⏹ Procedure for determining eligibility and enrollment in the Choices program.

**RESOURCES:**

* TWIST TANF History
* Choices Work Code Lists
* Counselor Note Procedure
* Choices Charitable Notice

**SERVICES**

Staff will determine eligibility for Choices funding on a monthly basis to maximize available resources for service delivery.

**WORKFORCE EXPECTATIONS:**

Staff will accurately determine eligibility in accordance with local, state and federal policies and procedures to ensure adequate and proper utilization of program funding.

Staff will collect and verify proper documentation and conduct data entry as required.

Staff will provide ineligible individuals with alternative resources within the center and/or community.

**WORK INSTRUCTIONS:**

Initial & Ongoing Eligibility Verification

HHSC determines eligibility for Choices customers and information related to eligibility is sent from HHSC to TWIST via daily and monthly interfaces. TWIST TANF History must be used as the primary program eligibility source for both initial and continued eligibility. If eligibility cannot be verified via TWIST, staff can use TIERS to verify eligibility information.

Staff will document a case note with the following information:

* Month the customer is eligible to receive benefits
* Benefit Amount
* Benefit Issuance Date
* Customer Work Code

Initial verification of eligibility must be documented in TWIST counselor notes on the date of intake. Ongoing verification of eligibility must be documented in TWIST counselor notes by the 3rd business day of the month.

If the space in the warrant file column in TWIST TANF History for the current month is blank (nothing at all in the space), it indicates that the customer has received TANF, but TWIST has not received the information from TIERS. The information will populate in TWIST after the Warrant file is received from TIERS, sometime between the 5th and 8th of the next month.

In the meantime, staff should use TIERS to determine the exact benefits issuance date and benefit grant amount for program purposes.

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| E**ligible Group** | **Description** | **Method of Eligibility Verification** | **Initial and Ongoing Timeframes for verifying eligibility** |
| TANF Applicant | * Adult or teen head of household in a family applying for TANF – TP01 or 61; **and** * Referred by HHSC to a Workforce orientation (WOA); **and** * Previously *did not* leave TANF in a sanctioned status | * HHSC Form 2588 (Workforce Orientation Referral) * Verify potential exemption status. * Document eligibility in counselor notes and file form 2588 in case file. | * *Initial:*   At the time of intake.   * *Ongoing:* Assigned staff verifies applicant status at least three times a week to identify when the applicant becomes certified or denied by using TIERS. * ***Note: Assigned staff will verify eligibility daily for applicants receiving childcare and take appropriate and timely action if the customer’s application is denied.*** |
| TANF Recipient | * Adult or teen head of household in a family receiving TANF | * Active TP 01 or TP 61 * SIG (Status in Group) 7/8 * Review Issue Date in TANF history * Benefits received for the month within the month. * Document eligibility in counselor notes * Staff will use TWIST TANF History to verify eligibility | * *Initial:*   At the time of intake   * *Ongoing*: Assigned staff verifies receipt of TANF for the month via TWIST TANF History. Eligibility must be documented in TWIST counselor notes by the 3rd business day of the month. |
| **Eligible Group** | **Description** | **Method of Eligibility Verification** | **Initial and Ongoing Timeframes for verifying eligibility** |
| Sanctioned Family | * Adult or teen head of household in a family who must demonstrate cooperation for one program month to have benefits re-instated. * Customer must demonstrate full cooperation with participation requirements for the **program month** *immediately following the month of non-cooperation.* | * Penalty requested in TWIST*.* (See TWIST TANF History - Penalty Tab) * Verify:   + Month of non-compliance and cooperation month. * Document eligibility in counselor notes. | *Initial:*   * At the end of the sanction month, prior to the start of the demonstrated cooperation month.     *Ongoing:*   * At the end of the demonstrated cooperation month, staff will send cooperation notice via TWIST if the customer has participated as required, or close the case if they have not, unless HHSC has not imposed the penalty. * If the customer demonstrates cooperation the case should remain open to allow HHSC to make a determination on the case. * Eligibility must be documented in TWIST counselor notes by the 3rd business day of the month. |
| Conditional Applicant | * Adult or teen head of household in a family *re-applying* for TANF; **and** * Referred by HHSC to a Choices orientation; **and** * Left TANF in a sanctioned status and must attend an orientation and demonstrate cooperation for **four consecutive weeks** | * HHSC Form 2588 * Document eligibility in counselor notes | *Initial:*  At the time of intake.  *Ongoing:*   * At the end of the demonstrated cooperation period, staff will send cooperation notice via TWIST if the customer has participated as required, or close the case if they have not. * If the customer demonstrates cooperation the case should remain open to allow HHSC to make a determination on the case. * Assigned staff verifies receipt of TANF for the month via TWIST TANF History. Eligibility must be documented in TWIST counselor notes by the 3rd business day of the month. |
| Non-Recipient Parent - Child only case | * Adult or teen head of household not receiving benefits *but living with his or her own child who is receiving benefits* * Non-recipient parent – child only cases are served as volunteers/exempt. | * Active TP 01 or 61 * Non-recipient parent work codes: * **V**- Legal Parent receiving SSI with child(ren) receiving TANF   + **X**- Legal Parent who exhausted State Time Limit with child(ren) receiving TANF   + **Y**- Other Disqualified Parent with child(ren) receiving TANF * Document eligibility in counselor notes. | *Initial:*  At the time of intake.  *Ongoing:* Assigned staff verifies receipt of TANF for the month via TWIST TANF History. Eligibility must be documented in TWIST counselor notes by the 3rd business day of the month. |

Non-Choices PRA Violations:

Individuals with a non-Choices PRA violation may continue to receive services for one month if HHSC states that the benefits should be restored in the near future; assigned staff must monitor TWIST for reinstatement of benefits. Verification should reveal if the customer will become active again the following month or whether benefits are being denied. Staff will make a decision on whether or not to continue services based on whether the individual is denied or re-issued benefits. If HHSC has not recertified the TANF by the end of the first month of the PRA violation, staff must contact HHSC again to ask if benefits will be recertified. If so, benefits may continue. If not, the case should be closed immediately.