



## **Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and Individual Service Strategy (ISS) Policy**

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### **I. PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide entities awarded a subcontract or agreement through the North Central Workforce Development Board – WIOA funds for Title I with the guidelines and requirements for the development and implementation of Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and Individual Service Strategy (ISS) documents.

### **II. BACKGROUND:**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that all Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth participants be provided an assessment and an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or an Individual Service Strategy (ISS), depending on the program. The IEP and ISS are similar documents / processes; however, the IEP is for Adult and dislocated Worker Program participants while the ISS is designed for Youth Program participants. The IEP and ISS are a culmination of the assessment and needs to identify the employment goal, appropriate achievement objectives, and the appropriate mix of services. The content of the IEP/ISS is the road map and compass demonstrating the agreed upon plan of action. The IEP and ISS are also used to justify training which must be linked to occupations in demand in the local area or areas where the individual is willing to relocate.

### **III. REFERENCES:**

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA); Subpart C—Youth Program Design, Elements, and Parameters
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
- North Central Workforce Development Board (NCWDB) Policies
- North Central Workforce Development Boards ITA Policy
- Training and Employment Guidance Letters No. 5-12, No. 23-14, No. 3-15
- Toolkit for Effective Front Line Services to Youth

#### **IV. POLICY:**

##### **A. Individual Employment Plan (IEP) – WIOA Adult / Dislocated Workers**

What is the individual employment plan? The individual employment plan (IEP) is an individualized career service plan, under WIOA sec. 134(c)(2)(A)(xii)(II), that is developed jointly by the participant and career planner when determined appropriate by the one-stop center or one-stop partner. The plan is an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals. (Source:WIOA § 680.170)

For adults and dislocated workers, the IEP is an individualized career services that is jointly developed by the participant and the case manager. The plan is an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve employment goals. WIOA enhances the youth program design through an increased emphasis on individual participant needs by adding new components to the objective assessment and individual service strategy. WIOA incorporates career pathways as part of both the objective assessment and development of the ISS. In addition, the ISS must directly link to one or more of the performance indicators.

An IEP will cause an individual to be considered a participant however there are other ways to qualify for participation because there is no sequence of services requirement in WIOA. An IEP is an individualized career service and can be provided under either title I of WIOA or under the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES) (as amended by title III of WIOA). Individualized career services (of which an IEP is one) may be provided with Wagner-Peyser Act funds.

WIOA authorizes “career services” for adults and dislocated workers, rather than “core” and “intensive” services, as authorized by WIOA. There are three types of “career services”: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. These services can be provided in any order; there is no sequence requirement for these services. Career services under this approach provide local areas and service providers with flexibility to target services to the needs of the customer.

The three categories of career services are defined as follows:

##### **Basic Career Services**

Basic career services must be made available to all individuals seeking services served in the one-stop delivery system, and include:

- Determinations of whether the individual is eligible to receive assistance from the adult, dislocated worker, or youth programs;
- Outreach, intake (including identification through the state’s Worker Profiling and Reemployment Services system of unemployment insurance (UI) claimants likely to exhaust benefits), and orientation to information and other services available through the one-stop delivery system;

- Initial assessment of skill levels including literacy, numeracy, and English language proficiency, as well as aptitudes, abilities (including skills gaps), and supportive service needs;
- Labor exchange services, including—
  - Job search and placement assistance, and, when needed by an individual, career counseling, including—
  - Provision of information on in-demand industry sectors and occupations (as defined in sec. 3(23) of WIOA); and,
  - Provision of information on nontraditional employment (as defined in sec. 3(37) of WIOA);
- Provision of referrals to and coordination of activities with other programs and services, including those within the one-stop delivery system and, when appropriate, other workforce development programs;
- Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including—
- Job vacancy listings in labor market areas;
- Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and
- Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs;
- Provision of performance information and program cost information on eligible providers of training services by program and type of providers;
- Provision of information about how the local area is performing on local performance accountability measures, as well as any additional performance information relating to the area’s one-stop delivery system;
- Provision of information relating to the availability of supportive services or assistance, and appropriate referrals to those services and assistance, including:
  - child care;
  - child support;
  - medical or child health assistance available through the State’s Medicaid program and Children’s Health Insurance Program;
  - benefits under the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
  - assistance through the earned income tax credit; housing counseling and assistance services sponsored through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD)<sup>1</sup>;
  - and assistance under a State program for Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF),
  - and other supportive services and transportation provided through that program;
- Assistance in establishing eligibility for programs of financial aid assistance for training and education programs not provided under WIOA; and
- Provision of information and assistance regarding filing claims under UI programs, including meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing a claim—
  - Meaningful assistance means providing assistance:

