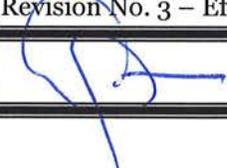


<b>Workforce Connections Program, Services and Activities Assessment Individual Employment Plan</b>	<b>ADW-030-03</b>
<b>Supersedes Policy 3.2 dated January 1, 2009</b>	Revision No. 3 – Effective 09-06-2016
<b>Policy Approved By: WC Executive Director Policy Adopted on: August 01, 2013</b>	

**Purpose:**

To provide guidance and instructions with respect to required elements for the development of Initial Assessment and the Individual Employment Plan (IEP).

**Background:**

Career and training services, tailored to the individual needs of jobseekers, form the backbone of the One-Stop Delivery System (OSDS). While some jobseekers may only need self-services or other basic career services like job listing and information about other services, some jobseekers will need services that are more comprehensive and tailored to their individual career needs. These services may include comprehensive assessments, career planning, and the development of an IEP that outlines the needs and goal of successful employment. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires a Comprehensive and Specialized Assessment (CSA) and the development of an IEP whenever appropriate for all eligible adults and dislocated workers receiving WIOA Title I individualized career services, [Sec.134 (c)(2)(A)(xii)(I)(II) of WIOA]. IEPs are one of the most effective ways to serve individuals with barriers to employment, and to coordinate the various services including training services they may need to overcome these barriers.

**Policy:**

Workforce Connections (WC) has established that all adult and dislocated workers who have been determined eligible for WIOA Title I individualized career services must first receive an Initial Assessment (IA). WC has also established that an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) must be developed for each registered adult and dislocated worker receiving individualized career services under WIOA Title I funded programs within five (5) days of the WIOA enrollment.

**Reference:** PL 113-128 WIOA [Sec. 122, 134, 189, 503]; [20 CFR Part 678.430]; [20 CFR Part 680]; [State TAG 15-3]; [State Compliance Policy (SCP) 1.8]

All information required by Federal, State, and local reporting requirements must be collected for each individual receiving WIOA Title I services. The appropriateness of any service provided to an eligible program participant should be documented in the IEP and should show a clear linkage between the provided service and potential improvement in the participant's employability or career objective goals.

Assessment shall be individualized and centered on the program participants' employability and career objective goals. A person-centered assessment approach shall identify the participant's desired outcomes and at the same time shall facilitate the development of an IEP to achieve them. This process examines the interest and abilities of each program participant in order to establish the basis for identifying the appropriate set of employment, training, and career development activities.

## I. General Provisions for Adult and Dislocated Workers: Assessment

### A. What is Assessment?

1. Assessment is a process to assist program participants in identifying strengths, transferable skills, interests, work values, and personal priorities as they relate to employment, training, and career development activities.
2. Assessment is part of the process leading to self-awareness and relies on the active participation of the participant. It is not something that a career coach does to a participant or for a participant, but rather an activity in which the career coach functions as a facilitator; helping the participant analyze data and information that will be used in a goal-setting process.
3. Assessment is also a systematic approach of gathering information about individuals. This information is then used in a variety of ways to assist in workforce development activities.

### B. Assessment Elements:

#### Adult and Dislocated Workers

1. Initial Assessment – The process of gathering information about an individual’s skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs in order to make an initial assessment of employability. Initial assessment will constitute the enrollment activity for all eligible WIOA Title I program participants.
2. Comprehensive and specialized assessment of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers:
  - a) Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools;
  - b) Comprehensive interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
  - c) Development of a written IEP, to identify the employment goals, steps and timetables, and combinations of workforce development services needed for the participant to achieve a specific career/occupational goal.
3. In-Depth Assessment – Following the intensive assessment the participant has been determined by a career coach to be in need of training services and to have the skills and qualifications necessary to complete the selected training program. An In-Depth Assessment may include below listed tools:
  - a) **Aptitude and ability tests**  
These instruments attempt to measure a person’s overall ability, including general intelligence, achievement, aptitude, and reading ability.
  - b) **Interest inventory**  
Standardized interest inventories help individuals identify their preference for particular activities. Suggestions are then made regarding the occupations or occupational clusters that most closely match interests.
  - c) **Career development and goals**  
These instruments attempt to assess where a person may be in the career decision making/development process, predisposition towards career change, stylistic approach, and other factors that affect the career development process.
  - d) **Work history and future job needs**  
Help the program participant match his or her skills against current and anticipated jobs.
  - e) **Barriers and support service needs**  
Source of additional support needed for success and to get and keep a job, and must be responsive to the participant’s needs.

