



Subject: Individual Service Strategy & Individual Employment Plan Policy

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1. Purpose:

This policy establishes the requirement for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) subrecipients to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for eligible youth participants or an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) for eligible adult and dislocated worker participants.

2. Background:

The ISS and IEP are used to assist participants in achieving their goals. Subrecipient and the participant work together to make informed decisions and select the appropriate services to enable the participant to achieve their goals and objectives successfully.

Operational Procedure

A. Policy

Subrecipient shall develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) with youth participants and an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) with adult and dislocated worker participants. All participants will be entered into the State Management Information System (MIS), where both the ISS and IEP are referred to as the Individual Participant Plan (IPP).

B. Youth Individual Service Strategy

The ISS begins with an active interaction between the participant and subrecipient, resulting in a mutually developed plan. WIOA requires that all youth participants have an ISS based on an objective assessment that reflects the interests and needs of the participant upon program enrollment. The ISS provides the participant with a plan for using the program successfully and gives the subrecipient a guide for effectively helping the participant transition through the program.

Objective Assessment

The objective assessment is a tool used to gather information about the individual's academic levels, skill levels, and overall service needs. The subrecipient then uses the objective assessment to develop an ISS and identify career pathways to facilitate the participant's educational, training, and employment goals. Every objective assessment shall include an evaluation of the following elements:

- Basic skills –
 - a) For purposes of the basic skills assessment portion of the objective assessment, the subrecipient is not required to use assessments approved for use in the Department of Education's National Reporting System (NRS), nor are they required to determine an individual's grade level equivalent or Educational Functioning Level (EFL) such as CASAS. However, the use of these tools is permitted.
 - b) Subrecipient may use other formalized testing instruments designed to measure skills-related gains.
 - c) Skills related gains may also be determined through less formal alternative assessment techniques such as observation, folder reviews, or interviews. These techniques may be particularly appropriate for youth with disabilities, given accessibility issues related to formalized instruments.
 - d) Subrecipient may use previous basic skills assessment results if such previous assessments have been conducted within the past six (6) months.

NOTE: If measuring EFL gains after program enrollment under the measurable skill gains indicator, subrecipient shall use an NRS-approved assessment (i.e., CASAS) for both the EFL pre-and post-test determine an individual's EFL as instructed in Program Notice-8 CASAS for Basic Skills Deficiency.

- Occupational skills - Training that will provide the job skills required to work in a specific industry or occupation.
- Prior work experience - Job experience gained by previous employment, including paid or unpaid employment.
- Employability - Skills that are required to secure employment and maintain employment. This includes job readiness skills.
- Interests - Work-related interests that can identify potential training and occupational goals. Interest inventories can be utilized to discover interests.
- Aptitudes – All youth, including youth with disabilities, can benefit from participation in career assessment activities including, but not limited to, assessments of prior work experience, employability, interests, and aptitudes.
 - a) Multiple assessment tools may be necessary since there is no standard approach that will work for all youth, including youth with disabilities.
 - b) Career assessments help youth, including those with disabilities, understand how various personal attributes (e.g., interests, values, preferences, motivations, aptitudes, and skills) affect their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments.
 - c) Youth also need access to reliable information about career opportunities (based on labor market information) that provide a living wage, including information about education, entry requirements, and income potential.
 - d) These assessments may be provided directly through the subrecipient and/or through referrals to community-based partners and resources.
- Supportive service needs - Assistance provided to enable the youth to participate in WIOA Title I activities and remove potential barriers to achieve their educational and employment goals successfully.
- Developmental needs - Skills needed to develop employment and career potential.
- Strengths – Tasks, attributes, or skills of the youth.

Each element of the objective assessment shall be addressed to develop a comprehensive picture of the youth's circumstances and ensure the program meets the youth's needs. A recent objective assessment administered by another entity can be used if conducted within 60 days of WIOA enrollment. Where appropriate, the subrecipient is encouraged to utilize standardized assessments to strengthen the quality of the youth's objective assessment.

Individual Service Strategy

The ISS is a plan designed to meet the youth's specific training, educational, and/or employment goals. The youth's objective assessment is utilized when developing the ISS, and all youth needs and barriers identified on the objective assessment shall be addressed on the ISS. It will serve as the basis for the entire case management service strategy and as a guide for the delivery of appropriate services. For each participant, the ISS will identify and document:

- Appropriate career pathway;
- The educational goal(s);
- The employment goal(s), including, when appropriate, non-traditional employment goals;
- Appropriate achievement objectives;
- Appropriate services, the sequence and mix of the services, and justification for the services to be provided;
- Any referral(s) to other services/programs.

There shall be a clear linkage between the selected program elements, established goals, and the action steps.

Documentation

Once the ISS has been developed, case notes, and MIS documentation shall be used to reflect services provided, the participants' progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments/outcomes. Subrecipient shall document services regardless of who provides the service.

After 30 days of no participation in a durational activity, as verified by attendance and participation records, the subrecipient shall close the durational activity and document in case notes.

C. Adult and Dislocated Worker Individual Employment Plan

The Benton-Franklin Workforce Development Council (BFWDC) requires an IEP be developed for each adult and dislocated worker who is determined eligible to receive WIOA career services. The IEP is a strategy jointly developed by adult and dislocated worker participants and the subrecipient that identifies the participant's employment goals, the appropriate achievement objectives, and the combination of services to achieve their employment goals. It is developed as a result of a comprehensive assessment and based on the participant's needs and shall contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- **Employment Goal** - The employment goal is determined by a comprehensive assessment consisting of an interview, evaluation, and/or testing. Determining the employment goal will ensure participants are being trained in-demand occupations that lead to self-sufficient wages.

- **Needs and Barriers** - The comprehensive assessment identifies potential needs and barriers that hinder the participant from achieving the selected employment goal. Needs and barriers may include, but are not limited to, assistive technology needs, supportive service needs, and skills gaps (including job search skills, job readiness skills, and job retention skills) with appropriate justification for all services to be provided.
- **Training/Educational Goals** - The goal(s) outlines the participant's training and educational needs to assist them in attaining their employment goal through licensure, certification, and/or skills development.

The IEP shall focus on a career pathway that can provide a guide beyond initial employment. WIOA defines career pathways as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

- Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of Washington State and the local or regional area economy;
- Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships;
- Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals;
- Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupation cluster;
- Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and
- Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Documentation

Once the IEP has been developed, case notes shall be used to document when additional needs are identified, all services provided to the participant, goal achievement, and/or circumstances that warrant a change. There shall be a clear linkage between the selected program elements, established goals, and the action steps.

D. Internal Review Process for Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Files

It is the subrecipient's responsibility to establish processes to review and approve all registration paperwork, including the ISS/IEP, for completeness, accuracy, and internal consistency.

REFERENCES can be found on the State's Comprehensive File Checklist located at Workforce Professionals Center-Monitoring Tools.