



TN

Department of  
**Labor & Workforce  
Development**



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## **American Job Center Operations Manual**

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# Operations Manual – American Job Centers

## **Background:**

American Job Centers (also known as One-Stop Centers) are designed to provide a full range of assistance to job seekers under one roof. Established under the Workforce Investment Act, and reauthorized in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act of 2014, the centers offer training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and similar employment-related services. WIOA seeks to functionally align a wide range of publicly- and privately funded education, employment, and training programs while also providing high-quality customer service to job seekers-(veterans, disadvantaged and those with disabilities), workers, and businesses through the one-stop delivery system.

The State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) takes a leadership role to ensure that the one-stop system is customer driven, for both job seekers and employers. This effort includes aligning federal investments in job training, integrating service delivery across programs, and ensuring that the workforce system is job-driven and matches employers with skilled individuals. The SWDB serves as a convener of State, regional, and local workforce system partners to enhance the capacity and performance of the workforce development system; align and improve employment, training, and education programs, and through these efforts, promote economic growth. As a strategic convener, the SWDB promotes partnerships and engages key stakeholders. The SWDB provides leadership and guidance to Tennessee's Workforce Development System. The vision of the Workforce Board is to increase the competitive position of Tennessee businesses and attract new businesses through the development of a highly skilled workforce.

The Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) is responsible for developing a strategy to continuously improve and strengthen the workforce development system through innovation in, and alignment and improvement of, employment, training, and education programs to promote economic growth. LWDB members actively participate and collaborate closely with the required and other partners of the workforce development system, including public and private organizations. This is crucial to the LWDB's role to integrate and align a more effective, job-driven workforce development system. The LWDB works to develop a comprehensive and high-quality workforce development system by collaborating with its workforce, education, and economic development partners to improve and align employment, training, and education programs under WIOA.

The one-stop delivery system is charged with enhancing the range and quality of workforce development services available to job seekers and businesses through a coordinated approach among partner agencies. Since the one-stop delivery system was established, technology has made lasting changes to our economy and society. Mobile workers and businesses with regional and national footprints that cross municipal borders are increasing. For that reason, there is an increased customer demand for consistent high-quality education, employment, and training services across Tennessee.

The passage of WIOA supports the workforce system in meeting that demand, and the adoption of a national vision for the one-stop delivery system and its one-stop centers is an important first step in that work. WIOA supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work. This manual should serve as a resource for general information. A manual specific to each center should be developed to be used as a resource for new employees as well as current staff.

## Procedures

### A. Customer Intake/VOS Greeter

Customers should use the iPad kiosk to check in when they come into an American Job Center to insure an accurate count of traffic flow and an accurate count for the reasons that the customers are coming into the center. Staff should be trained in its use to ensure accurate data is obtained from this tool.

**B. Assessment:** Welcome/Intake Staff provide initial assessments to determine the individual participant's needs for assistance. These assessments vary per center, but can include interviews and written and online assessments. Customers will be routed to the appropriate staff member or area according to their reason for being in the center by the welcome/intake staff.

**C. Resource Room:** Resource rooms in the American Job Center contain computers with internet access, phones, fax machines, and copiers. The equipment and technology is available for the use of job seekers, and are to be used for job seeking purposes only.

**D. Assisting priority of service participants:** Upon choosing the visit reason "Have You Served in the Military", the participant should be given a Military Services Form (LB-1118) to fill out if it is determined that they are not already designated as a veteran in Jobs4tn. Individuals answering yes to any of the criteria in section A or B on the form would be eligible to receive assistance from a DVOP. Those participants who are registered in jobs4tn that have already been identified as veterans do not need to fill out this form. Veterans should receive priority of service in all job centers. Eligible spouses of veterans should also receive priority of service. Please see the Veterans and Eligible Spouse Priority of Service and the Veteran Referral Process policies for more information. These policies can be located at <http://www.tn.gov/workforce/article/wioa-technical-assistance>.

**E. How to connect to partners and WIOA co-enrollments:** Each American Job Center should have a system in place that identifies how participants will be connected to partner staff, and how feedback from referrals will be delivered. Co-enrollments will allow participants to access a wider array of service that might otherwise be unavailable.

