



**COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO**  
**DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES**  
**WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

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**POLICY NO:** 30-19  
**TO:** Service Providers  
**FROM:** Department of Social Services  
**EFFECTIVE:** January 01, 2020, REVISED: October 20, 2023  
**SUBJECT:** Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity Policy

**REFERENCES:**

Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-352) Titles VI and VII  
Education Amendments of 1972 (Public Law 92-318) Title IX  
Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (Rehab Act) (Public Law 93-112) Title V, Section 504  
Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-135)  
Americans with Disability Act of 1990 (ADA) (Public Law 101-336)  
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) (Public Law 113-128) Sections 121(b), 183(c), and 188  
Title 20 CFR Section 658.400  
Title 28 CFR Part 35, Subpart A  
Title 29 CFR Parts 31, 32, 34, 38, and 1690-1691  
Title 41 CFR Part 101-19, Subpart 101-19.6  
Title 45 CFR Part 90, Subpart D, Section 90.43(c)(3) (Age Discrimination Act of 1975)  
Executive Order 13166, Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency (LEP)  
California Fair Employment and Housing Act, Government Code, Section 12900-12996  
Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (DABSA), Government Code, Section 7290-7299.8

**PURPOSE:**

This policy lays out the relevant regulations and requirements for the San Luis Obispo County Workforce Development Local Area's service providers on nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-financially assisted programs or activities. It serves to ensure that all WIOA Title I contractors (One-Stop Centers/Affiliates and service and training providers) are aware of their responsibilities for complying with all provisions of Federal, State and Local Area Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination regulations and requirements.

**BACKGROUND:**

Section 188 of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) contains the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions that prohibit discrimination on the grounds of race; color; religion; sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity); national origin (including Limited English Proficiency); age; disability; political affiliation or belief; or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. Title 29 CFR 38 implements the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

**POLICY:**

The San Luis Obispo County Workforce Development Board (SLOWDB), County of San Luis Obispo Department of Social Services (as the Administrative Entity for the WDB/WIOA programs), America's Job Center of California and its contractors (One-Stop Centers/Affiliates, Youth Services, and service providers) are required to implement and maintain an effective mechanism for assuring equal opportunity and nondiscrimination in all WIOA Title I funded programs and activities.

To ensure compliance, it is the Local Area's policy and practice that all terms and conditions or privileges of employment be administered without regard to race; color; religion; sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity); national origin (including Limited English Proficiency); age; disability; political affiliation or belief; or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship status or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. Additionally, no individual shall be excluded from participation in, denied benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of, or relating to any SLOWDB sponsored WIOA Title I-financially assisted program based on any of these factors identified in this paragraph.

**DEFINITIONS**

"Complaint", for this directive, means an allegation of a violation of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

"Recipient", taken from Title 29 CFR Part 38, means any entity to which financial assistance under the WIOA Title I is extended, either directly from the Department of Labor (DOL) or through the Governor or another recipient (including any successor, assignee, or transferee of a recipient), but excluding the ultimate beneficiaries of the WIOA Title I funded program or activity. One-Stop Center and partners, as defined in Section 121(b) of the WIOA, are treated as "recipients" and are subject to the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity requirements of Title 29 CFR Part 38 to the extent that they participate in the One-Stop delivery system.

## **PROCEDURES:**

The SLOWDB has identified nine (9) Equal Opportunity (EO) provisions, each which, when fully implemented, will ensure that WIOA Title I sub-recipients, including contracted service providers, are satisfactorily complying with applicable nondiscrimination provisions.

The nine (9) major EO provisions are:

- 1) Inclusion of Nondiscrimination Assurances in All Contracts, Plans, and Agreements
- 2) Appointment of EO Compliance Officer
- 3) Notice and Communication of EO and Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures
- 4) Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Preferred Language Data
- 5) Discrimination Prohibited Based on Disability
- 6) Affirmative Outreach
- 7) Data and Information Collection and Maintenance
- 8) EDD's Compliance Monitoring Guide
- 9) Complaint Process and Procedures

### **1. Inclusion of Nondiscrimination Assurances in Contracts, Plans and Agreements**

The Local Area, inclusive of the America's Job Center of California (AJCC), affiliates, youth programs and service providers, must ensure that all contracts, cooperative agreements, job training plans, policies and procedures contain the nondiscrimination assurances as specified in 29 CFR 38.25 and 38.26. The nondiscrimination assurances must state the service provider, as a condition to the award of financial assistance from Title I of WIOA:

- a. Must comply with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA and will remain in compliance for the duration of the award of federal financial assistance.
- b. Understands the government's right to seek judicial enforcement of the assurance.

