WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

Business Service Policy

IMPORTANT! This document contains **important information** about your rights, responsibilities, and/or benefits. It is critical that you understand the information in this document, and we will provide the information in your preferred language at no cost to you. **Call Lafonda Colbert (580) 357-3500** for assistance in the translation and understanding of the information in this document.

¡IMPORTANTE! Este documento contiene **información importante** sobre sus derechos, responsabilidades y/o beneficios. Es importante que usted entienda la información en este documento. Nosotros le podemos ofrecer la información en el idioma de su preferencia sin costo alguno para usted. **Llame al Lafonda Colbert (580) 357-3500** para pedir asistencia en traducir y entender la información en este documento.

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

EQUAL OPPORTUNITY AND NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT: All Recipients and sub-recipients/subgrantees must comply with WIOA's Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination provisions which prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including limited English proficiency), age, disability, political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title-I financially assisted program or activity.

South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I program funding statement can be found at https://scowib.info/funding

Caddo County, Grady County, McClain County, and City of Chickasha Labor Market Area
Comanche County, Cotton County, Tillman County, and City of Lawton Fort Sill Labor Market Area
Jefferson County, Stephens County, and City of Duncan Labor Market Area

BUSINESS SERVICES POLICY

PURPOSE: The South Central Oklahoma Workforce Board provides this issuance as guidance for the provision of Business Engagement and Business Services.

REFERENCES:

- WIOA sec. 108(b)(4)
- WIOA sec 134(c)(1)(A)(v) and (d)(1)(A)
- 20 CFR 678.435
- 34 CFR 361.435
- 34 CFR 463.435
- TEGL 16-16 Change 1
- TEGL 10-16, Change 3
- WSD #67-2024

POLICY:
The Joint WIOA Final Rule mandates that business services be provided through the American Job Center (AJC) network, to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the area. Through the Oklahoma Works American Job Centers (OWAJC), the core partners and other co-located entities must develop, offer, and deliver quality business services to help businesses and industry address the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy. To support area employers and industry sectors most effectively, OWAJC staff (including designated partner program staff) must:

- Have a clear understanding of industry skill needs;
- Identify appropriate strategies for assisting employers and coordinate business services activities across OWAJC partner programs and local economic development agencies, as appropriate; and
- Develop a unified business services strategy among the OWAJC partners to ensure clear and consistent communication with employers.

SCOWB is required to facilitate engagement in workforce development programs. The goals of business engagement are to:

- Increase awareness of services and resources provided through the workforce system;
- Increase the likelihood of employers hiring job seekers through the workforce system;
- Create and strengthen career pathways aligned to business and industry demand;
- Provide business intelligence to employers, intermediaries, and partners to ensure the workforce is relevant and useful;
- Ensure strong talent pipelines for demand occupations that allow businesses to grow and be successful; and

- Establish SCOWB as an integral partner in regional economic development by connecting to workforce strategies, solutions, and cutting-edge labor market research and data.

INSTRUCTIONS:
SCOWB's local plan must include a description of the strategies and services used to:

- Facilitate engagement of employers in workforce development programs, including small employers and those in in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
- Support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses.
- Better coordinate workforce development programs and economic development; and
- Strengthen linkages between the one-stop delivery system (OWAJC) and unemployment insurance programs.

The Local Plan must also describe strategies and services to implement initiatives such as incumbent worker training, on-the-job training programs, customized training programs, industry and sector strategies, career pathway initiatives, utilization of effective business intermediaries, and other business services and strategies.

The Business Engagement Self-Assessment Tool, provided as Attachment I, is a self-assessment for the local workforce development area's business service team. It helps evaluate how integrated and effective their current business services are and identify areas for improvement. SCOWB must use this tool as part of their strategic planning process. It serves as a framework for workforce partners to discuss how to become more responsive to businesses and helps determine what a "high performing" integrated business services system should look like. This tool must be archived with the local plan for review upon request.

Business Services Staff
The goal of business services staff is to assist businesses in developing the long-term strength of their workforce. This is done by understanding and addressing the specific needs of each business, as expressed by the employer. Effective business service involves listening, asking questions, and offering tailored solutions that meet the employer's needs, rather than simply providing a standard list of services. Ultimately, the focus is on delivering effective services that make a real impact for the business.

