

## WIOA Eligibility Policy

The NWPA Workforce Development Board (WDB) has developed this policy on eligibility and registration to ensure that every Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) participant who receives WIOA program-funded services is eligible and registered to receive those services. This policy applies to all eligible Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants and to individuals interested in enrolling in these programs. Program services contractor staff, PA CareerLink® staff, and WDB staff are responsible for implementing this policy.

### Definition of Key Terms

“Basic Skills Deficient” individuals are:

- A youth with English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or
- A youth or 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 individual’s family, or in society

“Displaced Homemaker” means an individual who has been providing unpaid services to family members in the home and who:

- Is unemployed or underemployed and is experiencing difficulty in obtaining or upgrading employment; and
- Has been dependent on the income of another family member but is no longer supported by that income; or
- Is the dependent spouse of a member of the Armed Forces on active duty and whose family income is significantly reduced because of a deployment, a call or order to active duty, a permanent change of station, or the service-connected death or disability of the member.

“Low-income individuals” meet one or more of the characteristics listed below:

- Recipient of cash public assistance
- Family income that does not exceed the higher of 70% of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL)
- Receives food stamps or was determined eligible to receive in the last six months
- Homeless
- Publicly supported foster child
- Individual with a disability and own income at or below 70% of the LLSIL or the poverty line
- Receives, or is eligible to receive, a free or reduced price school lunch

- An individual who resides in a high poverty area, defined as an area that has a poverty rate of at least 25% (set every 5 years, using ACS 5-year estimate)

### Requires Additional Assistance

“An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment” is defined by the NWPA WDB as a youth who meets one or more of the following criteria:

- Has an Individualized Education Program (IEP);
- Has a letter from a guidance counselor asserting their need of additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment;
- Is currently credit deficient (i.e. one or more grade levels behind peer group);
- Has a poor work history (been fired from 1 or more jobs within the last six months, OR has a history of sporadic employment, such as “has held 3 or more jobs within the last 12 months, and is no longer employed”);
- Has actively been seeking employment for at least 2 months, but remains unemployed or underemployed. This includes a youth with no employment history, with limited work experience, and/or actively seeking full-time employment, but have only achieved part-time employment; or
- Has incarcerated parent(s)

*Note: No more than 5% of ISY served in a program year may be deemed eligible based on the “requires additional assistance” criterion. The WIOA Title I program services contractor(s) will include the number of ISY participants determined and documented to be eligible under the “requires additional assistance” criterion on their regular reporting to the LWDB to ensure that this 5% limitation is not exceeded. It will also be included as part of LWDB monitoring of its WIOA Title I program services contractor(s).*

“Not attending any school” means a youth not receiving services from a public school, charter school, cyber charter school, career and technical school, sectarian school, or private school. Individuals who are enrolled in adult basic education/GED or high school equivalency preparation, skills training, or other remedial education programs, including YouthBuild and Job Corps are not attending any school for the purposes of this policy.

“Self-attestation” occurs when an individual states his or her status for a particular data element, and then signs and dates a form acknowledging this status.

“Self-certification” means an individual’s signed attestation that the information said individual submitted to demonstrate eligibility for a program under Title I of WIOA is true and accurate.

### Eligibility Requirements

#### **WIOA Adult Eligibility**

Adults must meet basic eligibility requirements for WIOA program services. Basic eligibility requirements include:

- Be 18 years of age or older (adults);
- Be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the U.S.; and

- Meet selective service registration requirements (males only) (see below).

See the NWSA WDB Priority of Service Policy for additional eligibility requirements for Adults to qualify for prior of service to receive training or career services.

### **WIOA Dislocated Worker Eligibility**

To qualify for services as a Dislocated Worker, job seekers must satisfy the basic WIOA eligibility requirements, which include:

- Be 18 years of age or older (adults);
- Be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the U.S.; and
- Meet selective service registration requirements (males only) (see below).

