



Workforce Services Guidance - (American Job Center Initial Assessment Guidance) - WIOA

Effective Date: May 8, 2017

Duration: Indefinite

To:

American Job Centers, Local Workforce Development Areas, Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development Management

Subject:

The Initial Assessment guidance explains the process conducted when a participant enters an American Job Center (AJC).

Purpose:

This document establishes guidance to carry out effective intake, initial assessment, and determination of appropriate programs which will result in employment for participants utilizing services offered by an AJC.

Scope:

Office of the Governor, Tennessee Department of Labor and Workforce Development (TDLWD); Division of Workforce Services (WFS); Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (ECD); Tennessee Department of Education (TNED); Tennessee Department of Human Services (DHS); State Workforce Development Board (SWDB); Title I – Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs, Title II – Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program(AE); Title III – Wagner-Peyser Act Program (WP); Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation Program (VR); Regional Planning Council (RPC); Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB); Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDA); American Job Center (AJC); One-Stop Operator (OSO); Workforce System Sub-Recipients (Sub-Recipients); Workforce System Partners (Partners)

Background:

American Job Centers (also known as One-Stop centers) are designed to provide a full range of workforce assistance programs within one comprehensive location. One-Stop centers were initially established under the Workforce Investment Act and have been reauthorized under the **Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014** (WIOA). These centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services for all Tennesseans, including employers seeking a well-trained and skillful workforce. Under WIOA any participant – including those simply requesting information about employment – must have access to technologies to conduct a self-directed job search, staff assisted job search, and to access other labor-market information. AJCs must make these services universally available and increase access opportunities, particularly for those with barriers to employment. Please refer to the **One-Stop Delivery System Policy**.

I. **Initial Assessment:**

A key service provided in the AJC system is the initial assessment of a participant's knowledge, skills, and abilities to support that participant's employment goal. The initial assessment determines needs and strategies to achieve sustainable employment; furthermore, training and supportive services are based on an analysis of information gathered from the participant during the intake process. The assessment should indicate what services the participant needs and should include, if necessary, referrals to appropriate partner staff and other agencies that can best provide these services. The intake process may include the use of registration information, a résumé, data collection, and/or the customary verbal interview. A thorough initial assessment will provide sufficient information about the participant's current situation which staff will use to create a service plan. Assessments must be conducted with each participant to determine their needs, goals, and services to be delivered. **Each LWDA must establish local policies on the utilization of a LWDA initial assessment that is specific to the resources available in their area.** Assessments should be monitored for use and effectiveness by each AJC. Ultimately the information gathered will be monitored by the TDLWD and the Program Accountability Review team.

II. **Elements of the Initial Assessment:**

Each LWDA must create and customize the initial assessment that is given to participants entering the AJC. These assessments should:

- Determine if the participant is job ready or not
- Determine any barriers to employment the participant may have
 - Questions about barriers should be designed to determine the specific barrier(s) need to be addressed with the job seeker
- Determine appropriate partner staff referrals
 - AJC staff should be familiar with the supportive services offered in their specific area as well as the services that partner staff provides for appropriate referrals. Staff should also know the appropriate referral process to these partner staff and supportive service providers.
- Determine the participant's skills, abilities, and interests
- Determine the participant's goals

Note: It is essential that participants with barriers to employment – who are in need of immediate income be provided short-term prevocational services that include communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, professional conduct, and financial literacy services to prepare them for unsubsidized employment.

III. **Initial Assessment Process:**

Staff at AJCs will use the assessment to learn about the participant's occupational goals, existing skills, and work readiness to determine whether or not the participant has any barriers to employment. This assessment is conducted in the context of current local labor market conditions by utilizing the tools and resources available through Jobs4TN.

- Staff will take into account service needs such as the desire to pursue training or education.
- The initial assessment should result in a determination of the participant's next steps, which may include a comprehensive assessment and the development of an individual employment plan.
- Since WIOA emphasizes the priority of assisting low income individuals with barriers to employment and assisting those with disabilities, information regarding training or education services must be provided so that the participant has an opportunity to make sound decisions when selecting a career path.

