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From: Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD)

Date: January 09th, 2024

Subject: Local Policy 2024-06
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult Priority of Service

**In response to DWD Policy 2019-04, the Northern Indiana Workforce Board, INC (NIWB) will adhere to the following policy. Changes made to this policy are only regarding regional procedures and expectations.*

Purpose

To provide guidance on the WIOA Title I Adult Program Priority of Service (POS) requirements for individualized career services and training services within Indiana's American Job Center/WorkOne system.

Change Summary

This policy includes the following changes:

- The *Eligibility Determinations for Veterans* section now includes clarified information regarding veteran priority of service and WIOA Title I.
- The policy emphasizes that, if a participant is a public assistance recipient, a low-income individual, or a basic skills deficient individual, then the participant must be categorized under one of those three priority populations in addition to any local priority groups.
- The policy provides additional information on priority of service benchmarks.
- The *Priority of Service Calculation* section has been reformatted for clarity.
- The Adult Priority of Service Documentation Table (**Attachment B**) has been updated with the most recent information from TEGL 23-19, Change 2.
- This policy now includes **Attachment C**, which is an Additional Priority of Service Population Form. The policy also details when and how the local areas should submit this form to DWD.

Rescission

References

See **Attachment A**.

Content

To prioritize services for those who have the most need for and who would benefit from employment and training services, WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) identifies three groups with barriers to employment and requires priority be given to these individuals. Priority of service must be given to public assistance

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recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient (including English language learners) when providing individualized career services and training services using WIOA Title I Adult program funds.

This priority requirement must be followed in the region, regardless of the amount of funds available for providing services.

Priority of Service Groups and Eligibility

Priority status for WIOA Title I Adult participants is determined during eligibility and enrollment. Status does not change during the period of participation. When providing individualized career and training services in the Title I Adult program, local areas must give priority of service to participants who receive public assistance, are low-income individuals, or are basic skills deficient. The three priority populations are described below. Acceptable documentation for verifying eligibility is provided in **Attachment B**.

Recipients of Public Assistance, defined by WIOA sec. 3(50), includes individuals who receive cash payments from federal, state, or local government for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test.

Low-Income Individuals, defined by WIOA sec. 3(36), describes individuals who meet one of the following criteria:¹

- Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or has received in the past six months, assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance

¹ See 20 CFR §675.300 for the definition of “family” and TEGL 26-13 regarding lawful same-sex marriages.

Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or a state or local income-based public assistance program; or

- In a family² with total family income that does not exceed the higher of:
 - the poverty line or
 - 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL); or
- A homeless individual³/homeless child/youth;⁴ or
- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch;⁵ or
- A foster child on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made;⁶ or
- An individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements above but is a member of a family whose total income does not meet this requirement.

Basic Skills Deficient, defined by WIOA sec. 3(5), describes an individual who meets at least one of the following criteria:

- Unable to compute or solve problems; or
-
- Read, write; or
 - Speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. (USDOL includes English language learners in the basic skills deficient group).⁷

TEGL 23-19, Change 2 states that basic skills deficiency data can be validated through Assessment Test Results, among other documentation. Local areas are to follow their own assessment policies to determine which assessments should be used as a measurement of basic skills deficiency. Further guidance regarding assessments is under development by DWD.

Eligibility Determinations for Veterans

For WIOA Adult programs, priority of service must be provided in the following order:⁸

- First, to veterans and eligible spouses who are included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive first priority for services with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
- Second, to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- Third, to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.

² 20 CFR § 675.300.

³ As defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994.

⁴ As defined under section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act. Applies to POS if the youth is also being served by the WIOA Adult program.

⁵ Under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.). Applies to POS if the youth is also being served by the WIOA Adult program.

⁶ Applies to POS if the youth is also being served by the WIOA Adult program.

⁷ TEGL 19-16, WIOA sec. 203(7).

⁸ TEGL 19-16.

- Fourth, priority populations established by the Governor and/or local WDB.
- Last, to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

When determining priority of service eligibility for WIOA Title I Adult employment or training programs, the following shall be disregarded in past income calculations:⁹

- Military pay and allowances received while serving on active duty.
- Compensation for service-connected disability or death or vocational rehabilitation.
- Benefits for education and training services funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).
- Compensation received by an eligible dependent or indemnity compensation for service-connected deaths.
- Educational assistance for eligible dependents and survivors of veterans under 38 U.S.C. 3500.

