

**Approved Date:**

**Effective Date:** July 1, 2023

**Subject:** Priority of Service Policy

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### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance and establish the procedures regarding priority of service for veterans, recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient served with Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds.

### **Background**

- I. WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult individualized career services and employment and training activities; there is no priority applied for receipt of basic career services. Funds must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and individuals with barriers to employment. Priority must be implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area.
- II. AJC team members must always prioritize services to these populations, regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area.

### **Veterans and Adult Priority of Services**

- I. Veterans and eligible spouses continue to receive priority of service for all DOL-funded job training programs, which include WIOA Title I programs. A veteran must meet each program's eligibility criteria to receive services under the respective employment and training program.

## Definitions

- I. Priority of Service is defined as the right of eligible covered persons to take precedence over eligible non-covered persons in obtaining DOL-funded services. It is important to understand that Priority of Service does not change the intended function of a program or service. Covered persons must meet all statutory eligibility and program requirements for participation in order to receive priority for a program or service.

## Application of Priority

- I. In regards to WIOA Adult funds, priority must be provided in the following order:
  - A. To veterans and eligible spouses who are also included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient would receive first priority for services with WIOA Title I Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
  - B. To non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA Title I Adult formula funds.
  - C. To veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
  - D. To priority populations in Iowa Plains LWDA
    1. Individuals that will exhaust unemployment benefits within 4 weeks of application
  - E. To non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.
- II. A minimum of 75% of WIOA Adult Title I participants will be served under priority of service categories.

## Priority of Service for Adult Program Funds

- I. The below list is used only for applying priority for the individual to receive individualized career services and training services. Certain individualized career services or training services may require pre- and post-test scores to measure skills gain for the specific activity; in this case the determination is made by administering an acceptable skills assessment or by using scores from any partner's previous assessment.
  - A. Recipients of Public Assistance
    1. Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF)
    2. General Assistance (GA)
    3. Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA)
    4. Supplemental Security Income (SSI)
    5. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
    6. Other income based public assistance
  - B. Low-Income Individuals
    1. Receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the SNAP, TANF, SSI under Title XVI of the Social Security Act, or state or local income-based public assistance program; or
    2. Receives an income or is a member of a family receiving an income that in relation to family size, is not in excess of the current U.S. DOL 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level Guidelines and U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Poverty Guidelines, or
    3. is a homeless individual an individual or family who lacks a regular, adequate nighttime residence, or who is fleeing/attempting to flee domestic violence or other dangerous conditions, who is a runaway or in foster care or in at out of home placement (as defined in Section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42.S.C. 14043e-2(6))), or a homeless child or youth (as defined under Section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. I 1302(a) and (b)));
    4. is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirement of clause (ii), but who is a member of a family whose income does.

- C. Individuals Who Are Basic-Skills Deficient
1. Lack a high school diploma or equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or
  2. Is enrolled in Title II adult education (including enrolled for English Language Acquisition); or
  3. Has poor English-language skills and would be appropriate for ESL, even if the individual isn't enrolled at the time of WIOA participation; or
  4. The career planner makes observations of deficient functioning, and, as justification, records those observations in the data management system; or
  5. Scores below 9.0 grade level (8.9 or below) on the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE); Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) or other allowable assessments as per National Reporting System (NRS) developed by the U.S. Department of Education's Division of Adult Education and Literacy; or
  6. Individual does not earn the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC) (e.g., one or more of the scores are below a Level 3 on the Workplace Documents, Applied Math, or Graphic Literacy assessments).
- D. Individuals with Barriers to Employment. Individuals with barriers to employment may include:
1. Displaced homemakers
  2. Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians
  3. Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities
  4. Older individuals (age 55 and older)
  5. Ex-offenders
  6. Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system
  7. Individuals who are:
    - a) English language learners
    - b) Individuals who have low levels of literacy (an individual is unable to compute or solve programs, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual's family, or in society); and
  8. Individuals facing substantial cultural barriers
  9. Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers
  10. Individuals within two years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility
  11. Single parents (including single pregnant women)