### **2. Designation of an Equal Opportunity (EO) Officer**

The Local Area WDB must designate an EO Officer who is responsible for coordinating its obligation under these regulations. The EO Officer reports directly to the Department of Social Services Director and has oversight for EO/Civil Rights for all DSS programs, including WIOA and serves as the liason with the Department of Labor (DOL) Civil Rights Center (CRC) and EDD EEO Office.

The EO Officer's responsibilities include the following:

- a. Investigating and monitoring WIOA Title I-funded activities and programs of the organization and its subrecipients.
- b. Reviewing the written policies of the organization and its subrecipients.
- c. Developing, publishing, and enforcing the organization's discrimination complaint procedures.

- d. Reporting to the appropriate authority regarding discrimination matters.
- e. Participating in continuing training and education, and ensuring that assigned staff receives the necessary training and support to maintain competency.
- f. Informing participants, employees, and program beneficiaries of their equal opportunity rights and responsibilities and how the discrimination complaint process works.

### **3. Notice and Communication of EO and Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures**

#### a. Notice

The Local Area, inclusive of the AJCC, affiliates, youth programs and service providers must provide initial and continuing notice that it does not discriminate on any prohibited basis.

The initial and continuing notice of nondiscriminatory practices poster (Equal Opportunity is the Law) and the right to file a complaint poster must be:

- i. Posted in prominent locations, in reasonable numbers and places, in available and conspicuous physical locations (such as the front customer entry and reception area) and on the Local Area's website page;
- ii. Disseminated in internal memoranda and other written or electronic communications with staff;
- iii. Made available to each participant at multiple points during their participation in the WIOA program;
- iv. Included in employee and participant handbooks and manuals, brochures, flyers, broadcasts, and other communications, regardless of form, including electronic and paper form if both are available;
- v. Included in each participant's case file. Where a hard copy case file is maintained, a copy of an acknowledgement of receipt shall be signed by the participant and included in each participant's case file. Where an electronic case file is maintained, staff must make a note indicating that this notification did occur. The note should include the date of the notification and the name of the staff person who provided it.

The notice shall be provided in appropriate formats to individuals with visual impairments. A record of such notice shall be documented within each participant's case file.

#### b. Communication

Publications, including brochures and other materials that are ordinarily distributed and communicated in written and/or oral form, electronically and/or on paper to staff, clients or the public at large, which promote or describe WIOA programs and/or activities must include the following taglines: "This WIOA Title I-financially assisted

program or activity is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities." WIOA program and administrative staff will work with appropriate agencies to ensure communication with individuals with disabilities is as effective as communication with individuals without disabilities.

Where hard-copy or electronic materials indicate that the AJCC/service provider may be reached by telephone, the telephone number of any Telecommunications Device for the Deaf (TDD), which is also known as a teletypewriter (TTY) or California Relay Service (CRS) must be indicated.

If the AJCC/service provider does not have a TDD/TTY, the California Relay Service (CRS) (711 or 1-800-735-2922 (English) or 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish) is an alternative. The CRS relays messages to hearing impaired persons via the telephone. A caller can contact the relay service by voice or TDD, and an operator will contact the party using voice or TDD/TTY.

If the Local Area publishes or broadcasts program information in the media, it must ensure that such publications and broadcasts state that the WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs or activity in question is an equal opportunity employer/program (or otherwise indicate that discrimination in the WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity is prohibited by Federal law) and indicate that auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.

The Local Area, which includes the AJCC and service providers, must not communicate any information that suggests, by text or illustration, that the recipient treats beneficiaries, registrants, applicants, participants, employees or applicants for employment differently on any prohibited basis, except as such treatment is otherwise permitted under federal law or regulation.

During each presentation to orient new participants, new employees, and/or the general public to its WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs or activity, whether this be in person or over the internet or using other technology, a recipient must include a discussion of rights and responsibilities under the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA Section 188 and 29 CFR Part 38, including the right to file a complaint of discrimination with the recipient or the Director of the Civil Rights Center (CRC). This information must be communicated in appropriate languages as required in 29 CFR Section 38.9 and in formats accessible for individuals with disabilities as required in 29 CFR Part 38 and specified in Section 38.15.

#### **4. Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and Preferred Language**

On August 11, 2000, President Clinton issued Executive Order 13166, entitled "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency." This Executive Order mandates that individuals with Limited English Proficiency (LEP) have equal access to federal funded programs and activities. Recipients of federal

financial assistance must take reasonable steps to ensure that individuals having LEP receive the language assistance necessary to afford them meaningful access to programs, services, and information provided by contractors.