WIOA program operators may not require veterans or their spouses to exhaust their entitlement to VA-funded training benefits prior to allowing them to enroll in WIOA-funded training.

Priority of Service Goal and Minimum Rate

USDOL envisions that giving priority of service to public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, or basic skills deficient individuals means ensuring that **at least 75 percent** of a state's participants receiving individualized career and training services in the Adult program are from **at least one of the**

three priority groups.¹⁰ USDOL may phase-in¹¹ the state-level goal, with encouragement to states to consider establishing additional benchmarks for local areas as a way to recognize whether priority is being provided to these populations.¹² DWD is continuing to evaluate local level benchmarks and will provide additional guidance when available.

Additional Priority of Service Groups¹³

The Governor and/or local WDBs may establish a process that also gives priority to other individuals eligible to receive such services, provided that it is consistent with priority of service for veterans (see 20 CFR § 680.650) and the priority provisions of WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E). Any additional priority groups identified by the Governor or local WDBs should be reflected in the WIOA State Plan, as well as the Local Area Plan(s).¹⁴ To establish an additional priority of service group, local areas must submit the form in **Attachment C** to policy@dwd.in.gov. A Word version of this attachment is available on DWD's policy website.¹⁵

⁹ 38 U.S.C. 4213.

¹⁰ Per TEGL 7-20, while local areas must strive to hit the 75 percent benchmark, USDOL expects this rate to be no lower than 50.1 percent.

¹¹ Initial phase-in had been expected to occur during PY20. DWD anticipates further guidance from USDOL due to the pandemic.

¹² TEGL 7-20.

¹³ 20 CFR § 680.600(c).

¹⁴ Indiana's WIOA State Plan identifies Target Populations, but no determination has been made about service priority.

¹⁵ <https://www.in.gov/dwd/compliance-policy/policy/active/>

Priority populations established by the Governor and/or local WDBs have a lower priority than the WIOA Adult priority of service or Veteran priority populations established in statute. If a participant is a public assistance recipient, a low-income individual, or a basic skills deficient individual, then the participant must be categorized under the applicable priority populations as well as in any relevant additional priority groups. The provision of services to priority populations established by the Governor and/or local WDBs will not impact the statutory priorities for the WIOA Adult or Veteran priority populations. When reviewing state progress against the 75 percent benchmark,¹⁶ USDOL will consider state progress against additional priority populations established by the Governor and/or local WDBs on a case-by-case basis.¹⁷

Locally Established POS Groups Data Entry

Once locally established priority groups have been identified, policies/processes have been developed, and the local plan updated, local areas must ensure the locally established priority group is appropriately documented within DWD's case management system. Please see DWD TA 2021-09, Change 1: *Locally Established POS Group Data Entry Instructions* for step-by-step data entry guidance. As a reminder, participants who meet the standards of one of the three priority groups (public assistance recipient, low-income individual, or basic skills deficient individual) **must be recorded as such**, even if they meet the standards of an additional priority group as well.

Priority of Service Calculation

The table below depicts how DWD calculates progress toward USDOL's 75% benchmark. DWD adds the total number of participants who are public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, or basic skills deficient individuals (numerator). Then, DWD divides that sum by the sum of all participants receiving adult individualized career and/or training services (denominator).

NOTE: Although a participant may fall into more than one of the three priority populations, the participant still only counts once toward the 75% benchmark. Despite this, DWD urges local areas to collect data validation elements on all priority populations for which a participant qualifies.

Table 1: POS Calculation

Priority Calculation: 75% Benchmark¹⁷

¹⁶ Additional resources: <https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/05/14/01/WIOA-Desk-Reference> and https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/09/11/25/Special_Populations_-_Adult_and_Dislocated_Worker_Populations.

¹⁷ Please note that DWD does not consider additional priority groups established by the Governor and/or local WDBs to contribute toward the state's progress toward the 50.1 percent minimum. While local areas must strive to hit the 75 percent benchmark, USDOL expects this rate to be no lower than 50.1 percent.