**F. Individuals with disabilities:** All American Job Centers should be handicap accessible and possess electronic resources to assist those with disabilities in their employment search. Ease of Access technology associated with most Windows versions can assist with a magnifier that increases the size of the information displayed on the computer screen, a narrator which will read the information to the user with vision issues, an onscreen keyboard which allows

the mouse to be used to type instead of the keyboard, and a high contrast option for those who have low vision issues. There are other options available through this function such as sticky keys, which enables the user to enter key combinations by pressing keys in sequence rather than simultaneously. This will benefit users who are unable to press or have difficulty pressing shortcut combinations.

Some centers also have other assistive technology such as zoom text, adjustable computer tables, and Jaws Screen Reader, among others. Headphones should be available for those using Jaws or the narrator to maintain the security of personal information for the customer. All staff in the center should know what assistive technology is available in their center and have training in how to use it. All staff should also know how to request translator services or sign language interpreters for those customers who need this service.

#### **G. Assisting Job seekers**

1. Non-program participants are participants who enter the job center strictly to use the self service options available in the center. Activities assigned to these participants are all self service activities and do not result in an active Wagner Peyser application.
2. Participants should be directed to the appropriate program representative
3. Title III staff (wagner-peyser) and Title I staff (Adult, DW, and Youth services) should be appropriately trained in entering activities that are required when they provide any assistance to an individual. Staff should be trained in the use of Labor Market Information that is provided in Jobs4TN to assist participants with career path choices. Staff should be aware of how to refer a customer to a job posting as well as how to result the outcome of that referral if information is obtained. Case noting should also be used to give an account of interactions between staff and customers.
4. Staff from all partner programs in the center should be cross trained regarding the specifics of each partner program in order to make meaningful referrals for participants and to avoid duplication of services.

#### **H. Case Management:**

To perform case management, the AJC staff member assesses, plans, implements, tracks and provides follow-up on the services required to meet the customer's employment needs. Documentation of all activity must be recorded via case note using Jobs4TN.

## I. Training

Training services offered by the AJC network provide tools and resources to assist participants with meeting the skill and experience needs of the region's growing businesses. Under WIOA, training services may be provided if, after conducting an assessment and career planning, AJC staff determine that the customer is eligible.

- A. Individual Training Accounts (ITAs)** - Participants may access training services through training providers who have met eligibility requirements set by the State in order to be listed on the Eligible Training Provider List. The goal of participant training is training completion, credential attainment, and placement and retention in the career within the chosen industry.
  
- B. On the Job Training (OJT)** -When an employer identifies the need to fill a vacant position, he often has a choice of hiring a skilled worker or a worker who needs to have additional training. If the employer is willing to hire an individual who has no prior experience in the vacant position, an on-the-job training contract may be developed with the Local Workforce Development Area. Under this agreement, the local program can pay up to 75% of the trainee's wages during the specified training period. The employer must agree to hire the trainee if he successfully completes the training.
  
- C. Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)** - The Incumbent Worker Training Program (IWT) is a competitive grant that provides funding to help eligible Tennessee businesses effectively train and retain employees by providing skills upgrades and process improvement training for existing, full-time employees. To qualify, businesses must meet the following criteria:
  - Grantee must be a classified as a Tennessee for-profit business (or a not-for-profit business in health care)
  - Businesses in operation at least one year
  - Businesses which employ at least five full-time employees
  - Businesses current on all local, state, and federal tax obligations
  - Businesses not currently or recently experiencing, nor expecting to experience, a bankruptcy – all businesses must be a financially viable
  - Businesses must not appear on any federal suspensions or debarment list

## II. Supportive Services:

Supportive services are services that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in AJC activities. Examples of supportive services include but are not limited to:

1. Transportation
2. Text books
3. Licensing/Certification fees
4. Career uniforms
5. Tools and equipment
6. Child Care

Supportive services are provided to adult and dislocated worker customers in accordance with eligibility, WIOA law and Final Regulations. Access to supportive services are contingent upon:

1. Available funding
2. Determination of need through an individual assessment and as documented in an IEP
3. Service is necessary for participation in Title I activities
4. Customer is actively participating in approved training, job search, or employment retention activities and have not yet exited
5. Customer is unable to obtain such supportive services through other programs providing similar services

**K. Job Placement:**

Job placement services include referral to employers, customized recruitments, job fairs, sharing job leads, setting up interviews for customers, coordinating with business services teams to fill openings, and other activities connecting customers to employment opportunities. Job placement efforts should focus on the locally approved target wage and/or jobs with meaningful career and wage growth opportunities.



