

<b><u>MESA COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD</u></b>	
Policy and Procedure	
<b>Title:</b> Adult Priority of Service Policy	<b>State Policy Guidance Letter:</b> WIOA-2015-07
<b>Program:</b> Career Development Program (WIOA)	<b>Effective Date:</b> 9/3/2015 <b>Revision Date:</b> 8/8/2017
<b>Authorized Signature(s):</b>	

**I. REFERENCE(S):**

- Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, Sections 3, 134(c)(3)(E).
- WIOA Department of Labor-Only Final Rule (81 FR 56072, Aug. 19, 2016).
- TEGL 26-13: Impact of the U.S. Supreme Court's Decision in United States v. Windsor on Eligibility and Services Provided Under Workforce Grants Administered by the Employment and Training Administration.
- TEGL 19-16, Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rules
- PGL# VET-2014-02 (prior #14-07-V), Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses.
- PGL# WIOA-2015-05 (prior #15-09-WIOA), WIOA Title I Eligibility
- PGL# WIOA-2017-06, PY17 Local Plans.

**II. PURPOSE:**

To provide guidance regarding implementation of Priority of Service for WIOA Title I Adult Program

**III. POLICY/ACTION:**

A. Priority Groups

There are three groups of individuals targeted for statutory priority under WIOA when providing individualized career services and training services in the Title I Adult program:

1. Recipients of public assistance;
2. Other low-income individuals (including underemployed);
3. Individuals who are basic skills deficient.

Colorado’s policy adds two additional priority groups:

4. Governor’s Priority;
5. Local Board Priority.

B. Definitions:

“Individuals with barriers to employment” includes: displaced homemakers; low-income individuals; Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians; individuals with disabilities; older individuals; ex-offenders; homeless individuals; youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system; individuals who are English learners, have low literacy levels, or face substantial cultural barriers; eligible Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers; individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under TANF; single parents (including pregnant women); long-term unemployed individuals; and members of other groups identified by the Governor (WIOA, Sec. 3(24)).

“Individualized career services” include comprehensive and specialized assessments, development of an individual employment plan, group and individual counseling, career planning, short-term prevocational services, internships and work experiences, workforce preparation activities, financial literacy services, out-of-area job search and relocation assistance, and English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.

There are four groups of individuals targeted for priority when providing individualized career services and training services in the Title I Adult program: public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and individuals who are both underemployed and low income.

1. “Recipients of public assistance” includes individuals who receive, or in the past 6 months have received, or are a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through one or more of the following:

- a. Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP);
- b. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program;
- c. Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program; or
- d. State or local income-based public assistance including LEAP, Section 8 Housing, CCAP (Child Care Assistance Program), or Refugee Cash Assistance (RCA).

2. “Low-income” includes:

- a. Recipients of public assistance (defined above);
- b. Individuals in a family with total income below 70% of the lower living standard income level;
- c. Homeless;
- d. Foster youth;
- e. Individuals with disabilities with individual income below 70% of the lower living standard income level.
- f. Youth in-school up to age 21, or parents of such a youth, who are eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch.
- g. Underemployed individuals who are employed full- or part-time may also be eligible for the Adult priority if they also meet the definition of a low-income individual.

**Note:** A youth 18 or older, who was determined low-income for the WIOA Title I Youth Program, may be co-enrolled in the Title I Adult Program without an eligibility redetermination, and be counted as an individual who meets Adult priority of service, if the original determination was made no more than 6 months prior to the date of co-enrollment.

3. “Basic skills deficient” is defined as an adult who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the participant’s family, or in society.

Individuals who are English language learners meet the criteria for basic skills deficient.

An adult may be assessed as basic skills deficient through case manager observations and documented in case notes. For example, the case manager may observe that the adult is not able to read or fill out an application form, or does not have basic computer literacy. A case manager may also document basic skills deficient with one of the following:

- Basic skills assessment questions or test results
- School records
- Referral or records from a Title II Adult Basic Education program
- Referral or records from an English Language Learner program

If a standardized test is used to assess basic skills, the test should include reading, writing, or computing skills. Lacking soft skills or specific skills needed for a particular job may not be used to determine otherwise high-functioning individuals as basic skills deficient.