National origin discrimination now includes LEP under 29 CFR Section 38.9 and specifically states that in providing any aid, benefit, service, or training under a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, a recipient must not, directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, discriminate based on national origin, including LEP. Additionally, 29 CFR Section 38.41 added “LEP and preferred language” to the list of categories of information that each recipient must record about each applicant, registrant, eligible applicant/registant, participant, and terminee. (Effective January 3, 2019)

In California, the Dymally-Alatorre Bilingual Services Act (DABSA) requires that when state and local agencies serve a "substantial number of non-English-speaking people," they must employ a "sufficient number of qualified bilingual staff in public contact positions" and translate documents explaining available services in their clients' language. The DABSA establishes specific legal mandates for state agencies, but allows local agencies discretion in establishing the level and extent of bilingual services they provide.

#### a. Definitions

For the purposes of this Directive, the following definitions apply:

Babel Notice – a short notice included in a document or electronic medium (e.g. web site, “app,” email) in multiple languages informing the reader that the communication contains vital information, and explaining how to access language services to have the contents of the communication provided in other languages (29 CFR Section 38.4[i]).

Employment-related training – training that allows or enables an individual to obtain skills, abilities and/or knowledge that are designed to lead to employment (29 CFR Section 38.4[t]).

LEP individual – an individual whose primary language for communication is not English and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write, and/or understand English. A LEP individual may be competent in English for certain types of communication (e.g., speaking or understanding), but still be LEP for other purposes (e.g., reading or writing) (29 CFR Section 38.4[hh]).

LEP Plan – A written language access plan which assists in ensuring that LEP individuals have meaningful access to WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities (29 CFR Section 38.9 Appendix).

Meaningful Access – Language assistance that results in accurate, timely, and

effective communication at no cost to the LEP individual. For LEP individuals, meaningful access denotes access that is not significantly restricted, delayed, or inferior as compared to programs or activities provided to English proficient individuals.

Primary language – An individual’s primary language is the language in which an individual most effectively communicates, as identified by the individual.

#### b. Reasonable Steps to Ensure Meaningful Access for LEP Individuals

Local Areas are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals have meaningful access to their programs and activities. Reasonable steps may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Assessing a LEP individual to determine their language assistance needs.
- ii. Providing oral interpretation or written translation of both hard-copy and electronic materials, in the appropriate non-English languages to LEP individuals.
- iii. Conducting outreach to LEP communities to improve service delivery in needed languages. (29 CFR Section 38.9[b][1])

Reasonable steps for providing meaningful access to training programs may include, but are not limited to the following:

- i. Written training materials in appropriate non-English languages by written translation, or by oral interpretation, or summarization.
- ii. Oral training content in appropriate non-English languages through in-person or telephone translation. (29 CFR Section 38.9[b][2][i][ii])

Local Areas should ensure that that every program delivery method, whether it be in person, electronic, or by phone, conveys in the appropriate language how a LEP individual may effectively learn about, participate in, and/or access any aid, benefit, service, or training available to them. It should also be noted that as new methods for the delivery of information or assistance are developed, Local Areas are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that LEP individuals remain able to learn about, participate in, and/or access any aid, benefit, service, or training available to them (29 CFR Section 38.9[c]).

#### c. Language Assistance Services

Language assistance generally comes in two forms: oral interpretation or written translation. Local Areas must ensure that above all, these services are free of charge and provided in a timely manner. A LEP individual must be given adequate notice about the existence of interpretation and translation services and that they are available free of charge. Language assistance will be considered timely when it is provided at a place and time that ensures equal access and avoids the delay or

denial of any aid, benefit, service, or training (29 CFR Section 38.9[d] and [e]).

d. Interpreter Services

Local Areas shall not require a LEP individual to provide their own interpreter. Furthermore, Local Areas shall not rely on a LEP individual's minor child or adult family or friend to interpret or facilitate communication, except for the following circumstances:

- i. In emergency situations while awaiting a qualified interpreter.
- ii. When the information conveyed is of minimal importance to the services to be provided.
- iii. When a LEP individual specifically requests that an accompanying adult provide language assistance and they agree to help the individual. If a Local Area permits an accompanying adult to serve as an interpreter for an LEP individual, it must make and retain a record of the LEP individual's decision to use their own interpreter.

