plan, TCC is limited to persons who are employed when leaving TCA or employed recipients of diversion.

Once the individual arrives in the receiving community and has requested services from the receiving One-Stop Career Center, (s)he may receive job search childcare for 30 days if (s)he is not employed. The individual who receives relocation as a diversion and is not employed may receive TCC only if employment is obtained within 90 days after receipt of the Relocation Assistance payment.

Data Entry

F.S. Chapter 445, requires the Relocation Assistance be tracked and reported to Workforce Florida, Inc. annually. The data is compiled from both OSST and the FLORIDA system. Therefore, the Relocation Assistance process must be entered and tracked in the OSST system.

A. Entering Relocation Assistance Data on TCA Applicants/Relocation Assistance as a Diversion

- From the *Skill Development* screen, select the *ADD* tab under the *Service Plan*. After selecting the correct provider, add the *Relocation* service to track the applicant throughout this process.
- *Case Notes* must be updated as appropriate.
- If the applicant is approved for Relocation Assistance, the service entered under *Service Plan* on the *Skill Development* screen must have a positive outcome of *Completed*. If the applicant is denied or withdraws the relocation request, the Relocation Assistance service should be ended with the appropriate reason and the *Actual End Date*.
- Once the outcome is entered, the user will have to enter a financial outcome. Under the *Financial Outcome* section of the diversion screen, the user will have to select a “yes” or “no” response to the following questions:
 - Was the relocation provided as a diversion to the applicant?
 - Was the relocation provided through RWB funds...?
 - Was the relocation provided through the Department of Children and Families (EBT card)?

B. Entering Relocation Data on WT Participants

- The participant’s case must be open in the OSST system.
- The participant must be engaged in and complying with the WT program.
- The Relocation Assistance must be entered as a service under the *Service Plan* on the *Skill Development* screen at the initiation of the relocation process.
- *Case Notes* must be updated throughout the Relocation Assistance process as appropriate.

- If the participant is approved for Relocation Assistance, the service entered under *Service Plan* on the *Skill Development* screen must have a positive outcome of *Completed*. If the Relocation Assistance is denied or withdraws the Relocation Assistance request, the relocation service should be ended with the appropriate reason and the *Actual End Date*
- Once the outcome is entered, the user will have to enter a financial outcome. Under the *Financial Outcome* section of the diversion screen, the user will have to select a “yes” or “no” response to the following questions:
 - Was the relocation provided as a diversion to the applicant?
 - Was the relocation provided through RWB funds...?
 - Was the relocation provided through the Department of Children and Families (EBT card)?.
- The RWB provider should follow-up to ensure that the family relocates and TCA is terminated (if relocated for a reason other than domestic violence).
- The OSST case should not be closed by the RWB provider until a To Do is received.

Reapplication for TCA Due to an Emergency

If the family demonstrates a qualified emergency to the RWB prior to the expiration of the six-month period, they may reapply for TCA. If the family reapplies for TCA through their local DCF office, the ESS should refer the family to the RWB to first determine if an emergency exists before the ESS can approve TCA. The RWB Provider completes the AWI WTP-0001 and determines if the family demonstrates a qualified emergency. A copy of the AWI WTP-0001 is forwarded to the DCF ESS.

The following are examples of emergencies:

- Hospitalization or illness documented by a physician licensed under Chapter 458 or 459 F.S., resulting in a significant loss of income or loss of employment;
- Loss of earned income for reasons *other than* resignation without good cause or termination for cause;
- Loss of housing;
- Natural disaster (for example a flood or hurricane) responsible for destruction of the family's major property;
- Other situations of similar nature affecting the individual's employment; and
- Domestic Violence.

Repayment of Relocation Assistance

If the family reapplies for TCA within six months due to an emergency, except in cases of domestic violence, either the entire amount of the Relocation Assistance received, or a portion

of it must be repaid. The Relocation Assistance repayment amount will be determined by the DCF ESS.

Fraud

If fraud is suspected or if the family fails to relocate within 90 days of receiving the Relocation Assistance, the entire amount of the relocation payment must be repaid. The RWB Provider **must** notify the DCF ESS so the benefit recovery repayment process can be initiated. If fraud is determined at a later date, the Relocation Assistance payment would be recouped according to the amount of the established claim.

Local Operating Procedure (LOP) for Relocation Due to Domestic Violence

It is recommended the RWB develop a LOP regarding the process of completing and verifying a Relocation Assistance application in an expedited manner while maintaining the requirements of the Relocation Assistance approval process. Areas to consider in the LOP include:

- There is no Federal or State minimum required distance a relocation recipient must move when relocating due to domestic violence. The RWB can develop a local operating procedure for processing the relocation due to domestic violence.
- The RWB provider should contact the receiving community to verify the availability of shelter and protection to secure an emergency plan for victims of domestic violence.
- The RWB provider should ensure the relocating family is not moving into a potentially dangerous situation.
- Verification that the relocation applicant will be able to receive supportive services and assistance in the receiving community.

The Relocation Assistance forms are available on the [AWI Website](#). The Relocation Assistance forms are:

Diversion Services Eligibility Screening Tool, AWI WTP-2073B

Diversion Services Emergency Criteria, AWI WTP-0001

Relocation Assistance Program Checklist, AWI WTP-2279

Relocation Budget Worksheet, AWI WTP-0002

Relocation Assistance Program Transfer Letter, AWI WTP-2278

TANF Eligibility Form for TANF Funded Services, AWI WTP 0005

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