



Hennepin-Carver

Workforce Development Board

WDA 09 WIOA Adult: Eligibility and Priority of Service

Policy Summary

This policy establishes criteria necessary to determine whether an individual is eligible for the WIOA Adult program and describes the priority of service requirement with respect to funds for individualized career services and training services.

Relevant Laws, Rules, or Policies

[Lower Living Standard Income Level](#)

Effective Date: March 18, 2026

Last Updated:

Contact: Jen Albrecht, Workforce Development Manager jen.albrecht@hennepin.us

Policy

Local Policy Required

Local providers are required to have an updated policy on file that includes, at minimum, the information required by this policy. The policy may be incorporated into the Local Plan or exist as a standalone document. Local policies must be made available to DEED upon request. *This policy adopts that of the Minnesota Department of Employment & Economic Development.*

Eligibility Requirements

The following is the eligibility criteria for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult Program. Documentation verifying the eligibility of participants is mandatory. Eligibility determination must be made prior to enrollment in the WIOA Adult program and receipt of any individualized career, training or supportive services. Each participant must receive an initial assessment of need for services to ensure that the local area is providing employment and training opportunities to those who are most in need of such services.

Individuals must meet the following eligibility criteria to participate in the WIOA Adult Program:

- U.S. citizen or otherwise legally entitled to work in the United States;

- Age 18 or older; and
- In compliance with Selective Service Registration requirements (see DEED's Selective Service Registration Policy)

Priority of Service

Individuals in the targeted groups below are given priority to receive individualized career services, training services, and supportive services funded by the WIOA Adult program over other individuals who may also be meet eligibility requirements for the program. Veterans and eligible spouses within these groups receive priority over non-veterans. This priority of service is in place at all times, regardless of availability of funds.

Priority of service is determined for the targeted groups during eligibility and prior to enrollment and must be accurately documented in Workforce One. If an individual who does not meet the priority of service requirements is already enrolled in the program and has begun receiving services, this policy does not require the service provider to discontinue services when other individuals who meet priority of service enroll in the program.

The priority of service established in the previous paragraph does not mean that these services must be provided exclusively to individuals who meet these priority of service categories. State and Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) may add additional priorities of service under the 4th Category/Priority in this policy.

Priority of service for WIOA Adult participants must be provided in the following order (i.e. individuals in the first category are prioritized first, individuals in the second category are prioritized second, etc.):

- 1st Priority of Service - Veterans and eligible spouses (covered persons) who are:
 - Low income, or
 - Recipients of public assistance, or
 - Who are basic skills deficient

*Note: military earnings should not be included when calculating income for veterans or transitioning service members for this priority

- 2nd Priority of Service - Individuals who are not Veterans and eligible spouses (non-covered persons) who are:
 - Low income, or

- Recipients of public assistance, or
- Who are basic skills deficient
- 3rd Priority of Service - Veterans and eligible spouses who are:
 - Not low income, or
 - Not recipients of public assistance, and
 - Are not basic skills deficient
- 4th Priority of Service – Priority populations established by the Governor and/or Local WDBs. These priorities must be clearly outlined in the State and Local plans. Any individuals identified in this category receive priority of service after priority has been given to individuals in Priority Categories 1, 2 and 3. Current State and Local Plans can be found on DEED’s WIOA website under the “State Plan” and “Regional and Local Plans” tabs.
- 5th Priority of Service – All other eligible individuals who do not meet any of the Priority of Service categories. The vast majority of individuals enrolled in the WIOA Adult program should meet the criteria for Priority of Service Categories 1, 2, 3, and 4.

Employment Status Clarification

Individuals do not need to be unemployed to qualify for the WIOA Adult Program. Participants who are unemployed or underemployed and meet any of the priority of service criteria may receive program services on a priority basis. Individuals with Barriers to Employment do not independently qualify to receive priority of service in the WIOA Adult Program, unless they are also low income, recipients of public assistance and/or basic skills deficient or are identified as a priority group by the State or Local WDBs in the State or Local Unified Plans.

For the purposes of this policy, “underemployed” means individuals who meet any of the following criteria:

- Are employed less than full-time but who are seeking full-time employment.
- Are employed in a position that is inadequate with respect to their skills and training. A position is considered inadequate if a person has obtained a postsecondary degree and is working in a low-skill, low-wage job; or has obtained an industry-recognized credential or training certificate but is working in a low-skill, low-wage job

- Are employed full-time or part-time but still meet the definition of a low-income individual
- Are employed full-time or part-time but whose current job's wages are insufficient compared to their previous job's earnings. Insufficient wages are defined as wages less than 80% of the worker's wages from their previous job at their previous employer
- Were laid-off from a previous job but have found interim/stop-gap employment

Participant File Documentation

DEED requires local providers to capture accurate and timely priority of service information for all WIOA Adult participants in Workforce One who meet priority of service in Categories 1-4. This information will be used to ensure local compliance with the priority of service requirements during monitoring visits and may also impact the local area's ability to negotiate performance standards using the mandated statistical adjustment model

Definitions

Basic skills deficient - an individual who:

- Lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education, or
- Is currently enrolled in a WIOA Title II Adult Education/Literacy program (ABE Program), or
- Completes a reading and/or math assessment at or below an 8th grade level, or
- Is an English language learner, or
- Is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job or in society (note: this definition is not meant to capture individuals who lack specific skills needed to function on a particular job they are seeking, but are otherwise proficient for many other occupations or situations)

Individual with Barriers to Employment – an individual who is a member of one or more of the following populations:

- Displaced homemakers;
- Low-income individuals;
- Indians, Alaska 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 season 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;
- Other groups that the Governor determines to have barriers to employment

Low Income - an individual who:

- An individual who receives, or in the past 6 months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past 6 months has received, assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program, or the Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, or State or local income-based public assistance;
- Is in a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of –
 - The poverty line; or
 - 70 percent of the lower living standard income (LLSIL)
- Is a homeless individual, or a homeless child or youth;
- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act;
- Is a foster child on behalf of whom State or local government payments are made; or

- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements of “low income” but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

Recipient of Public Assistance - an individual who receives or is eligible to receive one or more of the following benefits:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits
- Medical Assistance (Minnesota’s Medicaid program)
- Refugee Assistance benefits
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)/Minnesota Family Investment Program (MFIP) benefits
- Other state or federal benefits requiring an income limit to be eligible

Related Links

- [DEED's WIOA Website](#)
- [WIOA Adult Acceptable Documentation List](#)