

Mercer County Workforce Development Board
Case Management Policy
Adopted: 1/28/2025

Purpose

To provide guidance on case management and to ensure customers who need further assistance with workforce development services are given the opportunity to meet with Mercer County One-Stop staff.

Case Management

- Staff members who provide case management are expected to:
 - Develop on-going relationships with their customers and act as a resource.
 - Develop a relationship with WIOA program partners where co-enrollments may exist, when appropriate and possible.
 - Help customers understand and act on their Individual Employment Plan, making adjustments as necessary
 - Perform regular check-ins
- As much as possible, customers should be able to see the same staff member for check-ins and return visits/appointments until the customer finds employment or otherwise exits the system.

References

- WIOA Sec. 2
- WIOA Sec. 134
- 20 CFR § 680.210-220
- TEGL 19-16 Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services (ES), as amended by Title III of WIOA, and for Implementation of the WIOA Final Rule.
- New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development Guidelines for Local Workforce Development Areas, Adult and Dislocated Worker Program and Training Eligibility Determination Under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Revised July, 2018
- New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development, TITLE I YOUTH ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION and DOCUMENTATION, Revised, January, 2019
- WD-PY21-5 - New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice - Placement, Exit, and Follow-up Procedures – Issued: December 16, 2021
- WD-PY21-3 - New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Formula-Funded On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy – Issued: October 29, 2021

Electronic & Paper File Case Management

America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS) is the NJ DLWD's electronic case management system, for tracking program participation, program eligibility, data validation, service delivery, program outcomes, etc.

Paper files are also maintained by staff to support program participation. Paper files are maintained in a secured and organized manner. Staff should follow the Organization Instruction sheet. Files are to be maintained in a locked area. This type of file maintenance for program enrollments is not totally duplicative, but rather support one another to ensure compliance with Federal, State, and Regional guidelines.

Services

There are three types of career services: basic career services, individualized career services, and follow-up services. Individualized career services must be provided to participants after Mercer County One-Stop Career Center staff

determine that such services are required to retain or obtain employment.

Generally, these services involve significant staff time and are customized to each individual's needs.

An assessment process collects and evaluates various data elements concerning an individual. Through assessment, an individual and a One-Stop Team Member, will jointly develop a plan of activities and services needed. Assessment results are to be recorded in America's One-Stop Operating System (AOSOS).

When the participant's service strategy includes individualized career and/or training services, case notes must contain the determination of the need and eligibility for those services, under 20 CFR **SS** 680.210, as well as the justification for the determination.

Services provided to reportable individuals, registrants, and participants are entered into AOSOS. Case notes must be entered for each service/activity provided and support/justify the delivered service.

It is preferred that services and case notes be entered as delivered, but staff are allowed **up to three business days**.

It is allowable to enter a case note without a supporting service when it is intended to provide just an update or status change on the customer's progress where no evidence of a service was provided is shown.

The frequency and mix of service delivery is unique based on each individual participant, program, and eligibility of services.

- Keeping participants active and engaged through the delivery of various WIOA services increases the likelihood of successful outcomes, ideally until they become employed or have met other relevant goals.
- Participants will remain program active as long as services that prevent an exit are delivered every 90 days or less. Expected service delivery is every 30-45 days, if not more frequently.
- Basic career services, partner services, and supportive services do not prevent an exit.
- Identifying next steps with participants helps ensure continued service delivery and achieving steps/objectives to reach goals.
- For participants in an on-going training service such as occupational classroom training or OJT, monthly-check in services would be reported as appropriate. While the open service will prevent a participant from exiting, these monthly check-in services help staff assess the continued success of the service participation and issues that may need solutions identified, including referrals. Monthly check-in services do not prevent an exit.
- A best practice for participants attending short-term training is for the case manager to have at least one monthly check-in midway through the training for programs lasting one month or less.
- Staff will confirm the start of training and case note that date. Services are reported in ICC as of the date the customer began receiving the service. The service is closed as of the last date the customer received the service. A case note supports the last day of training attendance.

Individual Employment Plan (IEP)/Individual Service Strategy (ISS)

For participants program enrolled in WIOA (including NDWG), TAA, or JVSG an IEP/ISS is jointly developed in conjunction with the participant and staff. The customer is given a copy of the signed IEP.

- A Development of IEP activity is reported in AOSOS along with case notes that the plan was jointly developed in conjunction with both the customer and staff. Case notes will reflect the customer received a copy of the plan. Staff maintains a copy of the IEP in AOSOS. Goals and objectives are entered into ICC to support the plan. As goals and objectives are completed and closed, staff should report if the goal was attained or not.
- The IEP activity should remain open until program exit. It is reviewed and updated to reflect the current goals of the participant. A case note supports this. Goals are updated in AOSOS, as needed.

