



State Workforce Development Board
Disability Access Committee

GUIDANCE:

Focus Groups on Services for Individuals with Disabilities

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1. Background.

- Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), partner agencies are instructed to use customer-centered design.
- WIOA requires the use of customer feedback in one-stop certification.
- As part of a customer-centered design approach and to help meet the customer feedback requirement for one-stop certification, each Local Disability Access Committee will conduct a focus group of individuals with disabilities at least once per year to identify barriers to programs provided in the one-stop system.
- Each Local Disability Access Committee will report on its focus group to the Local Workforce Development Board as a whole and to the State Disability Access Committee.
- The State Disability Access Committee will create a report for the State Workforce Development Board on the focus groups and distribute that report to each Local Workforce Development Board.
- The State Disability Access Committee will provide technical assistance to management and Local Disability Access Committees to act upon the feedback received during the focus group to improve the provision of services to individuals with disabilities in the local one-stop delivery system.
- This Guidance gives instructions and direction to Local Disability Access Committees on the organization and conduct of focus groups on services for individuals with disabilities.

2. Organizing a Focus Group.

2.1. Select your field team.

2.1.1. Identify a member of the Disability Access Committee to serve as moderator of the focus group.

- The moderator will lead the discussion of the focus group.
- The moderator should be an individual with experience working with individuals with disabilities.

2.1.2. Identify a member of the Disability Access Committee to serve as recorder.

- This individual will take notes and capture the discussion of the focus group.
- A tape recorder may be used as an aid for capturing information that can be used for notes.
- If you intend to record the focus group, you must notify the participants ahead of time that you intend to record the focus group for the purpose of helping to ensure the accuracy of your notes.

2.1.3. Identify other members of your Disability Access Committee who will participate and provide assistance in organizing and conducting the focus group.

2.1.4. Identify a time and date for the focus group.

2.1.5. You should hold the focus group at your one-stop center. If you choose not to hold the focus group at your one-stop center, you must identify and secure a location for the focus group that is physically accessible for individuals with disabilities.

2.2. Identify participants.

2.2.1. The Disability Access Committee must identify individuals to participate in the focus group.

2.2.2. Focus group participants must include:

- 1) A majority of individuals with disabilities from your Region, including but not limited to such individuals who have:
 - Received services through a one-stop center;
 - Received services through affiliate offices; and/or
 - Received services through other required partner offices.
- 2) Individuals with a broad range of disabilities, including but not limited to,

individuals:

- Who are blind or have low vision;
 - Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing;
 - With cognitive disabilities;
 - With disabilities affecting mobility; and
 - With other types of disabilities, as identified by your Disability Access Committee.
- 3) A minority of individuals who offer additional insight into the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities, including but not limited to:
- Individuals with experience and expertise in providing services to individuals with disabilities;
 - Advocates for individuals with disabilities; and
 - Family members of individuals with disabilities;
 - Other individuals, as identified by your Disability Access Committee.
- 4) Individuals with disabilities who are potential customers of the one-stop delivery system, including but not limited to:
- Students;
 - Members of the community who are employed; and
 - Participants in sheltered employment.
- 5) Individuals with disabilities who range in age, representing:
- Youth (age 14-24);
 - Adults (age 25+); and
 - Aging individuals (age 55+).

2.2.3. To the extent possible, your Disability Access Committee should include in the focus group individuals with disabilities of different races and nationalities. This may require you to identify and schedule a certified interpreter if an individual has limited English proficiency (LEP).

2.3. Invite participants.

2.3.1. After you have identified potential participants using the criteria in Section 2.2, you must invite them to participate in the focus group.

2.3.2. When inviting individuals to participate in the focus group, you must inform them:

- 1) Of the date, time, and location of the focus group;

- 2) That the focus group is being conducted by the Regional Workforce Development Board's Disability Access Committee in an effort to improve services for individuals with disabilities;
- 3) That only participants in the focus group, participants' representatives, and Disability Access Committee members will participate in the focus group;
- 4) That no one will identify them publicly as a participant in the focus group; and
- 5) That reasonable accommodations are available.
 - You must make this inquiry of each participant far enough in advance of the focus group meeting to ensure that you have enough time to arrange for a requested accommodation.
 - You should record any requested accommodations so that you can make sure they are provided at the focus group meeting.
 - You must provide any requested reasonable accommodation.

2.3.3. After the initial invitation and agreement to participant, send a follow-up correspondence restating in writing the information in Section 2.3.2 and identifying the point of contact on the Disability Access Committee for participant questions.

