



Business Services Policy

North Central Workforce Development Area Effective July 1, 2022

(Rescinds and Replaces Business Services Guidance effective January 1, 2021, August 7, 2019)

I. PURPOSE:

To provide guidance and technical assistance to the PA CareerLink® centers in the North Central Workforce Development Area on the provision of business services to employers in the region. Included in this policy is background information, labor market information tools, technical assistance / tools and board suggestions for Business Service Team composition, expectations, team goals, objectives and team responsibilities.

II. REFERENCES:

WIOA Final Rule, 20 CFR 678.430(a)(4)(ii) and (a)(6), 34 CFR 361.430(a)(4)(ii) and (a)(6), and 34 CFR 463.430(a)(4)(ii) and (a)(6), 20 CFR 678.435, 34 CFR 361.435, and 34 CFR 463.435, and Pennsylvania Combined State Plan

III. BACKGROUND:

WIOA Places a strong emphasis on enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employers, economic development entities, and service providers to ensure that workforce development activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region. WIOA improves services to employers and promotes work-based training.

Workforce Solutions/North Central WDB strongly supports the emphasis on employers as a primary customer and believes workforce development begins with knowing the needs of local employers. This guidance outlines a strategy of collaboration between our partners and the board to ultimately fulfill a critical role in listening to employer needs, effectively responding and ultimately delivering high quality talent and services.

The following is directly from the legislation and/or regulations:

To support area employers and industry sectors most effectively, American Job Center 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 American Job Center partner programs, as appropriate; and*

- *Incorporate an integrated and aligned business services strategy among American Job Center partners to present a unified voice for the American Job Center in its communications with employers.*

The expectation is for solid employer relationships built with frequent and meaningful engagement that encourages employers' active participation in and use of the workforce system. The team should act in a "sales" role and be able to perform the following functions:

- ✓ *Ability to listen and understand needs rather than immediately sell*
- ✓ *Solutions-oriented approach to selling*
- ✓ *Ability to adapt and demonstrate value to unique contacts*
- ✓ *Provide innovative solutions for customers*
- ✓ *Utilize questioning skills in a friendly, professional appropriate way*
- ✓ *Ability to gain deep understanding of core business processes and needs*
- ✓ *Ability to prepare for and conduct appropriate pre and post contacts*

Business Services

The Joint WIOA Final Rule requires the provision of "business services" through the American Job Center network, to support a local workforce development system that meets the needs of businesses in the local area.

Through the American Job Centers, applicable one-stop partners develop, offer, and deliver quality business services that assist businesses and industry sectors in overcoming the challenges of recruiting, retaining, and developing talent for the regional economy.

Business services must be provided through the One-Stop System. These services include:

Career Services

Certain career services must be made available to local employers, specifically labor exchange activities and labor market information:

- *Appropriate recruitment and other business services on behalf of employers, including information and referrals to specialized business services other than those traditionally offered through the One-Stop delivery system;*
- *Provision of workforce and labor market employment statistics information, including the provision of accurate information relating to local, regional, and national labor market areas, including:*
 - 1. Job vacancy listing in labor market areas;*
 - 2. Information on job skills necessary to obtain the vacant jobs listed; and*
 - 3. Information relating to local occupations in demand and the earnings, skill requirements, and opportunities for advancement for those jobs.*

Local areas must establish and develop relationships and networks with large and small employers and their intermediaries. Local areas also must develop, convene, or implement industry or sector partnerships.

Customized Business Services

Customized business services may be provided to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations. These services are tailored for specific employers and may include:

- Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers;
- Customized services to employers, employer associations, or other such organizations, on employment-related issues;
- Customized recruitment events and related services for employers including targeted job fairs;
- Human resource consultation services, but not limited to assistance with:
 - o Writing/reviewing job descriptions and employee handbooks.
 - o Developing performance evaluation and personnel policies -provide referrals to appropriate legal resources for the development of employee handbooks and personnel policies.
 - o Creating orientation sessions for new workers.
 - o Honing job interview techniques for efficiency and compliance.
 - o Analyzing employee turnover.
 - o Creating job accommodations and using assistive technologies.
 - o Explaining labor and employment laws to help employers comply with discrimination, wage/hour, and safety/health regulations.
- Customized labor market information for specific employers, sectors, industries or clusters;
- Other similar customized services. Local areas may also provide other business services and strategies to meet the workforce needs of area employers, in accordance with partner programs' statutory requirements and consistent with federal cost principles. These business services may be provided through effective business intermediaries working in conjunction with Workforce Solutions.

