

SOUTH CENTRAL OKLAHOMA WORKFORCE BOARD, INC.

1703 SW 11th

Lawton, Oklahoma 73501

580-357-3500/ 580-467-3486

Telephone Relay Service is available by dialing 711 or 800-722-0353



SUBJECT: Center Certification Policy

PURPOSE: To define the local procedures to be used, as guided by the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development (OOWD), to prepare and submit for initial and subsequent center certification approval.

AUTHORITY: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Sections 101(d)(6), 121(e)(2), 121(g)(1), 121(g)(3), Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 16-16; 20 CFR 678.800 (a)(3), and CFR 678 Subpart F; 20 CFR 678.400-430; 20 CFR 678.800(b)); 20 CFR 361.400-430; 29 CFR 38; 34 CFR 463.410-430; 20 CFR 678.300(d)(3); Title I, II, III of the Americans with Disability Act; Oklahoma Works Workforce System Access for All; Oklahoma Workforce Development Issuance (OWDI) #07-2017.

BACKGROUND: WIOA envisions high-quality American Job Center (AJC) systems that are business driven, customer-centered, integrated, and tailored to meet the needs of the local workforce development area. The law emphasizes the need for partnerships and strategies that align workforce development, education, and economic development programs with regional needs.

The AJC system must be comprehensive, flexible, innovative, employer-driven, customer-focused and performance-based. The workforce one-stop system must also respond to customer needs, and be adaptable to the rapid changes in the global economy.

In an effort to ensure that the workforce one-stop system meets minimum quality standards, including the effective integration of services, and in anticipation of meeting requirements in WIOA, the Oklahoma Office of Workforce Development has developed a minimum standard for American Job Center (AJC) certification.

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DEFINITIONS:

A. Center Certification Team (CCT)

The CCT will be established by Local Workforce Development Board's (LWDB) and are responsible for conducting independent and objective evaluations of the American Job Centers and affiliate centers and shall make certification recommendations to LWDBs. The LWDB has discretion in forming the CCT's size and membership. CCT members must be free of conflicts of interest in the Centers.

POLICY: Under WIOA, the state is tasked with developing and implementing objective criteria and procedures for use by local areas in assessing and certifying comprehensive and affiliate one-stop centers for effectiveness, including customer satisfaction, physical and technology accessibility, and continuous improvement. Each local area must have at least one physical comprehensive one-stop center location that provides on-demand access to career services, training services, employment services, and all required programs and data, but may also incorporate affiliated or specialized centers.

A. Comprehensive Center

All comprehensive one-stop centers and the technology they provide to Job Seekers must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, as described in 29 CFR part 38, the implementing regulations of WIOA sec.188.

The comprehensive one-stop center must provide:

1. Career services, described in 20 CFR 678.430 and TEGE 16-16;
2. Access to training services described in 20 CFR 680.200;
3. Access to any employment and training activities carried out under sec.134(d) of WIOA;
4. Access to programs and activities carried out by one-stop partners listed in 20 CFR 678.400 through 678.410, including the Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA title III (Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program); and
5. Workforce and labor market information.

"Access" to each partner program and its services means:

1. Having a program staff member physically present at the one-stop center;
2. Having a staff member from a different partner program physically present at the one-stop center appropriately trained to provide information to customers about the programs, services, and activities available through partner programs; or
3. Making available a direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide meaningful information or services.

A "direct linkage" means providing direct connection at the one-stop center, within a reasonable time, by phone or through a real-time Web-based communication to a program staff member who can provide program information or services to the customer.

A “direct linkage” cannot exclusively be providing a phone number or computer website that can be used at an individual’s home; providing information, pamphlets, or materials; or making arrangements for the customer to receive services at a later time or on a different day. If the direct linkage is provided via telephone, access must be a phone line dedicated to serving one-stop customers in a timely manner. If the direct linkage is provided via technology, access must enable trained staff to provide remote assistance through technology such as live web chat (e.g. Skype, Facetime), video conference, or other similar technology that involves a form of one-on-one assistance. As applicable and practical, one-stop partners should make services accessible to individuals electronically in a way that improves efficiency, coordination, and quality in the delivery of one-stop partner services.

All comprehensive one-stop centers and the technology they provide to Job Seekers must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, as described in 29 CFR part 38, the implementing regulations of WIOA sec.188. Oklahoma’s Access for All was developed as a system-wide effort and includes two parts to the Access for All Certification in Oklahoma. One considers accessibility in the physical space and the other considers accessibility in technology. Both focus on the environments that Job Seekers interact with when participating in services provided by the Oklahoma Works Workforce System Partners. In the end, Oklahoma Works Workforce System Partners and Workforce Areas work through an Access for All Accessibility Process to achieve Certification.