- On-site using staff who are properly trained in UI claims, filing, and/or the acceptance of information necessary to file a claim, or
- By phone or via other technology, as long as the assistance is provided by trained and available staff and within a reasonable time, or
- The costs associated in providing meaningful assistance may be paid for by the State's UI program, the WIOA Adult or Dislocated Worker programs, the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service, or some combination thereof these funding sources.

### **Individualized Career Services**

If one-stop center staff determine that individualized career services are appropriate for an individual to obtain or retain employment, these services must be made available to the individual. These services must be available in all one-stop centers. One-stop center staff may use recent previous assessments by partner programs to determine if individualized career services would be appropriate. These services include:

- Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include—
- Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
- In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
- Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, eligible training providers;
- Group and/or individual counseling and mentoring;
- Career planning (e.g. case management);
- Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training, in some instances pre-apprenticeship programs may be considered as short-term prevocational services; Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers;
- Workforce preparation activities that help an individual acquire a combination of basic academic skills, critical thinking skills, digital literacy skills, and self-management skills, including competencies in utilizing resources, using information, working with others, understanding systems, and obtaining skills necessary for successful transition into and completion of postsecondary education, or training, or employment;
- Financial literacy services;
- Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
- English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

**Follow Up Services:**

Follow-up services must be provided as appropriate for participants who are placed in unsubsidized employment, for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. Counseling about the work place is an appropriate type of follow-up service. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

**Additional Information Regarding the IEP:**

The IEP is an individual plan based on the information provided by the assessment. It serves as the basis for the entire case management strategy, and identifies:

1. Employment goals (s), including non-traditional employment goals;
2. Job readiness, specific strengths, and identified deficiencies;
3. Appropriate achievement objectives;
4. Appropriate services based on assessment'
5. Assessment of individual's financial, social and / or supportive needs; and,
6. Sequence and mix of services to be provided.

The IEP will also document the services provided to the individual. If changes in the employment goals and / or services occur, the IEP must be revised.

Any information that describes an individual's medical condition or disability must be maintained in a separate file consistent with policies and procedures and reference made to the separate file.

Local labor market information must be taken into consideration in the development of the IEP.

It is the WIOA Program Operator's responsibility to establish processes to review and approve all registration paperwork, including the IEP, for completeness, accuracy and internal consistency as well as to ensure that the plan in each participant's file is current at all times.

**B. Individual Service Strategy (ISS) – Youth**

The WIOA Youth program requires every youth participant to have an ISS. WIOA calls for customer-focused services based on the needs of the individual participant not on the time constraints or structure of the provider. This includes the creation of career pathways for youth in all Title I youth programs, including a connection to career pathways as part of a youth's individual service strategy (ISS) in the youth formula-funded program. The ISS must directly link to one or more of the performance indicators. WIOA also calls for participants to be intimately involved in the design and implementation of services so the youth voice is represented and their needs are being met.

The ISS represents an individual plan for each young person that includes:

1. Educational goal (s) of the participant;
2. Employment goal(s) of the participant, including, when appropriate, non-traditional employment goals;

3. Objective assessment of current academic and skills levels, basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests and aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs;
4. A “Roadmap” to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals.
5. Appropriate achievement objectives for the participant;
6. Appropriate services, the sequence and mix of the services, and justification for the services to be provided;
7. Any referral(s) to other services / programs;
8. Services needed, but not available in the North Central Workforce Development Area; and,
9. Assessment of the individual’s financial, social and / or supportive service’s needs.
10. Develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy based on the needs of each youth participant that is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance described in WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(ii), that identifies career pathways that include education and employment goals, that considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment and that prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participant.

