



Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) Older Youth Program

This guide provides a standard set of policies and guidelines but does not cover every situation or scenario a provider may encounter.

For questions not covered in the handbook, please email:
FSD.E&TInquiry@dss.mo.gov

Table of Contents

Overview	<u>2</u>
Missouri Work Assistance Program (MWA)	
Contract Amendment	
Populations Served	
Serving MWA Older Youth	<u>3</u>
Referrals	
Youth Action Plans	
Case Notes	
Allowable Activities	
Supportive Services	
Incentives	
Outcomes	
Collaboration	
Information Security & Confidentiality	<u>7</u>
Monitoring	<u>7</u>
Invoicing & Payments	<u>8</u>
Appendix A: Forms	<u>9</u>
Appendix B: Resources & Quick Links	<u>10</u>

OVERVIEW

Missouri Work Assistance (MWA) Program

Section 208.040 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri, and Code of State Regulations Title 13, Division 40, Chapter 2 authorizes the provision of the State of Missouri’s Temporary Assistance (TA) program under the federal Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program.

The Department of Social Services (DSS) receives the TANF block grant from the Administration for Children and Families (ACF).

MWA is awarded to approved agencies who submit a proposal through a competitive bid process. These agencies provide employment and training (E & T) services to individuals to assist them in gaining economic sufficiency no longer have a need for public benefits. These agencies are referred to as contractors or providers.

In 2014, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was signed into law and Missouri chose a combined state plan, which includes TA as a partner. TANF provides funding for a variety of programs that meet one of the four purposes of TANF that are:

1. Provide assistance to needy families so that children can be cared for in their own homes or in the homes of relatives.
2. End the dependence of needy parents by promoting job preparation, work, and marriage.
3. Prevent and reduce the incidence of out-of-wedlock pregnancies.
4. Encourage the formation and maintenance of two-parent families.

Effective January 1, 2022 –

“All references to the MWA and SkillUP Program shall now include serving DSS Children’s Division (CD) Older Youth. Contractors will support the youth with life skills, education, and employment services to youth between the ages of 16 and 23...”

The MWA Older Youth Program meets Purpose 3.

Populations Served

MWA providers serve the following populations:

1. Individuals receiving DSS Temporary Assistance (TA) benefits and are deemed mandatory or volunteer for the MWA Program.
2. Individuals receiving DSS Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits, which is the SkillUP program; and
3. Youth who are considered Older Youth who are or have been involved with the DSS Children’s Division (CD), the program is called MWA Older Youth.

SERVING MWA OLDER YOUTH

Referrals

There are multiple ways in which an MWA provider may receive a referral. The MWA provider must attempt to enroll all youth referred to them within 10 days of receiving the referral, regardless of how referred. Attempts to contact referrals must be documented in a paper or electronic case record.

- Via the DSS File Transfer Portal (FTP).
The Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives (OWCI) will upload the referral list monthly by the 15th. Single referrals may also be uploaded more often, therefore MWA providers are required to review the FTP regularly to ensure referrals are contacted timely.
- The youth or the resource parent contacts the MWA provider directly.
Prior to serving the youth using Older Youth funds, the provider must email FSD.E&TInquiry@dss.mo.gov with identifying information for the youth, to make certain the youth meet the criteria for the program.
- A Community Partner contacts the MWA provider.
The provider must email FSD.E&TInquiry@dss.mo.gov with identifying information for the youth to make certain the youth meet the criteria for the program.

Case Management/ Coaching

Providers must make an attempt to contact each youth referred to them by DSS or a community partner within 10 calendar days of the referral to schedule a meeting. The providers must have documentation of the contact attempt in the case record.

- Case management/coaching must be provided for each youth to provide individual career planning, set goals/milestones, determine barriers, and develop a plan to overcome barriers and steps for reaching goals.
- The provider must attempt to contact 100% of youth referred for services at least once. Youth participating in the program, the provider shall contact the youth at a minimum of once monthly, or more if the youth is in need of additional support or services.
- Providers will develop youth apprenticeships/internships by networking with regional employers.

Youth Action Plans

MWA providers will develop a Youth Action Plan with the youth to outline their educational, training and career pathway to economic stability. Various topics must be

discussed with the youth and documented on the action plan. The action plan allows the case manager/coach to help the youth achieve goals, overcome barriers, build on areas of strength, and determine career choices. Providers will place youth in educational, training or employment activities. When discussing career plans with youth, providers must use Missouri Economic Research and Information Center (MERIC) - <https://meric.mo.gov/industry-research> to discuss career choices.

