



Southwest Georgia Workforce Development Board

Policy/Procedure Name: 3.2.3 Family Size, Income Determination and Self-Sufficiency Standards

Policy/Procedure #: WIOA-64

Effective Date: December 6, 2016

Revision Date: November 29, 2017

**Rescinds Policy #64 – Self Sufficiency Standards dated 3/2/2016**

Revision Date: June 7, 2022

Revision Date: September 7, 2023

### **PURPOSE.**

Self-Sufficiency Standards - WIOA section 134 (a)(3)(A)(xii) and section 134 (d)(1)(A)(x) addresses state and local determinations of economic self-sufficiency standards that specify the income needs of families, by family size, number and ages of children in the family, and sub-state geographical considerations.

Under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(A), training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who, among other criteria, are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services, and are in need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.

The State defines minimum standards for defining “lacks self-sufficiency” as follows:

An individual is declared to “lack self-sufficiency” if:

- A. An individual has a personal or family income that is at or below 100% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL),
- B. A Food stamp or TANF recipient (current or within the last six months),
- C. A Supplemental Social Security Income recipient, or
- D. An individual (single family of one) who is employed, but in a job earning less than the living wage hourly rate for the State of Georgia (See the Living Wage Calculator Section Below).

Dislocated workers may be considered to lack self-sufficiency if they are employed, but in a job/occupation that is at a wage or skill level that is significantly less than the job of dislocation.



Connecting Talent with Opportunity  
A proud partner of the AmericanJobCenter network

Local areas are permitted to define self-sufficiency at a higher income level than the state minimum, as long as supporting documentation is provided. This policy defines the eligibility criteria and self-sufficiency standards for Local Workforce Development Area 17.

### Living Wage Calculator

The living wage shown is the hourly rate that an individual must earn to support their family, if they are the sole provider and are working full-time (2080 hours per year). All values are per adult in a family unless otherwise noted. The living wage calculator estimates the living wage needed to support families of twelve different compositions: one adult families with up to three dependent children, two adult families where both adults are in the workforce with up to three dependent children, and two adult families where one adult is not in the workforce with up to three dependent children.

The calculator includes estimates for single adult households, two adult households with one adult working, and two adult households with two adults working. In two adult households with children and one adult working, the second adult is assumed to be providing childcare. Working adults are assumed to be working full-time; work is assumed to be year-round, 40 hours per week for 52 weeks, per adult.

The living wage is calculated at the county, metropolitan area, state, regional, and national level. Unless otherwise noted, geographic definitions are consistent with those published by the Office of Management and Budget. Reported national values are calculated at the average (mean) state living wage.

Local areas are encouraged to utilize the county-level data provided by the Living Wage Calculator at <http://livingwage.mit.edu/> to set local "lacks self-sufficiency" standards.

### **POLICY.**

#### I. Family Size

Family size must be determined and verified only if using family income to determine low-income status. Family size will be determined by counting the maximum number of family members in the residence during the last six months, not including the current month.

A family, for eligibility purposes, means two or more persons related by blood, marriage or decree of court, who are living in a single residence, and are included in one or more of the following categories:

- A. A married couple and dependent children
- B. A parent or guardian and dependent children
- C. A married couple 20 CFR § 675.300



A **Dependent child** – A dependent child lives in a single residence with parent(s) or guardian(s) and relies on them for financial support such as for housing, food, clothing, necessities, and more. Additionally, a dependent child does not meet the definition of an independent child based on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA).

**Independent child** – An independent child is living in a single residence with parent(s) or guardian(s) and is at least in one of the following:

- Is 24 years of age or older by December 31<sup>st</sup> of the current year;
- A veteran;
- A member of the armed forces;
- An orphan or ward of the court;
- Someone with legal dependents other than a spouse;
- An emancipated minor;
- Someone who is homeless or at risk of becoming homeless;
- Is a student for whom a financial aid administrator makes a documented determination of independence by reason of other unusual circumstances; or
- Is currently living with parent(s) or guardian(s) but provides more than 50% of his/her own support.

In certain cases, an individual may be considered a "family of one" for the purpose of eligibility determination. This includes individuals with a disability whose family income may exceed the income criteria, but whose own income meets the income criteria. 20 C.F.R. § 680.640

## II. Income Determination

Income is the amount of all reportable income for each family member for the prior six (6) months. This amount multiplied by two (2) is the total annualized family income.

Family income means all includable income actually received from all sources by all members of the family during the income determination period. However, when computing family income, the income of a spouse and/or other family members shall only be counted for that portion of the income determination period that the person was actually a part of the family of the applicant.