Where precise, complete, and accurate interpretations or translation of information and/or testimony are critical for adjudicatory or legal reasons, Local Areas can still provide their own, independent interpreter, even if a LEP individual wants to use their own interpreter as well. This also applies in cases where the competency of the interpreter requested by the LEP individual is not established. (29 CFR Section 38.9[f])

e. Concerning Vital Information

For languages spoken by a significant portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered, Local Areas must translate vital information in written materials into these languages. These translations must in turn be readily available upon request in hard copy or electronically. Written training materials offered or used within employment-related training programs (see definitions section above) are excluded from these translation requirements. However, in all cases, Local Areas must take reasonable steps to ensure meaningful access for LEP individuals.

For languages not spoken by a significant portion of the population eligible to be served or likely to be encountered, Local Areas must take reasonable steps to meet the particularized language needs of LEP individuals who seek to learn about, participate in, and/or access the aid, benefit, service or training that is available to them. Vital information may be conveyed orally if not translated.

- i. Local Areas must also be sure to include a Babel Notice (see definitions section above), indicating that language assistance is available in all communications of vital information. This includes letters or decisions in hard-copy or electronic formats. (29 CFR Section 38.9[g]).
- ii. Finally, to the extent otherwise required by 29 CFR Part 38, once a recipient

becomes aware of the non-English preferred language of a LEP beneficiary, participant, or applicant for aid, benefit, service, or training, the recipient must convey vital information in that language. (29 CFR Section 38.9[h])

## **5. Discrimination Prohibited Based on Disability**

### **a. Prohibited Actions**

The Local Area, including the AJCC, affiliates, and service providers, must not do any of the following in providing any aid, benefit, service, or training under a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, whether directly or through contractual, licensing, or other arrangements, based on disability:

- i. deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefit, service, or training, including meaningful opportunities to seek employment and work in competitive integrated settings;
- ii. afford a qualified individual with a disability an opportunity to participate in or benefit from the aid, benefits, services, or training that is not equal to that afforded others;
- iii. provide a qualified individual with a disability with any aid, benefit, service, or training that is not as effective in affording equal opportunity to obtain the same result, to gain the same benefit, or to reach the same level of achievement as that provided to others;
- iv. provide different, segregated, or separate aid, benefit, service, or training to individuals with disabilities, or to any class of individuals with disabilities, unless such action is necessary to provide qualified individuals with disabilities with any aid, benefit, service, or training that is as effective as those provided to others, and consistent with the requirements of the Rehabilitation Act as amended by the WIOA, including those provisions that prioritize opportunities in competitive integrated employment;
- v. deny a qualified individual with a disability the opportunity to participate as a member of planning or advisory boards;
- vi. otherwise limit a qualified individual with a disability of enjoyment of any right, privilege, advantage, or opportunity enjoyed by others receiving any aid, benefit, service, or training.

### **b. Accessibility Requirements**

#### **i. Physical Accessibility**

No qualified individual with a disability may be excluded from participation in, or be denied the benefits of a recipient's service, program, or activity or be subjected to discrimination by any recipient because a recipient's facilities are inaccessible or unusable by individuals with disabilities.

The Local Area, which is subject to Title II of the ADA of 1990, must also ensure

that new facilities or alterations of facilities that began construction after January 26, 1992, comply with the applicable federal accessible design standards, such as the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (1991 or 2010) or the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards.

In addition, the Local Area, as a recipient of federal financial assistance, must meet its accessibility obligations under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 32.

## ii. Program Accessibility

All WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities must be programmatically accessible to afford individuals with disabilities an equal opportunity to participate in, and enjoy the benefits of, the program or activity. This includes:

- providing reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- making reasonable modifications to policies, practices, and procedures;
- administering programs in the most integrated setting appropriate, including employment tests or other selected criteria used by WIOA Title I contractors;
- communicating with persons with disabilities as effectively as with others,
- providing appropriate auxiliary aids or services, including assistive technology devices and services, where necessary.

The AJCC/Affiliates must also provide:

- designated parking for the disabled that is accessible to the building entrance, free of any barriers (e.g. steps, slopes low spots in ground or pavement, buckled concrete, gravel);
- signage at a primary entrance to each of their inaccessible facilities, directing users to a location at which they can obtain information about accessible facilities;
- the international symbol for accessibility at each primary entrance of accessible facility;
- building entrance door that can be opened with one hand;
- accessible information/public counter areas;
- facility elevators that are accessible from the entrance meeting the above criteria;
- elevator control panel and entrance buttons with raised numbers and Braille symbols at an accessible height;
- at least one accessible public telephone;
- accessible meeting rooms with Braille symbols at an accessible height;
- restroom facilities that have at least one toilet stall with an accessible doorway-- the stall should have grab bars and the toilet stool should be accessible for the disabled individual after the door is closed (access to the grab bars should not be obstructed by such things as toilet paper dispensers,

etc.); and

- alternative methods to ensure that training, job structure, work schedule, work procedure, and work equipment are available to individuals with disabilities when the facilities are not physically accessible to individuals with disabilities.