Case Notes

Case notes are a vital part of documentation of the youth's journey and must include information and documentation such as activities assigned to the youth and comments regarding all necessary forms provided to the youth (correspondence, action plan, transfer form, case note form, etc.). Case notes are a part of the permanent record and are not optional.

Case notes must be factual and recount the interaction with the youth. Detailed case notes tell the participant's story while in the program and must include information such as activities assigned to the participant, participant challenges/barriers, successes the participant may have and other pertinent information regarding the participant.

Case Notes must be recorded in the record and must provide accurate and adequate recording of events and circumstances affecting the youth. Case notes must be recorded after each interaction. Whenever possible, case notes should be entered real time while assisting the youth; however, there may be times when this is not possible; In those cases, the case notes must be entered no later than twenty-four (24) hours from the last communication involving the youth.

Reminders regarding case notes:

- A part of the permanent record, therefore, not optional.
- DSS staff providing services may also read the case notes.
- The participant or guardian of the participant has the right to receive copies of the case notes and any other documentation in their record.
- A case note must be entered at every interaction or communication regarding the youth (face-to-face meetings, virtual meetings, texts, social media, emails, and phone calls). Case notes must include:
 - The reason for the interaction
 - Documents completed and the reason
 - Barriers to participation, employment, or training
 - A case note must also be entered when an attempted contact is unsuccessful.
 - Avoid emotional language, judgement, opinions and jargon.

Allowable Activities

- Life Skills Activity

The competencies and skills that will assist the youth in making informed decisions, solve problems, think critically/creatively, communicate effectively, build healthy relationships, empathize with others and cope with and manage their lives in a healthy and productive manner.

The following type of activities are allowable and can be categorized as life skill activities:

- Financial Management
- Housing Education
- Governance/Leadership/Community
- Self-Management/Social Competence
- Education services

- Training/Educational Activities

The training/educational activities are to educate and instruct youth by conveying a knowledge or a skill. A youth must remain in good standing if MWA funds are used to support the educational activities.

The following type of activities are allowable and can be categorized as educational activities:

- Education Related to Employment
- Vocational Education & Training
- Community Service
- Entrepreneurial Training
- Job Readiness Training
- Job Search Training
- Job Skills Training
- On-the-Job Training
- Work Based Learning

- Employment Activities

Employment activities are those in which the youth is hired and receives a wage or compensation. To be considered an employment activity the youth must have job responsibilities and work assignments for which he/she is assigned to complete.

The following type of activities are allowable and can be categorized as employment activities:

- A service performed for wage or salary or a work study program.
- Job Search
- Subsidized Employment
- Unsubsidized Employment
- Work Experience

Supportive Services

MWA Older Youth are eligible for Supportive Services. Providers must follow the same guidelines as MWA.

Transportation Reimbursement Expense (TRE)

TRE payments are issued to youth to assist with travel to allowable activities. Providers will provide youth with transportation supportive services when the youth has incurred a transportation cost and need is demonstrated when participating with the program. Providers shall not include any additional requirements or alter the TRE policy with their local policies.

To receive transportation assistance.

- The youth must be active in an allowable activity.
- Providers may only reimburse youth for transportation cost in which they are responsible.

Work-Related Expenses

Providers will provide youth with assistance with work-related expenses to assist the youth in obtaining, retaining employment, or participating with an educational activity. Contractors may approve WRE for a youth up to \$1,500 within a federal fiscal year. If WRE in excess of \$1,500 is required, providers are to contact Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives (OWCI) to request approval.

Incentives

Youth are eligible for incentives for milestones achieved. MWA providers must develop an Incentive Structure for their agency. Providers must complete the Incentive Structure form detailing the milestone, the incentive amount, how often the incentive can be earned, and maximums allowed. Prior to implementing an incentive structure, the structure must be approved by Office of Workforce and Community Initiatives.

Outcomes

Providers will have the following outcomes for MWA Older Youth based on the federal fiscal year and the number of youth referred to the agency.

- Outcome 1: Enroll at least fifteen percent (15%) of youth referred to the program.
 - Example: During the fiscal year 250 youth referred to the program, 45 youth were enrolled in the program.
The provider *met* this outcome requirement.
- Outcome 2: Twenty-five percent (25%) of youth enrolled in the program that are high school seniors and meet high school graduation requirements. (by September 30th of the federal fiscal year)
 - Example: During the fiscal year of the two hundred and fifty (250) youth referred, Thirty-five (35) are considered high school seniors. At the end of the school year nineteen (19) met graduation requirements.

