

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING POLICY

Trainee Eligibility

On-the-Job Training (OJT) may be provided to eligible Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) trainees who are assessed and found to be in need of and suitable for training services in order to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency. The trainees must demonstrate a need for training as recorded on the Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individualized Service Strategy (ISS).

Employers will have the final selection authority for individuals to be hired. All trainees must meet certain WIOA eligibility criteria before training can begin. Only those individuals who meet the eligibility requirements for career services, who have received an assessment, and for whom an IEP or ISS has been developed may be considered for OJT. An individual referred as a potential candidate for OJT by an employer (reverse referral) may be considered for OJT with that employer only after the individual has met eligibility requirements for career services, has received an assessment, and for whom an IEP or ISS has been developed that indicates OJT is appropriate. A currently employed worker may be placed in an OJT with the same employer when the OJT supports acquisition of new skills necessary for upgrading to a new job that requires substantially different higher level skills and the current employee as a result of successfully completing the OJT is expected to receive an upgrade to a higher level position and an increase in pay.

Consideration should be given to the skill requirements of the occupation, academic and occupational skill level of the trainee, prior work experience, and the trainee's IEP or ISS. The results of an objective assessment, as documented on the individual's IEP or ISS, must indicate that the trainee is in need of, and can benefit from, the activity of OJT. The IEP or ISS must capture the past work history of the applicant from the official file, assess the test results, capture additional information from the applicant about past work experience, hobbies, volunteer experience, and identify strengths and weaknesses of the applicant. It must include documentation as to the new skills to be acquired during training and how skills gap deficiencies will be overcome with the training.

Reverse Referrals

When an employer identifies a potential candidate for employment who lacks the skills the employer requires upfront and is in need of OJT, they may refer the individual to the Career Center for WIOA and OJT eligibility determination. This must be done prior to the hiring selection or extending an offer of employment.

Employer Eligibility

The hiring and training may begin after the OJT Pre-Award Analysis form has been completed and the OJT Employer Agreement has been signed by all the parties. The trainee becomes an employee of the company on the day the OJT begins.

Staff should give careful consideration when selecting a suitable employer for OJT. General business practices in terms of working conditions (safety, health), the availability of health benefits, sustainable wage structure, turnover rates, adequate staff and equipment to carry out the training, and whether the employer is in compliance with federal, state, and local laws are factors to consider while completing the OJT Pre-Award Analysis form.

When considering an employer to participate as an OJT worksite, staff should carefully review and determine the nature of the employment to ensure the employment is ongoing and not temporary, probationary, or intermittent employment.

An OJT contract must be limited to the period of time required for a trainee to become proficient in the occupation for which training is being provided. In determining the appropriate length of the training, consideration must be given to the skill gaps that exist when comparing the skill requirements of the occupation and the academic and occupational skill level of the trainee, prior work experience, and the trainee's IEP.

Contract Requirements

- OJT contracts require that the wages paid to trainees be at least the prevailing entry wage for any specific occupation in the community. If the employer operates under a collective bargaining agreement, the wage and benefits must be those specified in that union agreement and the job opening must be cleared with the appropriate union.
- The employer must comply with requirements of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and 29 CFR Part 31 with respect to equal opportunity in employment for the OJT position, as well as comply with all federal, state, and local laws.
- Trainees hired under OJT will be subject to the same personnel policies, rules and regulations, afforded the same benefits, and compensated at the same rates as other employees of the company.
- Employers must carry Workers' Compensation Insurance and make federal and state tax withholdings as required by law. In addition, the individual trainee payroll tax records must be maintained and available for review for a minimum period of three years after the end of the training period by the employer.
- Conditions of employment and training will be in full accordance with all applicable federal, state, and local laws (including but not limited to health and safety laws) and be appropriate and reasonable with regards to the type of work undertaken and the proficiency of the trainee.
- The employer must certify that the trainee will not displace any regular employee of the employer and that no person was displaced as a result of the relocation of the current business within the previous 120 days of signing the OJT Contract Agreement.

