

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission



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Rev. W. B. Parker, Chairman

Representing Employees

David Hill, Commissioner
Mike Wester, Commissioner

Oklahoma Employment and Training Issuance #09-2005

DATE: April 27, 2005
TO: WIA Grant Recipients
FROM: Employment and Training Division
Subject: Demand Occupations Policy

Purpose: To clarify Oklahoma policy regarding the development and use of demand occupations and demand skills listings.

Background: The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) empowers States and WIA grant sub-recipients to expend WIA Title I funds for training programs that lead qualifying individuals to self sufficiency. Section 134 of the Act specifies that funds allocated to a local area may be expended through the use of Individual Training Accounts (§134(d)(4)(G)) or pursuant to a contract of services in lieu of an individual training account (§134(d)(4)(G)(ii)) for qualifying individuals who select programs of training services that are directly linked to employment opportunities in the local area involved or in another area to which the adults or dislocated workers receiving such services are willing to relocate (§134(d)(4)(A)(iii)).

On April 1, 2004, the Governor realigned the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce and established the Office for Workforce Solutions within that agency. The Governor also established guiding principals for workforce and economic development, including *“Oklahoma will have a competitive labor pool that addresses the quality needs of current and anticipated industry clusters and employer groups.”*

Message: WIA training opportunities, whether the result of Individual Training Accounts (ITA) or contracts, should focus on community talent growth and aligning the workforce with targeted industry clusters (existing or emerging). To that end, occupations and/or skills shall not, in all instances, require history of demand to qualify for identification as “In Demand”.

- Each local board shall establish and maintain a list of occupations in demand, hereafter referred to as “Demand Occupations”, that are:
 - In demand in the local board’s Workforce Investment Area; or

- Are determined by the local board to be in sectors of the economy that have a high potential for sustained demand or growth in the local area.
- Are common to targeted industry clusters within the workforce investment area.
- Local boards shall also establish a list of demand skills. These skills should:
 - Support economic development priorities;
 - Focus on industrial sectors and clusters, whether present or emerging;
 - Address industry-specific or general shortages;
 - Enhance workplace literacy, including vocational English as a second language.
- Targeted industry clusters, demand occupations, and demand skills must be identified by the board, documented in official meeting minutes, and recertified as current during the first meeting of each program year that qualifies for attendance by the public under the Oklahoma Open Meetings Act.
- Local boards are not required to include in their listings, skills or occupations that are in demand in another area to which an adult or dislocated worker is willing to relocate, and for which training has been approved.

Action: Local boards shall establish local procedures for development and maintenance of demand occupations and demand skills lists, and shall have those lists established by the beginning of program year 2005. This is official policy and must be maintained in your permanent files.

Inquiries: Refer inquiries to Jeane Burruss, Manager of Systems Operations at (405) 557-7134 or jeane.burruss@oesc.state.ok.us.