Texas Workforce Commission

Adult Education and Literacy

Summer Business Meeting 2020

Handout

July 30, 2020

Day 2, Session 2

TxCHSE Voucher Program

Presenters:

Mahalia Baldini, AEL Interim State Director, Mahalia.baldini@twc.state.tx.us

Fabiana Ramirez, AEL Policy, Fabiana.ramirez@twc.state.tx.us

This session will cover the process and procedures for the High School Equivalency Vouchers system in Texas.

Contents

Background

House Bill 3 (public school finance and public education)

- Funded for 2020 and 2021 at $750,000 each year
- 21 years and older
- Up to the cost of one full credential completion

Rules on HSE Subsidy Program

New Rules in TAC Ch. 805, AEL Subchapter E, *High School Equivalency Subsidy Program.* **Send Comments through September 14th.**

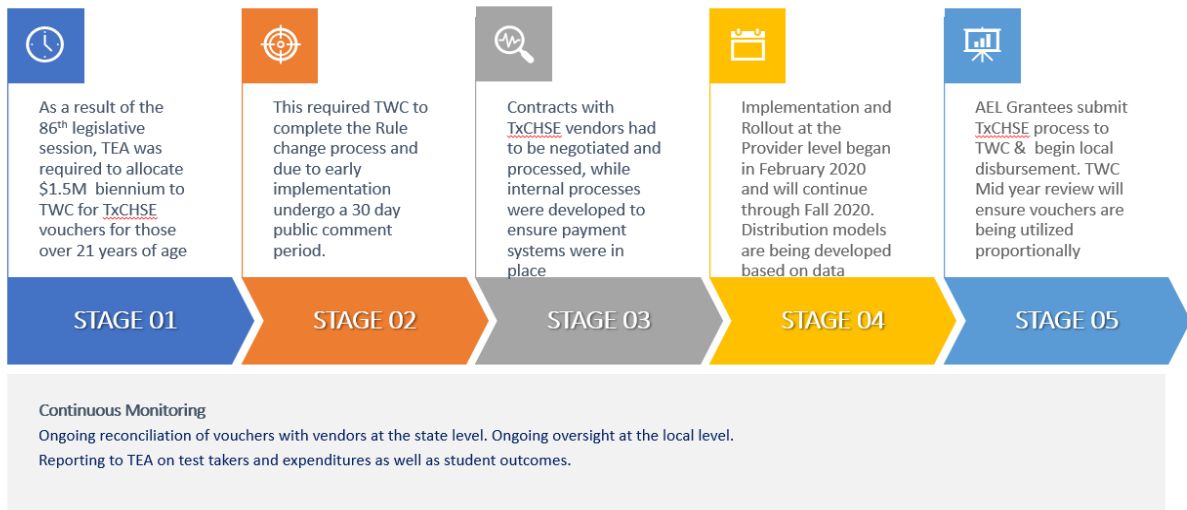Review the proposed rules on the TWC website.

Rules to outline eligibility (21+) and program implementation:

1. AEL participants and exiters priority
2. Voucher allotment by Sept. 1, then as needed based on usage/demand
3. Grant recipients to distribute vouchers locally, check eligibility

Statute to Implementation

1. Rule development
2. Contracts with GED/HiSET
3. Implementing Program at Local Level
4. Commission Approval on HSE Voucher Distribution
5. Adjustment of distribution

Stages of Implementation

STAGE 01	STAGE 02	STAGE 03	STAGE 04	STAGE 05
As a result of the 86th legislative session, TEA was required to allocate $1.5M biennium to TWC for TxCHSE vouchers for those over 21 years of age	This required TWC to complete the Rule change process and due to early implementation undergo a 30 day public comment period.	Contracts with TxCHSE vendors had to be negotiated and processed, while internal processes were developed to ensure payment systems were in place	Implementation and Rollout at the Provider level began in February 2020 and will continue through Fall 2020. Distribution models are being developed based on data	AEL Grantees submit TxCHSE process to TWC & begin local disbursement. TWC Mid year review will ensure vouchers are being utilized proportionally

Continuous Monitoring
Ongoing reconciliation of vouchers with vendors at the state level. Ongoing oversight at the local level.
Reporting to TEA on test takers and expenditures as well as student outcomes.

Figure 1: Five Stages of Implementation

Stage 1. As a result of the 86th legislative session, TEA was required to allocate $1.5M biennium to TWC for TxCHSE vouchers for those over 21 years of age.

Stage 2. This required TWC to complete the Rule change process and due to early implementation undergo a 30-day public comment period.

Stage 3. Contracts with TxCHSE vendors had to be negotiated and processed, while internal processes were developed to ensure payment systems were in place.

Stage 4. Implementation and Rollout at the Provider level began in February 2020 and will continue through Fall 2020. Distribution models are being developed based on data.

Stage 5. AEL Grantees submit TxCHSE process to TWC and begin local disbursement. TWC Mid-year review will ensure vouchers are being utilized proportionately.