Family size for the determination period is the maximum size of the family during such period. All items not expressly excluded are includable income.

Applicants having low or no income should complete an applicant statement that describes their means of support in the last six months.



A. **INCLUDE** in Family Income:

- I. Unemployment compensation, child support payments and old-age survivors insurance benefits received under section 202 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 402) are included under WIOA and no longer excluded.
  1. Old age and survivors insurance benefits include: Social Security Survivor Benefits are benefits paid to people up to age 18 who have had a parent die and the parent paid wages into the system; and
  2. Social Security Retirement Benefits – these are benefits that are paid to people who reached their social security age and have wages paid in the system.
- II. Money wages and salaries before any deductions;
- III. Net receipts from non-farm self-employment (receipts from a person's own unincorporated business, professional enterprise, or partnership after deductions for business expenses);
- IV. Net receipts from farm self-employment (receipts from a farm which one operates as an owner, renter, or sharecropper, after deductions for farm operating expenses);
- V. Regular payments from railroad retirement, strike benefits from union funds, worker's compensation, and training stipends;
- VI. Alimony;
- VII. Regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
- VIII. Pensions, whether private or public employee;
- IX. Military pension benefits authorized by Titles 10 and 15 USC (TEGL 10-09);
- X. Regular insurance or annuity payments other than Supplemental Security Income disability (SSI) or Veterans' disability;
- XI. College or university grants, fellowships, and assistantships;
- XII. Net gambling or lottery winnings;
- XIII. Social Security Disability Insurance payments (SSDI)
  1. SSDI pays benefits to individuals that have worked in the past, paid Social Security taxes, and are currently unable to work for a year or more because of a disability. SSDI is considered income replacement and must be included in family income.

B. **EXCLUDE** from Family Income:

- I. Military pay or allowances paid while on active duty or paid by the Department of Veterans Affairs for vocational rehabilitation, disability payments or related VA-funded programs (38 U.S.C. 4213 and 20 CFR 683.230. (TEGL 19-16)
- II. Public Assistance payments (including Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), Refugee Case Assistance (RCA), and General Assistance (GA));
  1. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a program that pays benefits to disabled adults and children who have limited income and resources. It is also paid to people 65 and older without disabilities who meet the financial limits. SSI is



considered cash assistance and individuals receiving SSI are automatically income eligible the same as individuals receiving TANF or SNAP. A WIOA participant applicant on SSI is a family of one. Refer to the Adult or Youth Verification Worksheets for acceptable documentation for SSI recipients.

- III. Foster care child payments;
- IV. Title IV of the Higher Education Act (i.e., Pell Grants, Federal Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (FSEOG), and Federal Work-Study (FWS));
- V. Needs-based scholarship assistance;
- VI. Severance pay;
- VII. Capital gains;
- VIII. Any assets drawn down as withdrawals from a bank, the sale of property, a house or a car;
- IX. Tax refunds, gifts, loans, lump-sum inheritances, one-time insurance payments, or compensation for injury;
- X. Non-cash benefits such as employer paid fringe benefits, food or housing received in lieu of wages, Medicare, Medicaid, Food Stamps (received or has been determined eligible to receive Food Stamps (SNAP) within the six-month period prior to application for the program); school meals, and housing assistance;

### III. Self-Sufficiency Standards

WIOA section 134 (a)(3)(A)(xii) and section 134 (d)(1)(A)(x) addresses state and local determinations of economic self-sufficiency standards that specify the income needs of families, by family size, number and ages of children in the family, and sub-state geographical considerations. LWDA's may make adjustments to the following factors based on local considerations.

Under 20 CFR § 680.210 training services may be made available to employed and unemployed adults and dislocated workers who, among other criteria, are unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services, and are in need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment.

The Local Workforce Development Area 17 defines minimum standards for defining "lacks self-sufficiency" as follows:

An individual is declared to "lack self-sufficiency" if:

- A. An individual has a personal or family income that is at or below **200% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL)**. The Southwest Georgia Workforce Development Board utilized the Living Wage Calculator (for Albany GA – LWDA MSA



- and State of Georgia) at <http://livingwage.mit.edu/> to set the local definition of "lacks self-sufficiency" standard.
- B. A Food stamp or TANF recipient (current or within the last six months),
  - C. A Supplemental Social Security Income recipient, or
  - D. An individual (single family of one) who is employed, but in a job earning less than the living wage hourly rate for the State of Georgia (See Living Wage Calculator Section Above on Page 2).

Dislocated workers may be considered to lack self-sufficiency if they are employed, but in a job/occupation that is at a wage or skill level that is significantly less than the job of dislocation.