The provider *met* this outcome requirement

- Outcome 3: Fifteen percent (15%) of youth that are no longer in high school are enrolled and attending post-secondary education, have gained employment and/or in the military.
 - Example: Of the two hundred and fifty (250) youth enrolled, eighty (80) are no longer attending high school. Of those eighty (80) ; six (6) are in post-secondary education, 5 have gained employment, none are in the military.
- The provider *did not* meet this outcome requirement,

Providers will use the MWA Older Youth Reporting form to report data quarterly by the dates listed below.

Quarterly Reporting Timeline (based upon federal fiscal year)		
Quarter	Time Period	Due to DSS
1 st Quarter	October 1 – December 31	January 31 st
2 nd Quarter	January 1 – March 31	April 30 th
3 rd Quarter	April 1 – June 30	July 31 st
4 th Quarter	July 1 – September 30	October 31 st

Collaboration

The MWA Older Youth program is intended to assist youth with career planning, coaching and case management to help to reduce the intergenerational poverty cycle. Therefore, providers must coordinate and collaborate other OWCI providers, Chafee providers, non-profits, employers, educational institutions, and other community partners. OWCI administers many programs specifically for youth, some state-wide and some regionally. MWA providers must stay knowledgeable about programs within their assigned region(s) to make certain they are collaborating with those community partners.

INFORMATION SECURITY & CONFIDENTIALITY

Providers must maintain a hard copy or electronic case record for each youth. Providers are required to adhere to DSS confidentiality requirements related to their reports, documents, and any other materials, and all of the file information is the property of DSS and therefore accessible for complete DSS oversight.

If at any time information related to abuse or neglect is suspected, they are bound to the DSS mandated reporting rules and must make the appropriate hotline report to DSS Children's Division.

MONITORING

The provider is subject to monitoring and inspection by DSS or a DSS designee to assure compliance with the requirements of the contract. The provider will participate in and cooperate with any monthly case reviews, monitoring reviews, fiscal monitoring, all program evaluations, and improvement plans in accordance with federal reviews, or any other performance initiative required of, or by, the DSS.

If DSS has concerns with the provider's performance, the DSS may, at its sole discretion, issue a monitoring report or other concerns to the provider. This provision does not change the state's right to Cancellation of the Contract.






INVOICING AND PAYMENTS

The provider will invoice for the reimbursement of actual allowable costs incurred for providing services for the MWA Older Youth Program.

- DSS may recover from the provider all funds for which adequate verification and full documentation of expenditures is not maintained.
- Invoices will be submitted no less than once every month. The provider will e-mail invoices, expenditure reports, and supporting documentation to: W&CI.Invoices@dss.mo.gov The provider must submit invoices on a DSS provided invoice.
- All invoices submitted will include backup documentation that clearly indicates the expense, date of the expense and how it relates to the Futures Program.
- Each invoice for the month of May will need to be submitted by a date as directed by DSS.
- Invoice templates are available on the OWCI portal: [MWA | Missouri Department of Social Services \(mo.gov\)](#)

APPENDIX A: FORMS

MWA providers are to develop their own outreach forms and flyers. Prior to usage of forms the provider must submit to DSS for approval.

Description of Form	Form
MWA Older Youth Action Plan	 MWA Older Youth Action Plan.pdf
Older Youth Documentation/Notes Form	 MWA Older Youth documentation.notes
Older Youth Incentive Structure	 MWA Older Youth Incentive Structure.pdf
Older Youth Quarterly Report	 MWA Older Youth Quarterly Report.pdf
Older Youth Referral/Transfer Form	 MWA Older Youth Referral- Transfer.pdf

APPENDIX B: RESOURCES & QUICK LINKS

Resource	Link
OWCI MWA Team Used for questions for MWA, MWA- SkillUP and MWA Older Youth.	FSD.E&TInquiry@dss.mo.gov
OWCI Monitoring Team email address. Used for contact with the OWCI Performance Monitoring Unit	FSD.E&TMonitoring@dss.mo.gov
OWCI Invoice Team email address Used for invoicing questions and where expenditure & invoices are submitted for reimbursement.	W&CI.INVOICES@dss.mo.gov
OWCI Training Unit email address Used for contact with the Training Unit for questions regarding training.	FSD.WIT.CIU.Training@dss.mo.gov
Children Division (CD) Older Youth Transition Specialist	Older Youth Transition Specialists County Contacts Missouri Department of Social Services (mo.gov)
Community Partnership Interactive Map	COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS - Missouri FACT (mofact.org)