B. Affiliate Center

An affiliated site, or affiliate one-stop center, is a site that makes available to job seeker and employer customers one or more of the one-stop partners’ programs, services, and activities with a physical presence of combined staff more than 50 percent of the time the center is open. An affiliated site does not need to provide access to every required one-stop partner program. The frequency of program staff’s physical presence in the affiliated site will be determined at the local level. Affiliated sites are access points in addition to the comprehensive one-stop center(s) in each local area. If used by local areas as a part of the service delivery strategy, affiliate sites must be established in a manner that supplements and enhances customer access to services. All affiliated sites must be accessible to individuals with disabilities, as described in 29 CFR part 38, the implementing regulations of WIOA sec. 188.

If Wagner-Peyser Act employment services are provided at an affiliated site, there must be at least one or more other partners in the affiliated site with a physical presence of combined staff more than 50 percent of the time the center is open. Additionally, the other partner must not be the partner administering local veterans’ employment representatives, disabled veterans’ outreach

program specialists, or unemployment compensation programs. If Wagner-Peyser Act employment services and any of these 3 programs are provided at an affiliated site, an additional partner or partners must have a presence of combined staff in the center more than 50 percent of the time the center is open.

C.Specialized Center

Any network of one-stop partners or specialized centers, as described in 20 CFR 678.300(d)(3), must be connected to the comprehensive one-stop center and any appropriate affiliate one-stop centers, for example, by having processes in place to make referrals to these centers and the partner programs located in them. Specialized Centers do not have to be certified.

A Specialized Center is a Center that address specific needs. (i.e. youth, key industry sectors, etc.). The specialized centers are not required to be certified.

CENTER EVALUATION: To evaluate AJC's and affiliate centers the LWDBs must first develop a "Center Certification Team" (CCT), then use the appropriate Certification Checklist provided under state guidance, OWDI #07-2017. Upon completion of the evaluation there are four certification determinations that may be assigned to each Center:

1. Certification;
2. Certification with Standard for Excellence designation;
3. Provisional Certification with a requirement that one-stop operators provide action plans and timelines for meeting certification standards; and
4. Not Certified or Decertified.

The type of certification is determined by the percentage of each criterion met:

1. **Certification** may be awarded if 100% of benchmark criteria and no less than 50% of general criteria are met;
2. **Certification with Standard for Excellence** designation may be awarded if 100% of benchmark criteria and more than 50% of Standard for Excellence criteria are met;
3. **Provisional Certification** may be awarded if less than 100% but not less than 75% of benchmark criteria are met; or
4. Centers are considered **not certified or decertified** if less than 75% of benchmark criteria are met.

CENTER CERTIFICATION PROCESS:

It is required the LWDB develop a "Center Certification Team" (CCT) to evaluate the centers every two years. The process must be updated in the Local Plan. The One-Stop Operator shall submit an application to the Board, requesting certification for each comprehensive and affiliate center (Attachment A: Center Certification Application).

The Board Staff, being the primary point person for the CCT, will provide the CTT with the certification application and electronic materials to begin a desk and onsite review. The CCT

must review documentation, such as, memorandums of understanding, procedure manuals, customer satisfaction surveys, etc. Upon conclusion of the review, the CCC shall hold an exit meeting with the One-Stop Operator, Board Staff, and other relevant staff to communicate their findings. If appropriate, the One-Stop Operator shall provide the CCT a plan of action on any “required” criterion that were not met. The Board may request of the One-Stop Operator a corrective action plan to meet all other criterion identified above and beyond the “required” standard.

Once the review has been completed, the CCT shall present the completed Certification Checklist and a letter signed by the CCT to the LWDB recommending which of the four determinations to assign to each center. Once the recommendation is approved by the LWDB, the board shall obtain the signature of the CLEO(s) for final approval.

In the event the CCT recommends that a comprehensive or affiliate one-stop center not be certified, the LWDB will send a letter signed by the CCT to the One-Stop Operator with specific corrective action items that must be addressed before certification can be approved. A copy of the letter shall also be sent electronically to OOWD. Once the One-Stop Operator informs the LWDB that all issues preventing certification have been resolved, the LWDB chair or designee can reconvene the CCT to conduct a follow-up evaluation using the same method as the initial evaluation.

Once the LWDB and CLEO approve the certification of a comprehensive or affiliate one-stop center, the LWDB chair or designee submits electronically all executed letters and copies of the completed Certification Checklist and necessary documentation to OOWD.

The Center Certification Process shall be as follows, unless otherwise directed by the SCOWB Executive Director:

Timeline during even numbered Program Years (2018, 2020, 2022, etc.)

December:	One-Stop Operator Complete and Submit Application
January:	Convene CCT
February:	Complete Audit Audit Report Completed Exit Meeting
March:	Correction Plan Due to CCT and Board
April :	Correction Plan Completed One-Stop Operator Notification Due and Received by Board
May:	Convene CCT for Final Review
June:	Board Approval of Certification CLEO Signature Submission to OOWD

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment A: Center Certification Application

Approved by:

Executive Committee: August 9, 2017

SCOWB: September 14, 2017

