



Re: Priority of Service for Dislocated Workers & Waitlists during COVID-19 Pandemic

Date: July 13, 2020

Summary

Due to the significant impacts that COVID-19 has had on the economy and the higher demand for services from the Dislocated Worker (DW) program, the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Area has implemented a priority of service for the DW program to ensure that the most in need are served first. Additionally, when Dislocated Worker funds of any kind are insufficient to support the intake of applications for employment services, a waitlist should be created to fairly administer services when funds become available again.

Background

Hennepin County declared a local state of emergency on March 17, 2020 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Carver County did the same on March 17, 2020. Since then, unemployment rates in Minnesota have risen to 9.9% as of May 2020.

Priority of Service is a system for screening and enrolling participants who are most in need when program resources are limited. Individuals in the groups with recognized barriers to employment will be given priority to receive individualized career services, training services, and support services funded by the DW program over other individuals who may also meet eligibility requirements for the program.

Waitlists may be necessary in times of unprecedented economic conditions that result from recessions, mass layoffs in one area or a large regional area, and/or during times of a public health pandemic. No formal policy is required under WIOA law, and this memo is issued by the local Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board. Hennepin County staff will partner with service providers to implement the guidance provided in this memo.

Priority of Service Determination

1st Priority – Individuals who are a veteran or an eligible spouse

2nd Priority – Individual members of a population with recognized barriers to employment:

- Displaced homemakers;
- Low-income individuals;
- Indians, Alaskan Natives, and Native Hawaiians;
- Individuals with disabilities;
- Older individuals;
- Ex-offenders;
- Homeless individuals or homeless children and youth;
- Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system;
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers;
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farm workers;
- Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime TANF eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.);
- Single parents (including pregnant women);
- Long-term unemployed individuals (defined as individuals unemployed since March 17, 2020)

3rd Priority – Individuals who:

- have not received training services in within the last 3 years

OR

- have not been employed for the last 12 months or more in their primary occupation

4th Priority – Individuals who:

- Have worked 10 consecutive years or more within the same industry/occupation;
- OR
- Have worked 10 years or more with most recent employer, AND
 - Live or worked in Hennepin County or Carver County

Procedures

1. Prioritization of Applicants

This memo will be implemented when service providers have reached 75% of their total enrollment numbers for the program year. Hennepin County and its sub-grantees will post communication pertaining to this special Priority of Service when each phase goes into effect. At that time, providers must initiate a waitlist for those individuals who do not fall into the priority populations that may be served in each phase. Service providers should refer waitlisted applicants to other providers in the state who may be able to accept DW program applications sooner.

Prioritization of populations will be implemented in the following phased approach:

| Phase | Parameters | Priority Populations |
|-------|---|------------------------|
| 1 | WDA has enrolled 75% of total enrollment goal per DEED Project Specific Plan (Contractual work plan between Hennepin Co. & DEED) as of 7/1/2020 through current date* | 1st, 2nd, 3rd |
| 2 | WDA has enrolled 85% of total enrollment goal per DEED Project Specific Plan (Contractual work plan between Hennepin Co. & DEED) as of 7/1/2020 through current date* | 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th |

*This will be determined utilizing DEED’s Workforce One Grant Summary Report

2. Development of Waitlist

1. Service provider management staff will monitor program enrollments regularly.
2. Once it has been determined that the local area has reached 75% of enrollment capacity based on DEED Work Plans, providers will communicate to their staff and Hennepin County staff that funding is low and this priority of service and waitlist process will go into effect on {insert date}.
3. Hennepin County will provide notice to the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Development Board members, DEED and other local areas that Hennepin-Carver WDA has implemented a waitlist.
4. Each provider only enrolls individuals who meet the priority populations above.
5. Applicants who cannot be immediately served may be placed on a waitlist if they (1) are ready and able to work full-time, and (2) complete the Hennepin-Carver Workforce Area Interest Form.
6. Applicants on the waitlist will be notified of other area DW resources.
7. As funding becomes available, individuals will be contacted in the order of the waitlist.

Trade Adjustment Assistance Priority:

In compliance with DEED’s Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy and Definitions, any individual receiving a notice of termination from a work site certified for Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) is automatically eligible for Dislocated Worker services. If a TAA-eligible customer seeks DW services, the provider must enroll the applicant so that they receive immediate services. Please refer to [DEED’s Dislocated Worker Eligibility Policy & Definitions](#).

Duration of Guidance

The guidance in this memo is a temporary emergency response to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. This guidance will expire on March 31, 2021 unless sooner terminated by the Hennepin-Carver WFDB.