c. Reasonable Accommodation and Reasonable Modifications

Regarding aid, benefit, services, training and employment, a recipient must:

- provide reasonable accommodation to qualified individuals with disabilities who are applicants, registrants eligible applicants/registrants, participants, employees, or applicants for employment, unless providing the accommodation would cause the recipient undue hardship on business operation (29 CFR Section 38.4(rrr) (1)), and
- make reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures when the modifications are necessary to avoid discrimination based on disability, unless making the modifications would fundamentally alter the nature of the WIOA Title-I financially assisted service, program or activity (29 CFR Section 38.4(z)).

In those circumstances where a recipient believes that the proposed accommodation would cause undue hardship, or the proposed modification would fundamentally alter the program, the recipient has the burden of proving that compliance with this section would result in such hardship and alteration. The recipient must make the decision that the accommodation would cause such hardship or result in such alteration only after considering all factors listed in the definitions of "undue hardship" and "fundamental alteration." The decision must be accompanied by a written statement of the recipient's reasons for reaching that conclusion. The recipient must provide a copy of the statement of reasons to the individual(s) who requested the accommodation or modification.

If a requested accommodation would result in undue hardship or a modification would result in a fundamental alteration, the recipient must take any other action that would not result in such hardship or such alteration but would nevertheless ensure that individuals with disabilities receive the aid, benefits, services, training or employment provided by the recipient.

In addition, a recipient must take appropriate steps to ensure that communications with individuals with disabilities, such as beneficiaries, registrants, applicants, eligible applicants/registrants, participants, applicants for employment, employees, members of the public, and their companions are as effective as communications with others.

d. Service Animals

Generally, a recipient shall modify its policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of a service animal by an individual with a disability.

e. **Mobile Aids and Devices**

A recipient must permit individuals with mobility disabilities to use wheelchairs and manually-powered mobility aids, such as walkers, crutches, canes, braces, or other similar devices designed for use by individuals with mobility disabilities, in any areas open to pedestrian use.

A recipient must make reasonable modifications in its policies, practices, or procedures to permit the use of other power-driven mobility devices by individuals with mobility disabilities, unless the recipient can demonstrate that the class of other power-driven mobility devices cannot be operated in accordance with legitimate safety requirements that the recipient has adopted.

6. **Affirmative Outreach**

Local Areas, which include the AJCC, affiliates, youth and service providers, must take appropriate steps to ensure they are providing equal access to their WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs and activities.

Reasonable efforts must be made to include members of various protected groups, including, but not limited to: persons of different sexes, various racial and ethnic/national origin groups, various religions, LEP individuals, individuals with disabilities, and individuals of all eligible age groups. Such efforts may include, but are not limited to:

- a. Implementing an outreach and recruitment plan to solicit participation of all WIOA Title I potentially eligible individuals in the entire local area.
- b. Creating an outreach and recruitment plan that will reach specific target populations through media, schools, and community services groups.
- c. Considering a pool of individuals for participation that includes members of both sexes; various racial, ethnic, and age groups; and individuals with disabilities.
- d. Establishing a hiring and eligibility process that is accessible to qualified individuals with disabilities.
- e. Consulting with appropriate community service groups for ideas and assistance to improve the local area's outreach and service to various populations.

7. **Data and Information Collection and Maintenance**

Each Local Area, which includes the AJCC, affiliates, youth program and service providers must collect and maintain specific demographic data relating to nondiscrimination and equal opportunity. The system and format in which the records and data are kept must be designed to allow the Governor, the Department of Labor Civil Rights Center (CRC), and the local EO Officer/designee to conduct statistical or other quantifiable data analyses to verify the recipient's compliance with Section 188 of the WIOA and 29 CFR Part 38.

Recipients must collect data on race/ethnicity, sex, age, and, where known, disability status, on applicants, registrants, eligible applicants/registrants, participants, terminees, employees and applicants for employment. Beginning January 3, 2019, recipients must collect and maintain data regarding limited English proficiency and preferred language of each applicant, registrant, participant and terminee.

Data must be maintained for a period of not less than three years from the close of the applicable program year and stored in a manner that ensures confidentiality, and may be used only for the purposes of the following:

- a. Record keeping and reporting
- b. Determining eligibility, where appropriate, for WIOA Title I-financially assisted programs or activities.
- c. Determining the extent to which the AJCC/affiliates, or service providers are operating its WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity in a nondiscriminatory manner.
- d. Other use as authorized by law.