Continuous Monitoring

1. Ongoing reconciliation of vouchers with vendors at the state level.
2. Ongoing oversight at the local level.
3. Reporting to TEA on test takers and expenditures as well as student outcomes.
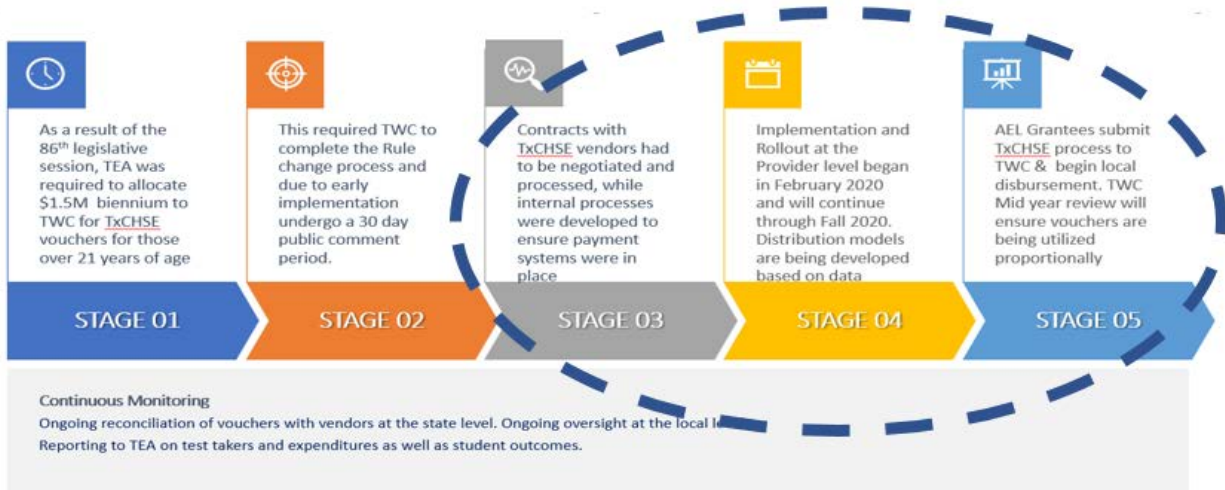
What stage are we in now?

Figure 2: Five Stages of Implementation

What we are going to focus on today

Stage 4 – Steps for Local Implementation

These are Steps to be taken by both TWC and Local Programs to ensure that proper implementation and oversight is continuous.

- Step 1
    - Disseminate guidance
    - Local procedures
- Step 2
    - Voucher Distribution
    - Voucher Reconciliation
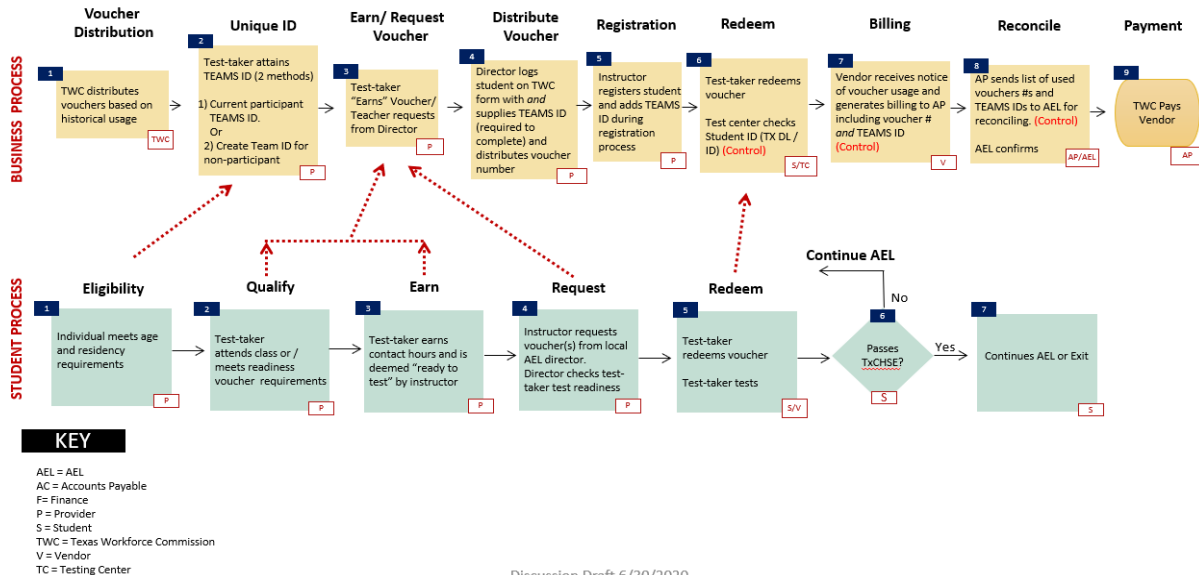- Step 3
    - Oversight and Monitoring

- Reporting

Local Process

What You Can Expect in Future Guidance

Voucher Process Map Key

- AEL = Adult Education and Literacy
- AC = Accounts Payable
- F = Finance
- P = Provider
- S = Student
- TWC = Texas Workforce Commission
- V = Vendor
- TC = Testing Center

Figure 3: Process Map for HSE Voucher Process

Business Process

What you need to know to set up your process

Step 1: Voucher Distribution

TWC distributes vouchers based on historical usage.

