

PASSAIC COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD

Subject: WIOA Title I American Job Centers (AJC) Certification Policy

Effective Date: 05/08/2026

PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to create an American Job Centers (AJC) / One-Stop Certification Policy in compliance with all requirements and identifying criteria for the local area. The policy is required under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 121. The policy includes an addendum on ADA compliance and accessibility assessments for individuals with disabilities.

BACKGROUND

WIOA requires the local American Job Centers (AJC) / One-Stop Career Centers to be certified. The WIOA American Job Center (AJC) Certification Policy establishes a standardized framework for evaluating and certifying AJCs. This framework ensures that AJCs meet specific operational, service, and partnership standards, thereby enhancing their capacity to serve job seekers, workers, and employers effectively. The policy aims to promote continuous improvement and encourage adherence to best practices in workforce development. The certification is a requirement to ensure a high and consistent level of quality in service delivery through periodic assessment. It is an opportunity to identify gaps in services within the AJC/ One-Stop and for the WDB to recommend corrective actions to address these gaps. The ADA Checklist for Existing Facilities identifies compliance issues and provides possible solutions for any deficiencies related to physical accessibility. The assessment process is used as an opportunity to initiate a cycle of continuous improvement in collaboration with the NJDOL and AJC/One-Stop lease holder to providing ADA access in the local one-stop system.

WIOA requires that the State establish a level of expectation for One-Stop certification that local boards must utilize as a basis to certify a One-Stop under its auspices. The legislation links such certification to the ability to receive potential infrastructure funding for the One-Stop. Such certification shall be based on established criteria and the extent to which the One-Stop provides programs and services in the local area that have enabled that area to satisfy or exceed performance and quality service criterion.

POLICY

The WIOA American Job Center (AJC) Certification Policy establishes a standardized framework for evaluating and certifying AJCs. This framework ensures that AJCs meet specific operational, service, and partnership standards, thereby enhancing their capacity to serve job seekers, workers, and employers effectively. The policy aims to promote continuous improvement and encourage adherence to best practices in workforce development. WDB adopts the federal and State criteria for procedures to assess facilities, programs and services to achieve certification. The WDB will recommend improvements based on the assessment outcomes and document the compliance of the AJC/One-Stop partners and lease holder to the recommendations and report their compliance in the next certification cycle.

Federal Certification Requirements

Under federal legislation, the State Workforce Development Board must establish objective criteria and procedures for Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) to use when certifying AJCs. Guidance is found in WIOA Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014, Sections 101(d)(6), 121(b), 121(e)(2), 121(g)(1), 121(g)(3), and 188 20 CFR 678.305-320, 678.400-440, 678.800, and 678.900 34 CFR 361.305, 361.310, 361.400, 361.415, 361.420, 361.800 29 CFR Part 38 (Implementation of the Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Provisions of WIOA) 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards) TEGL 16-16: One-Stop Operations Guidance for the American Job Center Network. AJCs must be certified at least once every three years.

The required partner programs, as provided in 20 CFR 361.400, are:

- Programs authorized under title I of WIOA, including: Adults, Dislocated workers, Youth, job Corps, YouthBuild, Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs, Native American programs (Note: Native American programs through federally recognized tribes are not currently present in New Jersey. However, engagement with state-recognized Native groups is recommended.)
- Employment services authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act
- Adult education and literacy activities authorized under title II of WIOA;
- The Vocational Rehabilitation program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act
- The Senior Community Service Employment

- Career and technical education programs at the post-secondary level authorized under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act; • Trade Adjustment Assistance activities
- Jobs for Veterans State Grants programs
- Employment and training activities carried out under the Community Services Block Grant
- Employment and training activities under the Department of Housing and Urban Development
- Programs authorized under State unemployment compensation laws (in accordance with applicable Federal law);
- Programs authorized under sec. 212 of the Second Chance Act (Reintegration of Ex offenders); and
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

34 CFR 361.305(a): A comprehensive one-stop center is a physical location where job seeker and employer customers can access the programs, services, and activities of all required one-stop partners. A comprehensive one-stop center must have at least one title I staff person physically present. The comprehensive one-stop center must provide:

- Career services, described in 5 361.430;
- Access to training services described in 20 CFR 680.200;
- Access to any employment and training activities carried out under sec. 134(d) of WIOA;
- Access to programs and activities carried out by one-stop partners.
- Workforce and labor market information.
- Customers must have access to these programs, services, and activities during regular business days at a comprehensive one-stop center.

"Access" to each partner program and its services means:

- Having a program staff member physically present at the one-stop center;

- Having a staff member from a different partner program physically present at the One-Stop center
- Making available a direct linkage through technology to program staff who can provide meaningful information or services.

A local comprehensive AJC/One-Stop center is a physical location within a local workforce development area where job seekers and employers can access the programs and services of all required partner agencies in one place. The WIOA legislation requires every local workforce area to have at least one comprehensive physical center.