#### **8. EDD's Compliance Monitoring Guide**

To ensure compliance with the State WIOA Nondiscrimination Plan, all AJCC's/Affiliates and service providers, including eligible training providers, are required to complete and submit a Compliance Monitoring Guide when requested by the State-Level EO Officer/designee. This will coincide with the local area WIOA Program Monitoring. Staff will review the compliance monitoring guide, compliance documents, and other equal opportunity-related data to ensure that all AJCC's/Affiliates and service providers, including eligible training providers, are following the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

#### **9. Complaint Processing Procedures**

The SLOWDB has established the WIOA complaint resolution procedures (including alternative dispute resolution) for resolving allegations within the Local Area for noncompliance with applicable nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions.

Each of the designated America's Job Center of California (AJCC) one-stop system operators has the responsibility to ensure that the AJCC is in compliance with the provisions of the WIOA complaint resolution procedure and shall work cooperatively with the Administrative Entity for the WDB/Department of Social Services' (DSS) designated EEO Compliance Officer to process all complaints filed with their agency involving WIOA Title I-funded participant activities.

At orientation, each participant in the WIOA Title I program will be provided a copy of the Discrimination Complaint Resolution Procedure. **Each participant will sign a**

**receipt indicating that he or she has received the complaint information and that shall be maintained in the participant's file.**

These procedures will be available for use by all individual entities, including unsubsidized employees in an employment activity operating with WIOA Title I funds, participants in an employment activity operated with WIOA funds, service providers and subgrantees of DSS, entities and individuals who are applicants for WIOA program funding, labor unions, community-based organizations, education agencies, private employers and other interested parties.

a. Complaint Form and Filing Procedures

Any person who believes that they or any specific class of individuals has been or is being subjected to discrimination prohibited by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA may file a written complaint or a representative may file the complaint on their behalf. It is necessary to have sufficient information in order to investigate a complaint. To accomplish this, individuals shall be given written guidance to assist with preparing a complaint (Discrimination Complaint Form attached). The form provides for the collection of consistent information for processing discrimination complaints regarding Title I programs and activities.

Promptly notify the County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Social Services (DSS)/SLOWDB EO Officer of any complaints, administrative enforcement actions or lawsuits filed against the SLOWDB, AJCC/Affiliate, youth program or service provider alleging discrimination on the grounds of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, and for beneficiaries only, citizenship or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program and activities.

The EO Officer shall issue a written acknowledgment of receipt of the complaint and shall include a notice of the Complainant's right to representation in the complaint process.

The SLOWDB EO Officer will forward one copy of the written complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Employment Development Department, 800 Capitol Mall, MIC 49, P.O. Box 826880, Sacramento, CA 94280-0001 or, email to [EEOMAIL@edd.ca.gov](mailto:EEOMAIL@edd.ca.gov).

The EO Officer is responsible for informing complainants that they have 180 days from the date of the alleged violation to file a complaint and that they may file their complaint with either DSS, or directly with the U.S. Department of Labor, Civil Rights Center (CRC).

**County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Social Services  
Workforce Development Board  
P.O. Box 8119  
San Luis Obispo, CA 93403-8119  
Attn: Michelle Infantino, EO Compliance Officer  
Telephone Number: (805) 781-1837  
TDD/CRS 711 or 1-800-735-2922 (English) or 1-800-855-3000 (Spanish)  
Email Address: [menfantino@co.slo.ca.us](mailto:menfantino@co.slo.ca.us)**

- or -

**U.S. Department of Labor Civil Rights Center (CRC)  
200 Constitution Avenue N.W.,  
Room N-4123  
Washington, D.C. 20210**

Complaints to either DSS or CRC must be filed in writing and must include the following information:

- complainant's name, address, or other means of contacting them;
- identity of the respondent (person alleged to have committed the violation) if known;
- description of the complainant's allegation(s) in sufficient detail to allow the CRC or the Local Area EO Officer, as applicable, to determine whether (1) the CRC or the Local Area has jurisdiction over the complaint, (2) the complaint was filed timely (within 180 days of the alleged violation), (3) the complaint has apparent merit, (i.e., whether the allegation(s), if true, would violate any of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA).
- signature of the complainant or their authorized representative.

Both the complainant and respondent have the right to be represented by an attorney or other individual of their choice.

The complainant must be offered Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) by the EO Officer when issuing the written acknowledgement of receiving the complaint. The choice whether to use ADR rests with the complainant (see further information about ADR in the section below, Alternative Dispute Resolution).

If the complainant elects not to participate in the ADR process, the SLOWDB EO Officer shall investigate the circumstances underlying the complaint.

