

NORTH CENTRAL ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

P.O. Box 2396 • Batesville, AR 72503 • (870) 793-5233 • Fax (870) 793-4035

Serving the Counties of
Cleburne • Fulton • Independence • Izard • Jackson • Sharp • Stone • Van Buren • White • Woodruff

WDB Policy #: 2.00

Effective Date: 3/10/2021

Revision Date:

SUBJECT WIOA Case Management Policy

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to establish North Central Arkansas' Workforce Development Board's (NCA WDB) general responsibilities and expectations associated with providing case management, under WIOA in accordance with the rules and regulations of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), the WIOA Final Rule, Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) published by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor (ETA), Issuances from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), WIOA Title I-B Policy Manual, and local workforce board policy.

REFERENCES

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA), the WIOA Final Rule, Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) published by the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor (ETA), Issuances from the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services (ADWS), WIOA Title I-B Policy Manual, and local workforce board policy.

BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) regulation require Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to develop policies that will ensure individuals receive the best possible service.

POLICY

WIOA case management is a participant-centered approach used to ensure that the goals, activities, and services are being met in accordance with an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS) developed with a participant. This approach ensures that participants are actively engaged on a path to success related to employment and life. Case management is the process of assessing, monitoring, coordinating, delivering, and/or brokering activities and services necessary for participants to enter employment or employment-related activities as quickly as possible.

Case management matches the needs of the participant with the appropriate services and/or employment in the community that will result in the participant becoming self-sufficient. Additionally, the Career Specialist negotiates, collaborates, and builds bridges with the community to support the participant's success.

Case management begins during the enrollment process, before an individual is a participant, and continues throughout program participation and follow-up.

During effective case management, Career Specialists conduct periodic reviews of actual activities in relation to participant plans to determine if progress towards successful completion is still on track. Any related problems that

may arise must be recorded in case notes. If obstacles are identified, note how each barrier or need will be addressed and by whom.

- Staff members who provide case management are expected to:
 - Develop on-going relationships with their participants and act as a resource.
 - Develop a relationship with Adult Education participants' instructors where appropriate.
 - Help participants understand and act on their Individual Employment Plan, making adjustments as necessary
 - Perform regular check-ins

The Career Specialist's Role

WIOA Career Specialists shall provide multiple services throughout the entire WIOA process within the following broad elements:

- Orientation
- Determine Eligibility (See local Eligibility Policies for more information)
- Enter participant data in the Arkansas Job Link (AJL) system (See Enrollment Procedure)
- Determine which assessments to use at the start of the process.
- Administer the assessments.
- Review the assessment results with the participant and draw conclusions that will serve as input for the development of an IEP or ISS.
- Customized Service Planning
- Progress Reporting
- Placement and Exit
- Follow-up

Throughout participation, services associated with the above elements will be defined, communicated and documented through the process of continuous career planning. Continuous career planning ensures that participant expectations and needs are addressed on a schedule that is relevant and predictable. Continuous career planning also ensures that service delivery is individualized and active throughout participation. The frequency of contact under continuous career planning is at least monthly. All contact shall be documented in the Arkansas Division of Workforce Services' Management Information System, Arkansas Job Link. (AJL). Documenting career planning is vital to quality service.

As much as possible, participants should be able to see the same Career Specialist for check-ins and return visits/appointments until the participant finds employment or otherwise exits the system. The participant should be notified in the event that the Career Specialist changes and offered an opportunity for an introductory meeting with the new Career Specialist as soon as mutually convenient. Case notes and file maintenance are to reflect the results of continuous career planning in detail so that the participant's status is easily determined.

Additional information on case note requirements can be found in the NCA WDB Enrollment and Case Notes Procedure. It should be noted that case notes, eligibility and program data, services rendered, and participant's status at exit should have supporting documentation contained within the participant's paper file. Supporting documentation for the above shall be validated for accuracy and completeness prior to exit.

Career Planning

WIOA Act Sec. 3(8) CAREER PLANNING —The term “career planning” means the provision of a client-centered approach in the delivery of services, designed—

- (A) to prepare and coordinate comprehensive employment plans, such as service strategies, for participants to ensure access to necessary workforce investment activities and supportive services, using, where feasible, computer-based technologies; and

(B) to provide job, education, and career counseling, as appropriate during program participation and after job placement.