Business Services Team Structure and Function
SCOWB is required to have a business services team (BST). The local BST is generally staffed by WIOA core partners, including Wagner-Peyser, the LWDB Business Services Representative, Adult Education and Literacy, Vocational Rehabilitation, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives (LVERS), and other workforce partner entities as determined by the local area. Each core partner in the LWDA must designate a staff member to serve as their BST representative. This ensures that the BST is comprised of knowledgeable representatives from all key areas, fostering a collaborative approach to delivering business services.

It is the responsibility of the BST to establish a single point of contact for employers. The single point of contact represents the core partners and is responsible for the coordination of business services, including making referrals to other partners as appropriate.

SCOWB must ensure the following:

1. **Staff Training and Development**
    - Full-Time Employees (FTEs) are trained in required activities.
2. **Employer Engagement and Services**
    - Employer account and service tracking.
    - Provision of all core business services in the local area/region, including:
        - Rapid Response/layoff aversion,
        - Data provision,
        - Registered Apprenticeship (RA) outreach and program development,
        - Employer-focused events (minimum of one per quarter),
        - Sector partnership support,
        - Competency-based hiring,
        - Employer incentive promotion and training.
3. **Strategic Planning**
    - Development of a coordinated business services strategic plan for the region that includes workforce development and economic development and/or chamber staff.
        - This plan should include a business needs assessment to inform strategy (e.g., LMI data review, employer focus groups, interviews, survey data, etc.).
        - OESC may offer technical assistance in the form of local team facilitation.
4. **Performance Monitoring and Improvement**
    - Monitoring of performance and implementation of continuous improvement strategies as needed.
5. **Promotion and Communication**
    - Promotion of business services via the LWDB website.
    - Development of a communications strategy for employer engagement activities.
6. **Partnership and Collaboration**
    - Partnership with economic development, chambers, and Oklahoma Employment Security Commission teams on an ad-hoc basis to develop workforce development strategies and solutions for business recruitment and expansion activities.

Employer Account and Service Tracking
All employer interactions, including job creation, service provision, and contact, must be recorded, and managed through Oklahoma's case management system. Specifically:

1. **Employer Account Creation**:
    - An employer account must be created by the employer in the case management system for each employer engaging with our services.
2. **Job Creation**:
    - All job openings created by employers must be entered into the case management system.
    - Details regarding job specifications, requirements, and other relevant information must be accurately documented.
3. **Service Provision**:
    - All services provided to employers, including consultations, recruitment assistance, and training programs, must be logged in the case management system.
    - Service details must include the type of service, date of provision, and outcomes where applicable.
4. **Employer Contact**:
    - All communications and interactions with employers must be tracked in the case management system.
    - This includes phone calls, emails, meetings, and any other form of contact.

Business Services through the One-Stop Delivery System

The following business services may be provided through the one-stop delivery system:

a. Certain career services must be made available to local employers, specifically labor exchange activities and labor market information described in 20 CFR 678.430. Local areas must establish and develop relationships and networks with large and small employers and their intermediaries, and develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships.
b. Customized business services may be provided to employers, employer associations, and other such organizations. These services are tailored for specific employers and may include:
    1. Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers;
    2. Customized services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations, on employment-related issues;
    3. Customized recruitment events and related services for employers, including targeted job fairs
    4. Human resource consultation services, including but not limited to assistance with:
        i. Writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks;
        ii. Developing performance evaluation and personnel policies;
        iii. Creating orientation sessions for new workers;
        iv. Honing job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance;
        v. Analyzing employee turnover;
        vi. Creating job accommodations and using assistive technologies; or

vii. Explaining labor and employment laws to help employers comply with discrimination, wage/hour, and safety/health regulations;

5. Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries, or clusters; and
6. Other similar customized services.

c. SCOWB may also provide other business services and implement strategies that meet the workforce development needs of area employers, in accordance with the statutory and regulatory requirements of partner programs and consistent with Federal cost principles. These business services may be provided through effective business intermediaries working in conjunction with SCOWB, or through the use of economic development, philanthropic, and other public and private resources in a manner determined appropriate by SCOWB and in cooperation with OESC. Allowable activities, consistent with each partner's authorized activities include, but are not limited to:

1. Developing and implementing industry sector strategies (including strategies that involve industry partnerships, regional skills alliances, industry skill panels, and sectoral skills partnerships);
2. Customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of a registered apprenticeship program;
3. Developing and delivering innovative workforce investment services and strategies for area employers, which may include career pathways, skills upgrading, skill standard development and certification for recognized postsecondary credential or other employer use, and other effective initiatives for meeting the workforce investment needs of area employers and workers;
4. Assistance to area employers in managing reductions in force in coordination with rapid response activities and with strategies for the aversion of layoffs, which may include strategies such as early identification of firms at risk of layoffs, use of feasibility studies to assess the needs of and options for at-risk firms, and the delivery of employment and training activities to address risk factors;
5. The marketing of business services to appropriate area employers, including small and mid-sized employers; and
6. Assisting employers with accessing local, State, and Federal tax credits.

