



*Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Transitional Assistance*


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**Online Guide Transmittal 2020-79
November 27, 2020**

To: Department of Transitional Assistance Staff
From:  Sarah Stuart, Associate Commissioner for Change Management
Re: TAFDC: High School Equivalency Testing and Vouchers

Overview

Through Employment and Training programs, the Department provides a number of support services, including authorization for high school equivalency (HSE) testing for active TAFDC and some former TAFDC clients. In response to the COVID-19 public health crisis, remote proctored GED and HiSET testing options are now also available.

Purpose

This Online Guide Transmittal details client options for HSE testing in Massachusetts and reminds staff of the procedures in requesting a HiSET or GED test voucher. The form for requesting HSE test authorization has been updated to reflect the test options available, including remote options.

**High School
Equivalency
(HSE) Testing**

HSE Testing in Massachusetts is overseen by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) High School Equivalency Office. Official test centers operate statewide to serve the needs of those looking to achieve an HSE certificate.

**High School
Equivalency
(HSE) Testing
Cont.**

At this time many Massachusetts HSE Test Centers remain closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some sites have reopened and are now available to test following strict safety guidelines. To find open test sites and schedule a test at an official test center, clients should be directed to visit the vendor websites: www.GED.com and www.hiset.ets.org.

Additionally, GED and HiSET offer a remote (at home) proctored testing option to Massachusetts candidates. To schedule an exam at home, clients should be directed to visit the vendor websites: [Introducing the Official Online GED Test - GED](#) or [HiSET Exam at Home](#).

Important: Clients who wish to have the Department pay for their HSE test are not able to register without the voucher. Clients who register without a DTA-issued voucher number are not able to be reimbursed.

**HSE Test
Voucher
Eligibility**

DTA recognizes obtaining a high school equivalency is a goal for many families on their path to economic stability. When discussing Employment and Training opportunities, client education and employment goals should be explored and clients should be referred to activities that best fit their needs. When a client feels they are ready to take the test to obtain their HSE, DTA is able to provide a voucher as one of the Employment and Training supports available. Testing may also be requested through a client's Employment and Training provider.

An active TAFDC client, or a former TAFDC client who was enrolled in a funded ESP program at case closure is eligible to request a voucher to complete the full HSE test or for individual subject tests needed, including retests.

**Requesting an
HSE Test
Voucher**

Eligible TAFDC clients should request the test voucher through either their case manager, Full Engagement Worker, designated DTA staff member or their Employment and Training provider. The client and/or staff person must complete Section B: Client/Provider Request of the *High School Equivalency Test Voucher Request* (ESP-40). A signature is no longer required. However if the request is being submitted on behalf of a client by DTA staff or a Provider, ensure that Section C: Client Issuance Agreement on the ESP-40 form is discussed and understood. This new form will be used for all HSE test type options and obsoletes the previous versions of the request form: the *HiSET Voucher for Full Battery* (ESP-40) and *HiSET Voucher for Individual Tests* (ESP-41).

**Requesting an
HSE Test
Voucher
Cont.**

DTA staff must scan and email the completed request form as an attachment to the DTA-DL-HiSET distribution list on the Department's Global Directory in Outlook, with the subject header: HSE Voucher Request. If a client submits the request form via DTA Connect or DPC, staff must email following the above procedures, marked as Entered and a clear narrative written. Employment and Training providers may submit the form directly to DTA-DL-HISET@massmail.state.ma.us.

Central Office staff will return the request with voucher number(s) to the client and/or the Provider to complete test registration. A *Notice of Approval or Denial of Requested Benefits* (NFL-9) will be issued to the client.

Clients must be advised of the registration process, identification requirements and how to request a reasonable accommodation, if needed. Clients will be screened for an Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA) accommodation at specific times to address this issue. If the client indicates they have a disability, conduct that screening. For procedures on accommodation requests, please see [Recognizing an ADA Accommodation Request](#).

**Obsolete
Operations
Memo**

Operations Memo 2014-38: Conversion from GED to High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) Testing and Vouchers has been obsolete.

**Obsolete Online
Guide Page**

The following Online Guide page has been obsolete:

Topic: TAFDC
Book: ESP
Chapter: ESP-Non Competitive Integrated Employment Services
Page: High School Equivalency Test (HiSET)

**Revised
Form**

The form HiSET Voucher for Full Battery (ESP-40) has been revised and is now named High School Equivalency (HSE) Test Voucher Request (ESP-40).

**Obsolete
Form**

The form *HiSET Voucher for Individual Tests* (ESP-41) is now obsolete.

Questions

If you have any policy or procedural questions, after conferring with the appropriate TAO personnel, please have your Systems Information Specialists or TAO management email them to DTA.Procedural Issues.

Systems issues should be directed to the Systems Support Help Desk.