Sum of participants in at least one of the following populations:
**Public Assistance Recipients, Low-income Individuals, or Basic Skills Deficient
(including English Language Learners) Individuals.**

Sum of all participants receiving Adult Individualized Career and/or Training Services

Oversight and Monitoring

Compliance with priority of service guidance and regulations will be reviewed and assessed during routine oversight and monitoring. Analysis will include but is not limited to:

- A review of the local WIOA Title I Priority of Service Policy;
- Any related procedures, training and monitoring developed and/or conducted by the local WDB and/or the authorized service providers;
- File and/or system review of client data; and
- Interviews with staff and leadership to assess understanding and consistent correct implementation of the local policy.

Attachments

Attachment A – References

Attachment B - Adult Priority of Service Documentation Table

Attachment C - Additional Local Priority of Service Population Form

References

- WIOA Sections 3, 134
- 20 CFR 680.600, 680.650, 675.300
- 38 U.S.C. 3500, 38 U.S.C. 4213
- TEGL 10-09 *Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), November 10, 2009*
- TEGL 23-19, Change 2 *Guidance for Validating Required Performance Data Submitted by Grant Recipients of U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce Programs*
- TEGL 26-13 *Impact of the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in United States v. Windsor on Eligibility and Services Provided Under Workforce Grants Administered by the Employment and Training Administration*
- TEGL 7-20 *Effective Implementation of Priority of Service Provisions for Most in Need Individuals in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program*
- TEGL 19-16 *Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the WagnerPeyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules*
- WIOA Desk Reference: *Priority of Service for WIOA Adult Funds*¹⁸
- WIOA Desk Reference: *Adult and Dislocated Worker Key Resources - Special Populations*¹⁹
- Section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994
- Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act
- Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (42 U.S.C. 1751 et seq.)

¹⁸ <https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/05/14/01/WIOA-Desk-Reference>.

¹⁹ [https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/09/11/25/Special Populations - Adult and Dislocated Worker Populations](https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/09/11/25/Special_Populations_-_Adult_and_Dislocated_Worker_Populations).

Adult Priority of Service Documentation Table

Local areas must use the following sources of documentation to verify whether an adult participant qualifies for priority of service under WIOA. ²²

Priority of Service Criteria	Acceptable Documentation
<p>Public Assistance Recipient</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of Authorization to Receive Cash Public Assistance • Copy of Public Assistance Check • Medical Card Showing Cash Grant Status • Public Assistance Eligibility Verification • Cross-Match
<p>Low Income Status at Program Entry</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award Letter from Veteran’s Administration • Bank Statements • Pay Stubs • Compensation Award Letter • Court Award Letter • Pension Statement • Employer Statement/Contact • Family or Business Financial Records • Housing Authority Verification • Quarterly Estimated Tax for Self-Employed Persons • Social Security Benefits • UI Claim Documents • Copy of Authorization to Receive Cash Public Assistance • Copy of Public Assistance Check • Public Assistance Eligibility Verification • Cross-Match with Refugee Assistance Records • Cross-Match with Public Assistance Records • Cross-Match with UI Wage Records

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Attestation²³
Basic Skills Deficient/Low Levels of Literacy at Program Entry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment Test Results²⁴ • Applicable Records from Education Institution (transcripts, academic assessments, or other school documentation) • Case notes

Additional Local Priority of Service Population Form

WIOA Title I Adult – Additional Priority of Service Population Form				Region:	
Population Feature	WDB Response				
Describe priority of service population <i>Criteria, characteristics of group members. Use one form per additional population.</i>					
Reason for Designation <i>Describe the circumstances leading to a POS designation. How will creating a local POS population help this group?</i>					
Why are members of this population unlikely to be included in the WIOA priority populations? <i>Public Assistance Recipients, Low-Income Individuals, and Basic Skills Deficient Individuals</i>					
Describe the timeline for serving this population. <i>If there is not a specific timeline, please explain.</i>					
Service Goals <i>What are the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timeframe) goals for the population? Percentage of clients served, number of clients achieving a specific milestone, etc.</i>	Specific Goal	Measurement		Why is it Achievable/Realistic?	Timeframe to Accomplish (If applicable)
		Method (How)	Frequency (How Often)		

Outreach & Engagement Strategies <i>How will the local area try to connect the target population with WorkOne services?</i>	Strategy		Resources Needed	Timeframe

Effective Date

Immediately.

Ending Date

Upon rescission.

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