

CDGA DFSS Workforce Services Frequently Asked Questions

These are the responses to the questions received during the webinar held on April 19 and any other additional questions received prior to the release of the CDGA application on May 3, 2021.

1. Will the webinar slides and recording be available?

Yes are available on the DFSS CDGA website

https://www.chicago.gov/city/en/depts/fss/supp_info/dfss-cdga-information.html and the recording link for the DFSS Workforce Services CDGA RFP Applicant Webinar can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=poGnE7iLwus>.

2. What are the rules for co-enrollment with WIOA-funded programs so clients can take advantage of vocational training?

We do not have a current agreement with The Chicago Cook Workforce Partnership (CCWP) for co-enrollment. We know that many DFSS delegate agencies also have WIOA contracts. Many of these WIOA grants offer vocational training opportunities to their clients. Agencies can leverage this multiple funding. For example, in a CDBG-funded Transitional Jobs Program (TJP) offered through DFSS, an individual may receive basic career supports and require additional workforce services or supports that are not covered by the CDBG grant. It is allowable then to use the WIOA funds to cover the additional costs.

3. How are grantees expected to demonstrate improved math and/or reading skills?

One assessment is by using the TABE test (Test of Adult Basic Education). TABE is a diagnostic test used to determine a person's skill levels and aptitudes. Many companies use it in hiring. The TABE test is also used by public service agencies who are guiding people into adult education programs, such as getting a high school equivalency or GED. TABE tests skills and aptitudes in reading, math and English. Your score can determine your eligibility/readiness for a given employment opportunity. It can also indicate a person's areas of weakness. Additional study is then required to demonstrate improvement. A second TABE test can then be administered after remediation to determine improvement.

Other assessment tools may consist of O'Net Career Interest Profiler and the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) as noted on slide 15 of the webinar PowerPoint.

4. One of the outcomes of the Industry Specific Job Training Program (ISJT) is pursuing additional vocational training. Is this in addition to the ISJT training that organizations are offering?

Pursuing *additional* vocational training is a great goal for an individual to pursue in their journey to a successful career. However, we pay for enrollments and 30-day placement retention. So, if an individual is enrolled in a CDBG Industry-Specific Training Program we will pay for the enrollment. If the individual does not land a job and retained for 30 days, we cannot pay for the placement. Please refer to slide 12 of the webinar for a discussion of payment points.

5. Is there increased funding for programs due to COVID?

No. We will be operating at the same funding levels as pre-COVID. Please refer to the RFP Program Description section to see the funding levels for each program model. If an applicant is a current DFSS contractor and would like to increase their funding award, they must make their case in their response. Demonstrate how they have the capacity to serve additional clients; show they have confirmed employment opportunities with strong employer partners; and, provide detailed metrics on serving the priority populations.

Also, please note, the amount of 2022 funding can be based on an agency's size and capacity including staff, systems and processes in place to deliver the services proposed. Funding awards are also based on the amount of funding allocated to DFSS from our funding partners such as HUD and the State of Illinois.

6. If awarded both Employment Preparation and Placement (EPP) and Transitional Jobs Program (TJP) can candidates from EPP also be put in a TJP. Same for ISJT. Can those clients also go into TJP?

No. Clients may only be enrolled in one DFSS CDBG program.

7. Do enrollees need to meet all the characteristics of the profile, or just one or more of them?

No, enrollees do not need to meet all the characteristics. They only need to meet one of the target population characteristics: returning citizen (ex-offender or criminal justice-involved), homeless individual or at risk of homelessness, and limited-English proficiency (ESL) as discussed on slide 13 of the webinar PowerPoint.

8. Will the program budgets be Line Item or performance-based?

In 2022, the programs will be performance-based contracts. This means that you will get paid for your performance: enrollments, 30-day placement retention, target population and 90-day retention.

9. Are computer and basic skills assessments and outcomes required for all Transitional Jobs Programs?

Yes.

10. For Transitional Jobs programs (TJP), I expect training costs which include TJP wages will happen shortly after a participant is enrolled. I anticipate that cost per enrollment (62% of contract award) will not be enough to cover TJP wages. How will agencies be reimbursed for TJP wages?

When preparing your budget for a TJP program, agencies must allocate (at a minimum) 30% of their award for subsidized wages. Therefore, TJP wages will come out of the 1245 line on a performance-based contract. Also, agency must include Schedule A to show TJP Wage computations.

For example, on a \$100,000 contract 30% will go towards subsidized wages (or \$30,000). The remaining \$70,000 will then be divided up between the 4 payment points:

62% for enrollments

35% for placements

1.5% for target population

1.5% for 90-day retention

11. How are grantees expected to demonstrate improved computer literacy skills? What is the preferred assessment tool for computer/digital skills?

Northstar Digital Literacy has an excellent assessment tool to determine computer literacy and level(s) of proficiency such as beginner, intermediate or advanced. Here is the link:

<https://www.digitalliteracyassessment.org/> Once an individual completes the test, it will then give them the results such as pass, fail, number correct, etc. The results will indicate what the test-taker answered incorrectly, thereby identifying areas for improvement.

12. If multiple agencies offer services to a client because of a diverse need, will both receive credit for the placement?

No. Before a person can be enrolled in a DFSS-funded program the agency must conduct a search on ECM (Enterprise Case Management) to determine if another agency has already enrolled the person. Only one agency can work with a DFSS client. So, there would be no dual placement.

13. Are individuals with disabilities and/or Veterans their own priority population or do they also have to fit within the homeless, ESL or returning citizen categories?

Individuals with disabilities and/or Veterans are not their own priority population. You may enroll them into your program, but the RFP stipulates that 75% of your enrollees must be from the target population as discussed in webinar slides 10 and 13.

14. Can you elaborate on the increased focus on career navigators?

We know there are numerous resources available to vulnerable individuals with multiple barriers to success or have experienced some type of trauma in their lives. We also know that many of these individuals are not aware of these resources or how to connect to them. We have learned through research and by identifying best practices throughout the city and throughout the country that career navigators are a vital part of the process. Due to the knowledge and expertise of some workforce professionals, we anticipate the addition of a Career Navigator to be crucial in connecting individuals to these resources, acting as a middleman/woman between the individual and the contractor.

We also recognize that not all programs are the right program/career path for all individuals. A Career Navigator can help (in partnership with) the individual to identify which program is best suited for his/her interests and/or skills.