

Montana Workforce System One-Stop Certification/Re-Certification Guide 2012



Montana Department of
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State Workforce Investment Board

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Montana Workforce System One-Stop Certification & Re-certification Guide

I. Introduction

As provided by the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, the Montana State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), with the agreement of the chief elected official, must designate and certify One-Stop Operators within the state. Certification ensures a consistent level of services provided across the One-Stop delivery system.

The assessment process allows local Operators to benefit from certification at the state level as a center that has met the highest quality standards for the provision of workforce development in Montana. Certification on a state level also allows for the “branding” of the Montana One-Stop systems as “American Job Center Networks”, a unifying name and brand developed by the U.S. Department of Labor that identifies a virtual and in-person publicly-funded workforce development services as part of a single network across the nation. This ensures that clients receive the same excellent service and programs throughout, and that States are able to take part in nation-wide promotional campaigns, while customizing marketing products to their own region.

II. Purpose

The purpose of certification is to ensure standard, best practices and quality service throughout Montana’s One-Stop workforce systems. Assessment and certification ensures that One-Stop operators are working in alignment with key WIA principles outlined in Section IV, and meeting federal requirements defined in Section 121 of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998. This guide defines the processes for one-stop certification and re-certification in the State of Montana, as defined by the Governor’s State Workforce Investment Board.

III. Definitions

For the purposes of this guide, the following will be referred to as defined below:

- Community Management Team (CMT) – Group of One-Stop partners, community members, local businesses, economic development representatives, and interested parties cooperatively planning WIA services in a community system.
- One-Stop Center -- Under the Workforce Investment Act, every local System must have at least one comprehensive Center. A One-Stop Center is a facility that makes a wide

range of the system's services available at a single site, through self-service or with staff help. The number of centers, the services offered and the manner in which they are given will vary from one area to another, according to local needs and resources.

- One-Stop Operator – One or more entities designated or certified under section 121(d) of the Workforce Investment Act. One-stop operators are responsible for the operations and the coordination of all activities in a one-stop center.
- One-Stop Partner – The term “one-stop partner” means:
 - 1. An entity described in section 121(b) (1) of the Workforce Investment Act; and
 - 2. An entity described in section 121(b) (2) of the Workforce Investment Act that is participating in the operation of a one-stop delivery system.
 - 3. Any entity/individual participating in the activities of a Community Management Team (CMT).
- One-Stop System -- The network of workforce products and services that meets business and jobseeker needs in whatever manner and location are most effective and convenient for the customer. Customers can choose to use the system's products and services in different ways. They may call a toll-free number or connect through a personal computer at home or in a neighborhood library. They may receive individualized assistance in a community-based agency, an educational institution, or a one-stop career center. The one-stop system is often described as a “seamless system of service delivery”. Information and access to services are available to customers regardless of which partner site is entered. All partners have an obligation to provide the core informational services so that individuals may access the one-stop system regardless of where they enter, including information regarding access or linkages to intensive services, training services and the programs and activities carried out by all of the One-stop partners.
- Wagner-Peyser – Employment Service programs – Employment Service basic labor exchange and other services funding source. Employment Services are provided in the Montana Job Service Workforce Centers located across the State.
- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 – An Act of the United States Congress to establish programs to prepare youth and unskilled adults for entry into the labor force and to give job training to those economically disadvantaged individuals and other individuals who face serious barriers to employment and who are in need of such training to obtain prospective employment.

IV. WIA Key Principles

The Statewide certification of One-Stop Centers and workforce centers is founded on the five key principles of the WIA, specified below.

- 1.) Customer Focus/Choice: Customer choice prompts the One-Stop offices to respond to the changing demands of job seekers and employers. Operators should seek continuous improvement in attracting and providing services to employers and job seekers. A positive relationship with the local community ensures trust in the services provided and facilitates economic growth.

- 2.) Streamlining Services: Streamlining services and programs allows for the integration of resources to ensure maximum efficiency and responsiveness.
- 3.) Empowerment: One-Stop centers provide a wide range of service options as well as sufficient information and assistance to aid customers in making informed, educated decisions, providing them with a sense of empowerment.
- 4.) Increased Accountability: Success is calculated by measuring clear, quantifiable outcomes through evaluating the needs and expectations of employers, job seekers, and the workforce investment system.
- 5.) Universal Access: Through One-Stop centers, All Montanans, including individuals with disabilities, have access to a full array of job seeking and employment development services.

V. Application for Initial Certification

The process for initial certification consists of a variety of elements structured to ensure a basis for accountability, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and promotes inclusion of partners and integration of services. Consistent with the WIA principles of universal access, customer choice, increased accountability, and strong private sector involvement, the process addresses quality improvement methods, customer satisfaction measures, and staff development.