3. Meeting Logistics.

- 3.1. You must ensure that the location of the focus group is physically accessible, including but not limited to, the placement of any tables and chairs within the meeting room).
 - The ADA checklist for physical accessibility identifies other potential physical barriers for individuals with disabilities.
- 3.1. If needed for a participant who is Deaf or Hard of Hearing, you must identify and schedule a professional, qualified American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter or other form of interpreter service, as requested. Be sure that individuals utilizing ASL interpreters are seated so their view of the interpreter(s) is not obstructed.
- 3.2. As discussed in Section 2.3.2, you must ask each participant in advance if the participant needs an accommodation in order to participate in the focus group.
 - You must make this inquiry of each participant far enough in advance to ensure that you have enough time to arrange for requested accommodations.
 - You should record all requested accommodations so that you can make sure that they are provided at the focus group meeting.
 - You must provide the requested accommodations.
- 3.3. To encourage open participation and feedback in a welcoming space, you must ensure that only Disability Access Committee members, participants, and participants' representatives

(as appropriate) attend the focus group.

4. Conducting a Focus Group.

4.1. Introduction.

The moderator of the focus group must:

- 4.1.1. Introduce him/herself, the members of the Disability Access Committee, and their roles (e.g., moderator, recorder).
- 4.1.2. Thank participants for coming and provide a brief overview of the purpose of the focus group and how the information gathered will be used.
- 4.1.3. Inform participants that their identities will not be shared, only the feedback they provide.
- 4.1.4. Ask if any of the participants have questions before getting started.

4.2. Questions.

This Section is intended as a guide to help you gather meaningful information from the focus group that can be used to improve the delivery of services to individuals with disabilities. Your Disability Access Committee should feel free to add additional questions. The moderator should not hesitate to allow discussion to get off of the script if participants are bringing up substantive issues and giving useful feedback.

4.2.1. Open-Ended Questions.

The focus group is intended to collect as much feedback as possible on providing services to individuals with disabilities. The moderator should not ask many yes-no questions because they have the effect of stifling discussion. Instead, the moderator should use open-ended questions as much as possible.

4.2.2. Physical Accessibility.

- 1) How easy is it to get to the one-stop center?
- 2) What types of transportation do you use to get to the center?
- 3) How easy is it for you to get around outside the building where center is located?
What are the barriers or things that make it difficult for you?

- 4) How easy is it for you to get around inside the building where center is located? What are the barriers or things that make it difficult for you?
- 5) Are the signs posted in the one-stop center accessible and easy to understand?
- 6) Are the restrooms easy for you to find and use?

4.2.3. Customer Service.

- 1) Did someone greet you and welcome you to the center when you came in?
- 2) Did you feel welcome when you entered the center?
- 3) Are staff helpful to you?
- 4) Are staff ever not helpful to you?
- 5) When you ask questions, do staff give you answers that are helpful and that you understand?

4.2.4. Accommodations and Communication.

- 1) Have you ever requested an accommodation at the center?
- 2) Was the accommodation you requested provided?
- 3) How long did it take staff to respond to your request for an accommodation?
- 4) Have staff ever been unable to communicate effectively with you at the center?
- 5) What accommodations would you find most useful in the center?
- 6) What things do you need help with at the center? (e.g., completing the membership process because you use a wheelchair and it is standing-height)

4.2.5. Membership

- 1) Did someone assist you with completing the membership process?
- 2) What kind of help did you need to complete the process?
- 3) Were you able to understand the questions asked on the computer screen?
- 4) Did someone explain all of the services available to you?
- 5) Did someone show you around the center and help you get started?

4.2.6. Workshops.

- 1) Tell us about your experience participating in a workshop at the center
- 2) Did you request an accommodation for the workshop? Was it provided?
- 3) How easy was it to understand the information presented in the workshop?
- 4) What would make the information presented in the workshop easier to understand?
- 5) Did staff answer your questions and take time to assist you when you needed help?
- 6) What other workshops might be helpful to you in finding a job?

4.2.7. Complaints.

- 1) If you have made a complaint, did you know the complaint process to follow?
- 2) Do you feel like the person receiving your complaint took it seriously?
- 3) Did someone follow up with you regarding your complaint?
- 4) Was your complaint resolved?
- 5) What complaints or issues do you want to share now?

4.3. Concluding the Meeting.

To conclude the focus group meeting, the moderator must:

- 4.3.1. Ask participants if there is additional information or feedback they would like to share.
- 4.3.2. Provide the moderator's contact information so that participants can follow up with additional information or request assistance, if needed.
- 4.3.3. Thank them for their time and feedback and end the focus group session.

5. Follow-Up Correspondence.

- 5.1. Within one week of the focus group meeting, the Disability Access Committee should send a follow-up "thank you" correspondence to all participants.

- 5.2. The follow-up “thank you” correspondence must be in a format accessible to the participant.

6. Report on Focus Group Findings.

- 6.1. Create a report using the Template for Focus Group Report.
- 6.2. On or before October 1, 2017, send your Focus Group Report to:
Page.Eastin@iowa.gov
- 6.3. On or before December 31, 2017, provide your Focus Group Report to your Local Workforce Development Board.

7. Questions.

If you have questions or would like further information, please feel free to contact:

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