Allowable activities, consistent with each partner's authorized activities, include, but are not limited to:

- Developing and implementing industry sector strategies involving industry partnerships, regional skills alliances, industry skill panels, and sectoral skills partnerships. Sector Partnerships are currently implemented by Workforce Solutions. At least one Pa CareerLink® staff responsible for employer services should actively participate on the Support Team for the Next Gen Partnerships.
- Customized assistance or referral for assistance in the development of a registered apprenticeship program. Workforce Solutions currently provides assistance to employers to develop RA programs. PA CareerLink® staff should be aware of the possibilities in order to refer to the board staff for follow-up.
- 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.

- 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.
- The marketing of business services to appropriate area employers, including small and mid-sized employers.
- Assisting employers with accessing local, state, and federal tax credits.

IV. LOCAL/REGIONAL BUSINESS SERVICES:

In addition to those services identified in the legislation and final regulations there are other services available through partners participating on the Business Service Teams and include but is not limited to:

- Develop On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Transitional Employment (TE) contracts
- Provide customized recruitment and job applicant screening, assessment and referral services
- Provide employer and industry cluster-driven Occupational Skills Training through Individual Training Accounts with eligible training providers
- Participate in on-site Rapid Response activities regarding closures and downsizing.
- Use of one-stop center facilities for recruiting and interviewing job applicants
- Coordinate with employers to develop and implement layoff aversion strategies
- Provide information regarding workforce development initiatives and programs including but not limited to the following:
 - Registered Apprenticeships and Pre Apprenticeships
 - Next Gen Sector Partnerships
 - Business Education Partnership
 - Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC)
 - Federal Bonding Program
- Business Needs Assessment and referral to other agencies, as appropriate
- Host various events that will be of interest to businesses. For example, job fairs, mass recruitment, rapid response activities, etc.
- Explanation of PA CareerLink® services and partner services
- When a referral is made from a partnering agency such as PREP or a local economic development agency (i.e. through the ENGAGE program) the BST should follow up with the company based on the needs identified.
- Enter a CWDS case note with each employer interaction.
- Collaborate with the Job Seeker Team in coordinating employer events
- Provide activity reports at regularly scheduled Staff Meetings.

V. BUSINESS SERVICES TEAMS- EXPECTATIONS:

Workforce Solutions’/North Central Workforce Development Board’s mission is to serve as the premier facilitator of an innovative workforce development system that meets the changing human capital needs of our employers and provides resources for our job seekers that maximizes their career potential and focuses on the customers’ needs. We accomplish this through our goals. Specifically, we have identified three out of five of our goals specific to our employer customers:

- Enhance public-private partnerships through better connectivity and communication in order to increase investment in our workforce system leading to greater economic vitality for our region
- Engage in Sector Strategies of our growth industries identifying current skill gaps of both the incumbent and entry-level worker that will result in skill upgrades through customized training and partnerships
- Ensure that our customers, both employers and job seekers, remain in the center of our design of all services and encourage our partners to do the same

Our PA CareerLink® staff and partners are important to the success of the board in helping to meet our goals. We support a comprehensive, collaborative approach to serving our employer customer. We believe our system must be flexible and responsive to our employers’ changing needs; and must ensure we stay in touch with their needs to provide proactive services to ensure they remain competitive. We have established several expectations that are meant as a proactive approach to services.

In order to be most valuable to our employers and avoid business fatigue from multiple contacts as well as ensuring coordination of services, it is recommended that teams make minimal employer visits to evaluate employer needs and explain available PA CareerLink® services and make referrals for other workforce programs including Next Gen Sector Partnerships, Business Education Partners, Registered Apprenticeship, Incumbent Worker Training etc. as appropriate.

