



## **ADULT PROGRAM PRIORITY OF SERVICE POLICY**

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### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:**

#### **Purpose:**

This document establishes the Workforce Development Board of Madera County's policy and establishes the procedures regarding priority of service for recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient served with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) adult funds.

#### **Effective Date:**

This policy is effective- on the date of approval by the Workforce Development Board.

#### **References:**

- Employment Development Department Directive WSD15-14
- WIOA (Public Law 113-128) Sections 3 and 134
- Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Sections 680.150, 680.600, 680.610, and 680.650

#### **State-Imposed Requirements:**

This policy contains some state-imposed requirements. These requirements are in ***bold, italic type***.

#### **Background:**

The Workforce Investment Act required that if funds allocated to a Local Area for adult employment and training activities were limited, priority of service was to be provided to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals for intensive and training services.

The WIOA made several changes to the priority of service requirement by adding individuals who are basic skills deficient as a priority population, changing intensive services to individualized career services, and removing the provision stating priority of service is only applied if funding is limited.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all Department of Labor (DOL) funded programs amongst all participants. These requirements were not affected by the passage of WIOA and must still be applied in accordance with guidance previously issued by the DOL and Workforce Services Directive WSD08-10.

### **Policy and Procedures:**

#### Priority of Service Requirement

As stated in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E), with respect to individualized career services and training services funded with WIOA adult funds, priority of service must be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Priority of service status is established at the time of eligibility determination and does not change during the period of participation. Priority does not apply to the dislocated worker population.

Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service among all eligible individuals; however, they must meet the WIOA adult program eligibility criteria and meet the criteria under WIOA Section 134 (c)(3)(E). As described in TEGL 10-09, when programs are statutorily required to provide priority, such as the WIOA adult program, then priority must be provided in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
2. Individuals who are the recipients of public assistance, other low income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient.
3. Veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
4. Other individuals not included in WIOA's priority groups.

For additional guidance on providing priority of service to veterans through the one-stop system, the guidance provided in Workforce Services Directive WSD08-10 will be followed.

Local Workforce Development Boards (local boards) may establish additional priority groups for their Local Area (e.g., residents of the local area, individuals with disabilities, ex-offenders, etc.).

**Additional priority groups designated by the Workforce Development Board of Madera County include individuals with disabilities and ex-offenders.**

**It is the policy of the Workforce Development Board of Madera County to provide priority for receipt of individualized career and training services to eligible adults who meet the criteria for priority of service and who are residents of Madera County. Individuals who are not members of a priority group may be provided these services, as long as funds are not limited. Exceptions to the priority requirements may be made for special projects, regional grants, or for exceptional circumstances on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the Executive Director.**

#### Definitions

For purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

**Basic Skills Deficient** – An individual that is 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 (WIOA Section 3 [5]). **Criteria used to determine whether an individual is basic skills deficient include the following:**

- **Lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education.**
- **Enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program.**
- **English, reading, writing, or computing skills at an 8.9 or below grade level.**
- **Determined to be Limited English Skills proficient through staff-documented observations.**
- **Other objective criteria determined to be appropriate by the Local Area, as documented in local policy.**

**Case Notes** – Paper or electronic statements by the case manager that identifies, at a minimum, (1) a participant's status for a specific data element, (2) the date on which the information was obtained, and (3) the case manager who obtained the information. If case notes are used as a documentation source, the case notes must provide an auditable trail back to the source of information verified in the participant's case file.

**Example:** A case manager verifies an individual is basic skills deficient by viewing school records, specifically, enrollment in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program. The case notes must include auditable information, such as the name of the school and the date of enrollment, which could allow an auditor/monitor to later retrieve this information. The case manager would not need to keep a hard copy of the school record in the participant's file (TEGL 06-14, Attachment A).

**Low-Income** – An individual that meets one of the four criteria below:

1. Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program, temporary assistance for needy families program, supplemental security income program, or state or local income-based public assistance.
2. In a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of the following:
  - a. The poverty line; or
  - b. 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level.
3. A homeless individual.
4. An individual with a disability whose own income does not exceed the income requirement, but is a member of a family whose total income does (WIOA Section 3[36]).

**Public Assistance Recipient** – An individual that receives federal, state, or local government cash payments for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test (WIOA Section 3[50]).

