

SOP 24-01
Data Integrity
Standard Operating Procedures
Grow Southwest Indiana Region 11
PENDING Approval Date: 02/23/2024

Purpose

To provide guidelines on the uniform, paperless documentation of participant files including instruction for the collection, dissemination, storage, and protection of information in DWD's case management system particularly for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs. Local Workforce Development Boards are to ensure policies and procedures include the data integrity standards in this SOP.

References

WIOA Sections 185 and 308

2 CFR 200.334

20 CFR 683.210

29 CFR 38.43 and 29 CFR 97.42

34 CFF Part 99

E-Government Act of 2002, Public Law 107-347, Title V Section 512(b)(1)

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (20 U.S.C. 1232-g; 34 CFR part 99) Government Paperwork Elimination Act of 1998

Health Insurance Portability and Accountability (HIPAA) Act of 1996

Paperwork Reduction Act (PRA) of 1995 (replacing the Paperwork Reduction and Simplification Act of 1976)

GPRA Modernization Act of 2010

TEGL 23-19, Changes 1 and 2 *Guidance for Validating Required Performance Data Submitted by Grant Recipients of U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Workforce Programs*

DWD Policy 2022-08, Change 1 *Workforce Programs Data Validation*

DWD Policy 2021-10, Change 2 *Safeguarding Protected Information and DWD User Accounts Management*

DWD Policy 2016-09 *Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Guidance Letter*

Content

As there are multiple regulations related to government agencies' transition from paper to digital files, this transition allows the keeping of records sufficient to prepare reports and permits tracking of expenditures to prevent unlawfully spent funds. This guidance applies to the administration of the following federal programs:

- Title I WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs
- Title III Wagner-Peyser (WP)
- Jobs for Veterans State Grant (JVSG)
- Trade Adjustment Act (TAA)
- National Dislocated Worker Grant (NDWG)
- Apprenticeship grants, and
- Other related workforce programs

Electronic Records

Federal reporting requires electronic data storage and retrieval of participant information. DWD requires the use of its case management system for documentation, eligibility determination, and the maintenance of pertinent records. See **Attachment A** for examples of participant documentation that must be maintained in DWD's case management system.

Participant Records

WorkOne/American Job Center (WorkOne/AJC) must enter electronic records used to show the following:

- Eligibility verification and enrollment data
- Training eligibility documented in alignment with 20 CFR 683.210(a) requirements that show the individual is:
 - Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment,
 - In need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment, and
 - Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.
- All characteristics of participants enrolled.
- Assessment of needs, barriers, and skill levels
- Creation dates for individual employment plan (IEPs for adults and dislocated workers) and individual service strategies (ISS for youth)
- Revised employment plans and service delivery strategies (these are living documents that should be updated over time)
- All employment and training goals that address needs in the IEP and ISS
- Types of services provided.
- Individual dates of transactional services (single day services)

- Actual training start and end dates
- Skill gains and credential goal attainment data
- Employment, earnings, credentials, occupation code and employment related to training after exit, which is collected through supplemental information gathering during the follow up.
- Copies of documents where electronic storage or verification of eligibility requirements are required and
- Activities and services in case notes regarding interactions with participants to include information that addresses **who, what, where, when, why, and how** of service delivery.

Fiscal-Related Documentation

- All participant-related payments will be linked to their corresponding payment in the fiscal accounting system by noting the invoice number or other specific identifier with the voucher payment in the case management system fiscal module; this allows for reference during state/federal monitoring and review.

NOTE: Local areas must adhere to established documentation practices for fiscal-related activities in other DWD systems, such as the Customer Relationship Manager (CRM).

- Applying to both paper and digital records, sub-recipients of funds will keep records that are sufficient to permit the preparation of reports and permit the tracing of funds to a level of expenditure adequate to ensure that funds have not been spent on non-allowable activities.
- Although digital files are intended to replace paper documents, records will be maintained in a manner that enables staff to produce a tangible paper copy immediately upon request.