Step 2: Unique ID

Test-taker attains TEAMS ID (2 methods).

1. Current participant TEAMS ID
2. Create Team ID for non-participant

For option 2, this means you will create a participant record. This does not include a full participant profile or PIRL. Basic personal and contact information is needed to save a participant record and generate a TEAMS ID number.

Step 3: Earn/Request Voucher

1. Test-taker "Earns" Voucher
2. Teacher requests from Director

Test-takers can earn a voucher through a local process to determine readiness, we will have some future guidance on parameters for local programs to test 'readiness', which likely will include scores on practice exams or NRS approved tests.

Step 4: Distribute Voucher

Director logs student on TWC form and supplies TEAMS ID (required to complete) and distributes voucher number.

TWC has developed a tracking form that will be sent to each Grantee and will include the voucher numbers ready for distribution. When a voucher is provided to an eligible individual, it must be placed in the TWC issued tracker for reconciliation purposes. TWC will request the tracker monthly to reconcile with GED and HiSet reports of redeemed vouchers.

Step 5: Registration

Instructor assist with getting student registered and adds TEAMS ID during registration process for GED or Hi Set.

This is a very important piece in the reconciliation process. During the online account creation/registration for scheduling and paying for tests, the student should indicate their TEAMS ID number in the field 'Please enter your TEAMS ID/participant identification number'. This helps GED, TEA and TWC get everything they need to reconcile the vouchers and pay vendors accordingly.

Step 6: Redeem

1. Test-taker redeems voucher
2. Test center checks Student ID (TX DL / ID)

Step 7: Billing

Vendor receives notice of voucher usage and generates billing to Accounts Payable, including voucher number and TEAMS ID (Control)

Step 8: Reconcile

1. AP sends list of used vouchers #s and TEAMS IDs to AEL for reconciling.
2. AEL confirms eligibility and vouchers being recorded in TEAMS before accounts payable pays the vendor.

Step 9: Payment

TWC pays vendor

Student Process

What you need to know regarding the student process

Voucher Process Map Key

- AEL = Adult Education and Literacy
- AC = Accounts Payable
- F = Finance
- P = Provider
- S = Student
- TWC = Texas Workforce Commission
- V = Vendor
- TC = Testing Center

Step 1: Eligibility

Individual meets age and residency requirements:

- 21 years old
- Texas resident

At this step of the Student Process providers are responsible for determining eligibility based on Rule language. TEAMS has also been updated to give errors if you try to enter a voucher for someone who is not eligible, meaning they are not lacking a HS diploma or equivalent and they are at least 21 years of age.

Step 2: Qualify

Test-taker attends class or / meets readiness voucher requirements. Future guidance will determine TWC requirements for determining readiness.

Step 3: Earn

Test-taker earns contact hours and is deemed "ready to test" by instructor. You may seem some nuanced revisions to this language once the final AEL Letter comes out that includes allowability to serve non-AEL participants, while prioritizing current and former AEL participants.

Step 4: Request

- Instructor requests voucher(s) from local AEL director.
- Director checks test-taker test readiness

In this step, local process is key to ensuring that test readiness is determined at the local level. We want to avoid large numbers of retakes when possible—this eats up the student's allotment of tests.

Step 5: Redeem

- Test-taker redeems voucher
- Test-taker takes the exam

Step 6 & 7: Continuing AEL

Determine need for additional instruction based on score results

- Passes TxCHSE – Continues AEL or Exit
- Does not pass TXCHSE – returns to continuing AEL

The last two steps are a combination of student needs and provider follow-up. If they student passes the TxCHSE, AEL should assist with follow-up activities for employment or post-secondary education opportunities.

What's Next After Contracts are Finalized

- TWC Guidance
  - AEL Letter
  - HSE Guide
- Voucher Distribution
  - Local Tracker with allocated voucher numbers for your Grant
  - Mid-Year Reallocation based on usage.
- Oversight and Reporting
  - Process Improvement, if needed.
  - Transactional Tracking and Reporting

Quick Resources

- HSE Subsidy Program Rules: https://www.twc.texas.gov/agency/texas-workforce-commission-rules#pendingProposedRulesRuleReviewsStatePlans
- TEA's TxCHSE Page: https://tea.texas.gov/student-assessment/certificate-of-high-school-equivalency/certificate-of-high-school-equivalency-information

- TCALL Webpage: https://tcall.tamu.edu/COVID-AEL.htm

Questions

If you have questions about this session, please e-mail AELTA@twc.state.tx.us.