<b>WIOA Performance Criteria</b>	<b>Youth</b>
<b>Employment (second quarter after exit)</b>	<b>65%</b>
<b>Employment (fourth quarter after exit)</b>	<b>57%</b>
<b>Median Earnings (second quarter after exit)</b>	<b>To Be Determined</b>
<b>Credential Attainment Rate</b>	<b>70%</b>
<b>Measurable Skill Gains</b>	<b>To Be Determined</b>
<b>Effectiveness in Serving Employers</b>	<b>To Be Determined</b>

The ISS is a distinct plan designed specifically for the WIOA Youth Program participants and is based on the information obtained during the objective assessment. The ISS will serve as the basis for the entire case management service strategy and as a guide for delivery of appropriate services. The ISS will identify and document a youth’s progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments.

Additionally, the ISS shall be:

- developed in partnership with the youth;
- used as a tool that can and will change over time, as necessary, to meet the needs of the young person;
- used as a roadmap to achieve measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals; and
- designed to reflect the young person’s interests and incorporate career pathway planning.

The NCWDB encourages case managers and other youth providers to review the Toolkit for Effective Front Line Services to Youth for effective approach to developing an ISS. Please refer to the October 29,

2012 email which includes links to all applicable TEGl's including TEGl 15-12, a link to the referenced toolkit, and other resources. As this email states, the NCWDB strongly encourage all Youth Providers to review and distribute these documents as well as keeping a printed manual of documents at each site.

**The design framework services of local youth programs must:**

Provide for an objective assessment of each youth participant that meets the requirements of WIOA sec. 129(c)(1)(A), and includes a review of the academic and occupational skill levels, as well as the service needs and strengths, of each youth for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants and informing the individual service strategy.

Develop, and update as needed, an individual service strategy based on the needs of each youth participant that is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance described in WIOA sec. 116(b)(2)(A)(ii), that identifies career pathways that include education and employment goals, that considers career planning and the results of the objective assessment and that prescribes achievement objectives and services for the participant

**Youth PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS - Core Requirements**

Program Elements: WIOA section 129 (c)(2) includes 14 program elements, which include the original 10 program elements under WIA (which have been consolidated to nine as the summer employment opportunities program elements is not a sub element under paid and unpaid work experiences) and 5 new program elements. The 14 program elements under WIOA section 129 © (2) are:

- 1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies:** includes instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of HS diploma or equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for youth with disabilities) or preparation for post-secondary credentials.
- 2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services** includes referral to formal alternative education programs or formal dropout recovery services, as appropriate
- 3. Paid and unpaid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experiences, which may include the following types of work experiences:** are planned, structured, learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. They may be paid or unpaid and may occur in for-profit, non-profit or public sectors. As with all workplace relationships labor standards and laws apply. Work experience provide youth with an opportunity to explore careers and develop skills. Work Experience must include a combination of academic and occupational education components. Work Experiences include the following types of experiences:
  - **Summer Work Experiences**
  - **Pre-Apprenticeship** is a program, or set of strategies, designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program; a documented partnership with at least one or more registered apprenticeship programs must be in place. Providers offering occupational education for pre-apprenticeship must be on the Eligible Training Provider List.

- **Internships & Job Shadowing** are activities that provide the youth with an opportunity to explore an occupation or work environment and may include activities that allow them to gain employment and occupational skill competencies.
- **On-the-Job Training** is training provided by an employer to a paid participant who is engaged in productive work from which she/he gains the knowledge and skills essential to the full performance of the job and for which the employer is provided a reimbursement of up to 50% of the participant wage and for which the employer makes a commitment to hire the individual. Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;

**4. Occupational skills training which include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with state and local in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the North Central PA region** is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required of certain occupational fields at the entry, intermediate and advanced skill levels. Priority must be given for training that leads to recognized post-secondary credentials that are in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.

**5. Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster** refers to the integrated education and training model in which required education and training occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Such a program element must describe how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.

**6. Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors** are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination and other positive social behaviors, such as: a) exposure to post-secondary educational possibilities, b) community and service-learning projects, c) peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring or peer tutoring, d) organizational and team work training, including team leadership training, e) training in decision-making, including prioritization and problem solving, f) citizenship training, including life skills such as parenting and work behavior training, g) civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community, and h) activities that place the youth in a leadership role such as serving on a youth leadership committee or a Standing Youth Committee.