Core Requirements

To be certified as "comprehensive," a center must meet specific federal standards by providing:

- **Physical Presence:** It must have at least one WIOA Title I staff person physically present during regular business hours.
- **Full Access:** It must provide access to the services of all required partners, which includes programs for veterans, adult education, vocational rehabilitation, and unemployment insurance.
- **Essential Services**
 - **Career Services:** Job search assistance, career counseling, and labor market information.
 - **Training Access:** Direct entry or referrals to vocational training and ITAs
 - **Employer Services:** Recruitment assistance and workforce data for local businesses.
- **Accessibility:** It must be physically and programmatically accessible to individuals with disabilities.

Comprehensive vs. Affiliate Sites

While a comprehensive center provides access to every required partner program, an affiliate site is a supplemental location that may only offer a limited selection of those services.

According to the Electronic Code of Federal Regulations, "access" at these centers can be provided through:

- **Staff on-site:** Program staff are physically present.
- **Cross-trained staff:** Staff from a different partner are trained to provide information on all available programs.

- Direct Linkage: Real-time technology (like a dedicated phone line or video chat) that connects a customer to a staff member at another location within a reasonable time.

34 CFR 361.310 defines an affiliated site or affiliate one-stop center, as a site that makes available to job seeker and employer customers one or more of the one-stop partners' programs, services, and activities. An affiliated site does not need to provide access to every required one-stop partner program. The frequency of program staff's physical presence in the affiliated site will be determined at the local level. Affiliated sites are access points in addition to the comprehensive one-stop center(s) in each local area. If used by local areas as a part of the service delivery strategy, affiliate sites must be implemented in a manner that supplements and enhances customer access to services.

Assessment Requirements

20 CFR 678.800 mandates the WDB to assess at least once every 3 years the effectiveness, physical and programmatic accessibility, and continuous improvement of one-stop centers and the one-stop delivery systems using the criteria and procedures developed by the State WDB. The WDB may establish additional criteria, or set higher standards for service coordination, than those set by the State criteria. The WDB must review and update the criteria every 2 years as part of the Local Plan update process described in 20 CFR 676.580 and the WDB must certify one-stop centers in order to be eligible to use infrastructure funds in the State funding mechanism described in 20 CFR 678.730.

New Jersey Department of Labor Policies

NJWINs provide guidance on AJC Certification

- NJWIN 17-16(A) – One-Stop Career Center (AJC) Certification. This is the primary notice detailing the certification criteria and process. It provides details on the assessment of programmatic and physical accessibility of One-Stop Centers for individuals with disabilities and includes physical and programmatic accessibility checklists for the workforce board to conduct assessments of the one-stops in the local area.
- NJWIN WD-11-16 – Regional and Local Plans. Provides the framework for how local boards must incorporate AJC certification and service delivery strategies into their multi-year strategic plans.
- NJWIN WD-PY21-6 Local Governance Policy was issued in May 2022, defines roles and responsibilities for New Jersey's Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) to ensure compliance with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The policy mandates shared governance, competitive procurement of service providers, and strict separation of roles to ensure transparency and prevent conflicts of interest.

- WD-PY22-3.1: When a program does not have a presence in a local area, they are not required.
- NJWIN WD-PY22-4.2 New Jersey Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Infrastructure Funding Agreement (IFA) serves as the primary regulatory framework for how Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) and One-Stop Partners coordinate services and share costs.
- NJWIN WD-22-16(A) American Job Center (AJC) Operations issued on April 27, 2017, focuses on operations. This notice reinforces certification standards by detailing functional service integration, the use of the "American Job Center" identifier, and the requirement for co-locating Wagner-Peyser Act services.
- NJWIN WD-PY22-6 issued on March 24, 2023, outlines the core requirements for the operation, monitoring, and certification of American Job Centers (AJCs) in New Jersey. This policy rescinded and replaced previous notices NJWIN WD-19-16 and NJWIN WD-22-16(A) AJC Operations.
- NJWIN WD-PY24-7, issued on June 3, 2025, provides comprehensive guidance on the federal, state, and local partners that Local Workforce Development Boards must engage to operate New Jersey's One-Stop Career Centers. This notice replaces the previous NJWIN WD-PY22-3.1 One-Stop Career Center Partners.
- NJWIN WD-PY23-3 emphasizes "functional alignment," where staff are organized into teams by function rather than just by program to provide seamless service

In New Jersey, the certification process is overseen by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC) and the Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL). Guidance for the One-Stop Certification Process and Checklist is provided by the State Employment and Training Commission (SETC).

Certification Frequency

While federal law allows for three years, New Jersey policy (SETC Policy 2016-14) has historically required recertification of Local WDBs and centers every two years to align with the State Combined Plan.

Prerequisites for Certification: Local areas must satisfy several "essential elements" before they can be certified, including:

- An established grievance/complaint system for customers.
- A certified local Workforce Development Board.
- A local Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that includes all required partners.
- Documented accessibility standards.

Policy Revision

The WDB Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) policies are reviewed amended annually by the WDB to remain in compliance with all federal mandates and state-level policy changes issued by the New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development. The WDB notifies partners of any policy revisions.