Operational Policy No. OP-430 Change 4
Subject: Self Sufficiency
Effective Date: PY26 – 09/21/2026

PURPOSE

To establish the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico economic self-sufficiency policy for employed adults and dislocated workers and to ensure that decisions concerning individualized career services and training services are made and documented in accordance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, 20 CFR Part 680, applicable U.S. Department of Labor guidance, and current New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions guidance.

POLICY

WCCNM adopts the current self-sufficiency wage standard issued by the New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions for the Central Region as an assessment benchmark. The benchmark is one factor in determining whether an employed adult or dislocated worker needs individualized career services or training services. Meeting or exceeding the benchmark does not make an otherwise eligible individual ineligible for WIOA services or establish that services are unnecessary.

The WIOA service provider shall make an individualized, service-specific determination based on the participant's employment circumstances, assessment, career plan, labor market information, and the requirements applicable to the requested service. Current wages shall not be used as the sole basis to approve or deny individualized career services or training services.

REFERENCES

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act section 134(c)(2)(A)(xii), Individualized Career Services
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act section 134(c)(3)(A), Training Services
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act section 134(c)(3)(E), Adult Priority
- 20 CFR 680.120 and 680.130, Adult and Dislocated Worker Career Service Eligibility
- 20 CFR 680.150(b), Individualized Career Services
- 20 CFR 680.210, Training Service Eligibility
- 20 CFR 680.220, Determination and Documentation of Need for Training
- 20 CFR 680.230, Coordination with Other Grant Assistance
- 20 CFR 680.600 and 680.610, Adult Priority and Dislocated Worker Funds

- TEGL 19-16 and applicable changes, WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker Operating Guidance
- TEGL 23-19, Change 2, WIOA Data Validation Guidance
- 11.2.4 NMAC, WIOA Local Governance
- Current NMDWS guidance and Self-Sufficiency Wage Standard applicable to the Central Region

DEFINITIONS

Economic self-sufficiency standard. The current hourly or other wage benchmark issued by NMDWS for the Central Region and identified in the applicable state guidance.

Employment leading to economic self-sufficiency. Employment that, after consideration of the applicable NMDWS benchmark and the individual's circumstances, supports a documented determination that the individual can obtain or retain suitable employment. The term is an assessment standard and is not a separate WIOA eligibility category.

Comparable wages. For a dislocated worker, wages reasonably comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, evaluated with consideration of wage type, customary hours, occupational conditions, and relevant labor market information.

REQUIREMENTS

1. Individualized Career Services

Individualized career services shall be made available when the service provider determines that they are appropriate for an adult or dislocated worker to obtain or retain employment. The self-sufficiency wage standard may inform this determination but shall not replace it. The case record shall identify the service need and the facts supporting the determination.

2. Training Services

Training services may be provided to an employed or unemployed adult or dislocated worker when the service provider documents that all applicable requirements of 20 CFR 680.210 are met. The determination shall address whether the individual:

- after an interview, evaluation or assessment, and career planning, is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services;
- needs training services to obtain or retain such employment;

- has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in the selected training program;
- selects training directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area, planning region, or another area to which the individual is willing to commute or relocate;
- is unable to obtain sufficient grant assistance from other sources to pay training costs, or requires WIOA assistance in addition to other grant assistance, consistent with 20 CFR 680.230; and
- when Adult funds are used, is served in accordance with the state and local Adult priority system required by WIOA section 134(c)(3)(E) and 20 CFR 680.600.

Consistent with 20 CFR 680.220, the case file must contain the determination of need for training based on sufficient information obtained through an interview, evaluation or assessment, career planning, or another appropriate career service. No federally required minimum period of participation in career services applies before training. When training is provided without prior career services, the circumstances supporting that determination must be documented.

3. Application of the Self-Sufficiency Wage Standard

The current NMDWS standard shall be applied as follows:

- Use the standard in effect on the date of the service-need determination.
- Compare the standard to verified current earnings using a consistent wage basis. Procedures shall address hourly, salaried, variable-hour, seasonal, multiple-job, and other employment arrangements.
- Consider current wages together with job stability, customary hours, benefits when relevant, prospects for retention or advancement, occupational requirements, barriers to employment, and other assessment information relevant to the requested service.
- Do not use the standard as an automatic approval or denial threshold.

4. Dislocated Workers

For a dislocated worker, the service provider shall consider whether current or prospective employment provides wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. The prior wage is an assessment benchmark and shall be considered within the complete service-need determination required by 20 CFR 680.210 and 680.220. Adult

statutory priority under 20 CFR 680.600 does not apply to services funded with Dislocated Worker funds.

5. Documentation

The participant record shall contain sufficient documentation to support the wage comparison and the service determination. At a minimum, the State management information system and case file shall record, as applicable:

- job title and employer name;
- dates of employment;
- wage amount and wage type;
- usual or documented hours per week;
- the applicable NMDWS self-sufficiency wage standard and its effective date;
- the result of the wage comparison; and
- a case note explaining the individualized determination for the requested service and addressing each applicable regulatory element.

Acceptable source documentation may include a recent paycheck or paystub, an employer statement, reliable wage records, or another source permitted by current NMDWS policy and data-validation guidance. Self-attestation may be used only when permitted by the applicable federal and state documentation rules and shall identify the facts attested, the reason it was used, the participant's certification, and the date.

6. Annual State Updates

WCCNM Administrative Entity staff shall distribute each current NMDWS Self-Sufficiency Wage Standard to WCCNM Adult and Dislocated Worker service providers. A new state-issued wage amount becomes operational on its stated effective date without a separate amendment to this policy, provided the update changes only the wage amount or related state-issued calculation table. Any substantive change to WCCNM policy, eligibility interpretation, service standard, or documentation requirement will require WCCNM Board approval.

7. Procedures and Quality Control

The WCCNM Workforce Director or designee may issue procedures, forms, and technical instructions consistent with this policy and controlling federal and state guidance. Procedures shall address wage conversion, variable employment, documentation standards, supervisory review, and correction of incomplete determinations. WCCNM may monitor case records to confirm consistent application and compliance.

Applicability:
WIOA Adult and Dislocated Worker service providers and WCCNM Administrative Entity staff responsible for program oversight.

INQUIRIES: WIOA Manager 505-724-3629

Should you require a signed copy of this policy, please email Tawnya Rowland at trowland@mrcog-nm.gov

Approval:
This Policy has received approval by the Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico Executive Standing Committee and or Full Board and rescinds any policy previously in effect.