



County of Mercer
Workforce Development Board
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Mercer WDB Policy: *Priority of Service* **Adopted: February 6, 2024**

Background/Requirement: A Priority of Service Policy is required under the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act (WIOA) (Section 134 (c)(3)(E) Title I Adult programs and as per NJWIN 11-16 (A). The statutory priority is for individuals who are receiving public assistance, other low-income individuals (as defined in WIOA Sec. 3 (36) and Basic Skills Deficient individuals (as defined in WIOA Sec. 3 (5) (B).

Priority of Service (per TEGL 19-16 and NJWIN 11-16) – The WIOA Adult program requires the provision of services to priority groups in the following order: Veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, are low

Policy: Services to **public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, and those who are basic skills deficient** are the identified priority population for Title I Adult Career and Training Services. Veterans and eligible spouses who meet the priority of services guidelines for all USDOL funding for Job Training Programs including but not limited to WIOA Title I and Wagner-Peyser will receive first priority. Expenditures according to funding are continuously reviewed to ensure that these priority populations receive the needed services should funding become limited.

Definitions:

Public Assistance Recipients residents include those individuals and families who, receive or have received in the past six months, assistance through TANF, SNAP, SSI, or another state or local income-based public assistance

Low-income individuals include individuals and/or families whose family income does not exceed the higher of the poverty line or 70% of the lower living standard income level; are homeless; receive or are eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch; foster child; have a disability whose own income meets the income requirement but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement.

Basic-skills deficient individuals include individuals who are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society; has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 9th grade level; lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary education; or an adult literacy program.

Eligible veterans - The One-Stop Career Center provides seamless services to Veterans and eligible spouses who will receive first priority referral to all job and career training opportunities for which they qualify. Also, in accordance with Section 134(c)(3)(E) of WIOA; the WDB/ One-Stop will utilize a four (4) tier system when providing veterans and their eligible spouses who meet the priority of service guidelines for all USDOL funding for Job Training Programs including but not limited to WIOA Title 1 and Wagner-Peyser.

Veterans who meet the eligibility criteria and have one or more of the barrier requirements will have priority in their eligibility cohort. Populations are tiered with public assistance recipients being at the top of the list. If there is an eligible veteran receiving public assistance they would be prioritized over a non-veteran. The second tier would include all other low-income individuals with covered veterans prioritized over other low-income individuals. The same will hold for Veterans in the third tier of the basic skills deficient individuals.

Locally identified Priority Group: In addition to the priority groups listed above, the Mercer WDB will target Individuals with disabilities, older individuals (55+), ex-offenders, homeless individuals, English-language learners, individuals facing substantial cultural barriers, and single parents.