



## Self-Sufficiency Criteria

E-100

### Purpose.

This policy establishes the definition and criteria for Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) in the six-county area served by the Southwest Wisconsin Workforce Development Board (SWWDB) and adheres to the state standard as published on July 1, 2017 (<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/wioa/policy/08/08.3.4.htm>). The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) specifies that the State shall establish criteria for adopting, calculating, or commissioning for approval an Economic Self-Sufficiency (ESS) standard that determines whether employment leads to self-sufficiency. Criteria used in this process include household size, ages of household members, and geographic location within the state. This standard is to be used by local boards upon enrollment in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs or to justify training.

### Policy.

SWWDB administers WIOA services and training intended to help a person earn new job skills and enter employment earning a wage that will make the person and his family self-sufficient. According to the Department of Workforce Development – Division of Employment and Training (DWD-DET) policies, Economic Self-Sufficiency is defined as the minimum amount of income required for a household to meet its most basic expenses, without public or private assistance. Under WIOA, this amount must always be equal to or greater than 100 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL), by family size.

It is the policy of SWWDB to adhere to the guidance set forth by the State in determining ESS and further determining whether a participant is eligible for WIOA training funds. In compliance with WIOA regulations and DWD-DET guidance, SWWDB defines self-sufficiency as follows:

#### Adult and Dislocated Worker Program

- Any person whose income meets or exceeds the ESS level for a single adult household AND
- If part of a multi-member household, have household income that meets or exceeds the ESS level based on the household composition.

#### Dislocated Worker Program

- Must meet the above criteria; and
- Any person whose income meets or exceeds 80 percent of the dislocation wage; or
- Any person whose income meets or exceeds the 75<sup>th</sup> percentile of wages for all occupations in the county of residence.

Furthermore, SWWDB supports DWD-DET interpretation of what is considered to be “earned income” and what is not when calculating self-sufficiency. The following are examples of what is considered to be “earned income”:

- Wages, salaries, tips, commissions and other taxable employee pay
- Net earnings from self-employment



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**Note:** For multi-member households, income earned by members below the age of 18 should not be included.

The following are examples of what is not to be considered as “earned income”:

- Interest or dividends
- Retirement income
- Social Security
- Unemployment benefits
- Alimony / spousal maintenance
- Child Support

SWWDB may also use the definition of ESS in the following instances:

- Identifying occupations that would likely result in ESS using county level occupational wage data;
- Measuring progress for participants embarking on a career pathway; and
- Determining whether a participant has met the program goal of securing employment resulting in ESS.

SWWDB shall require every program operator receiving funds through a WIOA contract with SWWDB to use and apply the approved self-sufficiency in interventions with clients, including but not limited to, determining client eligibility and referral for job placement. This calculator is located in the Automated System Support for Employment and Training (ASSET) and can be accessed by program operator staff to determine the ESS for specific participants. Program operator staff will follow the steps indicated in procedure E-100-1 – Self-Sufficiency Process.

Program operator compliance with this policy will be reviewed during the SWWDB monitoring and will be a factor in SWWDB’s evaluation of the program operator’s performance. Any disallowed costs associated with failure of the program operator or its staff to comply with this policy will be the responsibility of the program operator.

The Board directs the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to implement the outlined self-sufficiency standard disseminate the standards as appropriate. The Workforce Operations Manager will be operationally responsible the programmatic implementation of this policy. Deviations from this policy are discouraged but will be considered on a case-by-case basis by SWWDB when determined appropriate in the sole judgment of SWWDB.

Reference: DWD WIOA Policy Manual 8.3.4 Economic Self-Sufficiency  
WIOA Section 134(a)(3)(A)(xii); 20 CFR § 682.210(p)  
TEGL 03-15, p. 6

Policy Adopted: March 14, 2012  
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