



Office of Workforce Investments
Guidance & Technical Assistance

Subject: COVID-19 Emergency Guidance

Publish Date: 5/7/2020

New Revised

Overview

This guidance is provided to Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDB) by the Higher Education Coordinating Commission Office of Workforce Investments (OWI) to ease and enhance the LWDBs ability to respond to participants during the COVID-19 emergency.

Effective Date

March 13, 2020

Local Planning

Prior to the COVID-19 emergency, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) local plans were due to the OWI on behalf of the Workforce and Talent Development Board (WTDB) on April 30, 2020. However, the COVID-19 emergency both fundamentally changes local plans, especially in the near term, and restricts the ability of LWDBs to develop, complete, and process local plans.

Recognizing this, the State is extending current local plans for six months. All existing local plans are now valid through December 31, 2020. Further guidance will be issued to address how the State expects LWDB plans to be modified to address the COVID-19 emergency and provide a new due date for submission of LWDB plans.

Note: This guidance does not affect a LWDB's ability to submit a new plan prior to December 31, if they choose; nor does it prevent a LWDB from submitting a local plan modification.

State Planning

The State intends to submit the 2020-2023 WIOA Combined State Plan for Oregon in April 2020. It will be submitted in the form that it has been presented to the WTDB with an acknowledgment that revisions and modifications will be forthcoming to address the State's response to the COVID-19 emergency.

One Stop Center Certification

All One Stop Center Certifications are extended for one year: New due date is June 30, 2021.

WIOA Adult/Dislocated Worker

Eligibility, Enrollment, WIOA Documentation

During the COVID-19 emergency, the State allows for remote eligibility determination, enrollment and WIOA Documentation. When a document is noted below as required, these Staff Attestation/Document guidelines are to be followed.

Staff Attestation

Where staff and participant have video conference available, staff attestation of their review of the required document can support both Welcome requirements (Name/DOB) and WIOA Documentation requirements until rescinded by OWI.

Customer Provide Document

Where either staff or participant do not have access to a video conference tool, the document is to be uploaded to I-Trac using the secure tool/process developed for this purpose. LWDB may also request a customer selfie for later identification when services are again available through Centers. Follow I-Trac staff instruction for secure document upload.

Welcome Process

IB staff may complete Welcome with their customers either via video conference or telephone. Name and DOB documentation can be viewed and noted in WOMIS and Welcome complete when all other required elements are complete.

WIOA Documentation

- Date of Birth – Staff Attestation
- Legal to Work – Customer Attestation using WOMIS response.
- Dislocated Worker – Customer attestation using WOMIS response.
- In compliance with TEGL 11-11, the participant’s response to the Selective Service registration question in WOMIS or via an online application will be considered their attestation of “not knowing and willful” if documentation cannot be provided in one of the options available during the emergency (see Note for additional detail):
 - Selective Service online verification.
 - Selective Service Registration Card.
 - DD-214 Military Separation.

Note: To validate Selective Service registration using the online tool, staff must be on the telephone or video conference with the participant because the customer’s SSN is required. SSNs **may not** be emailed, texted or entered in video conference chat boxes, but only verbally provided for the check. If the customer has a required document (SS Registration Card, DD-214) it must be uploaded via the secure portal in I-Trac.

If the participant does not have one of these three options available, the documentation may be deferred for up to 90 days (timeframe which will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary due to ongoing emergency), but the Selective Service Registration must be completed once the emergency guidance is rescinded.

WIOA Youth

Eligibility Documentation

During the COVID-19 emergency, the State allows for remote WIOA Youth eligibility determination, enrollment and documentation. When a document is noted below as required, the above Staff Attestation/Document guidelines are to be followed.

- Social Security Number – Customer Attestation via submission through the online application or by staff entering information into I-Trac based on the participant supplying it verbally via telephone. **Note:** SSNs are not to be emailed, texted or entered in video conference chat boxes.
- Date of Birth – Follow WIOA Documentation guidance above.
- Legal to Work – Follow WIOA Documentation guidance above.
- Selective Service – Follow WIOA Documentation guidance above.
- Economic Characteristics – Customer Attestation via submission through the online application or by staff entering information into I-Trac based on the participant supplying it verbally via telephone or video conference.
- Six-month Income – Customer Attestation via submission through the online application or by staff entering information into I-Trac based on the participant supplying it verbally via telephone or video conference.
- Basic Skills Deficient – The requirement for assessment of Basic Skills to determine deficiency is deferred during the COVID-19 emergency. The assessment and determination will need to be made once the emergency guidance is rescinded.

Gap in Service

The State has authorized that all current WIOA IB enrollments will receive an automated 90-day gap in service to ensure that WIOA participants are not automatically exited during a time when they were unable to access services. The State will re-evaluate the need to extend this gap on May 15; if it's determined necessary a second automated 90-day gap in service will be authorized.

When Signature Required on State-Managed Grants

When State funded projects (e.g. WIOA Youth Formula Grant, National Dislocated Worker Grants, State Training & Work Experience Initiative) require a customer signature on an application, email electronic signature is approved for use during the emergency. An email should be sent to the participant once all registration information is collected from them and entered in I-Trac. The email should go to the Participant's email address and ask that the participant reply that they agree. The SSN and EEO Disclosures should be attached to the email. *The participant's completed application is not to be sent as it contains PII.*

When a WIOA Youth applicant is under age 18, staff are to send the email to both the parent's email account and the applicant's email account (two separate emails) to secure parental approval of enrollment.

The staff email should include the following verbiage or a similar statement the LWDB adopts that addresses all the elements:

This email from my personal email account is my certification that the information I provided to staff and through the online application process is true to the best of my knowledge as of the application date. I understand this information may be reviewed and verified and that I may be asked to return and sign the application once the Statewide COVID-19 emergency has been cancelled.

If requested later, I agree to provide documentation to confirm the information being used to determine my eligibility. Providing false or inaccurate information could lead to removal from the program and deem me liable for all costs expended on my behalf. I understand that if I am found ineligible after enrollment I will not be allowed to continue in the program and may be held responsible for the cost of the services I received.

By approving this application via email, I further acknowledge that I have received via email and reviewed information about the use of my social security number and understand the Equal Opportunity statement and complaint procedure.

I further understand that in order to provide me with the best service and support possible, partners within the WorkSource system may exchange information about my participation in program services. By approving this application via email, I give my consent to the sharing of this information between WorkSource partners.

Supportive Services

LWDBs are encouraged to review their supportive service policies to determine emergency adjustments necessary to support participants, including but not limited to Stipends for WIOA participants who are engaged in career services, WIOA activities (Youth) or training, Needs Related Payments policy, etc. Supportive Services must continue to follow Federal guidelines for allowability, which may continue to require receipts for certain types of support, even during the emergency.

Needs Related Payments

Pursuant to 20 CFR 680.960, the State is extending the Needs Related Payments wait period for Training start from 30 days to 90 days effective with this guidance.

Signatures

LWDBs are encouraged to adopt allowing check endorsement and direct deposit to an account in the participant's name as acknowledgement of receipt of a support service payment.

When Purchase Orders are used with local merchants, consider allowing for the merchant to have the customer sign the PO during the transaction so the signature is present when the PO is sent back to the contractor for fulfillment.

When gift cards, bus passes or bus tickets are used, the State waives during this emergency the requirement that the participant sign for the support when the support is mailed to the address on record in I-Trac. Staff attestation via case note that the mailing was sent to the required address is all that is necessary for documentation.

Contact

Questions are to be referred to hecc_owi_workforce_policy@oregon.gov.

References

WIOA Regulations 20 CFR 680.900 through 680.970