

13 Considerations for AE agencies in WIOA

(these considerations determine the awarding of grants or contracts under this section of WIOA legislation)

Note to AE Field: There is a constant stream of information about WIOA legislation and how it will impact the way we deliver adult literacy services. As we continue to reflect on and interpret these guidelines for enhancing programs and developing a 'WIOA Model' of services in our state, please consider the following insights, in red, specifically regarding:

- the function and purpose of Intake, Assessment & Orientation processes
- the role and responsibility of case management and job development staff

- (1) the degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to—
 - (A) regional needs as identified in the local plan under section 108; and
 - (B) serving individuals in the community who were identified in such plan as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals—
 - (i) who have low levels of literacy skills; or
 - (ii) who are English language learners;
- (2) the ability of the eligible provider to serve eligible individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities;

1 and 2 - The specific needs and/or disabilities of individuals must be captured during an intake and assessment process that is comprehensive and universal. This helps programs to a) plan and personalize services/instruction, and b) provide a baseline assessment of the individual's competencies, needs, and skills before instruction begins. This can include much more than literacy scores – which is why one-on-one personal interviews are necessary and effective, despite the time demand.

- (3) past effectiveness of the eligible provider in improving the literacy of eligible individuals, to meet State-adjusted levels of performance for the primary indicators of performance described in section 116, especially with respect to eligible individuals who have low levels of literacy;
- (4) the extent to which the eligible provider demonstrates alignment between proposed activities and services and the strategy and goals of the local plan under section 108, as well as the activities and services of the one-stop partners;
- (5) whether the eligible provider's program—
 - (A) is of sufficient intensity and quality, and based on the most rigorous research available so that participants achieve substantial learning gains; and
 - (B) uses instructional practices that include the essential components of reading instruction;
- (6) whether the eligible provider's activities, including whether reading, writing, speaking, mathematics, and English language acquisition instruction delivered by the eligible provider, are based on the best practices derived from the most rigorous research available and appropriate, including scientifically valid research and effective educational practice;

5 and 6 - The reading assessments are a critical component of the intake process and should be administered by a practitioner who understands and uses the screening tools effectively and consistently. This enables teaching staff to fully understand the reading needs so they can embed and incorporate specific instructional strategies, ensuring the individuals' unique needs are met.

- (7) whether the eligible provider's activities effectively use technology, services, and delivery systems, including distance education in a manner sufficient to increase the amount and quality of learning and how such technology, services, and systems lead to improved performance;

(8) whether the eligible provider's activities provide learning in context, including through integrated education and training, so that an individual acquires the skills needed to transition to and complete postsecondary education and training programs, obtain and advance in employment leading to economic self-sufficiency, and to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship;

8 - The Orientation Toolkit on the PDC website provides several engaging resources which are integrated and contextualized with essential employment and workforce competencies. These activities are a fun and effective way to introduce the world of work and employer expectations and standards. Programs should consistently compile and use a variety of activities available in toolkits from many local and online sources – monitoring the effectiveness of these with your specific populations.

(9) whether the eligible provider's activities are delivered by well-trained instructors, counselors, and administrators who meet any minimum qualifications established by the State, where applicable, and who have access to high quality professional development, including through electronic means;

9 - It is the responsibility of each individual practitioner, including case management and job development staff, to search for and participate in high quality professional development in order to stay current and knowledgeable of national trends and best practices. This is true despite time constraints and ongoing program demands.

(10) whether the eligible provider's activities coordinate with other available education, training, and social service resources in the community, such as by establishing strong links with elementary schools and secondary schools, postsecondary educational institutions, institutions of higher education, local workforce investment boards, one-stop centers, job training programs, and social service agencies, business, industry, labor organizations, community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and intermediaries, for the development of career pathways;

(11) whether the eligible provider's activities offer flexible schedules and coordination with Federal, State, and local support services (such as child care, transportation, mental health services, and career planning) that are necessary to enable individuals, including individuals with disabilities or other special needs, to attend and complete programs;

10 and 11 - It is essential that appropriate referrals are made to ensure individuals can receive services that meet their needs effectively and holistically. This requires collaboration and referral relationships with other institutions and service-providers to help people as their needs evolve and change, especially in developing career plans and pathways. The need for referral relationships that connect individuals to support services (i.e. transportation, child care, physical and mental health services) continues to persist.

(12) whether the eligible provider maintains a high-quality information management system that has the capacity to report measurable participant outcomes (consistent with section 116) and to monitor program performance; and

(13) whether the local areas in which the eligible provider is located have a demonstrated need for additional English language acquisition programs and civics education programs.

12 and 13 - Again, this reiterates the importance of a comprehensive intake process that captures relevant and quality data elements in order to track and measure individual's progress and outcomes. This includes not only services provided by your agency, but also services for which you made referrals to other agencies, making it possible to demonstrate need for specific services in your community.