Timeliness and Accuracy of Reporting

Timely Data Entry into the DWD Case Management System

- All applicant data is to be entered into the system immediately upon a participant receiving services.
- The local WDB will ensure that policies and procedures do not prevent timely and accurate data entry by creating additional steps between the participant receiving services and the entry of applicable data.
- In such instances where immediate data entry may not be possible, the maximum allowable time to enter information into the electronic system is three (3) days.
- Saturday, Sunday, and holidays are not considered business days and therefore not included in the three-day data entry window. If a participant received services on a Thursday, the information could be entered on the following Monday and still meet the three-business day deadline (even though it has been five total calendar days since the participant received the service).

Table 1: Example of the Three-day Data Entry Requirement

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
				Service Business Day 1	Business Day 2	X
X	Deadline Business Day 3					

- All eligibility intake information and documentation will be entered into the system upon receipt. This also applied to recording supplemental information during follow-up for participants who no longer need services.
- It is imperative that accurate information is entered into the system in a timely manner in order to generate timely and accurate reports for federal reporting to support credentials, recording of occupational codes or employment related to training, when applicable.
- Once a participant no longer needs services, follow-up procedures will begin. Documentation regarding these individuals will be entered into the system throughout the follow-up period (12 months), no exceptions.

Complete Data Entry

- Case managers are expected to enter all information, case management activities, service types/dates, goals, and verification documents, upon receipt or as delivered, into the case management system for all active (current) and past participants.

Data Validation

- Data validation is the process of reviewing participant electronic records for accuracy and compliance by comparing the recorded information against source documentation allowed by TEGl 23-19, Changes 1 and 2.
- Data validation is an annual review of a sample of participants from the federal report. DWD data validation staff will validate that the information recorded in the system for each participant is correct by verifying that supporting documentation matches the MIS data and is saved within a participant’s electronic file.
- Documents must be uploaded to the participant file as soon as they are received by the WorkOne/AJC staff person or within three business days.

Required Release and Equal Opportunity Forms

- These documents must be signed and dated by all participants and the case managers:
 1. An employment verification release
 2. Equal Opportunity Notice
 3. Acknowledgement of the grievance process

4. In region 11, the Babel notice is required to be signed and dated by both the participant and the case manager and uploaded in the client file.
- The Release Form will state that the participant's information may be used for reporting purposes as a result of federal regulation associated with the benefit of federal funds and that the participant's personal information will remain confidential.
 - A stand-alone form may be used, or information may be incorporated into other release forms used by the WorkOne/AJC.
 - The release form must be uploaded into the participant file in the case management system to validate that the participant agrees to the release of information for reporting purposes no later than three days after the initial enrollment participation date.

Legal Status of Electronic Documents

- Electronic records submitted or maintained in accordance with this policy, electronic signatures, or other forms of electronic authentication shall not be denied legal effect, validity, or enforceability because records are in electronic form.

Safeguarding Protected Information

- All workforce staff must access, maintain, and store participant information in a manner that ensures confidentiality as required by all federal, state, and local guidance related to confidentiality and the handling of protected information. See Region 11 SOP 22-02 Change 2.
- See Attachment B for more information on maintaining confidential medical and educational records.

Case Management Operational Best Practices

Case managers

- Case managers are responsible for participant outcomes through service provision along with support and encouragement for participants.
- Case managers are also key to federal reporting by accurately and timely recording participant services.
- Case managers will regularly monitor open services and timely close them to avoid system-closure which results in reporting errors and data validation errors.
- Core partner services will be recorded in the electronic case management system regardless of the existence of other information system data entry requirements. For example, a WIOA Youth participant is also a JAG participant, WIOA Youth service must be recorded in the electronic case system as well as JAGForce.

Case noting

- Case notes tell a detailed story of an individual's program participation so that another staff member, supervisor, or monitor can understand the activity that has occurred.
- Case notes are necessary for source documentation purposes in data validation.

- There are several data validation elements across multiple programs that may be verified with case notes.
- In addition to locally required case note content, DWD recommends the following best practice case noting standards:
 - Provide sequential tracking and reporting of customer contact and progress.
 - Document provided services and the outcome associated with those services.
 - Link services to the individual’s barriers to employment.
 - Discuss the reasoning behind a revised employment plan.
 - Be detailed enough to assist another case manager in helping the participant.
 - Enter case notes within three days of the event, contact, attempt, correspondence, service, etc.
- Information that could lead to the disclosure of the specific medical condition or disability of a participant cannot be entered into case notes. It is best to summarize information if it is needed to help with barriers to employment instead of listing the specific sensitive information.
- Case notes are legal documents that represent DWD and local board compliance with federal, state, and local policies. Case notes can and have been used as evidence in court.

