

OREGON WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

Worksource Oregon Self-Sufficiency Policy

Background

The term “self sufficiency” for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs refers to the level of income a person or family must be below in order to be eligible for certain WIA services. In other words, “self-sufficient” means that individuals are at such an income level that they do not need public employment services. The WIA requires each Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) to have its own self sufficiency policy, setting the level for self-sufficiency for that Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA), unless the state has a policy covering the entire state. This OWIB policy will relieve the LWIBs from the burden of creating and maintaining their own self-sufficiency policies.

The self-sufficiency provisions of the WIA make it problematic for LWIBs and WIA providers to serve incumbent (current) workers. In many places around the state, the mere fact that an individual is employed may make him or her ineligible. This is the case even though the individual may have more than one low-wage job. In this economy, no Oregonian is truly self-sufficient. Skill requirements for employment at all levels are increasing. Oregonians at all skill levels can benefit from upgrading their skills.

It is important to note that the rationale for the existing WIA rule is to assure that low-income individuals are served. It is equally important to note that this new self-sufficiency policy is not meant to exclude low income individuals, that they can be served, and are still eligible for services. The new policy does not prohibit a local board from a focus on those most in need. This aligns with OWIB policy and strategic direction.

The Integration Effort

The Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development and the Oregon Employment Department, along with LWIBs and other partners has undertaken an effort to integrate the US Department of Labor programs in the WorkSource Oregon (WSO) Centers. The integration effort has three goals:

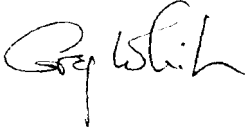
1. *Enroll all customers who come in to a physical one-stop center into both WIA and ES programs.* This will dramatically increase the numbers of WIA participants, but is difficult to do under current self-sufficiency standards. All Oregonians are eligible for Employment Service services, but under current self-sufficiency rules, many employed individuals are not eligible for WIA services.

2. *Provide each customer with a skill assessment.* This assessment will be on-line and fast to administer, but will give customers and WSO staff skill level information and direction for future services.

3. *Provide customers with attractive services that will enhance their skills.* Services will include a “product box” (Menu of Resources and Services) of skill upgrade activities ranging from on-line math brush-up to occupational skills training. All one-stop customers will receive skill enhancement or other services under this new policy, which would not possible under current self-sufficiency rules.

OWIB Self-Sufficiency Policy Language

Employment itself is not a guarantee of self-sufficiency. Due to the ever-increasing skill requirements of employment at all levels, all Oregonians can benefit from increased skills. Therefore no Oregonian seeking assistance through WorkSource Oregon shall be considered to be self-sufficient.

Approved by:	 Greg White OWIB Executive Staff
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