

Area 14 Workforce Development Board

Area 14 Workforce Development Board
State Special Projects Participant Eligibility
Area 14 Policy 14-25
Effective: May 6, 2026



Workforce Development Area 14
Athens, Meigs & Perry Counties

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I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for determining participant eligibility for programs funded through **WIOA Statewide Special Projects and Initiatives (JFS 01804)** and other similar funding opportunities.

This policy ensures compliance with federal and state requirements while allowing flexibility to support innovative, employer-driven workforce initiatives.

II. Definitions

For the purposes of this policy, the following definitions apply:

WIOA (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act) Federal legislation that governs workforce development programs, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth services, and establishes eligibility requirements for participants.

State Special Projects (JFS 01804) Funding provided by the Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS) to support innovative workforce development initiatives that address regional workforce needs, promote collaboration, and improve service delivery outcomes. These funds require participants to be WIOA-eligible.

Eligibility The process of determining whether an individual meets the required criteria to receive services under WIOA, including program-specific requirements for Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs.

Priority of Service A system used to prioritize certain populations for services when resources are limited. Priority does not determine eligibility but may influence the order in which eligible individuals are served.

Federal Poverty Level (FPL) Income guidelines issued annually by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services used to determine low-income status. Area 14 may use a percentage of FPL (e.g., 250%) as a priority of service threshold.

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OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) Center The local workforce delivery system responsible for providing employment and training services, including participant eligibility determination, enrollment, and case management.

ARIES (Ohio Workforce Case Management System) The state-designated system used to document participant eligibility, enrollment, services, and outcomes for WIOA-funded programs.

Participant An individual who has been determined eligible and is receiving services funded through WIOA or State Special Projects.

Case Management Ongoing coordination of services provided to a participant, including assessment, service planning, supportive services, and follow-up.

Supportive Services Services provided to participants to reduce barriers to participation in training and employment, such as transportation, childcare, or emergency assistance.

Training Provider An organization or entity that delivers occupational skills training, pre-apprenticeship, or credential-based instruction to participants.

Pre-Apprenticeship Program A training program designed to prepare individuals for entry into a Registered Apprenticeship program, including hands-on learning, industry-aligned curriculum, and career pathway development.

Registered Apprenticeship (RA) A formal training program approved by the U.S. Department of Labor or State of Ohio that combines on-the-job training with related instruction and leads to industry-recognized credentials.

Statewide Funds WIOA funds allocated by the state for special initiatives, distinct from formula funding, and intended to support innovation, system improvement, and targeted workforce strategies.

III. General Eligibility Requirements

All participants served under State Special Projects must:

1. Meet eligibility requirements for one of the following WIOA programs:
 - Adult
 - Dislocated Worker
 - Youth (if applicable to project design)

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2. Be determined eligible by authorized staff through OhioMeansJobs (OMJ) centers
3. Be enrolled and documented in the state-designated case management system (e.g., ARIES), when applicable

Eligibility determination does not guarantee enrollment in a specific program or service.

IV. Local Policy and Income Thresholds

A. Clarification of Eligibility vs. Priority

Area 14 distinguishes between:

- **Eligibility** → Required to receive services
 - **Priority of Service** → Used to guide selection when resources are limited
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B. Income-Based Priority (250% FPL)

Area 14 may utilize a local income threshold (e.g., **≤250% Federal Poverty Level**) as a **priority of service**, not a universal eligibility requirement.

This means:

- Individuals above 250% FPL **may still be eligible** under WIOA
 - Priority populations (including low-income individuals) **may be served first**, when applicable
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C. Application to State Special Projects

For State Special Projects:

- Income thresholds shall not be used as a sole determining factor for eligibility under State Special Projects.
- Eligibility will be determined based on **WIOA program criteria and project design**
- Priority populations may be emphasized, particularly:
 - Individuals with barriers to employment
 - Underrepresented populations

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- Individuals in recovery or other targeted groups

This aligns with the intent of Statewide funding to:

- Serve individuals with barriers
 - Support innovative and flexible workforce strategies
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V. Project-Specific Eligibility Framework

Each State Special Project may define additional eligibility parameters based on:

- Program design
- Employer needs
- Target population
- Training model

For example, projects may:

- Serve a mix of Adult and Dislocated Worker participants
 - Target specific populations (e.g., individuals in recovery, justice-involved, etc.)
 - Align with pre-apprenticeship or employer-driven training pathways
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VI. Participant Enrollment and Service Delivery

A. Referral and Intake

Participants may be referred through:

- OhioMeansJobs centers
 - Community partners
 - Educational institutions
 - Employer or program partners
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B. Eligibility Determination

Eligibility must be:

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- Verified by OMJ staff
 - Documented in accordance with WIOA requirements
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C. Enrollment and Case Management

- Participants will be enrolled in the appropriate WIOA program, when applicable
 - Case management will be provided by OMJ staff or designated partners
 - Services and outcomes will be tracked through ARIES or applicable systems
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VII. Coordination with Training Providers and Partners

Area 14 will ensure coordination with training providers and partners to ensure:

- Alignment between eligibility determination and program participation
 - Clear referral and enrollment processes
 - Documentation of participant progress and outcomes
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VIII. Supportive Services

Supportive services may be provided in accordance with:

- WIOA program requirements
- Local supportive services policy
- Availability of funding

Supportive services may include:

- Transportation
 - Childcare
 - Emergency assistance
 - Other barrier-removal services
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IX. Documentation and Compliance

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Area 14 will ensure:

- All participant eligibility determinations are documented
 - Enrollment and service delivery comply with WIOA requirements
 - Records are maintained for monitoring and audit purposes
 - Eligibility and enrollment documentation responsibilities will be carried out by OhioMeansJobs center staff unless otherwise specified by project design.
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X. Flexibility and Continuous Improvement

Recognizing the innovative nature of State Special Projects:

- Area 14 may adjust implementation approaches as needed
 - Policy interpretation may evolve based on ODJFS guidance
 - Continuous improvement will be supported through data and outcomes
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XI. Effective Date and Review

This policy is effective upon Board approval and will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued compliance and alignment with state and federal guidance.

XII. References

The following federal, state, and local guidance informed the development of this policy:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Pub. L. 113–128
- 20 CFR Part 680 – Adult and Dislocated Worker Activities under WIOA
- 20 CFR Part 681 – Youth Activities under WIOA
- Ohio Administrative Code (OAC) 5101:9-4-07.1 – Procurement Standards
- Ohio Department of Job and Family Services (ODJFS), **JFS 01804 – Local Workforce Area Special Projects and Initiatives Application**
- ODJFS WIOA Policy Letters (WIOAPL), including but not limited to:
 - WIOAPL 15-09.2 – Training Services for Adults and Dislocated Workers

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- WIOAPL 15-11.3 – Use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)
- WIOAPL 15-20.3 – Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses
- Area 14 Workforce Development Board:
 - Local Governance Agreement
 - Procurement Policy
 - Training Services Policy (14-15-09.4)
 - Supportive Services Policy (14-15.09.2)