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## WIOA Populations with Barriers to Employment

### Background:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 serves as a catalyst for the publicly-funded workforce system to expand access to employment, training, and support services for individuals defined as “having barriers to employment”. State and Local public workforce systems must make deliberate decisions with regard to resource allocation and prioritization of adults and youth facing barriers to employment. WIOA Section 116 requires a statewide report that includes a breakout by those with barriers to employment. WIOA specifies new reporting requirements, including data reporting related to barriers to employment. The definition of an “individual with a barrier to employment” encompasses mandatory populations, as defined in WIOA Section 3(24).

Furthermore, the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education expressly forbid the establishment of practices that create disincentives to individuals with barriers to employment who may require longer-term career and training services.

### Reference:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 3(24) and Section 116.

### General Information:

The state is required to submit monthly reports to the U.S. Department of Labor – Region IV Office containing the enrollment levels of the individuals with barriers to employment. To date, these enrollments have not shown a perceptible increase. The information contained in this issuance is designed to assist Local Areas in increasing their enrollments of individuals with barriers to employment.

The term “individual with a barrier to employment” means a member of 1 or more of the following populations:

- (A) Displaced homemakers.
- (B) Low-income individuals.
- (C) Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians, as such terms are defined in section 166.
- (D) Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities.
- (E) Older individuals.
- (F) Ex-offenders.

(G) Homeless individuals (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e–2(6))), or homeless children and youths (as description of defined in section 725(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a (2))).

(H) Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system.

(I) Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers.

(J) Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, as defined in section 167(i).

(K) Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).

(L) Single parents (including single pregnant women).

(M) Long-term unemployed individuals.

(N) Such other groups as the Governor involved determines.

ADWS has conducted research to identify some of the possible barriers to employment for each target population and compiled them in the chart below:

**Possible Barriers to Employment**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Barriers to Employment</b>
Displaced Homemakers	Anxiety/depression; more education/training required; low self-confidence/decision-making; financial dependence; lack of affordable housing, lack of access to affordable childcare; lack of transportation
Low-income individuals (including TANF and SNAP recipients)	Lack of transportation; lack of access to affordable childcare; need professional clothing and other necessities for interviews; criminal record hindering job applications/hiring; reduced access to education and training; fewer job-related resources (ex: computer access)
Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians	Obstacles to advancement; stereotyping; prejudice; poverty, lack of education opportunity and advancement; other social-structural factors
Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities	Discrimination; lack of information about reasonable accommodations; employer fear of litigation based on the Americans with Disabilities Act; lack of job experience, lack of information about jobs; risk of losing benefits
Older Individuals	Ageism, lack of technology literacy; lower education levels; greater health problems
Ex-Offenders	Low literacy; lack of vocational skills; lack of steady history of employment; lack of technology literacy; stigma; lower education levels; mental health issues; employer reluctance to hire

Homeless individuals or homeless children and youth	Lack of security; lack of housing; lack of steady history of employment; lack of education and training; physical or mental health issues; criminal records hindering job applications; stigma; employer reluctance; need professional clothing and other necessities for interviews
Youth who are in or have aged out of the foster care system	Low stability; mental health issues; substance abuse issues; criminal records hindering job applications; lack of guidance for professional development; need for mentoring; need for public assistance
Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers	Language and communication skills; lack of understanding of career options; discrimination; age/time out of school
Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers	Health challenges from nature of work; poverty; mobility living and working arrangements; limited access to healthcare; lack of health insurance; language barriers; victims of illegal employment practices
Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under Part A of the Social Security Act	Transportation; lack of affordable childcare; criminal records hindering job applications; need professional clothing and other necessities for interviews; fewer job-related resources (ex. Computer access); reduced access to education and training; mental health issues; addiction issues
Single parents (including pregnant single women)	Lack of opportunities in education and employment; domestic violence; lack of access to affordable childcare; marital status; number and ages of children
Long-term unemployed individuals	Lack of education and training; lack of technology literacy; lack of essential skills; lack of standardized credentials across regions; low literacy; lack of mobility to seek employment in other geographical areas
Individuals who have low levels of literacy	H.S. Diploma as prerequisite for jobs; lack of technology literacy; lack of transportation; lack of understanding of career options; lack of work experience; need professional clothing and other necessities for interviews
Individuals without a High School Diploma	H.S. Diploma as prerequisite for jobs; low literacy; lack of technology literacy; lack of work experience; lack of understanding of career options; need professional clothing and other necessities for interviews

## Potential Barriers to Employment Solutions:

- Partnering with community organizations and businesses to provide business-appropriate wardrobe for Low-Income job seekers.
- Partnering with local government and community organizations to identify resources to provide stabilized housing, childcare, domestic violence solutions, and transportation services.
- Offering soft-skills training to those individuals with barriers to employment.
- Identifying mentors who have successfully completed the program while living with some of these barriers to employment.
- Provide training to front-line staff to better understand cultural differences while conducting outreach and providing services to individuals with limited English proficiency.
- Developing a pool of employers willing to hire ex-offenders and/or provide work experience or On-The-Job Training (OJT) sites.

## Population Identification and Outreach Solutions:

Low-income, Displaced Homemakers, Single Parents, Individuals within 2 years of exhausting benefits, Long-term Unemployed: Distribute flyers at Beauty shops, Barber Shops, Churches, Apartment Complexes, Community Centers, Daycare Centers, and DHS Local Offices. Utilize social media (Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

Homeless Individuals: May be found at bus stops, shelters, food banks, salvation army, etc.

