

Subject:	WIOA Priority of Service for Title I Adult Programs
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Distribution:	Arapahoe/Douglas Works! Workforce Center Leadership and Employees

The Arapahoe/Douglas Workforce Board (ADWB) has designated Arapahoe/Douglas Works! (ADW!) as the provider of Career Services for WIOA Title I: Adult, Dislocated Worker and Young Adult programs, Title III: Wagner Peyser, and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

ALL FEBRUARY 2017 PGL REVISIONS ARE HIGHLIGHTED IN YELLOW

CITATIONS/REFERENCES

- Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, Sections 3, 134(c)(3)(E).
- WIOA Department of Labor-Only Final Rule (81 FR 56072, Aug. 19, 2016).
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16 Guidance: Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules
- 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.
- PGL 14-07-V, Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses.
- PGL 15-09-WIOA, WIOA Title I Eligibility
- WIOA-2015-07, **Change 1**: WIOA – Priority of Service for Title I Adult Programs

PURPOSE

To establish guidance, process and procedure in regards to providing priority of service for WIOA Title I Adult program customers.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires priority be given to public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient, when providing individualized career services and training services using WIOA Title I Adult program funds. In addition, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 19-16 specifies that priority is also applied to individuals that are both underemployed and low-income. WIOA provides a focus on serving individuals with barriers to employment, and the intent of this priority in the law is to ensure access to these populations on a priority basis. Under The Workforce Investment Act (WIA), priority was required for public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals when funds were limited. Under WIOA, priority of service is required regardless of the funding levels and is expanded to include individuals who are basic skills deficient. **Consistent with the intent of WIOA, Colorado will also give equal priority to “individuals with barriers to employment” for the Adult program. Local boards have authority to identify an additional local priority group if it is consistent with the intent of the law to serve adults with barriers to employment.**

POLICY/ACTION

DEFINITIONS

Colorado has added a priority for **“Individuals with barriers to employment”** which includes:

- a. displaced homemakers;
- b. low-income individuals;
- c. Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians;
- d. individuals with disabilities;
- e. older individuals;
- f. ex-offenders;
- g. homeless individuals;
- h. youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;
- i. individuals who are English learners, have low literacy levels, or face substantial cultural barriers;
- j. eligible Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers;
- k. individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF;
- l. single parents (including pregnant women);
- m. long-term unemployed individuals; and
- n. members of other groups identified by the Governor (WIOA, Sec. 3(24)) **(At this time the Governor has not identified any other groups).**

The Adult priority of service applies to individualized career services and training services. **“Individualized career services”** include comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of an individual employment plan, group and individual counseling, career planning, short-term prevocational services, internships and work experiences, workforce preparation activities, financial literacy services, out-of-area job search and relocation assistance, and English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

There are **four (4)** groups of individuals targeted for priority **under WIOA statute and federal guidance** when providing individualized career services and training services in the Title I Adult program: public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and individuals who are both underemployed and low-income.

1. “RECIPIENTS OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE” includes individuals who receive, or in the past 6 months have received, or are a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through one or more of the following:

- a. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- b. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program;
- c. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program; or
- d. State or local income-based public assistance **including LEAP, Section 8 Housing, or CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program) payments.**

2. “LOW-INCOME” includes:

- a. Recipients of public assistance (defined above);
- b. Individuals in a family with total income below 70% of the lower living standard income level;
- c. Homeless;
- d. Foster youth;
- e. Individuals with disabilities with individual income below 70% of the lower living standard income level; and
- f. **Youth in-school up to age 21, or parents of such a youth, who are eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch.**

Local boards may adopt a more stringent definition for “low-income” or include additional criteria (specifically for the purposes of determining Adult program priority) that may be applied to one or more of the low-income categories listed above and is consistent with local economic conditions and other criteria determined by the board. ADW! will utilize the state’s definition of “low income,” and does not intend to establish a more stringent definition at this time.

A youth 18 or older, who was determined low-income for the WIOA Title I Youth Program, may be co-enrolled in the Title I Adult Program without an eligibility redetermination, and be counted as an individual who meets Adult priority of service, if the original determination was made no more than **six (6)** months prior to the date of co-enrollment.

3. "BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT" is defined as an adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the participant's family, or in society.