Also, a Dislocated Worker has to fit in one of the following five categories:

- Terminated/Laid Off; Eligible for UC and Unlikely to Return
- Permanent Closure/Substantial Layoff
- General Announcement of Employer Closure
- Formerly Self-Employed/Currently Unemployed
- Displaced Homemaker

### **WIOA Youth Eligibility Requirements**

Youth must meet basic eligibility requirements to participate in the WIOA Youth Program. Both in-school and out-of-school youth must meet the following eligibility requirements:

Be a citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the U.S.; and  
Meet selective service registration requirements (males only if applicable) (see below)

Additional eligibility requirements for In-School Youth include:

- An individual who is between 14 and 21 years of age;
- An individual who is attending school, including secondary and post-secondary school (as defined by state law);
- A low-income individual (see Definition of Key Terms section); and
- One or more of the following:
  - Basic skills deficient;
  - An English language learner;
  - An offender;
  - A homeless individual;
  - Pregnant or parenting;
  - A youth who is an individual with a disability;
  - An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (See above for definition). *No more than 5% of ISY served in a program year may be deemed eligible based on this criterion.*

Additional eligibility requirements for Out-of-School Youth include:

- An individual who is not attending any school (including secondary or post-secondary);
- An individual between the ages of 16 and 24 years of age; and
- One or more of the following:
  - A school dropout;
  - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent who is a low-income individual and is--
    - Basic skills deficient; or
    - An English language learner.
  - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult juvenile justice system;
  - A homeless individual, a runaway, an individual in foster care, or an individual who has aged out of the foster care system;
  - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
  - A youth who is an individual with a disability;
  - A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment (see above for definition).

An eligible in-school youth or an out-of-school youth who have their high school diploma or GED/high school equivalency and are basic skills deficient or an English language learner must also meet low-income definition (WIOA Section 3, 36).

Youth 5% Exception

Up to 5% of youth registered may be classified as not low income but meet the other requirements. Requests to enroll youth who are not low-income must be approved by the NWPA WDB. At least 95% of registered youth must be classified as low-income.

**Primary Eligibility Review**

It is the subrecipient’s responsibility to review and sign off on all registration paperwork for completeness and accuracy. The subrecipient must maintain a centrally controlled file for each program applicant and registrant which contains copies of all documents collected. The subrecipient will provide federal, state, and NWPA WDB monitors with access to such records given reasonable notice.

The following checklist contains a listing of the most common documents for proving WIOA Youth eligibility:

- |                                     |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Social Security Number:             | Signed Social Security Card, Social Security Benefits Documents, Employment Records (showing number), DD-214, UC Records (showing number) |
| Citizenship or Eligibility to Work: | Birth Certificate, Alien Registration Card, Public Assistance Records, Social Security Card (work eligible)                               |

	with ID, Passport, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
Age/Date of Birth:	Birth Certificate, Federal, State, or Local Government ID, Public Assistance Records, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
Selective Service Registration:	Internet Verification/Registration
Family Income:	Pay Stubs, Pension Statement, Social Security Benefits, UI Documents, Statement of Family Size/Family Income
Cash Public Assistance:	Public Assistance Records
Food Stamps:	Public Assistance Records
Homeless or Runaway:	Shelter Letter, Individual Providing Shelter Statement, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
Supported Foster Child:	Court Documentation, State/Local Agency Statement, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
Individuals with Disabilities:	Agency Letter Stating Disability, OVR Letter, Medical Records, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
Basic Skills Deficient:	Standardized Test (TABE)
Pregnant or Parenting:	Birth Certificate, Doctor's Note, Social Service Agency Statement, Telephone Verification, Self-Certification
Dropout:	Dropout Letter, School Record, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
Offender:	Court Documents, Halfway House Residency, Probation Letter, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification
School Status:	School Record School Letter, Transcript, Telephone Verification Form, Self-Certification

### **Secondary Eligibility Review**

The NWPA WDB requires a documented secondary staff review of eligibility determination for all WIOA participants by the subrecipient. Appropriate data must be entered into the system of record (CWDS) by program services contractor staff for tracking participants' registration and eligibility, as well as documenting the secondary eligibility review in the participant file.