- The OJT employer will agree to adhere to the Local Area Workforce Development Board's (WDB's) grievance process if a complaint arises in connection with the OJT trainee and/or the training.
- OJT trainees will not be employed to carry out the construction, operation, or maintenance of any part of a facility that is used or to be used for sectarian instruction or as a place for religious worship or be required to participate in religious activities.
- No individual (neither new hire nor incumbent worker) may enter an OJT position if a member of his or her family is engaged in an administrative capacity with the OJT employer, including a person with selection, hiring, placement, or supervision responsibilities for the OJT trainee.
- The OJT employer must certify that neither the employing company nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended proposed for debarment, declared ineligible, or excluded from participation by any federal department or agency. Check with your Local Area WDB Financial Director for the Suspension of Funding List.
- The OJT employer will maintain and make available for review all time and attendance, payroll, and other records to support amounts reimbursed under OJT contracts.
- A trainee may not be trained under an OJT contract at a particular employer if:
 - 1) any other individual is on layoff from the same or substantially equivalent job;
 - 2) the employer has terminated the employment of any regular, unsubsidized employee, or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction in its workforce with the intention of filling the vacancy so created with the WIOA trainee; or
 - 3) the job is created in a promotional line that infringes in any way on the promotional opportunities of currently employed workers.

Skills Gap Analysis/Training Plan Development

Following the execution of the OJT Employer Agreement, an individualized OJT Training Plan must be developed for the acquisition of skills that the trainee does not already possess. Skills the trainee acquired from previous work or life experiences are transferrable and can be used in every occupation, regardless of the type of work. Transferrable skills are unlike job-related skills, which tend to be used only in one type of work. This plan will contain occupationally specific skills that the employer requires for competency in the OJT occupation. OJT funds should not be used for orientation to standard operating procedures of the employer. An analysis of the trainee's prior work history, transferrable work skills, and the job skills gained must be compared to the job skills/job description the employer requires in the OJT occupation. The resulting gap in skills will be the basis for the development of the Training Plan. The Specific Vocational Preparation (SVP) data found in the O*NET Online database for that particular occupation will be used and adjusted to determine the length of training necessary to acquire the needed skills. Each skill description should be concise but comprehensive, and the individual tasks should be measurable and observable. The specific types and sources of information used to identify the scope of the skills gap must be included in the trainee's case file.

There are a number of assessment tools available that may be used to conduct a skills gap analysis and provide adequate documentation of the process used to develop the Training Plan. These include Prove It!™, an Internet-based assessment tool used to determine an individual's level of skills in a particular occupation and to document skill deficiencies, as well as the O*NET Online website and www.myskillsmyfuture.org which have both been developed by the U.S. Department of Labor.

Trainee Skill Evaluation

At the midpoint of training, the trainee's acquisition of the required occupational skills on the Training Plan will be evaluated by the employer/supervisor using the OJT Trainee Evaluation Form. This is an opportunity for the employer/supervisor and the trainee to interact and review the skills progress made by the trainee and to make any necessary adjustments to the training shown in the Training Plan.

The Trainee Evaluation Form will also be used at the conclusion of training to document the mastery of the required skills. Completion of the final skills evaluation section of the form signals the successful completion of the Training Plan and agreement by the employer to retain the trainee. Trainees under an OJT contract will be formally monitored at least once during the training period by the staff of the agency responsible for the development of the contract. Trainee's progress must be documented monthly in the case notes.

General Provisions

The Local Area WDB will develop written OJT policies that address the following nine elements, at a minimum:

- 1) Outreach and recruitment of OJT trainees
- 2) Skills gap analysis and Training Plan development
- 3) Employer marketing strategies
- 4) Reverse referral policy
- 5) OJT supportive services policy
- 6) OJT contract development
- 7) Coordination of case management and business services functions
- 8) Reimbursement policy and invoicing process
- 9) Financial and programmatic monitoring

OJT Forms

The forms listed as Attachments B are the official documents to be used when conducting WIOA-funded OJT activities and are to be completed sequentially. The OJT contract package is incomplete if all forms (Pre-Award Analysis, Employer Agreement, Training Plan, and Trainee Evaluation) are not completed. The OJT package should be maintained, and all files are to include trainee's NCWorks Online and Business Services files.

Justification for Reimbursement Documentation

Signed timesheets, invoices, payroll records, and/or copies of pay stubs must be maintained and uploaded in NCWorks Online and made available for local and state monitoring. Electronic timesheets are acceptable with required signatures and may be printed and signed. The Local Area WDB must have processes in place to verify trainee time and pay.

Timely submission of invoices by the employer allows for timely reimbursement. It is at the Local Area WDB's discretion to implement a specific length of time for invoicing and reimbursements.