



APPROVAL DATE: 8/11/10
APPROVED BY: Betty Baker, WIB Chair

**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

POLICY NO: 2-08
TO: Service Providers
EFFECTIVE: September 26, 2008
SUBJECT: Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity

REFERENCES:

- Workforce Investment Act, Section 188
- Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, Title II, Subpart A
- Age Discrimination Act of 1975, as amended
- Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973
- Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972
- Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended
- Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 667.275
- Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Subpart F
- Title 29 Parts 31, 32, and 37

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance regarding prohibited discriminatory practices occurring in services under the WIA.

DEFINITIONS:

Beneficiary - One of the individuals intended by Congress to receive aid, benefits, services or training from a recipient.

Complaint - For this policy and procedure only, means an allegation of a violation of the WIA nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

Local Level Equal Opportunity Officer - The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) designates the Department of Social Services (DSS) EEO Officer as the local-level Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer. The EO Officer ensures compliance with the

nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIA and Title 29 CFR Section 37.23. The EO Officer's responsibilities include:

- Informing employees and participants of their rights and responsibilities.
- Hearing, answering, and advising individuals on complaints of discrimination.
- Explaining to grant recipient employees or participants how the equal opportunity complaint system works.
- Serving as liaison with the Civil Rights Center (CRC).

Recipient - means any entity to which financial assistance under WIA Title I is extended, either directly from the Department of Labor (DOL) or through the Governor or another recipient (including any successor, assignee, or transferee of a recipient), such as the San Luis Obispo County Workforce Investment Board (WIB), but excluding the ultimate beneficiaries of the WIA Title I-funded program or activity.

Small Recipient - A small recipient is a recipient having fewer than 15 beneficiaries, and on any given day, fewer than 15 employees, in the grant year.

POLICY:

It shall be the policy of the WIB to foster and ensure equal opportunity and non-discrimination in the operation of the WIA Public Law 105-220 programs and activities.

A. General Principles

1. Programs shall be open to all qualified individuals. No one shall be excluded from participation, denied benefits, subjected to discrimination, or denied gainful employment because of race, color or national origin, age, handicap, sex, religion, political affiliation or belief, retaliation, or citizenship. In addition, sexual harassment is against the law. Acts of sexual harassment are grounds for a discrimination complaint based on sex under Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
2. WIA clients, applicants, participants, and staff shall be free to file complaints and participate in hearings, alternative dispute resolution, investigations, or compliance reviews without the threat of intimidation, coercion, or discrimination. There shall be no retaliation or reprisal against an individual who has opposed a practice prohibited by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the WIA or an individual who has otherwise exercised any rights and privileges under the WIA nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.
3. Programs shall be open to citizens and nationals of the United States, lawfully admitted permanent resident aliens, lawfully admitted refugees and parolees, and other individuals authorized by the Attorney General to work in the United States.

4. Efforts shall be made to develop programs that contribute to lifelong learning, occupational development, upward mobility, development of new careers, and overcome sex stereotyping in occupations traditional to the other sex.
5. Fair employment practices shall be maintained in recruiting, hiring, transferring, promoting, training, and compensating all staff. These same principles shall apply to layoffs and terminations.

B. Other

1. Administrative Entity Office and Service Provider administrative offices and program sites shall be designed to accommodate the needs of physically and mentally handicapped individuals, as appropriate:
 - a) Offices providing intake, assessment, and referral shall be accessible.
 - b) WIA clients, applicants, participants, and staff may request medically necessary accommodations by simply putting their request in writing and submitting it to the appropriate administrative office.
 - c) Programs and activities shall be conducted in the most integrated setting appropriate for qualified handicapped individuals.
 - d) Programs and activities, when viewed in their entirety, shall be accessible.
2. Efforts should be made to use minority and female owned enterprises when procuring goods and services for the Workforce Investment System, as appropriate.
3. Recipients of federal financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals having Limited English Proficiency (LEP) receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to programs, services, and information provided by the recipients. Program documents, when appropriate, will be published in languages other than English to convey program information to limited English speaking participants, applicants, and participants and members of the public interested in job training information and programs, as appropriate.
4. Initial and continuing notice of nondiscriminatory practices and the right to file a complaint will be:
 - a) Posted in prominent locations;
 - b) Disseminated in internal memoranda and other written or electronic communications;

c) Included in handbooks and manuals, brochures, broadcasts, and other communications;

d) Included in each participant's file. The participant must sign a copy of acknowledgement of receipt. Where the participant's file is maintained electronically, a record of such notice shall be documented in the participant's file;

e) The notice shall be provided in appropriate formats to individuals with visual impairments. A record of such notice shall be documented in the participant's file; and

f) Given to:

- Applicants/registrants;
- Eligible applicants/registrants;
- Participants;
- Applicants for employment;
- Employees;
- Unions or professional organizations holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the WIB; and
- Recipients of WIA Title I funds.

5. Generally distributed publications, broadcasts, and other communications, which that promote WIA programs or activities, shall include the following taglines: "This WIA Title I-financially assisted program or activity is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities." This applies similarly to those recipients required by law or regulation to publish or broadcast program information to public media. Where appropriate, information and services should be additionally provided in languages other than English.