## **Business Services Function**

The Business Services Function is provided by business services representatives from partner and WIOA funded staff. Business services teams are responsible for building positive relationships with employers, identifying opportunities to address the human resource needs of employers, and designing services and products to assist employers in meeting their needs. This function is the bridge between business and job candidates by coordinating with all AJC staff members to actively recruit and refer qualified job candidates based on the needs of business. Team representatives must be knowledgeable of the eligibility and performance requirements of the AJC network. Business Services functions may include, but are not limited to:

- Schedule employers for on-site recruitment at the AJC or employer worksite
- Business outreach and development
- Standard and customized recruitment and referrals for job vacancies primarily for targeted business and industry
- Job candidate qualification review
- Provision of economic, business and workforce trends
- On-the-job training contracting, and work experience
- Referral to community services
- Funding source-focused (Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment, Vets, etc.) job development for specific job seekers which may remain with the individual partner agencies

## **WIOA Services**

To accomplish increasing access of services in the workforce system, service integration with system partners and understanding where and how customers access services is critical to success. The AJC network is integrated through the partnership of the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), core WIOA partners, AJC operators, and other required core programs to work together to leverage resources and provide participant-centered services.

The AJC core programs are:

- WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds)
- Adult Education and Literacy Act programs
- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs

AJC staff and partners should place emphasis on assessment, career coaching and skill development rather than self-directed activities.

Each AJC should offer services that meet the unique needs of its local community.

The three levels of career services are:

- Basic career services
- Individualized career services
- Follow-up services

### **A. Basic Career Services-Welcome Function**

Staff members who are assigned to the Welcome Function provide basic career services. These services must be made available to all individuals seeking services from the AJC network, and include:

1. Initial assessment of skill levels, as well as aptitudes, abilities, and supportive services needs
2. Determinations of eligibility to receive assistance through adult or dislocated worker program
3. Outreach, intake and orientation to services available through the AJC system
4. Conducting of workshops
5. Labor exchange services including provision of information on in-demand sectors and occupations, regional labor market information and information on non-traditional employment
6. Information, coordination, and referrals to other programs and services including those within the AJC delivery system and other workforce development programs
7. Information and direct referrals to supportive services and assistance
8. Information on performance and program costs on eligible providers of training services by program and type of provider
9. Assistance in establishing eligibility of programs for financial assistance for training and education not provided by WIOA

10. Meaningful assistance to individuals seeking assistance in filing an Unemployment Insurance claim

### **B. Individualized Career Services- Skills/Career Development Function**

Staff who are assigned to the Skills/Career Development Function provide individualized career services. All eligible customers must be enrolled in individualized career services if AJC staff determine that this level of services is necessary for the customer to gain meaningful employment. Individualized career services must be designed by each AJC to meet the unique needs of the customer and their region. These services include:

1. Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and supportive services needs of eligible adults and dislocated workers. These assessments may include:
  - a. Use of assessment tools
  - b. In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify barriers and appropriate employment goals
2. Development of an individual employment plan (IEP) to identify the employment goals, objectives, and combination of services for the customer to achieve their employment goals
3. Group and/or individual career counseling and mentoring
4. Career planning (case management)
5. Short-term pre-vocational services to develop learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, time management skills, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct
6. Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers
7. Workforce preparation activities that assist an individual in acquiring a combination of basic academic, critical thinking, digital literacy, and self-management skills
8. Financial literacy services
9. Job search assistance

### **C. Follow-up Services**

Follow-up services must be provided for customers who are placed in employment for up to 12 months after the first day of employment. These services may include but are not limited to career counseling, mentoring, or emergency support to sustain long-term employment. Follow-up services do not extend the date of exit in performance reporting.

Staff members must ensure that customers do not exceed 90 days of no service. Jobs4tn will exit customers who exceed 90 days of no service from all DOL programs tracked. Staff must manually create closure forms in Jobs4tn for enrolled participants before the system automatically creates the closure form creating a soft

exit. TDLWD will periodically monitor closure form data entry to determine compliance.

## **AJC Operations**

To accomplish increasing access of services in the workforce system, service integration with system partners and understanding where and how customers access services is critical to success. The AJC network is integrated through the partnership of the Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB), core WIOA partners, AJC operators, and other required core programs to work together to leverage resources and provide participant-centered services.

The AJC core programs are:

- WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula funds)
- Adult Education and Literacy Act programs
- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services
- Vocational Rehabilitation programs

AJC staff and partners should place emphasis on assessment, career coaching and skill development rather than self-directed activities.