**Self-Attestation** – When a participant states his or her status for a particular data element, such as low income, and then signs and dates a form acknowledging this status. The key elements for self-

attestation are (1) the participant identifying his or her status for permitted elements and (s) signing and dating a form attesting to this self-identification. The form and signature can be on paper or in the Local Workforce Development Area management information system, with an electronic signature (TEGL 06-14, Attachment A).

Note that self-attestation is not to be used as the primary method of gathering documentation to verify data elements. Self-attestation as a documentation source is only to be used when the preferred options of paper documentation or third party corroboration are not available.

## Career and Training Services

Under WIOA, the WIA core and intensive services are merged into a new category entitled “career services.” The career services category includes basic career services, found at WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(A)(i)-(xi), and individualized career services, found at WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(A)(xii). Basic career services are not subject to the priority of service requirement. However, individualized career services and training services are subject to the requirement (Title 20 CFR NPRM Section 680.150).

### **Basic Career Services**

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services offered by the one-stop delivery system, and include the following:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs.
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the state’s Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants likely to exhaust benefits), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system.
- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skill gaps), and supportive service needs.
- Labor exchange services, including the following:
  - Job search and placement assistance and, when needed by an individual career counseling, such as the information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations as well as non-traditional employment.
- Provision of referrals to, and coordination of activities with, other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs.
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including the following:
  - Job vacancy listings and the job skills necessary to obtain them.
  - Information on local in demand occupations and the earnings, skills requirements, and opportunities for advancement that accompany them.
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers.

- Provision of information about how the Local Area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area's one-stop delivery system.
  - Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including (1) child care, (2) child support, (3) medical or child health assistance available through the state's Medicaid program and Children's Health Insurance Program, (4) benefits under the SNAP, (5) assistance through the earned income tax credit, (6) housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, (7) and assistance under a state TANF program, and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program.
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs that are not funded under WIOA.
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim. Meaningful assistance means providing assistance either on-site using staff who are properly trained in UI claims, filing, and/or the acceptance of information necessary to file a claim, provided that questions, advice, or decisions that could affect a claimant's eligibility are only handled by UI program staff, or by phone or via other technology, as long as assistance is provided by trained and available staff within a reasonable time. The costs associated with providing meaningful assistance may be paid for by the state's UI program, the WIOA adult or dislocated worker programs, the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, or by some combination of these funding sources.

### ***Individualized Career Services***

Individualized career services are subject to priority of service, and consist of the following:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include the following:
  - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools.
  - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals.
- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers.
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring.
- Career planning (e.g. case management).
- Short-term prevocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training. In some instances, pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term pre-vocational services.
- Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers.
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills,

including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, training, or employment.

- Financial literacy services.
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance.
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

### ***Training Services***

Training services are subject to priority of service, and consist of the following:

- Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment.
- On-the-job training.
- Incumbent worker training.
- Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs.
- Training programs operated by the private sector.
- Skill upgrading and retraining.
- Entrepreneurial training.
- Transitional jobs.
- Job readiness training provided in combination with another training service.
- Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with another training service.
- Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training.

### **Documentation**

The Madera County Local Workforce Development Area will use the following sources of documentation to verify whether an adult participant qualifies for priority of service under WIOA:

- Recipient of Public Assistance
  - Copy of authorization to receive cash public assistance
  - Copy of public assistance check
  - Medical card showing cash grant status
  - Public assistance records
  - Refugee assistance records
- Low Income
  - Alimony agreement
  - Award letter from veteran's administration
  - Bank statements
  - Compensation award letter
  - Court award letter
  - Pension statement

- Employer statement/contact
- Family or business financial records
- Housing authority verification
- Pay stubs
- Public assistance records
- Quarterly estimated tax for self-employed persons
- Social Security benefits
- Unemployment Insurance documents
- Self-attestation, as defined on page 3 of this policy
- Basic Skills Deficient
  - School records
  - Results of academic assessment
  - Case notes, as defined on page 3
  - Self-Attestation, as defined on page 3

**ACTION:**

This policy replaces the previous version which was approved by the Board on December 17, 2015. Please retain this policy until further notice.

**INQUIRIES:**

Questions regarding this policy should be directed to the Executive Director or designee at (559) 662-4500.