



OhioMeansJobs

Summit & Medina Counties

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OHIO LOCAL WORKFORCE AREA 2
POLICY LETTER A-07
STANDARD OF SELF-SUFFICIENCY

I. **SUBJECT:** Standard of Self-Sufficiency

II. **PURPOSE:** This policy establishes the criteria for determining whether employment leads to self-sufficiency and how such eligibility is documented for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Adult and Dislocated Worker participants served through the Local Area 2 Workforce Development Board (WDB) office under the Summit and Medina Workforce Area Council of Governments (SAMWA COG) at its OhioMeansJobs Summit County and OhioMeansJobs Medina County locations.

III. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** November 6, 2017

IV. **DATES REVISED:** June 7, 2019; April 13, 2020; April 7, 2021; February 28, 2022; June 6, 2022; May 26, 2023; April 22, 2024; July 1, 2024

V. **BACKGROUND**

The WIOA requires local boards to set the criteria for determining whether employment leads to self-sufficiency. This is necessary to determine whether an employed Adult qualifies for Individualized and/or Training Services through the One-Stop Employment System. In Area 2, determination of appropriate need for Individualized or Training services is made by the contracted WIOA Career Services provider and approved by the Executive Director of the local Workforce Area. At a minimum, the criteria must provide that "self-sufficiency" means employment that pays at least the lower living standard income level ("LLSIL") as defined in WIOA section 3(36)(B). Self-sufficiency for a Dislocated Worker may be defined in relation to a percentage of the layoff wage. The self-sufficiency criteria set the standard for what is considered to be a self-sufficient wage in the local area.

VI. **POLICY**

The Area 2 WDB office has set the criteria for self-sufficiency at 225% of U.S. Department of Labor's LLSIL for Adults and 88% of the dislocation wage for the Dislocated Worker population. Workers who have received notice of layoff but have not yet been laid off and who do not have any other sources of employment will not be subject to review of self-sufficiency as defined by WIOA. The following guideline will give explanation to the self-sufficiency criteria.

Pursuant to section 134 (b)(3)(A)(i)(I) of the WIOA, for adults to receive training services they must be in need of such service to obtain or retain employment that leads to self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment. Priority must be given to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, individuals who are basic skills deficient, and Veterans. Under section 134 (b)(3)(A) of the WIOA, training services may be provided

to adults or dislocated workers who after an interview, evaluation, or assessment and career planning, have been determined by the contracted WIOA Career Services provider at OhioMeansJobs Summit and Medina centers to be:

1. Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services;
2. In need of training services to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment; and
3. Have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in the selected program of training services.

Example: An unemployed adult (individual or “family of one”) with no current income would meet the base criteria of “in need of such service to obtain employment that leads to self-sufficiency”. If the unemployed adult is a member of a family (2+) then family income must be calculated. If the customer’s family income is greater than or equal to the 225% figure, they are considered part of a self-sufficient family and would not be eligible for training *unless the training has the possibility of leading to a job with wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment*. This must be documented in the participant’s file.

An individual who is seeking WIOA Career Services in Area 2 shall have their dependency status determined at the time of registration. The determination of dependent status is required for all individuals under 24 years of age as part of the determination of eligibility for WIOA program services. This determination shall be made prior to the application of the federal definition of “family.” A person not meeting the definition of family is considered to be an individual (often known as “family-of-one” or “Individual”).

Independent Criteria

The individual’s gross earned income is not above 225% of LLSIL, OR;
 Applicants who fall in any one of these categories are considered to be “independent” (per Ohio Department of Job and Family Services’ (ODJFS) WIOAPL 15-06):

1. Under 18 years of age, not living with parents or guardians, and not receiving support from them;
2. Individuals, age 18-24, providing more than 50% of their own support;
3. Age 25 or older;
4. Married (including separated but not divorced);
5. Has children that receive more than half of their “support” from the applicant;
6. Support as it relates to the dependent includes financial assistance from parents or guardians to help pay for food, clothing, shelter, utilities, education, medical and dental care, recreation, transportation, and any other living expenses as well as any government-provided cash public assistance and food assistance;
7. Has dependents other than a spouse or children who live with the applicant and receive more than half of the "support" from the applicant;
8. Lives in own residence or in a residence without financial or other support from parents or guardians;
9. Is on active duty in the U.S. armed forces for purposes other than training
10. A veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces

Family Criteria

The individual is a member of a family whose combined gross earned income is not above 225%

of LLSIL for their actual family size; OR

1. Family means two or more persons related by blood, marriage, or decree of court, who are living in a single residence, and are included in one or more of the following categories:
 - i. Two spouses and dependent children
 - ii. A parent or guardian and dependent children, and
 - iii. Two spouses
2. Applicants who fall in any one of the following categories shall be consider a dependent for eligibility purposes:
 - i. Under 18 years of age, living with parents or guardians, and is receiving support from them; or
 - ii. Age 18-24 and parent(s) or guardian(s) pay(s) for more than 50% of the applicant's support

Family Income

The total includable income of an individual or a family for the 6-month period prior to application for the program. Family Income shall include:

1. Money wages and salaries before any deductions, including reported tips;
2. Net receipts for nonfarm self-employment (receipts from a person's own unincorporated business, professional enterprise, or partnership after deductions for business expenses);
3. Net receipts from farm self-employment (receipts from a farm which one operates as an owner, renter, or sharecropper, after deductions for farm operating expenses);
4. Unemployment Compensation;
5. Child support payments including foster care child payments and adoption subsidies;
6. Regular payments from social security, old-age survivors insurance benefits, railroad retirement, strike benefits from union funds, workers' compensation, and training stipends;
7. Alimony (spousal support);
8. Regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
9. Pensions whether private, government employee (including military retirement pay);
10. Regular insurance or annuity payments;
11. College or university grants, fellowships, and assistantships;
12. Dividends, interest, net rental income, net royalties, periodic receipts from estates and trusts;
13. Net gambling or lottery winnings.