#### Response Timeline

The Local Area has 90 days to issue a "Notice of Final Action." If, during the 90-day period, the SLOWDB issues a decision that is not acceptable to the Complainant, the Complainant or their representative may file a complaint with the CRC within 30 days after the date on which the Complainant receives the "Notice of Final Action."

If the 90 days expire, and the Complainant does not receive a “Notice of Final Action” from the SLOWDB, or the SLOWDB failed to issue a “Notice of Final Action,” the Complainant or his/her representative may, within 30 days of the expiration of the 90-day period, file a complaint with the CRC. In other words, the complaint must be filed with the CRC within 120 days of the date on which the complaint was filed with the SLOWDB.

The CRC may extend the 30-day time limit if the Complainant is not notified, as provided in the Title 29 CFR Section 38.77, or for other good cause shown.

The SLOWDB EO Officer will forward one copy of the issued Notice of Final Action to the Equal Employment Opportunity Office, Employment Development Department, 800 Capitol Mall, MIC 49, P.O Box 826880, Sacramento, CA 94280-0001 or, email to [EEOMAIL@edd.ca.gov](mailto:EEOMAIL@edd.ca.gov).

b. Alternative Dispute Resolution

The methods available to resolve the complaint must include Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) procedures.

i. Mediation

The preferred form of ADR is mediation. Mediation is a voluntary process during which a neutral third party assists both parties (complainant and respondent), communicates their concerns, and comes to an agreement about how to resolve a dispute. The mediator does not make decisions, rule as to who is right or wrong, nor take sides or advocate for one side or the other. The role of the mediator is to assist with communication, so the parties can reach an understanding about how to best resolve their differences.

As the law allows, mediation proceedings and the information shared are confidential and no information divulged during this mediation may be used in court or any legal or administrative proceedings.

If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file directly with the CRC as described in 29 CFR Sections 38.69 through 38.72.

A party to any agreement reached under ADR may file a complaint with the CRC in the event the agreement is breached. In such circumstances, the following rules will apply:

- The non-breaching party may file a complaint with the CRC within **30 days** of the date on which the non-breaching party learns of the alleged breach.
- The CRC must evaluate the circumstances to determine whether the agreement has been breached. If the CRC determines that the agreement

has been breached, the complainant may file a complaint with the CRC based upon his or her original allegation(s), and the CRC will waive the time deadline for filing such a complaint.

ii. Conciliation

At any point in the investigation of the complaint, the complainant, respondent, or the Local Area EO Officer may request that the parties attempt conciliation. The Local Area EO Officer shall facilitate such conciliation efforts.

Conciliation is a process whereby the parties to a dispute agree to utilize the services of a conciliator, who then meets with the parties separately to resolve their differences. Conciliation differs from mediation in that the main goal is to conciliate, most of the time by seeking concessions.

If the conciliator is successful in negotiating an understanding between the parties, said understanding is almost always committed to writing (usually with the assistance of legal counsel) and signed by the parties, at which time it becomes a legal binding contract and falls under contract law.

If the parties do not reach an agreement under ADR, the complainant may file directly with CRC (see next section, Discrimination Complaints filed with the Center of Civil Rights).

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the resolution of the complaint, they may file a complaint with CRC within **thirty (30) days** of the date that the complainant received notice of DSS' proposed resolution. If the complainant has not received notice of resolution within 90 days of filing, the complainant may file the complaint with CRC.

### **Discrimination Complaints filed with the Center of Civil Rights (CRC)**

A complaint filed pursuant to this part must be filed within **180 days** of the alleged discrimination. The CRC, for good cause shown, may extend the filing time. In order to receive an extension, the Complainant must be notified by DSS that a waiver letter is to be filed with CRC. The waiver letter should include the reason the **180-day time period** has elapsed. [This time period for filing is for the administrative convenience of the CRC and does not create a defense for the Respondent].

#### **Actions by CRC:**

The CRC determines acceptance of a complaint filed pursuant to Title 29 CFR Section 37.30. When CRC accepts a complaint for investigation, it shall:

- Notify DSS, the service provider or subgrantee and the Complainant of the acceptance of the complaint for investigation; and
- Advise DSS, the service provider or subgrantee and Complainant on the issues over which the CRC has accepted jurisdiction.

DSS, the service provider or subgrantee, the Complainant, or a representative may contact the CRC for information regarding the complaint filed.

When the complaint contains insufficient information, the CRC will seek the needed information from the Complainant. If the Complainant is unavailable after reasonable means have been used to locate him or her, or the information is not furnished with **15 days** of the receipt of such request, the complaint file maybe closed without prejudice upon notice sent to the complainant's last known address.

