



Region 1 Workforce Development Board Policy Letter #20

Subject: Empowered Employment

Effective Date: August 21, 2019

REFERENCE(S): Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 134 (a)(3)(A)(x) WIOA Regulations Section 682.210

PURPOSE: To establish policy for implementation of Empowered Employment (WIOA Section 134 (a)(3)(A)(x)).

BACKGROUND: West Virginia has multiple characteristics that impact the available labor pool for employers located in the state. The following are examples of barriers that limit the ability to find even temporary or part time employment which in turn, serves as a deterrent to individuals seeking or finding long term employment and/or developing a career path.

- West Virginia has a low labor participate rate of 53.3%
- Poverty and lower education levels serve as barriers to employment
- Rural nature of the majority of the state hinders employment opportunities
- Drug/opioid use and related criminal charges/incarceration history
- Indirect impact of drug/opioid use or incarceration of family member(s)
- Targeted population with limited or no work experience
- Targeted population with “job hopping” work history indicating challenges with retaining employment

To assist in overcoming these barriers, WorkForce West Virginia has initiated a pilot program, entitled Empowered Employment. The Empowered Employment pilot is designed to assist individuals in obtaining a time-limited work experience that is wage-paid, subsidized up to 100%, and is in the public, private, or non-profit sectors.

These jobs are designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment. Empowered Employment job activities must be combined with comprehensive career and supportive services provided prior to, or concurrently, with the Empowered Employment job activity.

The goal of the program is to place individuals into work experience opportunities, allowing the participant to develop work skills. In addition, through support services from WorkForce WV, partner and community organizations, the participant will have the resources to identify solutions to other potential barriers to employment, such as financial stability, dependable transportation, and child care.

ACTION: Empowered Employment is a time-limited work experience that seeks to overcome employment barriers and transition people with labor market barriers into work using wage-paid, short-term employment that combines real work, skill development and supportive services. Empowered Employment participants earn a paycheck, learn skills, and receive intensive mentoring and support.

The R1 WDB will work with employers in the public, private, or non-profit sectors who are willing to provide time-limited work experience and supervision to individuals who meet WIOA eligibility guidelines and who have barriers to employment and chronic unemployment or an inconsistent work history. These jobs will be designed to enable an individual to establish a work history, demonstrate work success in an employee-employer relationship, and develop the skills that lead to unsubsidized employment. (WIOA Section 134 (a)(3)(A)(x))

Expiration Date: Effective until rescinded or modified by the Region 1 Workforce Development Board.

Approved:	8.1.19	Executive Committee
	8.15.19	R1WDB Members
	8.21.19	LEO Members