



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT
ADULT EDUCATION DIVISION
220 French Landing Drive
Nashville, TN 37243-1002

ADULT EDUCATION POLICY – HiSET* VOUCHERS

Effective Date: January 25, 2021

Date Issued: January 22, 2021

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SUMMARY OF REVISIONS

1. Revised the eligibility requirement that students must attain a minimum qualifying score on a practice test to state that students only must complete a practice test.
2. Removed HiSET OPT8 and added OPT10 as an approved practice test.
3. Removed the “staff recommendation” option for determining test preparedness.
4. Revised the eligibility requirement that students may only receive the value of one full battery voucher over the course of this program to state that students may receive the value of two full battery vouchers.
5. Removed the requirement for utilizing Jobs4TN as the means for verifying eligibility and added the accountability requirement for agencies to provide student records to TDLWD upon request.

AUDIENCE

- Local Adult Education program directors and staff

*HiSET is a registered trademark of Educational Testing Service (ETS).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This policy establishes eligibility requirements for Adult Education program students to receive high school equivalency testing (HiSET) vouchers that waive the costs associated with the exam. This policy also outlines the process for local Adult Education providers to request vouchers.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title	Role or Responsibility
Local Adult Education Program Staff	Ensure that a student meets all eligibility requirements before issuing them a voucher; follow voucher request process to receive vouchers from TDLWD; provide records to TDLWD upon request.

BACKGROUND

The Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD) is able to help remove barriers associated with testing for the HiSET exam by supplying vouchers to adult education providers who can then issue the vouchers to eligible program students. TDLWD provides vouchers not only to TDLWD adult education subrecipient programs, but also to other community-based programs that provide similar services to adults. All programs must use the process outlined in this policy to request vouchers directly from TDLWD (see page 5).

Vouchers provided by the state include the following. Please note that two retake credits are issued whenever a test is purchased from ETS (retakes must occur within 12 months of voucher redemption).

- *Computer - Full Battery + Test Center Fees (\$78.75 value):* covers the cost of the full computer-based exam and test center fees (all five subjects) and allows for two free re-takes per subject (test center fee voucher required).
- *At-Home Computer - Full Battery + Remote Proctor Fees (\$141.25 value):* covers the cost of the full exam and remote proctor fees (all five subjects) and allows for two free re-takes per subject (remote proctor fee voucher required).
- *Computer - Single Subject + Test Center Fee (\$15.75 value):* covers the cost of one computer-based test subject and test center fee and allows for two free retakes of that subject (test center fee voucher required).

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- *At-Home Computer - Single Subject + Remote Proctor Fee – Computer (\$28.25 value):* covers the cost of one test subject and remote proctor fee and allows for two free retakes of that subject (remote proctor fee voucher required).
- *Paper - Full Battery + Test Center Fees (\$100 Value):* covers the cost of the full paper-based exam and test center fees (all five subjects) and allows for two free re-takes per subject (test center fee voucher required).
- *Paper - Single Subject + Test Center Fee (\$20 Value):* covers the cost of one paper-based test subject and test center fee and allows for two free retakes of that subject (test center fee voucher required).
- *Test Center Fee Only (\$5 Value):* covers the cost of sitting for a single test retake.
- *Remote Proctor Fee Only (\$17.50 Value):* covers the cost of sitting for a single test retake, remotely proctored.

POLICY

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1. Student Eligibility

To receive a HiSET voucher, an individual must be deemed eligible and issued the voucher through a local Adult Education program. For an individual to be eligible to receive a HiSET voucher, they must meet three requirements: (1) Tennessee residency, (2) completed official practice test, and (3) previous-voucher-usage. Each requirement is described in detail below. Note: 17-year-old testers must also have a signed *HiSET Recommendation* form ready to present at the time of the test (see [Services for Minor Students Policy](#)).

A. Tennessee Residency

The funding that pays for vouchers is appropriated by the State of Tennessee, therefore vouchers may only be utilized by a student who is a Tennessee resident or citizen (or is incarcerated in a Tennessee correctional facility). Individuals receiving vouchers must prove residency by providing one of the following to program staff:

- Tennessee driver's license or identification license, or
- Federally issued ID with Tennessee address, or

- Pay stub, utility bill, voter registration card, or current lease/deed agreement with name and Tennessee address, or
- Proof of incarceration in a Tennessee correctional facility.

B. Test Preparedness

Students can demonstrate test preparedness through one of two methods: (1) completing an approved practice test; or (2) achieving educational functioning level 5 in math and reading via TABE assessment.

Additional details concerning each method are below.

i. Practice Test Requirement

Individuals receiving a voucher under this option must first complete a qualifying practice test (for test subjects utilizing vouchers). Approved forms of a practice test include:

- HiSET OPT10
- HiSET OPT9
- HiSET Academy™ Practice Tests

The Spanish-language versions of the above practice tests are also allowable. Other assessments may be approved only with written approval from TDLWD.