**C. Additional provisions**

The determination of the necessity and reasonability of services must be properly documented via an assessment tool. Services, that are allowable, necessary and reasonable and which the participant is unable to provide for themselves or obtain from another community agency, are available to eligible WIOA Title I adult and dislocated worker program participants as long as such needs are documented in participant's assessment and IEP.

**D. Assessment is a critical component of a workforce development program. Assessments can be used to:**

- Provide information for career exploration;
- Objectively identify the education and skill building an individual requires;
- Identify and develop individual career goals and objectives;
- Evaluate program participants' success; and
- Evaluate the success of the workforce development program itself.

The overall assessment process is composed by four basic steps:

- Initial assessment;
- Individual employment plan;
- Progress steps and review/action plan; and
- Follow-up

**E. There are many types of assessment tools that are used in the workforce development system. These include traditional knowledge and ability tests, personality and interest inventories, and work sample or performance test. Workforce development program specific assessment tools differ in:**

1. Purpose, e.g., career counseling, referral, selection, placement, or completion of training and development goals;
2. What they are designed to measure, e.g., knowledge, skills, abilities, personality traits, work styles, work values, vocational interests, career success, and job satisfaction;
3. Format, e.g., paper-and-pencil, work sample, or computer application; and
4. Level of standardization, objectivity, assessment tools and procedures vary greatly on these factors. For example, there are subjective evaluations of informal interviews, highly structured achievement tests, and personality inventories with no specific right or wrong answers.

Regardless the assessment tool and what, in fact, it measures and/or tests, it must at least demonstrate a systematic approach to combining and evaluating all the information gained and use it to provide career guidance, training development and employment gain.

## II. General Provisions for Adult and Dislocated Workers: Individual Employment Plan -IEP

### A. What is the IEP?

Consistent with 20 CFR §680.170, the individual employment plan is an ongoing strategy jointly developed by the participant and the career coach that identifies the participant's employment goals, the appropriate achievement objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals.

### B. The IEP Elements

#### Adult and Dislocated Workers

1. The IEP provides the participant with a plan for using the program successfully. Having an effective employment plan in place is an important step in achieving a successful outcome.
2. The IEP sets expectations toward which the participant can strive and achieve. A properly completed IEP will provide the participant with a clear series of specific action steps they are expected to undertake.
3. The IEP gives the WIOA program a guide for effectively helping the program participant.  
An IEP with specific action steps gives the program a guide to what they need to do to help that particular participant be successful.

### C. IEP Preparation

1. A successful IEP does not just happen. It requires a great deal of preparation. Participants must first be prepared with the right message during recruitment and orientation. WIOA program staff who write the IEP must be prepared and trained to write a good IEP. A lot of information must be gathered and available when writing an IEP. And, of course, a comprehensive assessment of the participant is crucial to writing a good and effective IEP.
2. One of the biggest barriers to writing an effective IEP is the participant who is not prepared for the IEP discussion. This preparation of the participant needs to occur at a crucial level. Does the participant understand the need for them to progress through the program? Do they understand why you are having the IEP conversation? Have the WIOA program and the IEP process being properly explained to them? Have they had time to think about what might go into their IEP? The WIOA program must prepare them for the IEP discussion before it takes place. Use the orientation to prepare the program participant for success with their IEP.
3. Use the orientation to set high expectations from the beginning. Be very clear about what you expect them to do in the program. Stress the IEP and job development aspects of the program. Invest the time in a clear, detailed orientation. It will pay off in the long run. Then, constantly reinforce these high expectations throughout their time in the program.
4. Program staff preparation and training is essential for a successful IEP. The staff person writing the IEP with the participant is the critical piece of the puzzle. Making sure that staff person is properly trained is essential to developing effective IEPs.
5. Knowing the resource information that is necessary for completing an effective IEP is important. Always being as specific as possible is a key element of a good IEP. Having done your research in advance, and having such information readily available when writing the IEP, makes being specific a lot easier. An effective IEP process is more about interviewing and counseling than it is about just completing forms.