**Code of Conduct:**

A code of conduct should be developed for each center. Partner staff should refer to their AJC manual for the code of conduct specific to their location. These documents may include such items as:

- A.** Badges must be worn at all times
- B.** All personal phone calls will be taken away from your desk and only during emergency situations or on your break
- C.** All smoking (including e cigarettes) must be in the appropriately marked areas
- D.** Appropriate language should be used while on center property and working with customers
- E.** Employees shall conduct themselves in a manner that creates and maintains respect for their work sites, fellow employees and customers, their respective agencies or departments.
- F.** Employees shall strive to provide impartial quality service to those with whom they interact, including customers and fellow employees, and avoid providing preferential treatment to any individual or organization
- G.** Consumption of illegal drugs or narcotics or the abuse of any drug or narcotic is strictly prohibited. Use of alcoholic beverages or being under the influence of alcohol while on duty or immediately prior to reporting for duty is prohibited.
- H.** Inappropriate romantic or sexual relationships between supervisors and subordinate staff as well as inappropriate use of supervisory position or influence are prohibited.
- I.** Employees will comply with all federal and state laws, rules and other regulations
- J.** Employees shall respect and protect confidential information and abide by all laws governing the possession and use of such information
- K.** Employees will provide customers with accurate, timely, fair, and understandable information and provide the highest level of customer service possible
- L.** Employees shall not speak on behalf of their department or agency without prior authorization to do so
- M.** Employees shall conserve and protect property and equipment and not use it for unauthorized purposes
- N.** Employees shall accurately report work time and attendance
- O.** Employees shall not be involved in dishonesty, fraud or misrepresentation.
- P.** Employees shall help maintain a healthy, safe, and productive work environment which is free from discrimination and harassment
- Q.** Employees shall not refuse to accept reasonable assignments or intentionally fail to follow lawful instructions
- R.** Any employee having knowledge that a theft, forgery, credit card fraud, or any other act of unlawful or unauthorized taking, or abuse of, public money,

property, services, or other shortages of public funds has occurred shall report the information immediately to the office of the comptroller of the treasury

## **The Roles of the Partners and Programs**

All staff working in a One-Stop center should be aware of the services that their co-located and non co-located partners provide, and what process is used to refer participants to these services. Training on the services that can be provided by partners results in less duplication of services, encourages co-enrollment, and results in better outcomes for participants who are able to obtain the resources that they need to be successful.

- A. One Stop Operator:** The basic role of a one-stop operator is to coordinate the service delivery of participating one-stop partners and service providers in an American Job Center. A One-Stop Operator must coordinate service delivery of the required One-Stop American Job Center partners and service providers. □  
Oversee management of One-Stop Centers and service delivery
- Evaluate performance (as indicated in the Incentives and Sanctions Policy) and implement required actions to meet performance standards – This does not include performance negotiations
  - Evaluate various customer experiences (including but not limited to employers, jobseekers, and partner staff)
  - Ensure coordination of partner programs
  - Act as liaison with the LWDB and One-Stop Center
  - Define and provide means to meet common operational needs (e.g., training, technical assistance, additional resources, etc.)
  - Oversee full implementation and usage of all State systems by all local areas
  - Design the integration of systems and coordination of services for the site and partners
  - Manage fiscal responsibility for the system or site
  - Plan and report responsibilities
  - Write and maintain business plan
  - Market One-Stop Career Center services
  - Facilitate the sharing and maintenance of data; primarily the site, with emphasis on the state system
  - Integration of available services and coordination of programs for the site with all partners
- B. WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth (Title 1):** Services offered by staff consist of (but are not limited to) career counseling, supportive services, training, and workshops.
- C. WIOA Adult Education and Family Literacy (Title II):** Conduct activities designed to assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary to obtain employment and economic self-sufficiency, which includes obtaining their high school equivalency diploma. Adult Education also assists



customers who are English language learners to improve their reading, writing, speaking, and comprehension skills as well as math skills.