Going forward from the effective date of this policy, students who previously took a HiSET OPT8 subtest may still receive a voucher based on that qualification; however, OPT8 may no longer be given for voucher purposes as of the effective date of this policy. Therefore, OPT8 may now be used for instructional purposes.

Program staff should review test results and discuss with the student the degree to which the student is prepared for the actual exam (for a table that shows how well a student is prepared based on OPT9 and OPT10 practice test scores, please [click here](#); HiSET Academy™ practice tests results can be reviewed within the software).

ii. Educational Functioning Level 5 in Math and Reading

Students who are assessed with a TABE form 11 or 12 assessment in the subjects of math and reading, and achieve a score that places them at NRS educational functioning level 5 or higher in both subjects, meet the preparedness requirement.¹ However, the following assessment requirements must be followed:

¹ See https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_11_12_Scoring_Best_Practice_Guidelines.pdf

- The assessments must be proctored by program staff.
- To minimize practice effect, students should not be given the same form of TABE back-to-back if retakes are required.

C. Previous Voucher Usage

The number of test vouchers is finite. To be efficient and equitable to all those wanting to take advantage of vouchers, the maximum value of vouchers allowed per individual under this program is equivalent to two (2) full battery vouchers (plus the two retakes per subject allowed). Therefore, an individual can receive up to, on two separate occasions, the following:

- One full battery voucher (computer- or paper-based) which covers all subject tests and fees; OR
- Five partial vouchers (computer-or paper-based) which cover individual subject tests and fees; AND
- Two test center or remote proctor fee vouchers per subject retake.

If a student does not pass the exam after exhausting the first full-battery value of vouchers, the local program must take the following measures before issuing additional vouchers to the student:

1. Ensure the student receives at least 12 hours of instruction from the last time they took the exam;
2. Ensure the student completes an approved practice test since the last time they took the exam (for test subjects utilizing vouchers); and
3. The program director must give signed, written approval for the student to receive additional vouchers ([click for link to sample approval form](#)).

Once the maximum value has been met for an individual, they may no longer receive vouchers under this program. However, for exceptional circumstances, local program directors may make a written request to TDLWD to approve additional vouchers beyond the maximum value for a student.

2. Voucher Request Process

To be eligible to request HiSET vouchers, Adult Education programs that are non-TDLWD-funded must complete and submit a [HiSET Vouchers – Agency Application](#), and have the application approved by TDLWD. TDLWD subrecipient programs are eligible by default.

Eligible agencies can request to receive vouchers from the TDLWD Adult Education Division for the purpose of providing them to qualified prospective test-takers. Vouchers are issued in the form of alphanumeric codes, and are sent via email to the program director (or uploaded directly to Jobs4TN for TDLWD subrecipient programs).² Program directors are responsible for having an efficient and secure process for providing and tracking vouchers in their programs.³

Requests for vouchers should be made via the online [HiSET Voucher Request Form](#). Please allow up to three business days to receive the new voucher codes, availability pending.⁴

Agencies should only request the volume of vouchers needed to cover a few months' worth of students based on best estimates. It is acceptable to request more vouchers than are immediately needed for the purpose of having extra on hand; however, agencies with significant amounts of unused vouchers will be denied requests for additional vouchers.

Note: TDLWD prioritizes computer-based testing over paper-based testing, as computer-based is more economical, secure, and indicative of an individual's digital literacy skills. Requests for paper-based-test vouchers must be justified in the voucher request form.

TDLWD reserves the right to deny voucher requests, in part or in full, for any reason.

3. Agency Accountability & TDLWD Governance

As the fiduciary of the funds allocated for vouchers, TDLWD is responsible to hold agencies accountable for proper voucher usage. TDLWD expects the processes and requirements outlined in this policy to be followed in their entirety.

For TDLWD to verify that student eligibility requirements are met, TDLWD staff will, at their discretion, request voucher usage and student information from recipient agencies. TDLWD staff will conduct a random sampling of student records—specifically, evidence of the student's Tennessee residency and their practice test or TABE results (note: copies of documents proving Tennessee residency should only be made with the student's consent). TDLWD staff will also review program director approval forms for students who use more than one full-battery value of vouchers. Agencies must make these records available to TDLWD upon request.

² Voucher codes are redeemed during the checkout process when an individual registers for the HiSET exam.

³ View and download sample tracking spreadsheet here: <https://goo.gl/tb9n7r>.

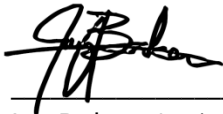
⁴ TDLWD must occasionally replenish the available voucher supply via the state procurement process, which could delay the fulfillment of the request by 2-3 weeks.

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Agencies found to be in non-compliance will be required to address the issue(s) TDLWD discovers, and depending on the severity of the infraction, the agency will (1) be required to correct the issue(s), and/or (2) lose the ability to request or redeem vouchers.

CONTACT

For any questions related to this policy, please contact LaToya Newson, assistant administrator of performance and accountability, at latoya.newson@tn.gov or (615) 741-7055.



Jay Baker, Assistant Commissioner of Adult Education