6. **A comprehensive assessment is crucial.** The IEP is a plan to get the participant from where they are to where they want to be (their goal). It is very difficult, if not impossible, to tell someone how to get to where they want to be if you do not know where they are in the first place. A good comprehensive assessment tells you where the participant is – their starting point. If you know their starting point and their goal you can start to figure out the necessary steps to get them from their starting point to their goal. These steps are what constitute their IEP. So the importance of a comprehensive assessment cannot be understated.

**D. Writing the IEP**

1. **An effective IEP** utilizes the SMART principle. It sets out goals and action steps which are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time Driven.
  - a) **S is for Specific:** The participant must have a specific goal so that they are very clear about what it is they are trying to achieve. The steps must be very specific so that they know exactly what it is they need to do to achieve their goal.
  - b) **M is for Measurable:** The participant cannot know if they have achieved a goal or completed a step unless it is somehow measurable. The measuring can be as simple as a yes/no answer to the question of completing a step (e.g., did they learn a specific skill, or did they enroll in class).
  - c) **A is for Attainable:** The goal and the specific steps should be realistically attainable within the time frame.
  - d) **R is for Relevant:** The steps to be undertaken must be relevant to the goal stated. While the participant may be doing lots of things, the action steps should focus on what they will do to achieve their goal.
  - e) **T is for Time Driven:** Unless specific dates are set for when each step will be completed, the IEP and specific action plan is meaningless. Remember, this is a commitment for the participant to do certain things by certain dates.
  
2. The actual writing of the IEP should be done by a career coach. This does not mean the career coach should simply write the IEP and then give it to the participant to sign. The IEP is a negotiated agreement between the participant and the career coach detailing what the participant will do for his/her own development, and what the program will do to assist him/her in that effort. It is, therefore, imperative that the IEP is written with the full participation of the participant. If for no other reason, the participant has to be part of developing his/her IEP so that they will “buy into it” and give it his/her full effort.

**3. Revisions/Updates to the IEP**

New IEP required if:	Amended IEP required when:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A new employment goal is established</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New objectives are added to the IEP</li> <li>• Objective content or dates are revised</li> <li>• New barriers are identified</li> <li>• Additional training activities are provided</li> </ul>
<p>Both an amendment and a new IEP require signatures and dates from the participant and the career coach, and must be recorded in the MIS.</p>	

4. IEPs must be reviewed within 30 days of receipt of a transfer file, where the program participant is active and not in follow up.

## Individual Employment Plan – IEP Resource Guide

**Note: This is a resource informational table only**

<b>Summary</b>	<p><b>First:</b> If IEP’s are done effectively the participant succeeds in the program.</p> <p><b>Second:</b> If the participant succeeds because IEP’s are done effectively the program also succeeds. It pays to take the time to do effective IEP’s.</p>
Points to remember for writing effective IEP’s	
I	
Participants need to be prepared to do an IEP. This starts with a recruitment message and orientation that stresses that this is a dynamic program about helping them reach goals. It continues with giving them a chance to think about their goals before doing an IEP. It involves a thorough assessment of the participant having to know where they are starting.	
II	
The staff must be prepared to do the IEP. This includes knowing IEP procedures and forms. It also means getting to know the participant they are helping develop an IEP, preparing to address any barriers they may have, and/or preparing to discuss any delicate subjects that may need to be addressed. Most importantly, they must know all the local resources that can be used to help the participant complete their action steps and achieve their goals.	
III	
The staff must engage the participant in a conversation and make use of various counseling skills. Such skills include: attending, active listening, asking questions and avoiding barriers. They must have the participant’s confidence and trust to be successful.	
IV	
Each IEP should be written as specifically as possible. The SMART acronym should be used to make sure the goals and action steps are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time Driven.	
V	
There should be a succession of specific, short-term IEPs with each one moving the participant one step closer to their ultimate goal (hopefully a job). The timing of each IEP should be determined by the action steps involved, not by an arbitrary limit.	
VI	
If a participant has trouble articulating a goal, staff should explore to determine the reason why and then apply the response appropriate to that reason.	
VII	
The participant must “buy-in” to their IEP. They must be committed to achieving it.	
VIII	
The IEP should determine almost everything the participant does while they are in the program, especially their host agency/training site assignment.	
IX	
There can be no follow-up unless a specific, measurable, time driven IEP was written initially.	
X	
Follow-up should be ongoing (not waiting for a three-month monitoring visit) and should occur in time for the participant to successfully complete their action step by the deadline.	