

**Workforce Development System
Technical Advisory #23-06
October 25, 2023**

To: Workforce Development Community

SUBJECT: Initial Assessment in the Career Center System

PURPOSE

Establish guidance and policy for the effective use of initial assessment to determine participant eligibility and the appropriate services that should be provided to customers of the Career Center System.

Rescind and replace Workforce Development System Technical Advisory (WDS TA) #08-04.2: Effective Use of Initial Assessment in the Career Center System (January 29, 2015).

POLICY

The New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) requires that all Career Center customers receive an initial assessment prior to or on the same day they receive their first staff-assisted service. The only exceptions to this requirement are individuals who access self-service/information only (SS/IO) services. Individuals seeking SS/IO services must be registered into the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) but are not required to receive an initial assessment.

Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) must have processes and procedures in place to ensure Career Center System customers receive an initial assessment prior to or on the day they receive their first staff-assisted service, in accordance with NYSDOL policy.

All staff must utilize NYSDOL intake and eligibility forms (e.g., ES100, ES101, and ES102), available on the NYSDOL Programs and Tools [webpage](#), or similar locally-approved intake and eligibility forms containing all required eligibility criteria fields, to help assess a customer's program eligibility. Additionally, staff must utilize relevant eligibility forms for other state or local programs, such as the Veteran's Program Military Service Questionnaire ([MSQ](#)) for any customer who indicates they have served in the U.S. Armed Forces or is an eligible person.

ACTION

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The initial assessment is intended to determine eligibility and the service(s) a customer requires. An assessment must be made prior to or on the same day the customer receives their first staff-assisted service.

Initial Assessment Process

The initial assessment process includes the following steps:

1. Program Eligibility – In developing assessment questions, staff should reference NYSDOL or similar locally-approved intake and eligibility forms; relevant eligibility forms for other state or local programs (i.e., MSQ); and current Adult Priority of Service, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Data Element Validation (DEV) guidance (e.g., is the customer currently receiving public assistance, are they low-income, a DW, an English language learner, etc.?).
2. Occupational Goal – Evaluate the customer’s occupational goal as favorable or not favorable in the labor market. If the customer does not have a clear occupational goal or the outlook for the occupational goal is not favorable, then services should focus on career exploration to identify an occupation with a favorable local labor market outlook. Additional information on labor market information can be found on NYSDOL’s Labor Market Information for Workforce Planning [webpage](#).
3. Knowledge, Skills, Strengths, and Abilities – If the goal is for an occupation or occupational cluster that has a favorable outlook in the labor market, then evaluate the customer’s occupational knowledge, skills, strengths, and abilities (e.g., Does the customer have occupational skills that are currently in-demand? How does the customer’s work history, experience, and/or level of expertise relate to the goal? Are the customer’s skills transferable? Does the customer have the education and training to compete in the job market? Are they unlikely to be able to return to their former occupation due to local economic conditions?).
4. Barriers to Employment – If knowledge, skills, strengths, and abilities are proficient, then determine whether barriers to employment exist. Does the customer have barriers or obstacles preventing them from finding work or retaining work (e.g., health and physical considerations, poor work history, a lack of references, childcare or elder care issues, justice involvement, transportation issues, limited English skills, homelessness, or other personal issues)?
5. Job Search Skills – The customer’s job search planning, preparation, and job seeking skills should also be evaluated (e.g., job adaptation skills, a well prepared and up-to-date résumé, interviewing and communication skills, knowledge of where to look for work and how to research companies, basic digital literacy skills to apply for work online, the ability to do internet-based job searches, social networking and self-marketing skills, motivation to find work, and having a work search plan).

Data Entry

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After conducting an initial assessment, staff must update the customer's OSOS or other appropriate State Management Information System (MIS) record, and record the "Assessment Interview, Initial Assessment" activity. Staff must also record an OSOS/MIS comment, including the assessment results.

Staff should utilize the [Recording an Initial Assessment Activity in OSOS Guide](#) and the [OSOS Selected Enrolling Activity Definitions](#) for additional information on updating the customer's OSOS/MIS record.

BACKGROUND

Conducting an initial assessment will help determine which Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) program the customer is eligible to receive services under.

A key service to be provided in the Career Center System is an initial assessment of a customer's knowledge, skills, strengths, and abilities to support their employment goal, and to identify supportive service needs, based on an analysis of information gathered from the customer through an intake process which may include, but is not limited to, a registration form, résumé, career services eligibility survey, and an interview.

A quality initial assessment will provide enough information on the customer's present situation for staff to determine WIOA program eligibility and the next step(s) of a service plan with the customer. The purpose of the assessment is to understand the customer's occupational goals, existing skills and strengths, and work search readiness, and to determine whether there are any barriers to employment. This assessment is conducted within the context of local labor market conditions and considers service needs that may be articulated by the customer, such as a desire to pursue training or education.

Assessment is an ongoing process which may change along with a customer's varying needs and decisions. The initial assessment is exactly that – a preliminary indication of the customer's needs derived from the baseline information gathered at enrollment and initial provision of staff-assisted services. All subsequent services, which may include a comprehensive assessment or development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or training plan, should be driven by staff's reassessment of the customer's needs at that point in time. For instance, a customer may be determined to be a DW that needs WIOA basic services at the time of an initial assessment, but after the customer attends a workshop and seeks employment, they realize they may need intensive or training services to be gainfully employed.

WDS TA #[09-17.1](#), Individual Employment Plans/Training Plans for WIA Participants in Training (02/04/2015), offers policy and guidance on the use of IEPs and Training Plans.

REFERENCES

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WDS TA #[23-03](#): Data Element Validation (DEV) for Titles I and III under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWGs), the Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) Program, and the Jobs for Veterans State Grants (JVSG) Program (04/28/2023)

WDS TA #[23-01](#): Serving Priority Populations and Priority of Service under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult Program (01/20/2023)

Program Guidance Letter (PGL) #[22-01](#): New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) guidance and interpretation on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) definition of Dislocated Worker (DW) and Recording DWs in the One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) (09/14/2022)

WDS TA #[19-02](#): Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Program – Participant Eligibility Criteria (08/15/2019)

WDS TA #[09-17.1](#): Individual Employment Plans/Training Plans for WIA Participants in Training (02/04/2015)

Military Service Questionnaire ([MSQ](#))

[Recording an Initial Assessment Activity in OSOS](#)

[OSOS Selected Enrolling Activity Definitions](#)

INQUIRIES

Questions regarding this TA may be directed to: DEWS.ReEmploy@labor.ny.gov.

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