Foster Care Youth: May be found by visiting homeless shelters, food banks, YMCAs, and other faith- and community-based organizations. Utilize social media (Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

Ex-Offenders: May be found by visiting with area parole officers, re-entry programs, faith- and community based organizations, halfway houses, juvenile justice, and “legal aid” type establishments.

English Language Learner, Eligible Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers, Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians : May be found by visiting faith- and community-based organizations that cater to specific population, adult education (ESL) programs, distribution of flyers in communities where populations live, and distribution of flyers at businesses where populations work. Utilize social media (Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.).

Older Individuals: May be found at Beauty and Barber shops, faith- and community-based organizations, and adult centers.

**Available Resources for Locate Special Populations:**

<b>Population</b>	<b>Organizations</b>	<b>Websites</b>
<b>Veterans</b>	Park University at LRAFB	<a href="https://military.park.edu/location/park-university-at-little-rock-afb-in-little-rock-ar/">https://military.park.edu/location/park-university-at-little-rock-afb-in-little-rock-ar/</a>
	LRAFB Airman and Family Residence Center	<a href="http://www.littlerock.af.mil/Units/Airman-and-Family-Readiness/">http://www.littlerock.af.mil/Units/Airman-and-Family-Readiness/</a>
<b>Low-Income</b>	Hope Filled Homes	<a href="http://www.hopefilledhomes.org/">http://www.hopefilledhomes.org/</a>
	Goodwill Industries of Arkansas	<a href="https://goodwillar.org/">https://goodwillar.org/</a>
	Shepherd's Hope Neighborhood Health Ctr.	<a href="http://shepherdshopelr.org/">http://shepherdshopelr.org/</a>
	Local Food Pantries -- Reportedly 573 statewide	<a href="https://www.foodpantries.org/st/arkansas">https://www.foodpantries.org/st/arkansas</a>
	Arkansas Public Defender Commission	<a href="http://www.apdc.myarkansas.net/">http://www.apdc.myarkansas.net/</a>
	Center for Arkansas Legal Services	<a href="http://www.arlegalservices.org/center">http://www.arlegalservices.org/center</a>
	Legal Aid of Arkansas	<a href="http://arlegalaid.org/">http://arlegalaid.org/</a>
<b>Indian, Native Alaskan, Native Hawaiian</b>	American Indian Center of Arkansas	<a href="http://www.arindianctr.org/home.html">http://www.arindianctr.org/home.html</a>
<b>Individuals with Disabilities</b>	Harmony Health Clinic	<a href="http://www.harmonyclinicar.org/">http://www.harmonyclinicar.org/</a>
	Shepherd's Hope Neighborhood Health Ctr.	<a href="http://shepherdshopelr.org/">http://shepherdshopelr.org/</a>
	Arkansas Minority Health Consortium	<a href="http://arminorityhealth.com/partners/minority-health-consortium/">http://arminorityhealth.com/partners/minority-health-consortium/</a>
	Ark. Dept. of Career Ed. Rehab. Services	<a href="http://www.arcareereducation.org/home/arkansas-rehabilitation-services">http://www.arcareereducation.org/home/arkansas-rehabilitation-services</a>
	Arkansas Area Agencies on Aging	<a href="http://www.daas.ar.gov/aaamap.html">http://www.daas.ar.gov/aaamap.html</a>
<b>Older Individuals</b>	AARP Arkansas	<a href="https://states.aarp.org/region/arkansas/">https://states.aarp.org/region/arkansas/</a>
	Various Re-Entry programs Aggregated	<a href="https://exoffenders.net/reentry-programs-assistance/arkansas/">https://exoffenders.net/reentry-programs-assistance/arkansas/</a>
		Center for Women in Transition
<b>Homeless Individuals</b>	Local Food Pantries-- Reportedly 573 statewide	<a href="https://www.foodpantries.org/st/arkansas">https://www.foodpantries.org/st/arkansas</a>
<b>Youth Currently in Foster Care</b>	Arkansas's Creating Connections for Children	<a href="http://www.fosterarkansas.org/">http://www.fosterarkansas.org/</a>

	DHS Div. of Children and Family Services	<a href="http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dcfs/programs-services%20%20%0A">http://humanservices.arkansas.gov/about-dhs/dcfs/programs-services%20%20%0A</a>
	Arkansas Public Defender Commission	<a href="http://www.apdc.myarkansas.net/">http://www.apdc.myarkansas.net/</a>

**Action:**

Each Local Workforce Area must immediately provide added emphasis towards the identification, outreach, and enrollment of individuals possessing barriers to employment. This added emphasis must include, but is not limited to:

- Development of a comprehensive Local Outreach Plan geared towards increased enrollment and service delivery to individuals with barriers to employment. This includes a broadening of the current local area service delivery base to identify and collaborate with advocates for veterans and their spouses, the homeless, low-income, formerly incarcerated, single mothers, and individuals with limited English proficiency or cultural barriers. This plan will be reviewed during the annual ADWS WIOA Monitoring site visit.
- Designating staff who will serve as the lead coordinator(s) of Local Area outreach efforts to serve individuals with barriers to employment. The lead coordinator will be interviewed during the annual ADWS WIOA Monitoring site visit.
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- Identification of best practices in your local area that may be replicated in other regions of the State.
- Formalizing MOUs or other institutionalized practices designed to increase enrollments to individuals with barrier to employment.

**Expiration:**

Ongoing

**Attachment:**

Individuals with Barriers to Employment Checklist (Form WIOA I-B – 2.8)