The CRC may issue a subpoena to the Complainant to appear and give testimony and/or produce documentary evidence, before a designated representative, relating to the complaint being investigated. Issuing a subpoena can be done anywhere in the United States, at any designated time or place.

Where the CRC lack jurisdiction over a complaint, the CRC shall:

- Advise the Complainant, indicating why the complaint is not covered by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions outlined in WIOA or Title 29 CRF Section 34.43; and
- Refer the Complainant to the appropriate federal, state or local authority when possible.

The CRC will contact the Complainant when a claim is not to be investigated and explain the basis for the determination. The CRC will refer the complaints governed by the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 to mediation as specified in Title 45 CFR Section 90.43 (c)(3). If the Complainant alleges more than one kind of complaint, "joint complaint", (e.g., individual employment discrimination, age discrimination, equal pay discrimination, etc.), the CRC shall refer such joint complaint to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) for investigation and conciliation procedures for joint complaints at Title 29 CFR Part 1691. The CRC will advise the Complainant, DSS, the service provider or the subgrantee of the referral.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the CRC shall issue an Initial Determination. The Initial Determination shall notify the Complainant and DSS, the service provider or subgrantee, in writing of:

- Specific findings of the investigation;
- Proposed corrective or remedial action and the time by which the corrective or remedial action must be completed;
- Whether it will be necessary for the WIOA or subgrantee to enter into a written agreement; and,

- The opportunity to participate in voluntary compliance negotiations

Where a no-cause determination is made, the Complainant and DSS, the service provider or subgrantee shall be notified in writing. Such determination represents the final agency action of the Department.

Corrective Actions/Sanctions for Discrimination:

- Letter of findings, Notice to Show Cause, or Initial Determination issued pursuant to Title 29 CFR Sections 34.40, 34.41, or 34.43, respectively, shall include the steps and the specific time period it will take the LWIOA or subgrantee to achieve voluntary compliance. (See Section 34.44 for corrective action steps).
- **Monetary corrective action may not be paid from federal funds.**

#### Non-Jurisdiction

The EO Officer will notify the Complainant in writing immediately upon determining that it does not have jurisdiction over a complaint that alleges a violation of the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provision of WIOA. The “Notice of Lack of Jurisdiction” will include the basis for the determination as well as a statement of the Complainant’s right to file a written complaint with the CRC within 30 days of receipt of the Notice.

#### Due Process

During the complaint resolution process, the EO Officer shall assure that all parties involved are given due process. These due process elements include:

- notice to all parties of the specific charges;
- notice to all parties of the responses to the allegations;
- the right of both parties to representation;
- the right of each party to present evidence, and to question others who present evidence; and
- a decision made strictly on the evidence of the record.

#### Corrective Actions Sanctions

It is the responsibility of each AJCC/Affiliate and service and training providers to comply with the EO Officer’s request for compliance documentation. Failure to provide the necessary documents will result in corrective actions/sanctions.

#### Local Area Complaint Log

Each Local Area must promptly notify the state or CRC when any administrative enforcement actions or lawsuits are filed against it alleging discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin (including LEP), age, disability,

or political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity.

Each Local Area must maintain a log of complaints filed with the recipient that allege discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex (including pregnancy, childbirth, and related medical conditions, transgender status, and gender identity), national origin, age, disability, political affiliation or belief, citizenship, and/or participation in a WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity. The log must include the following:

- name and address of the complainant
- basis of the complaint
- description of the complaint
- date the complaint was filed
- disposition and date of disposition of the complaint
- other pertinent information.

Information that could lead to identification of an individual as having filed a complaint must be kept confidential.

#### Intimidation and Retaliation Are Prohibited

No recipient may discharge, intimidate, retaliate, threaten, coerce, or discriminate against any individual because the individual has filed a complaint alleging any of the following:

- a violation of the WIOA;
- opposition to a practice prohibited by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of the WIOA;
- or if the individual has furnished information to, assisted or participated in any manner in an investigation, review, hearing, or any other activity related to administration of, exercise of authority under, or exercise of privilege secured by the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA or 29 CFR Part 38.

The sanctions and penalties contained in these procedures may be imposed against any recipient who engages in any such retaliation or intimidation, or fails to take necessary steps to prevent such activity.

#### **ACTION:**

The County of San Luis Obispo, Department of Social Services, and all WIOA Title I-funded recipients including AJCC/Affiliates, youth program and service providers shall comply with this policy. This policy will remain in effect from the date of issue until such time that a revision is required.

