

DRAFT

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services Program Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)		
DOES-Policy No.	Subject	Date
XXXX-2012	American Job Center Operations	September 2012

SCOPE

The District's American Job Center system operates under the guiding principles as mandated by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIA, which became law in 1998, reformed a number of federal laws and job training programs to create a comprehensive workforce investment system. The reformed system is intended to be customer-focused, to give citizens access to the tools they need to manage their careers, and to match employers with skilled workers.

PURPOSE

The primary role of the District's American Job Center system is to connect area employers with job seekers and link customers to vocational education, community colleges, and other training opportunities. DCNetworks is an integral part of this system. DCNetworks embodies DCNetworks.org's "No Wrong Door" approach to services and reflects the District's emphasis on integrated and coordinated service delivery.

PROGRAM PROCEDURES/IMPLEMENTATION

The operation of American Job Centers is founded in the WIA law, which embodies six (6) key principles. They are:

- a. Streamlined services – Programs and providers will co-locate, coordinate, and integrate activities and information, whenever possible, so the system as a whole is integrated and accessible for individuals and businesses alike.
- b. Empowering individuals - Eligible adults are given Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) to pay for education and training at qualified institutions. Participants chart their own employment course and select their training providers, based on performance information. They are further empowered through the advice, guidance, and support from American Job Center staff and partners.
- c. Universal access. Any individual may access the American Job Center system and core employment-related services. Information about job vacancies, career options, student financial aid, relevant employment trends, and instruction on how to conduct a job search, write a resumé, or interview with an employer is available to any job seeker or other person who wants to advance his or her career.
- d. Increased accountability. The goal of the Act is to increase employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and in doing so, improve the quality of the workforce to sustain economic growth, enhance productivity and competitiveness, and reduce welfare dependency. Consistent with these goals, WIA identifies core indicators of performance that state and local entities managing the workforce investment system must meet. States exceeding the performance levels can receive incentive funds. Training providers and their programs also must demonstrate successful performance to remain eligible to receive federal funds.

- e. Strong role for local workforce investment boards and the private sector. With leadership from local business leaders, the workforce investment board is focused on strategic planning, policy development, and oversight of the local workforce development system. Business and labor have an immediate and direct stake in the quality of the workforce investment system. Their active involvement is critical to the provision of essential data on what skills are in demand, what jobs are available, what career fields are expanding, and the identification and development of programs that best meet local employer needs.
- f. State and local flexibility. States and localities have increased flexibility, with significant authority reserved for the Governor (Mayor) and elected officials, to build on existing reforms and tailor programs to meet the particular needs of local and regional labor markets.

Management Roles and Responsibilities

American Job Center managers are to ensure that staffing specialists are trained and possess the tools, information, and abilities to use DCNetworks effectively and efficiently. Procedures include, but are not limited to:

- a. Entering customer data in a timely manner
- b. Determining customer eligibility for each service/title
- c. Communicating with customers and training providers, including notification of approval to start training
- d. Preparing various administrative documents
- e. Recording case notes and comments, as activities occur
- f. Obtaining copies and recording certificates or documentation of achievement
- g. Following up on customers to make sure their experience with DOES is satisfactory
- h. Assisting customers in finding suitable and self-sustaining employment

DOES employees should refer to the DCNetworks User Manual which provides specific and detailed procedures on customer entry and case management responsibilities. The manual can be accessed in DCNetworks via the Staff On-Line Reference Link.

Universal Access

Under WIA, all individuals are entitled to a range of “core” services, which are defined as services available to adults or dislocated workers through the American Job Center delivery system. At a minimum, core services must include:

- a. Eligibility determinations;
- b. Intake (which may include worker profiling) and orientation to other services available through the American Job Center system;
- c. Initial assessment of skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and supportive service needs;
- d. Job search and placement assistance, and where appropriate, career counseling; employment statistics information, including accurate information on local, regional, and national labor market areas;
- e. Performance information and program costs for training provider services, including providers of adult education, post-secondary vocational education activities, vocational education activities to school dropouts, and vocational rehabilitation program activities;

- f. Information about local workforce investment system performance and any additional performance information with respect to the American Job Center delivery system in the local area;
- g. Accurate information related to the availability of supportive services in the local area, including child care and transportation, and referral to such services, as appropriate;
- h. Information regarding filing claims for unemployment compensation;
- i. Assistance in establishing eligibility for welfare-to-work activities and financial aid for training and education programs not funded under WIA; and
- j. Follow-up services, including counseling regarding the workplace, for participants in workforce investment activities placed in unsubsidized employment for not less than 12 months after the first day of the employment, as appropriate.

