**Section 590.315 Eligibility** **for Participation in the Program for Self-Employment**

For customers interested in self-employment opportunities, the following steps to determine eligibility must be completed before the IPE and the Self- Employment Plan can be developed.

a) Options other than self-employment must be explored with the customer and, as appropriate, a business mentor to determine if an equal or greater opportunity for successful employment is available in the competitive labor market.

b) To be eligible for participation in the Program for Self-Employment, the customer, in consultation with the business mentor and the counselor, will complete the Preliminary Program for Self-Employment Questionnaire that documents:

1) Previous formal education and/or training in business operation:

A) Evidence of education or training is indicated by:

i) a two or four year degree in business/financial management or related field; or

ii) prior business management experience that provides business knowledge equivalent to the formal education described in subsection (b)(1)(A)(i); or

iii) documentation of the customer working with an appropriate business mentor.

B) Exceptions to subsections (b)(1)(A)(i) and (ii) may be granted by the appropriate Bureau Chief.

2) Self-employment is a viable employment option for the customer and is consistent with the customer's unique strengths, resources, priorities, concerns, abilities, capabilities, interests and informed choice.

3) Self-employment shall enable the customer to engage in gainful employment that will generate income at a level equal to or above the earnings level of Substantial Gainful Activity (SGA) as determined annually by the U.S. Social Security Administration for Title II recipients.

4) Evidence that the customer has available cash or credit resources to cover 50% of all eligible costs of the customer's Program for Self-Employment and any required participation as determined in the financial analysis in 89 Ill. Adm. Code 562.

5) Evidence that the customer has available resources to cover all eligible expenses over the $10,000 limit that DHS-DRS will contribute towards eligible costs under the customer's Program for Self-Employment. The appropriate Bureau Chief may grant exceptions to the DHS-DRS contribution limit.

(Source: Amended at 36 Ill. Reg. 6598, effective April 13, 2012)