An adult may be assessed as basic skills deficient through a Workforce Specialist's (WFS) observations and documented in case notes. For example, the WFS may observe that the adult is not able to read or fill out an application form, or does not have basic computer literacy. The WFS may also document basic skills deficient with one of the following:

- Basic skills assessment questions or test results
- School records
- Referral or records from a Title II Adult Basic Education program
- Referral or records from an English Language Learner program

If a standardized test is used to assess basic skills, the test should include reading, writing, or computing skills. Lacking soft skills or specific skills needed for a particular job may not be used to determine otherwise high-functioning individuals as basic skills deficient.

A youth 18 or older, who was determined basic skills deficient for the WIOA Youth Program, may be co-enrolled in the Adult Program without an eligibility redetermination, and be counted as an individual who meets Adult priority of service, if the original determination was made no more than 6 months prior to the date of co-enrollment.

Local policy may further define the criteria that will be used to identify and document basic skills deficient individuals.

4. "UNDEREMPLOYED" individuals are employed full- or part-time and must also meet the definition of a low-income individual in order to be eligible for the Adult priority.

➤ **WHAT IT MEANS TO PROVIDE PRIORITY OF SERVICE**

Priority of service means that individuals in the **statutory** priority groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and underemployed who are also low-income) are given priority over other individuals for receipt of individualized career services and training services funded by the Title I Adult program. **Consistent with the intent of WIOA, Colorado will give equal priority to individuals with one or more of the 14 barriers to employment (see "Definitions" section of this policy) for the Adult program.**

As mentioned, local workforce development boards may add a local priority for another targeted group in the local area if it is consistent with the intent of the Adult priority to serve individuals with barriers to employment. For example, individuals lacking a high school diploma or equivalency may be identified as a local priority that is consistent with the intent of the law. Local priorities must be identified in the local area plan beginning in PY17, including data to support the need. How the local priority will be documented and implemented must be addressed in local policy. A local priority may be changed no more than once a year and will be reviewed and approved by CDLE and CWDC as part of the local plan process. Further guidance is forthcoming in the updated PGL on local plans.

Veterans within all the priority groups receive priority over non-veterans. Adult priority is determined for the targeted groups during eligibility and enrollment.

➤ INTERACTION OF THE ADULT PRIORITY AND VETERANS' PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in PGL# VET-2014-02) always applies across all qualified employment and training programs. The priority of service for public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including underemployed, individuals who are basic skills deficient, individuals with one of the 14 barriers to employment, and any local priority applies only to the receipt of individualized career services and training services in the WIOA Title I Adult program. With regard to the priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, priority of service for the Title I Adult program must be applied in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the **Adult** priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including the underemployed, basic skills deficient, one of the 14 barriers to employment, or local priority) and Adult program eligibility must receive the highest level of priority for services;
2. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who meet the **Adult** priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, basic skills deficient, barrier to employment, or local priority) and Adult program eligibility then receive the second level of priority for services;
3. All other veterans and eligible spouses who meet Adult program eligibility, then receive the third level of priority for services;
4. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who do not meet the **Adult** priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, basic skills deficient, barrier to employment, or local priority), but do meet Adult program eligibility, then receive the fourth level of priority for services.

➤ STATE MONITORING

Local areas' success in achieving priority of service for the targeted groups within the Adult program will be monitored to a state-established formula comparing the percentage of individuals in the priority targeted groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including underemployed, basic skills deficient, individuals with barriers to employment, and local priorities) who were enrolled in the Adult program versus the percentage of all other individuals who were enrolled in the program. **The intent of WIOA is to serve public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including the underemployed, basic skills deficient, and other individuals with barriers to employment through the Title I Adult program.**

E. RESTRICTING SERVICES TO LOCAL AREA RESIDENTS

WIOA does not either prohibit or require local residency for an individual to receive services from a local area. At this time, due to current decreases in funding, as well as anticipated future decreases in funding, ADW! has implemented restricting services to residents of Arapahoe and Douglas county. Proof of residency must be provided (which may include, but is not limited to: a driver's license, bill, and/or mail in the customer's name). In addition, this residency restriction is applicable to Young Adult customers as well.

On a monthly basis, ADW! utilizes Connecting Colorado reports to closely monitor Adult participants with priority of service and/or barriers to employment; as well as the population breakdown of customers' self-reported residency (on average, Arapahoe and Douglas county residents predominately account for the vast majority of customers served through ADW!).

➤ LOCAL POLICY REQUIREMENTS

In this policy, the ADWB has established and addressed all local requirements as noted in the PGL.

Only the ADW! Program Manager and/or ADW! Deputy Division Manager may grant exceptions to provisions within this policy.