Fee-for-Service

Under WIOA, customized employer-related services may be provided on a fee-for-service basis, though charging a fee is not mandatory.

1. **Customized Employer-Related Services**
   - Services described in sections (b) and (c) of the Business Services through the One-Stop Delivery System section may be provided on a fee-for-service basis.
   - These services may also be delivered through effective business intermediaries in conjunction with the LWDB, either on a fee-for-service basis or by leveraging

economic development, philanthropic, and other public and private resources.

2. **Determining Fee-for-Service**
    - When opting to provide business services on a fee-for-service basis, the LWDB must:
        - Assess the services to be provided.
        - Compare the assets and resources available within the Oklahoma Works American Job Centers and its partners.
        - Determine an appropriate cost structure for services, if any.
    - Any fees earned for customized employer-related services are considered program income and must be expended in accordance with the partner program's authorizing statute, implementing regulations, and Federal cost principles in the Uniform Guidance.
3. **Non-Fee Services**
    - No fee may be charged for the mandatory career services provided to local employers listed in section (a).
    - Recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including referrals to specialized business services, cannot be offered on a fee-for-service basis.
    - Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information must be free of charge, including:
        - Accurate information on local, regional, and national labor market areas.
        - Job vacancy listings in labor market areas.
        - Information on job skills required for vacant jobs.
        - Information on local occupations in demand, earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement.

Business Services Toolbox

The following business services tools are provided to local areas to guide conversations with employers. Priority business services may include:

1. **LMI Reports**
    - Provide labor market information (LMI) reports with recommendations on recruitment strategies.
2. **Competency-Based Hiring Practices**
    - Assess new hires for hidden skills using a competency-based skills assessment agreed upon by the Business Services Team (BST).
    - Screen candidates for hire.
    - Examples of competency-based assessments may include, but are not limited to, WorkKeys®, Microburst Learning, introduction to safety credentials, and computer familiarity skill assessments.
3. **Sector Partnerships**
    - Support and expand partnerships in key industry sectors.
4. **Expanding Registered Apprenticeship (RA) Opportunities**

- Develop and promote RA programs.

5. **Employer-Focused Events and Outreach**
   - Organize specialized recruitment events and job fairs.
   - Host summits and outreach events, such as:
     - Workforce Summit
     - RA/Work-Based Learning (WBL) Summit
     - Disabilities Summit
     - Youth Summit
6. **Rapid Response (WIOA Required)**
   - Provide rapid response services for employers undergoing layoffs or closures.
7. **Layoff Aversion (WIOA Required)**
   - Implement strategies to prevent layoffs and retain employees.
8. **Promotion of Employer Incentives**
   - Promote various employer incentives such as:
     - RA tax credit
     - Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
     - Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)

Other Business Services Tools

- **Posting Job Orders**
  - Assist employers in posting job orders and provide job order analytics.
- **Promoting OWAJCs and the state database system**
  - Integrate Oklahoma Works American Job Centers (OWAJCs) and state database system into the communications strategy.
- **Providing Space for Interviews**

Offer space for employers to conduct interviews at the OWAJC

<u>Evaluation of Business Services</u>

SCOWB will be evaluated by the following measures:

- Effectiveness in serving employers; measured only by retention with the same employer in the second and fourth quarters after exit.
- Customer satisfaction survey results;
- Output metrics:
  - Number of employer outreach contacts per month inputted into verified accounts on the Oklahoma case management system.
  - Number of employer-focused events conducted per quarter; and
- Number of active sector partnerships.

ACTION REQUIRED: SCOWB will disseminate the Business Service Policy to all SCOWB contractors, staff, and board members. All contractors, staff, and board members will be responsible for following this policy.

ATTACHMENTS:
Attachment I: Business Engagement Self-Assessment Tool

APPROVED: 01/19/2024