Career Planning is a collaborative process designed to assist the individual job seekers in preparing for and obtaining employment that will lead to self-sufficiency.

Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Services Strategy (ISS)

For participants receiving WIOA career or training services, an IEP or ISS is developed in conjunction with the participant and staff. The participant is given a copy of the signed IEP or ISS.

- A Development of IEP or ISS activity is reported in AJL along with case notes that the plan was developed in conjunction with both the participant and staff. Staff maintains a copy of the IEP or ISS in the participant paper file and AJL. Goals are entered into AJL to support the plan when appropriate. As goals are completed, the staff should report if the goal was attained or not. More information on goals can be found in the Measurable Skills Gains Procedure and the Follow-Up Procedure.
- The state has determined that the IEP or ISS service should be opened and closed on the same day it is completed. A modification to an IEP or ISS will require a new entry of an IEP or ISS service reflecting the day it is modified. The IEP or ISS is reviewed and updated to reflect the current goals of the participants. A case note is required to support this. Any new goals are to be updated in AJL.

Program Eligibility & Data Validation

Staff will follow the policies and procedures of North Central Workforce Development Area on Program Eligibility and Data Validation.

Services

Services provided to reportable individuals, registrants, and participants are entered into AJL. Case notes must be entered for each service/activity provided and support/justify the delivered service.

It is preferred that services and case notes be entered as they are delivered to the individual but staff are allowed up to three business days.

It is allowable to enter a case note without a supporting service when it is intended to provide just an update or status change on the participant's progress where there is no evidence that a new or continued service was provided. For more information on Case Notes, see Enrollment and Case Notes Procedure.

The frequency and mix of service delivery is unique based on each individual participant, program, and eligibility of services.

Service Delivery, Participation, and Exit Dates

Staff will follow the policies and procedures of North Central Workforce Development Area regarding priority of service, eligibility, local restrictions of services, and ending services.

- Keeping participants active and engaged through the delivery of various WIOA services increases the likelihood of successful outcomes, ideally until they become employed or have met other relevant goals.
- Participants will remain program active as long as the delivery of services that prevent an exit is delivered less than 90 days.
- Basic career services, partner services, and supportive services do not prevent an exit
- Identifying next steps with participants helps ensure continued service delivery and steps being achieved to reach goals.
- Ideally, a monthly service will be provided.

- For participants in an on-going training service such as Occupational Skills Training or On-the-Job Training, monthly-check in services would be reported as appropriate. While the active open service will prevent a participant from exiting, these monthly check-in services help staff assess the continued success of the service participation and any areas of improvement that may need solutions identified, including referrals. Monthly check-in services do not prevent an exit.
- A best practice for participants attending short-term training is for the Career Specialist to have at least one monthly check-in for training shorter in length than one month.
- If a gap of 90 days or more in services is anticipated (due to health reasons, or a delay before the start of a training program), a scheduled service at a future date will prevent a soft exit from occurring before the intended end date of enrollment.

Electronic & Paper File Case Management

Career planning involves not only the provision of direct services to individuals, but also includes the maintenance of required records and documents, both paper and electronic.

Arkansas Job Link (AJL) is Arkansas Division of Workforce Service’s (ADWS) electronic case management system, for tracking program participation, program eligibility, data validation, service delivery, program outcomes, etc.

Paper files are also maintained by staff to support program participation. Paper files are maintained in a secured and organized manner. Staff follows the appropriate Checklist to determine placement of documents. Files are to be maintained in a locked area. These types of file maintenance for program enrollments are not totally duplicative, but rather support one another to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and Local guidelines.

Program Exits

Ninety days after services are closed, an exit from the program will occur in AJL. The exit date will be the day of the last service provided. Not all services prevent an exit. Alternatively, not extending projected end dates properly will cause the enrollment to exit. Once an expected exit date has occurred, Career Specialists will follow the End Services Procedure to ensure all services are properly closed, and start follow-up.

Performance and Follow-Up

Staff follows the Local Follow-Up Policy and Procedure. Staff will unassign themselves as Career Specialist in AJL upon completion of quarterly follow-ups and follow-up services.

Approved by the NCAWDB on:

3/10/2021

Gayle Cooper, NCAWDB Chairperson:

Gayle Cooper