On-the-Job Training (OJT)

Staff follow WIOA T1 (134)-P1 On-the-Job Training Guidelines under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WD-PY21-3 - New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice - Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Formula-Funded On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy – Issued: October 29, 2021

Program Exits & Closure Screens

At the time the customer has reached their goals and no longer expresses a need for services or hasn't received any services preventing an exit for 90 days, a soft exit from the program will occur in ICC. By default, ICC will report the exit code as Soft Exit Applied. ICC generates this exit 90 days after closure of last open service or if the projected end date has expired. Not all services prevent an exit.

Prior approval of the MIS Director must be obtained prior to changing the exit reason from a Soft Exit. This requires documentation and case notes which are reported in AOSOS, and removes the participant from performance measures.

Upon program exit, staff should complete the Closure Screen.

- Staff should update the Work history, MSG, EFL and credential screens, as appropriate.
- The IEP/ISS objectives, goals and then the Plan (in that order) should be closed prior to completing the Closure screen. All activities must be closed prior to closing the Plan.
- Staff should update the **Accountability Closure/Exit Status** and change as appropriate, along with completing the remainder of the ICC closure screen.
- **WIOA Youth Only** should update the **School Status & Youth Placement at exit** in the AOSOS closure screen and **School Status at exit** in the ICC exit/outcomes screen.
- Subsequent employment obtained, up to 1 year after program exit, requires updating the Employment History, Employment ribbon, Closure Screen and any affected quarterly follow-ups. All updates should be case noted.

Follow-Up

Follow-up services must be offered and provided as appropriate for participants after exit from Title I services for at least 12 months after exit. Follow-up services aid Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Workers as they transition and exit from Title I programs. Follow-up services are especially critical for supporting youth and ensuring their success in next step opportunities.

Follow-up services must be made available to all WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker¹, and Youth participants. All participants must be informed of Follow-up Services at the time of enrollment. Follow-up Services are critical to help ensure participants have a successful employment and/or post-secondary education or training experience post program participation. Follow-up services are not required for Wagner/Peyser participants.

Exit and follow-up service start dates are determined by the last day of Individualized Career and Training Services provided to individuals. These services may include the provision of specific Individualized Career Services post-training that further support the success of individuals before Staff will follow the regional WIOA Title I Post Exit Follow-Up Policy.

Retention of Records

The Mercer County One-Stop Career Center shall retain and make available all financial records, supporting documentation, statistical records, evaluation data, member information and personnel records for three (3) years from the final Expiration Date of this Grant Agreement. If any litigation, claim, negotiation, audit or other action involving the records has been started before the expiration of the 3-year period, the records must be retained until completion of the action and resolution of all issues which arise from it, or until the end of the regular 3-year period, whichever is later.

Questions regarding retention of records may be directed to the MIS Director for guidance.

CASE NOTES

Case notes must:

- Capture services, present the current situation of an individual, identify current barrier.
- Provide sequential tracking and reporting of customer contact and progress to build their story.
- Link services to the individual's deficiencies and barriers that are presented.
- Provide the story behind revised employment plans.
- Increase accountability to allow for oversight and monitoring.
- Fulfill an ethical requirement of helping professions.
- Assist another employment specialist in helping the participant.
- Be entered **within five calendar days** from the event, contact, attempt, correspondence, service, etc. If a case note is created after the allowed five days, it must include an explanation of why the five-day policy was not followed.

Case notes must be:

- Timely.
- Clear and brief.
- Concise and precise.
- Accurate and complete.
- Proofed and edited prior to submitting.
- Contain facts (not opinions).

Enter a case note when:

- Contact with a participant is made or attempted.
- Connections with a partner agency are made regarding a participant's situation.
- Any service is entered.

Parts of a Case Note

Subject Line

The subject line of the case note should be the name(s) of the service(s) provided or a summary of what happened if a service was not entered.

Body

The body of the case note must describe each service or the action that occurred. The service should be in all caps if multiple services are in one case note.

Case notes **should** include:

- ✓ Objective information.
- ✓ Assessment results.
- ✓ Service justifications.
- ✓ Future plans (next appointment).

Objective Information

Consider who, what, when, where, why, and how. Objective information can include:

- Behaviors reported by the participant or partner agency.
- Statements made by customer.

- Factual observations.
- Assessment results.

Assessment

- Substantiate conclusions and judgements based on objective information.
- Justify approval or denial of services.

Outline Future Plans

- Specific next steps based on the information provided.
- Details of any revisions to the Employment Plan.

Case notes should **NOT** include:

- × Opinions
- × Conclusions or judgements not based in facts.
- × Phrases that contain “I think,” “it’s my opinion,” “it seems to me,” “I assume,” “probably”.
- × Medically sensitive information.

Disability or Medically Sensitive Information

Information that could lead to the disclosure of the specific medical condition or disability of a participant cannot be entered into SDWORKS case notes or comment sections. Case notes may state a medical condition or disability exists but cannot provide information describing the condition. Summarize information needed to help with barriers to employment instead of listing the specific sensitive information.