

**SOUTHWESTERN AREA  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Self-Sufficiency  
Policy 17-16.2**

**Effective Date**

August 14, 2025

**Applicability**

This applies to Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board (SAWDB), Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) providers of the Adult/Dislocated Worker and Youth Programs.

**Purpose**

To update the SAWDB WIOA Self-Sufficiency Wage Standards for grant recipients when determining eligibility for participants needing Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services under WIOA. In addition, the annual updated Self-Sufficiency Wage Standard will be used on receipt of any updated Guidance Letters from NMDWS thereafter.

**References**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) §134(a)(3)(A)(xii) and §133(b)(2)(B)

WIOA Joint Final Rules, 680.210

Guidance Letter: State WIOA Self-Sufficiency Wage, July 3, 2023

Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board Program Year 2023 Self-Sufficiency Wages \$53.40/Hour.

**Background**

WIOA Eligibility—Except as provided in clause (ii), funds allocated to a local area for adults under paragraph (2)(A) or (3), as appropriate, of section 133(b), and funds allocated to the local area for dislocated workers under section 133(b)(2)(B), shall be used to provide training services to adults and dislocated workers, respectively—

- (I) Who, after an interview, evaluation, or assessment, and career planning, have been determined by a one-stop operator or one-stop partner, as appropriate, to— (aa) be 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 the career services described in paragraph (2)(A)(xii); (bb) be in need of training services to obtain or retain (bb) be in need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and (cc) have the skills and qualifications to participate in the selected program of training services successfully;
- (II) Who select programs of training services that are directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the adults or dislocated workers are willing to commute or relocate;

(III) Who meet the requirements of subparagraph (B); and who are determined to be eligible in accordance with the priority system in effect under subparagraph (E).

### **General Guidance on Self-Sufficiency Wage Standard**

The State Administrative Entity is responsible for reviewing and updating the self-sufficiency standard for each local area using a living wage model or comparable data that draws upon geographically specific expenditures that incorporate the income needs of individuals, families, and sub-state geographical considerations. The SAWDB then applies this information when determining eligibility for employed individuals to determine if they meet Self-Sufficiency Wage Standards before approving Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services. The self-sufficiency wage is included in the annual SAWDB grant agreements and may be revised.

SAWDB is directed to use the following definition of “self-sufficiency” as it applies to a currently employed worker who is applying for WIOA Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services through the local workforce development system:

- A. An individual employed in a full-time job (employment that provides compensation for at least 32 hours each week) at a pay rate at or above the designated self-sufficiency wage shall be considered to have achieved employment that allows for self-sufficiency. Therefore, the individual shall be deemed self-sufficient, and a determination shall be made that Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services are not required.
- B. If the individual’s current job does not meet the definition of “Employment Leading to Economic Self-Sufficiency,” Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services may be offered as appropriate.

### **Requirements for Documenting “Self-Sufficiency”**

- A. Information about the customer’s current hourly wage must be recorded in the “Work History” portion of the America’s Job Center Online System (NMJobs), including each of the following elements:
  - a. Job Title;
  - b. Employer Name;
  - c. Dates of Employment: From / To (Month, Year);
  - d. Wage;
  - e. Wage Type (Hourly, Annual, Other); and
  - f. Hours per Week.
- B. Acceptable verification sources include:
  - a. Copy of a recent paycheck or paystub;
  - b. Employer letter or other document describing the customer’s current wage
  - c. Self-Attestation (method of last resort)

**EXCEPTION:** SAWDB can determine the eligibility of an employed worker using the most current Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL). Suppose a worker’s current pay rate exceeds 125% of the LLSIL. In that case, a determination shall be made that the individual does not meet the “Employment Leading to Economic Self-Sufficiency” definition.

**EXCEPTION:** If the individual is an eligible Dislocated Worker, “self-sufficiency” shall be defined as full-time employment at a pay rate equal to or greater than the pre-layoff wage rate– even if the pre-layoff wage was greater than the designated self-sufficiency wage.

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**Inquiries**

Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Administrative Entity or Fiscal Agent at (575) 744-4857.

**Attested**

This policy was reviewed and approved by the SAWDB on August 14, 2025.

*Jacqueline Fryar*  
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SAWDB Chair