WorkOne Supervisors

- A key part of data entry is timely data entry and staff scheduling can have a substantial impact on this.
- A “back up” case manager will be assigned to take over service provision and recording activities when a staff person is out for an extended period of time.

Action

DWD Policy 2023-05 *Maintaining Data integrity in Workforce Programs* will be implemented in region 11 as SOP 24-01 *Data Integrity*.

Attachments

Attachment A – Examples of Electronic Participant Documentation

Attachment B – Additional Guidance on Maintaining Confidential Medical and Educational Records

Effective Date

Immediately

Ending Date

Upon rescission

Attachment A

Examples of Electronic Participant Documentation

Eligibility-Related:

- Application signed by participant.
- Verification of Social Security Number (SSN), if provided
- Proof of date of birth
- Proof of Selective Service Registration
- Proof of Veteran status, if provided
- Public Assistance records
- Dislocated worker documentation
- Proof of authorization to work.
- Assessment(s)
- Signed and dated release forms (when applicable)
- Signed and dated Equal Opportunity For,
- Signed and dated Babel form (region 11)

Training/Work Experience:

- Signed and dated IEP or ISS (and any revised IEP or ISS)
- Training contracts and/or agreements
- Training attendance records
- Verification of measurable skill gain types
- Credentials
- Invoices or voucher-related documents
- Timesheets, if applicable
- Any documents that relate to training and work experience activities that require documentation and verification.

Supportive Services:

- Any documentation needed to validate any supportive services provided to a program participant during program participation.
- Any documentation needed to validate any support services provided to a Youth program participant after exit.
- Case notes are sufficient for an Adult or Dislocated Worker program participant regarding follow up.
- Supportive services are only allowed after the exit for youth.

Follow up:

- Any documentation needed to validate any follow-up services provided to a program participant after exit.

Attachment B

Additional Guidance on Maintaining Confidential Medical and Educational Records

- Data or information acquired by an agency under a confidentiality agreement to be used exclusively for statistical purposes shall not be disclosed by an agency in identifiable form for any use other than an exclusively statistical purpose.
- Use of this information is prohibited except with the informed consent of the respondent.

Medical Records Confidentiality

Records containing identifiable health information – also known as protected health information (PHI) under the HIPAA Act of 1996 – such as health status, provision of health care, or payment for health care must be maintained in a secure and paper format.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy

- Educational records are covered under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, enacted in 1974, to protect the privacy of student education records.
- Under this law, students have the right to control disclosure of their education records. A student's education records may be disclosed only with the parent or student's prior written consent, unless:
 - The disclosure is to other school officials, including teachers, within the agency or institution whom the agency or institution has determined to have legitimate educational interests.
 - A contractor, consultant, volunteer, or other party to whom an agency or institution has outsourced institutional services or functions may be considered a school official under this paragraph provided that the outside party:
 - ✓ Performs an institutional service or function for which the agency or institution would otherwise use employees.
 - ✓ Is under the direct control of the agency or institution with respect to the use and maintenance of education records.
 - ✓ Is subject to the requirement of 34 CFR 99.33(a) governing the use and re-disclosure of personally identifiable information from education records.
- An educational agency or institution must use reasonable methods to ensure that school officials obtain access to only those education records in which they have legitimate educational interests.
- An educational agency or institution that does not use physical or technological access controls must ensure that its administrative policy for controlling access to education is effective and that it remains in compliance with the legitimate education interest requirement of this section.
- The disclosure is, subject to the requirements of 34 CFR 99.34, to officials of another school, school system, or institution of postsecondary education where the student seeks

or intends to enroll, or where the student is already enrolled so long as the disclosure is for purposes related to the student's enrollment or transfer.

- Participants who attend training through WIOA-funded programs must sign and date a form authorizing the release of educational records in order to obtain information or copies of certifications or diplomas from educational institutions for data validation and reporting purposes, if the educational agency is not a partner to a data sharing agreement for reporting and research purposes and would already be providing this information and documentation.