Integrated Service

American Job Center services are offered with the participation and cooperation of a number of partners. In addition to federally mandated partners, such as Veterans Employment Services and Title V Older Worker programs, District American Job Center partners include community and technical colleges, secondary educational institutions, vocational rehabilitation, public assistance, social service, and economic development agencies, as well as community- and faith-based organizations. Wherever possible, programs and providers are to co-locate, coordinate, and integrate activities and information so that services are synchronized and accessible for individuals and businesses alike.

DOES integrated service is guided by four (4) primary workforce functions:

- a. The Unemployment Insurance system – the payment of benefits to eligible individuals and the collection of employer taxes.
- b. The Wagner-Peyser Job Service – a publicly funded labor exchange system that matches job seekers with job openings.
- c. The adult programs – providing training to dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged individuals with barriers to employment.
- d. The Labor Market Information (LMI) system – the gathering and generation of data in accordance with procedures developed by the USDOL in areas such as employment and wage comparisons, local area employment and unemployment statistics, and high/low growth occupations.

DOES engages in the following activities to accomplish its goals and advance the purpose of the American Job Centers:

- a. Participates in advisory committee and subcommittee activities, including monthly front-line staff team meetings;
- b. Develops and operates an integrated case management system;
- c. Develops and disseminates orientation material that clearly communicates all services to the public and directs customers to appropriate agency resources;
- d. Regularly conducts program review and expansion projects, including capacity-building activities;
- e. Employs a strategic customer satisfaction/improvement plan; and
- f. Negotiates Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) and monitors performance by each American Job Center partner.

Customer Choice

Informed customer choice is a fundamental principle of the WIA. American Job Centers provide information about jobs and job requirements and the training needed to prepare for employment in an occupational area of choice. DOES maintains a list of qualified and certified training providers offering a variety of educational and occupational programs. Employment specialists guide customers through core and intensive services and help them select an appropriate academic or vocational training facility or professional.

After receiving core and intensive services and completing an on-line training eligibility application in consultation with employment specialists, eligible participants use the DCNetworks system to access a list of eligible providers and educational services. The site provides geographically-based information on:

- a. Training Providers and Schools – users select this option to link to web sites and to locate specific providers and schools and the programs offered;
- b. Training Education Programs – users select this option to find training or educational programs related to an occupation or field of interest;
- c. Education Program Completers – this option allows users to review the number of students that complete training and education programs; and
- d. Financial Aid for Training – this option provides potential sources of financial assistance for schools and programs.

Priority of Service

The Workforce Investment Act states that, in the event funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities are limited, priority for intensive and training services under Title I Adult funds must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in the local area. Federal priority of service guidelines apply to Title I Adult funds only. Funds allocated for dislocated workers are not subject to this requirement (20 CFR 663.610).

The following policies will be applied District-wide for the use of Title I Adult funds under the WIA:

- a. When Title I funds to serve adults are determined to be limited, priority for services must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income adults as set forth in Section 101(25) of the Act;
- b. When American Job Center managers accept all customers, priority will be given to District residents or those dislocated from an employer in the District of Columbia;
- c. The Priority of Service policy does not prohibit American Job Centers from providing intensive services to individuals other than District residents; and
- d. Residency may not be used for priority of service regarding core services. Core services shall be universally available to all adults and dislocated workers regardless of where they live.

ACTION: This is the official District policy and should be kept in your permanent policy issuance file. Share this information with your staff and anyone else who would benefit from these policies.

APPROVAL

Director's Signature
Lisa María Mallory

Date

Remove & Destroy: None
Effective Date: Date of Signature
Review Date: Two-Year Anniversary of Signature
Distribution: All DOES American Jobs Center Employees, Office of Program Performance
Monitoring Employees, and the District Eligible Training Providers

Point-of-Contact: American Job Center, 202-698-4215