

**SOUTHWESTERN AREA
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD**

**Referral Process
Policy 18-05.2**

Effective Date

August 14, 2025

Applicability

WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth.

Purpose

The purpose is to provide entities awarded a contract with the Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board with a referral process policy for adult, dislocated worker, youth, and workforce delivery system partners.

Background

- A. The vision of WIOA Partnerships in the American Job Center is to:
- B. Connect all customers to the full range of services available in their communities;
- C. Provide seamless, customer-focused, integrated service delivery across all programs and enhance access to the programs' services;
- D. Ensure that businesses and job seekers have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes.
- E. Grantees, subrecipients, and contractors funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) must abide by WIOA law, regulations, and guidance, state and local WIOA policies.
- F. In addition, as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding, core partners agree to:
- G. Provide substantive referrals in accordance with this policy – to customers who are eligible for supplemental and complementary services and benefits under partner programs.

Action

The choice of referral process depends on the customer's needs and the arrangements, if any, that have been agreed upon with the service to which the customer is to be referred. Additionally, the capacity of both the referring organization and the service to which the customer is being referred must be taken into account at all times.

Referral processes can occur in a telephone environment, in face-to-face settings, or through written communication (including email) or a combination of these channels. A referral process selected may combine aspects of each of the processes.

Feedback and Follow-Up

When a referral is made, it is always helpful to obtain customer feedback about the referral, as well as input from the agency(s) to which the referral is made. A follow-up call should be made to each to ensure the referral was effective.

Possible term	Characteristics	Possible advantages and disadvantages
Passive referral	The customer is provided with contact information for the appropriate service(s) and is left to make their own contact at a time that best suits them.	This process places the responsibility on the customer to take action on their own behalf. However, there is a greater likelihood that the referral will not be taken up.
Facilitated referral	The customer is assisted in accessing another service, for example, the referring organization makes an appointment on the customer's behalf with the other service, requests that the other service contact the customer, or transfers a caller to the other service.	The other service is made aware of the customer, and the customer is assisted in accessing that service. The customer may need to wait for a response to the other service.
Active referral	The referring organization, with the customer's consent, provides the organization to which it is referring the customer with information that it has collected about the customer, as well as its professional assessment of the customer's needs.	The customer does not need to repeat their story, and the agency to which the customer is referred has relevant information about the customer. However, there is a risk that the information is communicated out of context and therefore misinterpreted by the service receiving the referral, especially if it is not made as a 'warm' referral (see below).
Cold referral	The customer is transferred to another service without any immediate communication between the service providers.	The other service may be unaware of the nature of the call or of any information or services that have already been provided. The customer may be frustrated that they must retell their story or may not communicate their needs in a way that allows the other service to see why the customer has been referred.
Warm referral	A 'live' three-way conversation in the presence of the customer (whether face to face or by telephone) in which the referring organization introduces the customer, explains what has already been done to assist the customer, and why the customer is being referred.	This provides an open and transparent process in which information can be exchanged between all services involved. Issues can be clarified immediately. The customer does not need to repeat their entire story. The process relies on someone being available at the other service at the time the customer is to be referred.

Tracking of Referrals

Referrals made by core partners should be submitted via phone or email, with case notes in America's Job Center reflecting the referrals received. This includes referrals made to core and non-core partners. Case notes should also be entered regarding all follow-ups made on referrals. The Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board will monitor referrals.

Staff Skills

Sound skills and practices are critical to effective referral. Staff who make referrals must also possess the knowledge and skills necessary to support individuals in accessing other services as needed, including negotiating ways to overcome barriers to service access.

The following checklist may assist staff in making effective referrals:

- A. I understand the customer's situation and perceived needs.
- B. The customer and I have talked about how to prioritize these needs and what options exist to help address them.
- C. The customer is willing and ready to be referred.
- D. We have discussed what issues might make it difficult for the customer to follow through with the referral.

Some additional points for staff are:

- A. I have considered whether a facilitated, warm, or active referral would be desirable, based on the customer's
 - a. ability to negotiate complex social situations
 - b. ability to provide and receive information
 - c. ability to tolerate waiting
 - d. level of ambivalence about seeking help
 - e. interpersonal style (eg, passive or argumentative)
- B. If the referral is passive or cold, I have provided sufficient information and 'coaching' to help make the referral successful.
- C. (Where appropriate) I have made a plan to follow up with the customer to see how things went and to determine next steps.

Inquiries

Questions related to this policy should be directed to the Administrative Entity at (575) 744-4857.

Attested

This policy was reviewed and approved by the SAWDB on August 14, 2025.

SAWDB Chair