Policy Letter #5

TO: **All Staff**

FROM: **Samantha Wullenwaber, Director**

SUBJECT: **Self-Sufficiency Policy**

PURPOSE

This policy establishes guidelines for determining economic self-sufficiency for participants receiving services through Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs administered by the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board (Mid-Carolina WDB). It ensures that NCWorks Career Center staff conduct appropriate assessments to determine participant eligibility and suitability for training services, with the goal of helping individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency through employment.

BACKGROUND

NCWorks Career Center staff are responsible for determining whether training services are appropriate for participants based on information gathered through the assessment process. A comprehensive assessment is conducted to evaluate each participant's employment history, skills, training needs, career interests, and barriers to employment. This process helps determine whether training services are necessary to support the participant in obtaining employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency.

The Mid-Carolina WDB has established criteria to determine whether employment results in economic self-sufficiency based on wage levels and employment outcomes. These criteria differ for Adult and Dislocated Worker participants in order to reflect their unique employment circumstances.

For Adult participants, employment must provide wages that exceed the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) for the participant's family size. For Dislocated Worker participants, employment must provide wages that are at least 80 percent (80%) of the income earned at their most recent job prior to dislocation.

ACTION

The Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board will apply the following guidelines when determining economic self-sufficiency for participants receiving WIOA-funded services.

1. **Assessment Requirement**
   NCWorks Career Center staff must conduct a thorough assessment of each participant to determine employment and training needs. The assessment process must include evaluation of employment history, wage levels, occupational interests, and potential barriers to employment.

2. **Definition of Self-Sufficiency – Adult Participants**
   An Adult participant will be considered economically self-sufficient when the

participant's wages exceed the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) for their family size as identified in Attachment A.

Adult participants whose wages fall below the LLSIL may be considered for training services if such training is determined necessary to obtain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency.

3. **Definition of Self-Sufficiency – Dislocated Workers**
   A Dislocated Worker will be considered economically self-sufficient when employment provides wages that are at least 80 percent (80%) of the wages earned from their most recent job prior to dislocation.

   Dislocated Workers whose wages fall below this threshold may be eligible for training services when training is determined necessary to regain comparable employment.

4. **Application of Self-Sufficiency Standard**
   The self-sufficiency standard will be used when determining eligibility and appropriateness for:
   - Occupational skills training
   - On-the-Job Training (OJT)
   - Customized training programs
   - Other WIOA-funded training services

5. **Employed Participants**
   Participants who are employed at the time of WIOA registration may or may not be considered economically self-sufficient. The self-sufficiency standard will be applied to determine whether training services are appropriate.

   While achieving self-sufficiency is the ultimate goal of WIOA services, any increase in earnings that moves the participant closer to economic self-sufficiency may be considered an acceptable outcome.

6. **Low-Income Documentation Requirement**
   IF A PARTICIPANT IS DETERMINED TO BE LOW-INCOME, DOCUMENTATION MUST BE RECORDED THROUGH A CASE NOTE IN NCWORKS ONLINE TO SUPPORT THE DETERMINATION AND MAINTAIN COMPLIANCE WITH PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS.

REFERENCES

90 FR 20318
OG 02-2026: 2025 Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL)

ATTACHMENT

Attachment A: Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) Operational Guidance

CREATION DATE

July 2022

REVISION DATES

January 2024
December 2024
March 2026