- D. WIOA Wagner-Peyser (Title III):** Wagner-Peyser staff offer basic labor exchange services such as job referrals, labor market information, and job search assistance. Staff offer services to businesses standard and customized recruitment, referrals to job vacancies, job candidate qualification and provision of economic, business, and workforce trends
- E. Vocational Rehabilitation (Title IV):** Staff provide a variety of individualized services to people with disabilities. Staff provide employment-focused rehabilitation services for individuals with disabilities consistent with their strengths, priorities and resources. Services include counseling and guidance, training, maintenance and transportation, transition services from school to work, personal care assistance, technology services, job placement, post-employment services, supported employment, and independent living services for those customers with disabilities.
- F. Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** TANF is a workforce development and employment program. It is temporary and has a primary focus on gaining self-sufficiency through employment. The program helps participants reach this goal by providing transportation, child care assistance, education, job training, employment activities, and other support services. Temporary cash assistance is also provided to families with dependent children when at least one parent is incapacitated, unemployed, deceased, or absent from the home, and the family is unable to pay for essential living expenses.
- G. Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP):** SCSEP is an employment training program for low-income, unemployed individuals aged 55 years and older. The program provides subsidized, part-time work experience for a limited time through community service. Participants in the program learn new skills and talents, or enhance existing skills, through valuable work experience and other training to become competitive in today's workforce.
- H. Community Service Block Grant Program:** This program aims to combat poverty within communities by removing the barriers to self-sufficiency clients may encounter. Applicants meeting the income requirements may be eligible for a variety of services. The goal of the program is to provide services to eligible low-income individuals and families to improve the communities in which they live. Allowable services range from "safety net" emergency services through job development, adult education, and self-sufficiency programs.

- I. **Job Corps:** Job Corps is a no-cost education and career technical training program administered by the U.S. Department of Labor that helps young people ages 16 through 24 improve the quality of their lives through career technical and academic training.
- J. **National Farmworker Jobs Program:** This program is aimed at educating and training farmworkers into jobs that allow them to earn an income to sustain themselves and their families. The program provides an opportunity for migrant and seasonal farm workers who are U.S. citizens to participate in education beyond high school or GED to secure employment in a more stable field of work. Services include farmworker housing assistance, career counseling, work experience, classroom training, on the job training, job search assistance, and emergency assistance to address the immediate needs of the farmworker and his/her family.
- K. **Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA):** provides support to laid-off workers and downsizing businesses impacted by jobs leaving the USA or foreign products or services making it hard to compete. Services include re-employment services, job search allowances, relocation allowances, funded training, weekly trade readjustment allowances for eligible workers who have exhausted their Unemployment Compensation benefits and are in training, Alternative Trade Adjustment Assistance/Re-employed Trade Adjustment Assistance, and On-the-job training
- L. **Unemployment Insurance:** Unemployment Insurance (UI) is a social insurance program paid by Tennessee employers for workers who have lost their job through no fault of their own. The benefits include a maximum of \$275 per week for 26 weeks if eligible. Unemployment staff are not located in the American Job Centers, but staff in the AJC provide meaningful assistance to participants if needed.
- M. **SNAP Employment & Training:** Staff in this program help participants obtain job readiness skills. Eligible participants are provided with job development services that may include job search assistance, training or additional education and placement services. Funds may also be provided for transportation and associated resources like books, tools and supplies. The primary goal of the SNAP Employment and Training Program is to assist individuals in reaching their employment potential and becoming totally independent of public assistance.
- N. **Career and Technical Education (Perkins Act):** This program is a principal source of federal funding to states and discretionary grantees for the improvement of secondary and postsecondary career and technical education programs across the nation. The purpose of the Act is to develop more fully the

academic, career, and technical skills of secondary and postsecondary students who elect to enroll in career and technical education programs.

- O. HUD Employment and Training Programs:** Provide employment opportunities, training, and supportive services to assist low income persons in becoming self-sufficient through multiple programs.
- P. Youth Can:** Youth CAN provides eligible youth ages 16–24 with the financial and educational help they need to receive a high school diploma, HiSET, postsecondary diploma, or other qualified credential. This program prepares youth for employment, occupational, and educational opportunities.
- Q. Other Service Providers:** Each American Job Center location has service providers unique to their area. Staff should be aware of these resources and what services they provide, as well as how to refer individuals to them and how to receive feedback on the referral.
- R. Mobile American Job Centers:** Mobile American Job Centers (formerly known as Career Coaches) provide resource stations on the go. These mobile units are one-stop job centers equipped with internet access and knowledgeable staff. Much like brick and mortar locations, Mobile American Job Centers provide a variety of services that include job search assistance, recruitment, and workshops.

### **Locating American Job Centers**

To find the American Job Center closest to any location in Tennessee, visit <http://www.tn.gov/workforce/topic/find-local-help>. You may conduct a search using the Center name, city, zip code, or service needed. Alternately, you may click on any area of the map to locate American Job Centers close to the location that you select.