

Priority of Service Policy

As required by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, local workforce development areas must target certain populations for priority of service selection in accordance with WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR 680.600 and 20 CFR 680.640 when providing individualized career services and training services using WIOA Title I Adult Program funds. In addition, Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 3-15 specifies that priority should also be applied to individuals with barriers to employment. This requirement is regardless of funding levels and has been expanded to include individuals who are basic skills deficient. Targeted populations must first meet the eligibility requirements for the WIOA Title I Adult Program and adult priority is determined for the targeted groups during eligibility and enrollment. WIOA funds allocated for dislocated workers are not subject to this policy.

There are four groups of individuals targeted for priority when providing individualized career services and training services in the WIOA Title I Adult Program:

- 1) “**Recipients of Public Assistance**” includes individuals who receive, or in the past six months have received, or are a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through one or more of the following:
 - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
 - Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
 - Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
 - State or local income-based public assistance

- 2) “**Low Income**” includes
 - Recipients of public assistance (defined above)
 - Individuals in a family with total income below the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level
 - Homeless
 - Foster youth
 - Individuals with disabilities with individual income below the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level

A youth 18 or older who was determined low-income for the WIOA Title I Youth Program may be co-enrolled in the WIOA 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 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.

In assessing basic skills, local workforce staff may only use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for this target population, and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities. An adult may be assessed as basic skills deficient through case manager observations and documented in case notes or documented using any one of the following: basic skills assessment questions or test results; school records; referral or records from a Title II Adult Basic Education Program; or 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.

- 4) “**Underemployed**” individuals are employed full-time or part-time and must also meet the definition of a low-income individual in order to be eligible for the Adult priority of service.
- 5) “**Residency Priority**” has been added by the local workforce development board as a discretionary priority for serving individuals for the Adult program. Individuals receiving priority of service shall be served in the following order of priority with regard to residency:

First: Eligible individuals residing within the six-county local workforce development area (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango and Warren Counties) for at least twelve months preceding enrollment into the program

Second: Eligible individuals residing within the eight-county workforce development region (Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Venango, Warren, Lawrence, and Mercer Counties) for at least twelve months preceding enrollment into the program

Third: Eligible individuals living outside of the local and/or regional area

The residency priority can be waived at the discretion of the WIOA Title I program contractor(s) on a case-by-case basis (i.e. returning veterans, etc.).

According to 20 CFR 680.120, 680.130, and 680.210, the above priority requirements do not necessarily mean that only the recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals can receive WIOA Adult funded career and training services. In compliance with the Jobs for Veterans Priority Provisions of the Jobs for Veterans Act, veterans and veteran’s eligible spouses will be identified at the point of entry and will be made aware of their entitlement to priority of service. Veterans and veteran’s eligible spouses who meet applicable eligibility requirements take precedence over other non-veteran eligible persons in obtaining services.

Priority requirements for the WIOA Title I Adult Program include:

First:	Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who are public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including the underemployed or basic skills deficient and meet Adult Program eligibility
Second:	Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who are public

	assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including the underemployed or basic skills deficient and meet Adult Program eligibility
Third:	All other veterans and eligible spouses who meet Adult Program eligibility
Fourth:	Other individuals not covered under the First, Second, and Third categories above but do meet local discretionary priority and Adult program eligibility
Fifth:	Other individuals not covered under the First, Second, and Third categories above that do not meet the local discretionary priority but do meet Adult program eligibility

Individuals that request services must first undergo a determination for eligibility and appropriateness prior to the implementation of any program services beyond basic career services (i.e. individualized career and training services). All registered WIOA adults that do not qualify for training services due to the limitations imposed by the priority of service requirement can improve their employability through a menu of career services. When funds are exhausted, program services contractors establish waiting lists for participants, including recipients of public assistance and low-income individuals, as well as covered veterans and veteran’s eligible spouses. When WIOA Title I employment and training funds have been obligated, the NWPA WDB will make every effort to access or recruit additional funds through outside sources (i.e. Dislocated Worker Grant, Rapid Response, Trade Act and/or other grant funds), when appropriate, based upon the eligibility of the participant. If available training funds are not immediately accessible, the participant will be notified by the program services contractor and will have the choice to complete the training course without immediate assistance or may defer assistance to another semester/program period at the time funding is available (within two years of approval). All participants will be informed by the program services contractor of the priority of service policies and will be notified when funds are available.

The commonwealth has implemented a goal for each local area to serve at least 51% of Adult customers from the priority targeted groups. Monthly data reporting from the program services contractor to the NWPA WDB will include data on all active participants that can be locally monitored in meeting this goal. The data will be reviewed at least every six months and outreach to these populations will be conducted, if needed, to ensure that this goal is met.

REFERENCE

WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(E) 20 CFR 680.600 20 CFR 680.640

HISTORY

Name	Date	Rev Level	Description of change	Effective Date
Deb O’Neil	08/07/2014	A	Policy approved under new LWIB	
Deb O’Neil	10/20/2014	B	Revisions per state recommendation	12/17/2014
Deb O’Neil	03/07/2016	C	Revisions per WIOA	04/29/2016
Deb O’Neil	05/11/2016	D	Revisions per state review	06/09/2017