Family income shall exclude:

1. Receives, or is a member of a family that receives, cash payments under a Federal, State, or local income based public assistance program;
2. Military earnings or allowances for any person who served on active duty and certain other specified benefits in accordance with 38 U.S.C. 4213.

Dislocated Worker

The individual is a Dislocated Worker who has a replacement employment position that are not at a wage at or above 88% of his/her previous employment position from which they were laid off.

**2024 POVERTY GUIDELINES
FOR THE 48 CONTIGUOUS STATES AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA**

SIZE OF FAMILY UNIT	POVERTY GUIDELINES
1	\$15,060
2	\$20,440
3	\$25,820
4	\$31,200
5	\$36,580
6	\$41,960
7	\$47,340
8	\$52,720

For families/households with more than 8 persons, add \$5,380 for each additional person.

2024 LOWER LIVING STANDARD INCOME LEVEL (LLSIL) FOR OHIO

This issuance provides an annual LLSIL for 2024, and a reference to the 2024 Health and Human Services (HHS) "Poverty Guidelines." Use of these income figures are meant only for the purpose of meeting specific requirements of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) as defined by statute and regulations.

Based on jurisdiction of the Census Region, Ohio is in the Midwest. Ohio is divided into three areas; Metropolitan, Non-Metropolitan, Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). Area 2 is located within the Cleveland-Akron MSA.

CLEVELAND-AKRON MSA

Ashtabula	Geauga	Lorain	Portage
Cuyahoga	Lake	Medina	Summit

**225% OF 2024 LOWER LIVING STANDARD INCOME LEVEL (LLSIL)
BY FAMILY SIZE**

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Cleveland-Akron MSA	\$35,835	\$58,743	\$80,622	\$99,519	\$117,452	\$137,340
(6 month determination)	\$17,917	\$29,371	\$40,311	\$49,759	\$58,726	\$68,670

For families/households with more than 6 persons, add \$19,888 for each additional person.

Excluded Income:

1. Cash payments under federal, state, or local income-based public assistance program (i.e., TANF, SSI,)
2. Military earnings or allowances for any person who served on active duty

Included Income:

3. Earned Gross Income of all Household Family Members
4. Social Security Old Age and Survivor's Benefits

5. Retirement, Pension, Ongoing Severance
6. Unemployment Compensation
7. Worker's Compensation
8. Child Support
9. Alimony
10. SSDI

Note: Individuals with a documented disability may be viewed as a family size of one, only taking their own six-month income into consideration for eligibility determination. Family income still needs to be documented.

Discussion

Setting the WIOA Adult Self-Sufficiency Standard at 225% of LLSIL addresses the needs of the "working poor" whose incomes are above the guidelines for public assistance. Establishing local Self-Sufficiency Standard at 225% LLSIL enables Area 2 to design workforce activities and training which will help individuals achieve the average living standard.

Setting the standard for Dislocated Workers at the higher of 88% of the dislocation wage or 225% LLSIL recognizes the need of obtaining employment that is at least comparable to their pre-layoff standard of living. This 88% standard is also the same percentage that the State is requiring as the County performance indicator for the earnings replacement wage for the dislocated worker.

1. WIOA Career Services provider staff will continue to work with those individuals who accept a job and are still underemployed.
2. WIOA Career Services provider staff will maintain verification of dependent status in the participant files for documentation and accountability purposes.
3. WIOA Career Services provider staff will accept an ODJFS Self-Attestation form to document parental support when signed by parent or guardian. A sample document is attached (**Attachment A**).

VII. DOCUMENTATION OF INCOME

Employed participants must provide documentation of family income in order to determine the self-sufficiency of the family:

1. Public assistance recipients – consult the ODJFS Allowable Source Documentation for WIOA Program Eligibility (**Attachment B**). If the employed worker is part of a family receiving public assistance, he/she is considered to be a member of a family who is not self-sufficient.
2. For those who are not on public assistance, gross earnings for the 6 months prior to enrollment for each working family member shall be collected along with verification of family size.
3. Individuals with a documented disability may be viewed as a family size of one, only taking their own six-month income into consideration for eligibility determination. Family income still needs to be documented.

VIII. REFERENCES

1. WIOA Public Law 113-128
2. Training & Employment Guidance Letter WIOA No. 19-16
3. ODJFS WIOA Policy Letter 15-06 Determination of Dependent Status
4. ODJFS WIOA Policy Letter 15-07.3, Attachment B – Allowable Source Documentation for WIOA Program Eligibility
5. ODJFS WIOA Policy Letter 15-19.1
6. HHS Poverty Income Guidelines and Lower Living Standard Income Level Poverty Income Chart for 2024