6. Where materials indicate that the WIB may be reached by telephone, the California Relay Service (CRS) telephone number 1-800-735-2929 or 711 will be also used.

C. Universal Access

1. As required in Title 29 CFR Section 37.42, recipients must ensure universal access to WIA Title I financially assisted programs and activities by:

a) Implementing an outreach and recruitment plan to solicit participation of all potentially WIA Title I-eligible applicants in the entire locale;

b) Creating an outreach and recruitment plan that will reach specific target populations through media, schools, and community services groups;

c) Considering a pool of individuals for participation that includes members of both sexes, various race/ethnicity/age groups, and individuals with disabilities;

d) Establishing a hiring and eligibility process that is accessible to qualified applicants with disabilities; and

e) Utilizing facilities designed to provide reasonable access to individuals with disabilities in the following areas: training, job structure, work schedule, work procedure, and work equipment and auxiliary aids accommodations.

D. Compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as Amended and Title 29 CFR Part 37

1. The recipients must ensure the accessibility to their training programs and activities for all individuals, and must administer their training programs and activities in the most integrated setting appropriate to the needs of qualified individuals with disabilities. This includes employment tests or other selection criteria used by recipients that do not screen out individuals with disabilities, and training programs accessible to individuals with visual, hearing, or speech impairments. The recipients must provide means for individuals with disabilities to receive information about availability of facilities accessible to them. Additionally, recipients must provide auxiliary aids and services and reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities to enable them to perform duties of the job (e.g., special aids, modified work sites, or restructuring of jobs). WIA clients, applicants, participants, and staff may request medically necessary accommodations by submitting a written request to the appropriate administrative office.

2. The recipients must also provide:

a) Designated parking for the disabled that is accessible to the building entrance, free of any barriers (e.g., steps, steep slopes, low spots in ground or pavement, buckled concrete, gravel);

b) Signage at a primary entrance to each of their inaccessible facilities, directing users to a location at which they can obtain information about accessible facilities;

c) The international symbol for accessibility at each primary entrance of an accessible facility;

d) Building entrance doors that can be opened with one hand;

e) Accessible information/public counter areas;

- f) Facility elevators that are accessible from the entrance meeting the above criteria;
- g) Elevator control panel and entrance buttons with raised numbers and Braille symbols at an accessible height;
- h) At least one accessible public telephone;
- i) Accessible meeting rooms with Braille symbols at an accessible height;
- j) Restroom facilities that have at least one toilet stall with an accessible doorway. The stall should have grab bars and the toilet stool should be accessible for the disabled individual after the door is closed (access to the grab bars should not be obstructed by such things as toilet paper dispensers, etc.); and
- k) Alternative methods to ensure that training, job structure, work schedule, work procedure, and work equipment are available to individuals with disabilities when the facilities are not physically accessible to individuals with disabilities.

3. With regard to aid, benefits, services, training, and employment, a recipient must:

- a) Provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities, who are applicants, registrants, eligible applicants/registrants, participants, employees, or applicants for employment, unless providing the accommodation would cause the recipient undue hardship on business operations; and
- b) Make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination on the basis of disability, unless making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the WIA Title I financially assisted service, program, or activity. In those circumstances where a recipient believes that the proposed accommodation would cause undue hardship or the proposed modification would fundamentally alter the program, the recipient has the burden of proving that compliance with this section would result in such hardship and alteration. The recipient must make the decision that the accommodation would cause such hardship or result in such alteration after considering all factors listed in the definitions of "undue hardship" and "fundamental alteration." A written statement of the recipient's reasons for reaching that conclusion must accompany the decision. The recipient must provide a copy of the statement of reasons to the individual(s) who requested the modification.

4. If a requested accommodation would result in undue hardship, or a modification would result in a fundamental alteration, the recipient must take any other action that would not result in such burden or such alteration but would nevertheless ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the aid, benefits, services, training or employment provided by the recipient.

Title 29 CFR Section 37.4 defines "undue" hardship" with regard to reasonable accommodation of individuals with disabilities as significant difficulty or expense incurred by a recipient, when considered in light of certain factors to be considered. These factors include, but are not limited to, the nature and net cost of the accommodations needed, overall financial resources of recipient, type of operation(s) of recipient, the number of persons aided, benefited, served, trained, or employed, the impact on the ability of other participants to receive aids, benefits, services, or training, or of other employees to perform their duties and the impact on the facility's ability to carry out its business.

The term "fundamental alteration" means (1) a change in the essential nature of a program or activity as defined in Title 29 CFR Part 37, including but not limited to an aid, service, benefit, or training or (2) a cost that a recipient can demonstrate would result in an undue burden. The definition of "fundamental alteration" incorporates the concept of "undue financial and administrative burdens" in Title 29 CFR Part 37.

5. In addition, recipients must take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with beneficiaries, registrants, applicants, participants, and members of the public who are individuals with disabilities are as effective as communications with others.