Teams should meet at least quarterly with an agenda and conference call options. Meetings are to be documented by brief meeting notes with an emphasis on the outcomes, shared with all BST members, PA CareerLink® and Workforce Solutions staff (Business Engagement Coordinator) as appropriate. Workforce Solutions realizes it is likely that teams will have additional impromptu meetings and encourage teams to capture the outcomes of these meetings in the quarterly meeting notes.

Suggested Agenda Items for Business Service Team include but are not be limited to; needs of employers identified by each partner, potential coordination of services, Next Generation Sector Partnership Activities, High Priority Occupations, new employers, lay-offs, review of job order processes, (i.e. listing/writing job orders), local/regional labor market and/or other employer data/analysis. Employers should be profiled prior to each visit to determine basic information. Employer information to obtain includes but is not limited to; hiring needs, training needs, expansion, downsizing, etc. The PA CareerLink® services explained and use of the CWDS system should be explained and assistance and / or training on CWDS should be provided.

Collaboration with the Job Seeker Team in coordinating employer events is encouraged as well as the provision of activity reports at regularly schedule staff meetings.

VI. GOALS:

Workforce Solutions has established some measurable goals for each of the Business Service Teams.

1. Engage with new employers to open a business folder on CWDS, post positions on CWDS and present an overview of all PA CareerLink services. A new employer as an employer that hasn't accessed any PA CareerLink® service in the past two years.*
 - a. Clearfield County – at least 5 per quarter
 - b. Jefferson, McKean and Elk Counties – at least 3 per quarter
 - c. Cameron and Potter Counties – at least 1 per quarter

*Goal determined by the number of establishments by center.

2. Visit, tour and assess at least 2 Employers per quarter– could be in collaboration with the ENGAGE Program (virtual or in person) to discuss services available to employers at the PA CL
3. Participates in 3 of 4 Industry Partnership meetings per year (at least one member of the BST)
4. Hold at 3-5 Hiring events, open interview events, etc. per quarter – can be individual company or multiple company events.

VII. BUSINESS SERVICES TEAMS – CORE COMPOSITION:

Workforce Solutions recommends that each comprehensive PA CareerLink® center in the North Central Workforce Development Area have in place a Business Service Team (BST). The core members of each are the PA CareerLink® Partners. However, PA CareerLink® centers are encouraged to engage additional partners in the region that also serve employers as deemed appropriate by the Site Administrator of each center.

The additional partners will vary by county and may include but are not limited to: Workforce Solutions Business Engagement Coordinator, the PA CareerLink® Operator, Business Education Partnerships, Chambers of Commerce, County and Regional Economic Development agencies, Northwest Industrial Resource Center (NWIRC), Clarion University Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) and others as identified by each Business Service Team.

VIII. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE:

Workforce Solutions' staff have access to several tools and resources that can assist you in meeting the goals, objectives and responsibilities of the Business Service Teams. Staff will send several reports on a monthly basis including: Real Time Intelligence (RTI), Economic Overview.

In addition, following is a list of what can be provided upon request:

1. Workforce Solutions' Employer Database as provided to board staff by the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA).
2. JobsEQ via Chmura Economics and Analytics online tool - Upon request board staff can supply you with detailed labor market information as listed on Attachment 1 to this policy and contains a list of the data that will be available for your use.
3. Sample Business Education and Training Assessment to use when meeting with employers. See attachment 2 to this policy.
4. Staff providing Business Services are also encouraged to reach out to Workforce Solutions and involve staff if appropriate in meetings and conversations.

IX. ACTION REQUIRED:

None

X. INQUIRIES:

If you have specific technical questions, please contact:

Pamela Streich	pstreich@ncwdb.org	(814)245-1835
Donna Hottel	dhottel@ncwdb.org	(814)245-1835

Workforce Solutions for North Central PA
425 Old Kersey Road
Kersey, PA 15846
(814)245-1835

XI. EXPIRATION DATE:

Ongoing.

Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

Equal Opportunity Employer/Program