

## **What sort of documentation is required in case files to demonstrate self-sufficiency planning activity?**

The required components of customer Self-Sufficiency planning are:

1. Vocational Planning: Identification of long-term career goal and creation of flexible plan to reach goal.
2. Financial Planning: Identification of wage requirements to support family and reach financial goals.
3. Resources and work supports: Identification of support resources a customer has/needs to achieve goals and succeed in training/employment, (e.g., scholarships, loans, financial counseling, child care, housing assistance, etc.).

The WDC is not requiring use of a specific format for the Self-Sufficiency Plan in this early stage of implementation. We encourage agencies to create a format that is most meaningful and useful to the individual customer and case manager. During this program year, we would like WIA managers and their case manager staff to explore what format a document that summarizes and integrates goals and action steps related to the critical elements of self-sufficiency planning might take. In the meantime, when WDC Planners review files they will be looking for items such as those listed below that indicate self-sufficiency planning activity is taking place with WIA customers.

Documentation of self-sufficiency planning activity might include:

- printouts from Choices, WOIS, Workforce Explorer, etc. that include results of skills/interest inventories, lists of occupations that fit skills/interests, wages, labor market information, etc.;
- results from formal assessments;
- printouts from the calculator, including summary of test wage scenarios, wage adequacy, and impacts of work supports;
- budgets/budget worksheets;
- financial plans with short and long-term goals;
- information on specific work supports (printed from the calculator or linked web sites, etc.);
- case notes documenting action steps agreed to and referrals to services/resources, etc.

## **What sort of documentation is required in case files to demonstrate that (A) we have saved information into the Self-Sufficiency Calculator Database, or (B) we have exempted clients because they are at or above Economic Self-Sufficiency, or (C) we have exempted clients as part of the up to 25% of the caseload that can be exempted?**

- (A) When saving data to the calculator at registration and exit, case managers should print out the "Summary" page of the Calculator (an option at the bottom of the last page before you hit "Save") and then write the case number for the customer on that printout and put it in the case file.

- (B) If you suspect that a customer is already at or above self-sufficiency, enter the customer's family composition in the "Personal Info" page of the Calculator and click on the button at the bottom of the page that says: "show me my self-sufficiency wage." If family income is equal to or greater than the self-sufficiency wage/income indicated, print out this page, write the current family income next to the self-sufficiency income, and put this page in the case file.
- (C) If you are exempting a customer, indicate that you are doing so, and the reasoning behind your decision, in the case notes.

**How close to registration and exit do I need to save information into the Self-Sufficiency Calculator Database, and how soon after registration do I need to start self-sufficiency planning?**

Information must be saved into the Self-Sufficiency Calculator Database within 30 days of registration and exit.

Please note that saving data to the calculator is a **2-step process**; case managers must save **both** the demographic information captured on the first page that appears when entering a new case (at registration) or revisiting an exiting case (at exit) **and** the income and expense information captured on the calculator pages that follow. Initial analysis of the data saved to the Calculator database so far indicates that several case managers are completing only the first step. Please review the **Step-By-Step Guide to Saving Customer Information** desk aid that was provided at training (and is also available on our web site with other handouts from the training; see "Available Resources" below).

**How many times do I need to attempt to contact a customer at exit to get the required information to save into the Self-Sufficiency Calculator database?**

Case managers should make 3 attempts to contact a customer at exit and collect the information required for the Calculator database. When case managers collect data to save to the calculator at registration, they should let customers know that they will be contacted for the same information at exit. Customers should be aware of the process so they are not confused or surprised by the contact at exit.

Case managers have multiple options for collecting data to be saved to the calculator at exit: (1) via in-person visit, (2) by phone, (3) by mail, or (4) by email. The WDC is in the process of developing paper and electronic versions of a form that covers the required demographic, income, and expense information which can be mailed/emailed to a customer to fill out and return to the case manager in the event that in-person or phone contact is not possible.

**I have lots of ideas for how the Calculator could be improved. Are you going to do any enhancements?**

We are planning to make improvements to the calculator. We have already refined some of the language around benefits eligibility, and have changed the process for saving information into the database to be more intuitive and user- friendly. Additionally, we will update the eligibility information annually and have begun the process of commissioning a 2005 Self-Sufficiency Standard.

We welcome, and are tracking, your questions and suggestions for additional improvements, and intend to continually improve this tool. Several questions have been raised about how to handle circumstances that are not currently well accommodated by the Calculator, for example, customers who have zero income. We have begun to address those concerns and are posting answers on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page available on the WDC website (see "Available Resources" below).

**There were a lot of resources shared in the Vocational Planning and Economic Self-Sufficiency Training. Where can I find them?**

Many of the resources associated with the calculator and the training can be accessed on the Workforce Development Council's website:

<http://www.seekingwdc.org/>

TRAINING MATERIALS

Handouts used throughout the WDC's Economic Self Sufficiency and Vocational Planning training are posted on the following page:

<http://www.seekingwdc.org/Templates/ssctrain.htm> From the WDC home page, click on the Quick Link for the Self Sufficiency Calculator to get to the Calculator intro page. Scroll down to find the link to the handouts.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

As the WDC receives questions from case managers and others using the calculator, we will post answers to questions with broad applicability to the Calculator FAQ page on the WDC website. From the WDC home page, click on the Quick Link for the Self Sufficiency Calculator to get to the Calculator intro page. Scroll down to find the link to the FAQ page.

RELATED LINKS

From the WDC home page, follow the quick links to the Self Sufficiency Calculator to reach the Calculator home page. In the lower right corner of the Calculator home page is a list of related links including the Washington State Self Sufficiency Standard report, reports and articles from other states, and links to organizations involved in developing the Self Sufficiency Standard.

**Are there any next steps planned for continued training around Financial Planning and the Self-Sufficiency Calculator?**

This fall trainers will deliver training to staff who work in WorkSource Resource Rooms. This training will focus on calculator basics in efforts to assist customers interested in using the calculator in a self service capacity.

Following the resource room staff training, another session of the full Economic Self Sufficiency and Vocational Planning training will be scheduled for new WIA funded staff and those that missed the trainings in April and May.