E. Review Assurances in Job Training Plans, Contracts, and Policies and Procedures

1. A system must be implemented to ensure that all contracts, job training plans, and policies and procedures contain the nondiscrimination assurance as specified. The nondiscrimination assurance must state that the grant applicant will "comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions" of WIA and acknowledge the government's right to seek judicial enforcement of the nondiscrimination assurance.
2. Title 29 CFR Section 37.20 requires that each application for federal financial assistance under Title I of WIA must include the nondiscrimination assurance. Application for assistance is defined as the process by which required documentation is provided to the Governor, recipient, or DOL prior to and as a condition of receiving federal financial assistance under Title I of WIA (including both new and continuing assistance).

F. Data and Information Collection and Maintenance

1. In compliance with Section 188 of WIA, recipients must:

a) Collect data on race/ethnicity, sex, age, and, where known, disability status, of each applicant, registrant, eligible applicant/registrant, participant, terminnee, applicant for employment, and employee;

b) Maintain records of data in a system designed to allow the State and CRC to conduct statistical or other quantifiable analyses to verify compliance;

c) Safeguard the confidentiality of the required information (confidential information should only be used for record keeping and reporting purposes; determining eligibility, where appropriate, for WIA Title I financially assisted program or activity; determining if the recipient is operating its WIA program in a nondiscriminatory manner, or other use authorized by law);

d) Maintain, and submit to CRC upon request, a log of complaints filed alleging discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in a WIA Title I financially assisted program and activity. The log must include: (1) name and address of the complainant; (2) grounds of the complaint; (3) description of the complaint; (4) date complaint was filed; (5) disposition and date of disposition of complaint; and (6) any other pertinent information;

e) Promptly notify the CRC of any administrative enforcement actions or lawsuits filed against a LWIA alleging discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in a WIA Title I financially assisted program and activity. Provide a brief description of the findings in any civil rights compliance review where the applicant or recipient was found in noncompliance and keeps a log containing certain information regarding complaints filed with it according to procedures set by CRC;

f) Retain records, including records of complaints, for a period of not less than three years from the close of the applicable program year or date of resolution of complaint; and

g) Adopt procedures for responding to complaints of discrimination

G. Compliance Monitoring

1. In accordance with Title 29 CFR Sections 37.54(d)(2)(ii) and 37.54(d)(2)(iii), the Compliance Review Division (CRD) of EDD's Program Review Branch monitors LWIAs for compliance with WIA provisions and related regulations.
2. Biennially, the EDD's EEO monitoring staff will request that all LWIA Equal Opportunity (EO) officers complete and return the Compliance Monitoring Checklist

(CMC). LWIA EO Officers are responsible for completing the self-assessments at the LWIA level and responsible for ensuring that each One-Stop Career Center (OSCC) and other WIA providers identify persons responsible for completing the self-assessments for their individual facilities. The CMC will be reviewed by the EDD EEO monitors to identify One-Stop Career Centers in need of technical assistance. The EDD EEO Office will prepare a Technical Assistance Review Report (TARR) for the local areas. The report will enable the EEO Office and the local areas to work together to address the items identified in the report. Additionally, the EDD EEO Office on-site monitoring review of any One-Stop Career Center may be selected for further review by the DOL CRC. The EDD EEO Office will provide technical assistance to address identified subject matter as well as work with One-Stop staff in developing strategies and creative solutions. The State will provide an information packet to local EO Officers and One-Stop Career Center staff responsible for completing the self-assessments. The State will also make technical assistance available for LWIAs and One-Stop Career Centers during the time in which they complete self-assessments and develop compliance plans.

H. Complaint Processing Procedures

1. In compliance with nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the WIA and Title 29 CFR Section 37.76, the EO Officer must:
 - a) Develop and publish procedures (including alternative dispute resolution) for resolving allegations within the LWIA for noncompliance with applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions;
 - b) Develop and publish procedures for resolving allegations against service providers for noncompliance with applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions. The service providers must then follow those procedures (Although the WIB does not have the same contractual jurisdiction with vendors, as with service providers, the EO Officer shall document the facts of an alleged complaint. The facts should be used to advise the participant of any recourse available and to determine if the WIB should continue to utilize the services of the vendor.); and
 - c) Establish a system to record discrimination complaints.
2. Any client, applicant, participant, staff, employer/supervisor, Service Provider staff, prospective operation, union or professional organization holding collective bargaining or professional agreements with the WIB, or other interested party alleging violations of the discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the Workforce Investment Act 1998 Title I financially assisted programs or activities, its implementing regulations; policies or procedures pertaining thereto, may file a complaint through the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity complaint procedures for WIA programs.

ACTION:

The Administrative Entity for the WIB and its Service Providers shall follow this policy. This policy shall remain in effect until such time that a revision is required.

INQUIRIES:

Inquiries should be addressed to WIB Admin at wibadmin@co.slo.ca.us.

REVISION HISTORY:

<i>DATE</i>	<i>DETAILS</i>
04/03/14	1-Updated inquiry contact details.