### **Self-Certification**

Self-certification is allowed as a viable source for documenting eligibility for all WIOA Title I program participants. With the exception of Out-of-School Youth, the use of self-certification must be limited and only available as a last resort after all other sources of eligibility verification are exhausted. Self-certification may be used rarely for Dislocated Workers, Adults and In-School Youth to verify eligibility items requiring documentation that, in rare cases, may cause undue hardship for applicants to obtain, particularly those with barriers to employment, for the following criteria elements:

- Date of dislocation (Dislocated Worker)
- Displaced homemaker (Dislocated Worker)
- Reemployment opportunity is poor/unlikely to return to work (Dislocated Worker)
- Permanently or temporarily laid off as a consequence of disaster (Dislocated Worker)
- English language learner (Youth)
- Homeless (Adult and Youth)
- In/Aged out of the foster care system (Youth)
- Offender (Youth)
- Pregnant or parenting (Youth)
- Requires additional assistance (Youth)
- Runaway (Youth)
- School status at time of registration (Youth)

Family income level may not be self-certified in any case. Program service contractors are encouraged to use telephone verification prior to self-attestation for Adult, Dislocated Worker, and In-School Youth populations where possible. Telephone verification involves verification of eligibility criteria through phone calls with recognized governmental or social services agencies. Information obtained through this method should be documented.

### **Self-Attestation**

Self-attestation (also referred to as an applicant statement) occurs when an individual states his or her status for a particular data element, such as “runaway youth,” and then signs and dates a form acknowledging this status. The key elements for self-attestation are:

- (a) The individual identifying his or her status for permitted elements; and
- (b) Signing and dating a form attesting to this self-identification

### **Random Sampling Methodology**

In order to verify applicant self-certification usage and to monitor self-attestations, NWPA WDB will adopt a random sampling methodology. The methodology will verify eligibility in self-attested applications and will be implemented for all Title I programs.

Based on previous experience, NWPA WDB estimates that less than 1% of participants report incorrect information when self-attesting on application forms. For the purposes of ensuring the validity of self-attested data, NWPA WDB will use a 90% confidence interval and 5% margin of error. A random sample of the population using self-attestation will be selected to verify if the information those individuals reported is correct. The size of the sample depends on the size of the population and is outlined below. Population will be measured by funding stream (e.g. all OSY) and not by individual provider. Participants selected through the random sampling

methodology will be notified at the time of eligibility and required to provide additional eligibility documentation.

Population Size	Random Sample Size
25	8
50	9
75	9
100	10
200	10
300	10
400	10
500	14
750	20
1000	26

If more than 10% of examined participants are found to be ineligible, NWPA WDB will take corrective action, including providing technical assistance to program services contractors using self-certification as a form of eligibility.

**Selective Service Requirements**

Every male citizen and male permanent resident noncitizen in the United States between the ages of 18 and 26 are required to register with Selective Service. Males who failed to register with Selective Service by their 26<sup>th</sup> birthday and can provide written explanation and supporting documentation of any of the following may be eligible for WIOA services:

Over the age of 26 and were willing but unknowing of the requirement to register with Selective Service; Incarceration, institutionalization, or hospitalization between the ages of 18-26; or Noncitizen status and nonpermanent resident status before age 26.

NWPA WDB will monitor Selective Service exceptions to ensure that proper procedures are followed.

**REFERENCES**

WIOA Section 3(2), (5), (15), (16), (36)  
WIOA Section 129(a)(1)(B) and (C)

**HISTORY**

Name	Date	Rev. Level	Description of Change	Effective Date
Deb O’Neil	03/13/2017	A	New policy per state	08/11/2017
Deb O’Neil	03/29/2019	B	Revise high poverty rate threshold	04/12/2019