**7. Supportive Services** for youth are those that are designed to enable them to participate in WIOA activities and may include: linkage to community services; referrals to health care; and cost assistance with: transportation, childcare, housing, uniforms, work attire, work-related tools, protective gear, educational testing, and reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities.

**8. Adult mentoring** is a formal, in-person, relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee. The activity must last for a period of at least 12 months and must be with an adult mentor other than the assigned youth case manager. Adult mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company who acts as a mentor.

**9. Follow-up services** are critical services that must be provided for at least a 12 month period following the youths exit from the program and are designed to help ensure that the youth is successful in employment or postsecondary education/training. Follow-up services may include: leadership activities, regular contact with the youth's employer to help address work-related issues, assistance with career pathway development or in securing a better paying job, assistance with further education or training and participation in work-related peer support groups, adult mentoring or other services determined appropriate based on the needs of the participant. Follow-up must include more than only an attempted contact and must be documented in order to receive a performance outcome

Follow-up services may be provided beyond the 12 months at the local board's discretion. The types of services provided and the duration of services must be determined based on the needs of the youth and therefore, the type and intensity of follow-up services may differ for each participant. ***However, follow-up services must include more than only a contact attempted or made for securing documentation in order to report a performance outcome.***

**10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling** is individualized to the participant, may include career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling and referral to partner programs for which the youth counselor has coordinated the youth referral with the partner agency on behalf of the individual youth.

**11. Financial literacy education.** is education or activities that: assist youth to initiate checking and savings accounts at banks and to make informed financial decisions; supports youth learning how to manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit and credit cards; teaches the significance of credit reports and credit scores and rights regarding credit and financial information; teaches how to assure accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to maintain or improve good credit; supports a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products and services; informs participants about identity theft, their rights in regard to it and ways they can protect themselves from it; and supports the financial literacy needs of non-English speakers through use of multilingual financial literacy and education materials.

**12. Entrepreneurial skills training** is training that provides the basics of starting and operating a small business, this training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as: taking initiative, creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities, developing budgets and forecasting resource needs, understanding various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and how to communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas. Approaches to teaching youth these skills may include: educational programs that introduce youth to the basics of starting and running a business; enterprise development supports and services that

incubate and help the youth develop their own business through access to small loans or grants, or that provide individualized assistance in development of viable business ideas; and may include experiential programs in which youth get experience in the day-to-day operation of a business and more.

**13. Services that provide labor market and employment information** about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services.

**14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.** include information about and preparation for college entrance including information about applying to colleges, financial aid, entrance testing, student life, pre-requisite courses and more.

#### **V. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION AND REQUIREMENTS:**

- The ISS shall be a living document, to be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. The case manager should use the ISS to update strategies and activities as they occur and/or as life changes require, and to document referral and contact information for services obtained from partner organizations. When reviewing the ISS, case managers shall document a participant's progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments. Additionally, the ISS shall be developed, and modified in partnership with the participant, and shall document achievements in measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals that both reflect the young person's interests and incorporate career pathway planning.
- Appropriate credentials to be obtained shall be included in the participant's ISS. As stated above, the participant's progress and achievements must be updated in the ISS and case notes, as appropriate.
- While there is no minimum or maximum time a youth can participate in the WIOA youth program, programs must link program participation to a participant's ISS and not the timing of youth service provider contracts or PYs.
- The IEP and ISS and case notes shall be used as the basic instrument to record the results of decisions made about the combination and sequence of services for the participant based on the assessment. It shall also contain a post-employment strategy given the nature of most WIOA performance measures.
- The IEP and ISS do not give legal or entitlement rights for services to participants.

#### **V. EXPIRATION:**

Ongoing

#### **VI. INQUIRIES:**

Questions shall be directed to:

Pamela Streich, Executive Director at [pstreich@ncwdb.org](mailto:pstreich@ncwdb.org); or

Donna Hottel, Strategic Planning and Project Manager at [dhottel@ncwdb.org](mailto:dhottel@ncwdb.org)

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