- The initial assessment will allow staff to determine appropriate referrals to partner agencies, such as adult education or vocational rehabilitation, as well as to entities that can provide supportive services needed by the participant.
- The initial assessment should also serve as a tool for staff to determine enrollment or co-enrollment in appropriate programs.

All AJCs must have processes and procedures in place to ensure their participants receive an initial assessment on the day they first receive service from staff. Staff performing the welcome function will greet all participants and perform the initial assessment, unless a similar or more effective local process is established. It is the Division of Workforce Services policy that all AJC participants receive an initial assessment unless the staff member determines that it is appropriate to use a recent interview, evaluation, or assessment of the participant conducted pursuant to another education or training program. Assessments should be uploaded into the participant's Jobs4TN file if possible, or case noted when a paper assessment is not used.

IV. Assessment Process:

Each LWDA and AJC must create their own initial assessment form. These forms will be audited for both content and use. The initial assessment process may include the following steps:

1) Occupational Goal Evaluation:

- a) An analysis of the participant's occupational goal to determine whether it is favorable or unfavorable in the labor market
- b) If the participant does not have a clear occupational goal, or if the participant's outlook for an occupational goal is unfavorable, then the participant is identified for career development services (i.e., career exploration to identify an occupation with a favorable, local labor-market outlook).

2) Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Evaluation:

If the participant's occupational goal has a favorable outlook in the labor market then the following questions must be asked:

- a) Does the participant have occupational skills that are currently in demand?
- b) How does the participant's work history, experience, and/or level or expertise relate to the participant's goal?
- c) Does the participant have transferable skills?
- d) Does the participant have the necessary education and training to compete in the job market?
- e) Is the participant unlikely to return to a former occupation due to local economic conditions?

If the answers indicate to staff that the participant has deficiencies in knowledge, skills, and/or abilities which will lead to barriers for sustainable jobs and earnings then the participant will be identified as needing educational, training services, or support services.

3) Barriers to Employment Evaluation:

This should be conducted if the participant's knowledge, skills, and abilities are proficient. Some examples of barriers to employment are:

- a) Health and physical considerations
- b) Poor work history
- c) Lack of references
- d) Child or elder care issues

- e) Criminal record
- f) Transportation issues
- g) Limited English skills
- h) Homelessness

If no barriers exist, or the barriers can be addressed during the initial assessment or a subsequent appointment, the participant is identified for job search ready services.

4) Job Search Skills Evaluation:

This should be conducted to determine a participant's planning, preparation, and job seeking skills. Some subjects to evaluate include:

- Does the participant have job adaptation skills?
- Does the participant have an up to date résumé?
- Does the participant need assistance with interviewing and/or communication skills?
- Does the participant know how to conduct an effective job search?
- Does the participant have basic computer skills in order to apply for work online and conduct internet-based job searches?
- Does the participant have social networking and self-marketing skills?
- Is the participant motivated to find work?
- Does the participant have a work search plan?

V. Services:

1) Job Search Ready Services:

These services are to be provided to participants who possess the following:

- An occupational goal with a favorable labor market outlook;
- Occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities for the occupational goal; or
- No barriers that might prevent obtaining and retaining employment

2) Training Services:

These services are to be provided to participants who:

- Do not possess an occupational goal; and/or
- Do not possess the requisite occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities to find work related to the participant's occupational goal; and/or
- Have barriers that potentially prevent them from obtaining and retaining employment

A participant's assessment may also reveal a skills gap. If so the next logical step, assuming that no other mechanism is available, is to make available the means for training services. These training services will include, but not be limited to:

- Work-based training skills with instructions
- Occupational skills training
- On-the-job training
- Skills upgrade
- Customized training
- Training in a registered apprentice program
- Issuance of ITAs with other support services

Please refer to the ***Individual Training Account Use policy*** for clarification regarding ITAs. Participants may be co-enrolled in partner programs with resources the participant will most benefit from.

References:

20 CFR 680.220; WIOA Section 129(c)(1)(A); WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(A)(iii); WIOA Section 134(c)(2)(B); WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(A)(ii)

Contact:

For any questions related to this policy, please contact the Program Integrity Unit at Workforce.Board@tn.gov



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