

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION LETTER

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Keyword:	ES; Recovery Act; RRES; TWIST; UI; WIA; WorkInTexas.com
Effective:	Immediately

To: Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers



From: Laurence M. Jones, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Wagner-Peyser Employment Service and Workforce Investment Act
Service Delivery Strategies and Integration**

PURPOSE:

To provide Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with guidance on service delivery strategies to:

- promote the integration of services available through Wagner-Peyser Employment Service (ES) and Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs; and
- assist job seekers who are most in need, including:
 - unemployment insurance (UI) claimants profiled as high risk by the Rapid Reemployment Services (RRES) program;
 - other UI claimants; and
 - job seekers who are not UI claimants.

BACKGROUND:

As the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration (DOLETA) has noted repeatedly in its guidance for the use of American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 funds, the investment of funds under ARRA is more than an injection into workforce development resources. It represents “an extraordinary and unique opportunity for the workforce system to advance its transformational efforts and demonstrate its full capacity to innovate and implement effective one-stop service delivery strategies.” DOLETA has challenged states to “take an expansive view of how the funds can be integrated into transformational efforts to improve the effectiveness of the public workforce system.”

The Texas Workforce Commission (Commission) is developing workforce service delivery strategies and tools to assist in identifying and outreaching individuals who can benefit most from ES and WIA services.

While there are obvious differences between ES and WIA services—WIA can fund training, support services, and needs-related payments (NRPs), while ES cannot—the two programs provide core and intensive services.

Texas workforce system service delivery spans a continuum from purely customer directed to more heavily staff managed.

- Customers who engage in self-service exclusively or receive limited staff assistance—e.g., through the resource room, a workshop, with a résumé, job referrals, or ideas on how to approach job search—generally are classified as ES customers.
- Some customers requiring more staff assistance, such as those likely to exhaust benefits or those who have sought assistance through a Texas Workforce Center and have little work experience or need training, support services, or NRPs, may be enrolled as WIA customers if eligibility requirements are met.

Although ES and WIA customers are often identified by the types of services provided, many commonalities among the two programs' services exist, including the more intensive staff-assisted services.

DOLETA guidance to more fully integrate workforce service delivery with the additional funds provided through ARRA presents a renewed opportunity to let customer needs drive service delivery rather than classifying customer service options based on whether the services are funded through ES, WIA, or any other program.

Additionally, DOLETA has encouraged states to increase the number of individuals in training and the provision of support services and NRPs, thus making the use of WIA funds a priority. While ARRA may be the catalyst for these changes to service delivery and resource usage, the Commission intends for the changes to be permanent. ARRA funding is limited, but the service delivery model should be scalable to available funding.

PROCEDURES:

Boards must be aware that the delivery of Texas workforce system services must include:

- identifying, outreaching, and informing job seekers who appear likely to have significant difficulty obtaining and retaining meaningful employment of services available through the workforce system—e.g., training, support services, NRPs—while allowing for customer choice to participate in certain programs;

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- targeting one-on-one services to UI claimants that include increased quantity and quality of services provided;
- targeting one-on-one services to low-income individuals and public assistance recipients that include increased quantity and quality of services provided;
- giving priority consideration to veterans, migrant and seasonal farmworkers (MSFWs), foster youth, and individuals with disabilities;
- increasing the number of job seekers receiving WIA dislocated worker and adult services;
- identifying a need for, and connecting job seekers with, training as early as possible to facilitate reentry into the workforce; and
- leveraging both ES and WIA funding and services to maximize staff and other resources to enhance job seekers' opportunities to return to the workforce.

Boards must establish outreach and service delivery strategies for each of the following customer groups requiring additional staff assistance to successfully connect or reconnect with employment:

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- UI Claimant Job Seekers:
 - *High-Risk UI Claimants*—individuals identified through RRES as most likely to exhaust their regular UI benefits and called in to a Texas Workforce Center for reemployment services;
 - *Other UI Claimants*; and
- Universal Job Seekers—individuals who are not receiving UI benefits but are registered in WorkInTexas.com and who appear likely to have significant difficulty obtaining and retaining meaningful employment.

Boards must ensure that RRES is provided to high-risk UI claimants in accordance with the parameters outlined in WD Letter 56-07, Change 1, issued January 28, 2009, and entitled “Revisions to the Rapid Reemployment Services Program: *Update*,” and any subsequent changes.

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Boards must be aware of new automation tools being developed to produce separate reports, one for UI claimants and one for nonclaimants, which will identify the reemployment risk factors of job seekers currently seeking services. Boards must use their outreach and service delivery strategies in conjunction with these new automation tools to target job seekers most in need of staff assistance.

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“Most in need” is defined as meeting all of the criteria in the reports, i.e., four of four factors, followed by those meeting three of four factors, and so on. These factors may be expanded over time as economic and labor market conditions change. They are not limited to but currently include:

- Wages for the first four of the past five completed calendar quarters were below \$20,000 annually or \$10/hour;
- Wage records for the first four of the past five completed calendar quarters indicate that the individual's wages were reported by at least three employers;
- Individual does not have a high school diploma or a GED; and/or

- Individual has used workforce system services regularly during the previous eight weeks without obtaining employment.

Additionally, Boards must be aware that the outreach reports consider whether an identified individual is a veteran, an MSFW, a foster youth, has a known disability, and other factors noted on the reports.

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Boards must ensure a continuum of workforce service delivery that ranges from self-directed job search to staff-guided intensive services and includes the following:

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- *Self-Directed Job Search*—for job seekers with the necessary skills, experience, and abilities to find employment with minimal assistance from the Texas workforce system. Self-directed job seekers choose whether to use Texas Workforce Center resources such as resource rooms, group orientations, and workshops.
- *Staff-Guided Intensive Services*—for job seekers facing barriers that make it difficult to find employment without staff assistance. All job seekers needing staff-guided intensive services will require direct interaction with staff and the provision of staff-assisted and/or intensive services. Some job seekers in this category require only intermittent staff contact to assess progress or modify plans for obtaining employment as necessary; other job seekers in this category require regular, ongoing staff contact and follow-up.

Boards must ensure that:

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- UI claimants and universal job seekers identified for staff-guided intensive services are enrolled in a WIA program when appropriate; and
- all Texas Workforce Center staff working with job seekers is trained to provide core and intensive services.

Boards may allow all Texas Workforce Center staff working with job seekers to provide WIA-funded services.

LF

INQUIRIES:

Direct inquiries regarding this WD Letter to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

RESCISSIONS:

WD Letter 54-07

REFERENCE:

American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (P.L. 111-5)
WD Letter 56-07, Change 1, issued January 28, 2009, and entitled “Revisions to the Rapid Reemployment Services Program: *Update*.”

FLEXIBILITY RATINGS:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Boards must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this WD Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that Boards have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this WD Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”