

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission
Workforce Integrated Programs

Memo

M-01-2008

To: WIA Board Chairs and Board Staff

From: Richard J. Gilbertson, Director
Workforce Integrated Programs Division

Date: March 7, 2008

Re: Procurement of WIA Integrated Services

Dear Chairs and Staff:

The purpose of this letter is to follow up to the recent training on best practices for procuring WIA adult and dislocated worker service providers and provide clarity to some obvious confusion about our expectations. This is an effort to bring existing procurement problems for adult and dislocated worker services to your attention; there is no new policy forcing new service provider procurement but you need to be in compliance with existing State policy.

This effort began when we received a number of inquiries from local boards asking how they can induce their service providers to be more responsive. We have also observed that many WIA service providers continue to focus on occupational skills training with extensive case management for very small numbers of customers despite State and Federal policy significantly increasing their customer pool. This makes it difficult for that WIA service provider to fully engage in local integration efforts. Finally, a review of existing adult and dislocated worker service provider contracts leads us to believe that few local boards have properly procured integrated services in compliance with OETI 03-2007 and even fewer have documented sufficient justification for renewing service provider contracts as required by OETI 11-2003, Change 1.

In addition to potential non-compliance with existing State policy, it appears that many local boards are using old procurement practices. I.e., some local boards are continuing to procure unspecified WIA services where the bidders develop their own program design. We think this leads to non-responsive service providers and delays movement from old program silos to integrated service delivery.

From our perspective many local boards have made significant progress in creating an integrated service delivery design in their areas by designating comprehensive centers, adopting customer flow models, and developing local integration policies and procedures. What is needed is for local boards to procure service providers to carry out the local boards' integrated service delivery design utilizing the local boards' design documents. We believe this will result in the WIA adult/dislocated worker service providers being more responsive to local boards while changing the old WIA/JTPA service delivery paradigm where it still exists.

Instead of buying unspecified WIA Title I services, we believe local boards should procure an adult/dislocated worker service provider(s) to staff identified positions in comprehensive centers and other service delivery locations identified by the local board while requiring real time metrics to measure impact. In addition, the local board should also identify products necessary to assist center customers with skill enhancements. I.e., instead of buying general WIA services that bidders describe, local boards should include their own integrated service delivery design documents in their RFP to procure what WIA funded staff is needed to perform particular functions plus specific skill enhancement products to be available so any center staff can access for appropriate customers.

These integrated service delivery design documents should include the local board's customer flow chart, an organizational chart for each service delivery location identifying which positions and tasks will be provided by OESC and other potential partners and which need to be supplied by the WIA service provider, integrated policies and procedures, skill enhancement products in addition to traditional occupational skills training, real time performance metrics, and the local board's policies which impact service delivery integration (e.g., policies on priority and self-sufficiency).

We can appreciate that OETI 03-2007 (issued July, 2007) was too late to be utilized in procuring WIA adult and dislocated worker services for this current program year. But we have assumed that the last 8 months were sufficient time to allow an appropriate procurement for next program year. If your local board has not procured "integrated services where WIA staff may be functionally supervised by others" or if you are planning to renew your current service provider contract(s) without sufficient justification, you will need to procure WIA adult/dislocated worker integrated services for the upcoming program year.

Our discovery of your potential procurement exposure has come too late for you to do a proper procurement for the program year beginning July 1st. For this reason, if you are not already planning to procure the appropriate

services, we authorize you to renew your existing service provider contract for a single 90 day period so you will have time to complete an appropriate procurement. If you believe your local board has properly procured integrated services in accordance with OETI 03-2007 and hope to merely renew that contract on July 1st, then we suggest you contact the Workforce Integrated Programs staff to verify your compliance with these existing State policies. To be of further assistance, in the next few weeks we will be providing additional guidance on best practices to procure WIA adult and dislocated worker service providers to carry out your local board's integrated service delivery design. This guidance will include a model RFP document.

If you still have questions about our expectations please call Richard Gilbertson at (405) 557-7121 or Ann Pendergraft at (405) 557-5317.

Sincerely,

Richard Gilbertson
WIP Director