**Note:** A youth 18 or older, who was determined basic skills deficient for the WIOA Youth Program, may be co-enrolled in the Adult Program without an eligibility redetermination, and be counted as an individual who meets Adult priority of service, if the original determination was made no more than 6 months prior to the date of co-enrollment.

4. Under the Governor’s authority, Colorado has added the “Governor’s Priority” for “individuals with barriers to employment” as identified in WIOA Sec. 3. The Governor’s Priority will include:

- a. displaced homemakers;
- b. Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians;
- c. individuals with disabilities;
- d. older individuals (age 55 and older);
- e. ex-offenders;
- f. individuals who face substantial cultural barriers;
- g. eligible Migrant Seasonal Farm Workers;
- h. individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility;

- i. single parents (including single pregnant women); and
- j. long-term unemployed individuals (27 or more consecutive weeks).

C. What It Means to Provide Priority of Service:

Priority of service means that individuals in the statutory priority groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and underemployed who are also low-income) are given priority over other individuals for receipt of individualized career services and training services funded by the Title I Adult program. There are no restrictions to providing basic career services; they may be provided to any eligible adult. Adult priority is determined for the targeted groups during eligibility and enrollment. As Customer Summary Forms/WIOA applications are submitted to the program, applicants who self-attest to being in an Adult priority category will be contacted and guided through eligibility/enrollment before applicants that do not indicate an Adult priority category.

D. Interaction of the Adult Priority and Veterans' Priority of Service:

The priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses (as defined in PGL VET-2014-02) always applies across all qualified employment and training programs. However when a program is required in statute to provide priority to specific groups, priority must be applied in the order described below. The Adult priority of service applies only to the receipt of individualized career services and training services in the WIOA Title I Adult program. With regard to the priority of service for veterans and eligible spouses, priority of service for the Title I Adult program will be applied in the following order:

1. Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the statutory priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including the underemployed, or basic skills deficient) and Adult program eligibility must receive the highest level of priority for individualized career and training services.
2. Other individuals (not veterans or eligible spouses) who meet the statutory priority (public assistance recipient, other low-income individuals including underemployed, or basic skills deficient) and Adult program eligibility then receive the second level of priority for services.
3. All other veterans and eligible spouses who do not meet the statutory Adult priority, then receive the third level of priority;
4. Individuals who meet the Governor's Priority receive the fourth level of priority;
5. All other individuals then receive the fifth level of priority.

#### E. Performance Goals:

The Mesa County Workforce Development Board adopts the State's measurement of success in achieving priority of service for the targeted groups within the Adult program with the following formulas: 1) comparing the percentage of individuals in **all** the priority groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including underemployed, basic skills deficient, and Governor's priority) who were enrolled in the Adult program versus the percentage of all other individuals who were enrolled in the program. 2) Comparing the percentage of participants in all the priority groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including underemployed, basic skills deficient, Governor's Priority, and Local Priority) who received individualized career services and/or training services in the Adult program versus the percentage of all other participants who received individualized career services. 3) **A formula comparing the percentage of participants in all the priority groups (public assistance recipients, other low-income individuals including underemployed, basic skills deficient, Governor's Priority, and Local Priority) who received training services in the Adult program versus the percentage of all other participants who received training services in the Adult program.** The Mesa County Career Development Program (WIOA) will conduct active outreach to recruit the priority groups if they are not meeting the goal. Internal monitoring of the goal to serve Adult participants from the statutory priority groups will be conducted by the program manager for the Career Development Program (WIOA) on a monthly basis, and will also be conducted on a yearly basis by the Mesa County Department of Human Services Professional Standards team.