



# Residency Requirements for Issuance of the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma

---

*Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education  
Division of Adult Education Policy*

**Subject:** Residency Requirements for Issuance of the Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma  
**Number:** H.100  
**Issued:** October 12, 2016  
**Effective:** Immediately  
**Expires:** Indefinite  
**Status:** Replaces H.100 issued February 17, 2003

The following policy guidance is issued to high school equivalency testing centers providing testing services to citizens of the commonwealth who are seeking to earn a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma through successful completion of a high school equivalency test.

## **INTRODUCTION**

There is a residency requirement to receive a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma. Title 22 Pa. Code chapter 4.72(2) states in pertinent part "...[The] Commonwealth secondary school diploma may be issued to an applicant who is a resident of this Commonwealth...upon earning a passing score as determined by the Department of Education on the high school level tests." However, there is no statutory definition of what constitutes "residency" in order to receive a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma. In order to protect the credential and ensure test security, high school equivalency testing publishers have supported states' establishment of requirements for taking the high school equivalency test that include a residency requirement. Pennsylvania has always assumed that those candidates who register for high school equivalency testing in Pennsylvania are residents of the commonwealth. Absent a clear statutory or regulatory definition, an interpretation must be made. The Pennsylvania Supreme Court interprets the term "reside" as it is used in the Public School Code, to mean " 'a factual place of abode' evidenced by a person's presence in a particular place." One may reside in a particular locale and enroll in local education programs and be defined as a "resident" based on the person's physical presence in a particular place.

## **POLICY STATEMENT**

Because there is a residency requirement to receive a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma, the Bureau of Postsecondary and Adult Education states that a candidate for high

school equivalency testing must demonstrate that he/she is not in the commonwealth for a temporary purpose. Such evidence can be a factual place of abode in Pennsylvania as evidenced by a signed lease and rental receipts, a job commitment letter or evidence of one's seeking a job within the commonwealth, a Pennsylvania driver's license and/or automobile registration, registration to vote, bank accounts, and/or a statement of intent to reside indefinitely. Demonstration of intent to remain is sufficient.

Pennsylvania high school equivalency testing center administrators are advised to determine if a candidate is a resident of Pennsylvania through such means as a place of abode, a job commitment or activity seeking a job, a Pennsylvania driver's license and/or car registration, registration to vote, bank accounts, and/or a statement of intent to remain indefinitely. The candidate can then take a high school equivalency test. Upon successful completion of a high school equivalency test, the candidate is entitled to a Commonwealth Secondary School Diploma.