12. Long-term unemployed individuals (unemployed for 27 or more consecutive weeks)
13. Underemployed Individuals. Underemployed individuals may include:
  - a) Individuals employed less than full-time who are seeking full-time employment
  - b) Individuals who are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training
  - c) Individuals who are employed who meet the definition of a low-income individual
  - d) Individuals who are employed, but whose current job's earnings are not sufficient compared to their previous job's earnings from their previous employment, per state and/or local policy

### **Veteran Qualifications**

- I. Priority of service must be applied uniformly across all local systems to veterans and eligible spouses as defined below:
  - A. Veteran - A person who served at least one day in the active military, naval, or air service and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable
    1. Active service includes full-time service in the National Guard or a Reserve component
    2. Active service does not include full-time duty performed strictly for training purposes (weekend or annual training), nor does it include full-time active duty performed by National Guard personnel who are mobilized by state rather than federal authorities

- B. Eligible Spouse - A spouse to any of the following:
1. Veteran who died of a service-connected disability
  2. Member of the Armed Forces serving on active duty who, at the time of application for the priority, is listed in one or more of the following categories and has been so listed for a total of more than 90 days:
    - a) Missing in action
    - b) Captured in the line of duty by a hostile force
    - c) Forcibly detained or interned in the line of duty by a foreign government or power
    - d) Veteran who has a total disability resulting from a service-connected disability, as evaluated by the Department of Veterans Affairs
    - e) Veteran who died while a disability was in existence

### **Identifying and Informing Eligible Spouses**

- I. The processes for identifying covered persons will not require verification of the status of an individual as a covered person at the point of entry unless they immediately undergo eligibility determination and enrollment in a program.
- II. A covered person may be enrolled and given immediate priority and then be permitted to follow-up subsequently with any required verification of his/her status as a covered person.
- III. Priority of Service will be ensured by:
  - A. Identifying veterans and other covered persons using the acceptable documentation.
  - B. Coordinating service delivery, outreach, employer and all other related activities with Local Veterans Employment Representative (LVER) and Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP) staff.
  - C. Local Operation Managers will run quarterly report to identify individuals who registered as a Veteran and/or eligible spouse in IowaWORKS. Title I team members will be assigned to conduct outreach to these potential Veterans and eligible spouse to discuss employment, training and placement services.

- D. Identifying employers who are interested in hiring veterans.
- E. Promoting job fairs for veterans and eligible spouses.
- F. Assisting veterans and eligible spouses before other customers.
- G. IowaWORKS allows registered Veterans to view job postings 24 hours before the public.
- H. Service providers will work with the LVER and DVOP specialists to encourage additional referrals to the WIOA programs for veterans.

### **Applying Priority of Service for Veterans**

- I. Universal Access Programs
  - A. For workforce programs that operate or deliver services to the public without targeting specific groups, covered persons must receive priority of service over all other program participants
- II. Programs with Eligibility Criteria
  - A. For workforce programs with specific eligibility criteria, covered persons must meet all statutory eligibility and program requirements for participation, and priority of service must be applied as follows:
    - 1. Covered persons who meet the eligibility requirements must receive the highest priority of service
    - 2. Non-covered persons who meet the eligibility requirements must receive second priority
- III. Programs with Eligibility Criteria and Statutory Priorities
  - A. For workforce programs with a federal mandate that requires a priority or preference for a particular group of individuals or requires spending a certain portion of program funds on a specific group, priority of service must be applied as follows:
    - 1. Covered persons who meet the mandatory priorities or spending requirement or limitation must receive the highest priority
    - 2. Non-covered persons within the program's mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation, must receive priority for the program or service over covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation

3. Covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation must receive priority for the program or service over non-covered persons outside the program-specific mandatory priority or spending requirement or limitation

IV. Programs with Eligibility Criteria and Discretionary Priorities

- A. For workforce programs that focus on a particular group or make efforts to provide a certain level of service to such a group, but do not mandate that the favored group be served before other eligible individuals, priority of service must be applied as follows:
  1. Covered persons must receive the highest priority for the program or service
  2. Non-covered persons within the discretionary targeting will receive priority over non-covered persons outside the discretionary targeting

*Equal Opportunity Program / Employer – Auxiliary aids and services available upon request for individuals with disabilities*