- 1.) Application Packet.
 - a. Letter of Request for Certification, signed by the One-Stop Operator & CMT Chair
 - i. See Template [LINK](#)
 - b. Application
 - i. [LINK](#)
 - c. Partnership Plan
 - i. See Template [LINK](#)
 - d. Memorandum of Understanding [LINK](#)
 - e. Any Supplemental Documents
- 2.) Criteria.
 - a. A One-Stop system must provide the core services specified in WIA section 134(d)(2) and must provide access to other programs and activities carried out by the One-Stop partners. Additional partners may voluntarily incorporated.
 - b. The One-Stop System must demonstrate a commitment to the 5 key WIA principles, as stated above.
 - c. Co-located and off-site partners must complete the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), provided at [LINK](#), describing the services to be provided through the one-stop delivery system; how the costs of such services and the operating costs of the system will be funded; methods for the referral of individuals between the one-stop operation and the one-stop partners, for the appropriate services and activities; and the duration of the memorandum and the

procedures for amending the memorandum during the term of the memorandum as well as the roles and responsibilities of each partner at the site.

- d. All collaborating partners, those on and off site, must have the appropriate staff trained in the services provided by other partners, must know who the contact person for each partner is, and must be able to seamlessly refer clients or participants to the appropriate entity within each partner program.
 - e. All One-Stop Operators and Partners must comply with Federal Directives and requirements, including the use of the "American Job Center Network" Identifier, as outlined in TEGL No. 36-11
 - f. Co-Location and Hotelling is encouraged to the extent possible. Hotelling space must be made available at the site for visiting partner programs whenever feasible, and sites used for co-location must be accessible for those with disabilities and those who speak languages other than English, to the best extent possible.
 - g. When selecting a site, customer accessibility is expected to be a priority. A resource room that is staffed, has information on all partners in the local area, and is available for customer use must be present in the site.
- 3.) On-Site Review. After the application is received, State Workforce Investment Board staff will schedule a site visit. The on-site review will be conducted by State Workforce Investment Board Staff, along with private-industry members of the board if possible. The review is designed to give the Board an opportunity to validate information provided in the Operator's application, ask questions that may arise after a review of the written material, and give the board a chance to visit the One-Stop Center and become more familiar with the staff and services provided there. Combined with the written application, the on-site review provides the State Workforce Investment Board with additional insight as to the Operator's readiness for recertification. Site visits will generally cover the items listed below:
- a. Customer Flow
 - b. Administrative Systems
 - c. Service and Resource Integration
 - d. Information Technology Systems
 - e. Business Services
 - f. Quantitative & Qualitative Measures
 - g. Financial Systems
 - h. Facility

The Board and staff may conduct annual visits to certified One-Stop centers, in an effort to assist in identifying improvement opportunities, training, and technical assistance needs. These visits will be prearranged with One-Stop operators.

- 4.) Consortium Agreement. After review of the application packet is completed and approved, the State will issue a Consortium Agreement between the One-Stop Operator and the State. Upon certification of this document, SWIB staff will authorize the One-

Stop Center's status with an award letter and plaque. Consortium Agreements must be renewed every two years during the recertification process.

VI. Application for Re-Certification

All certified one-stop systems must re-apply for re-certification every two years. The re-certification process will take place in the fall of even numbered years. Re-certification applications will be accepted six months from the date of expiration (typically Dec. 31st) and should be submitted no later than 3 months prior to the date of expiration. SWIB staff will notify one-stop systems when these dates are approaching. In order to re-certify, One-Stop systems, along with CMT's must complete and submit the following:

- a. Re-certification Application [LINK](#)
- b. Memorandum of Understanding [LINK](#)
- c. Community Management Team Roster
- d. Any Other Supplemental Information

VII. Review Process

State Workforce Investment Board staff will review all applications for completion. During this review, staff may contact applicants to review the application and to discuss any concerns or questions or to request additional information or documentation. If any elements are missing or found to be inadequate, feedback and technical assistance will be provided to support the operator's development to the level required for certification.

After staff has determined the application is complete, the applications will be submitted to the Workforce Investment Act Committee. The committee will determine if all certification criteria are met by the One-Stop applicant, and will make recommendations regarding certification & re-certification to the full State Workforce Investment Board. The full Board will make all final certification and re-certification determinations.

One-Stop centers or workforce system applicants who fail to meet all applicable criteria may be recommended for developmental certification. A status as a Developmental One-Stop center will require the center to submit a timeline including dates for meeting the necessary criteria for full certification.

VIII. Timeline

Upon submission for initial certification, staff and the WIA committee will have 90 days to complete the certification review process. The applicant will receive a written determination from the State Board within that time.

When certification is achieved, it will be valid for two years from the date of award.

Under the policy set forth by the Federal Government and State Workforce Investment Board, One-Stop centers and Workforce Systems must re-certify state status at least once every two years. Systems looking to receive state certification for the first time may apply at any time.

The re-certification process will take place during the fall of even years.

IX. Submission

In order to receive certification or re-certification, Workforce Systems and One-Stop Centers must complete the application found on the State Workforce Investment Board website at:

ENTER SITE

The applicant must submit the completed documentation for certification or re-certification and any supplemental materials to the State Workforce Investment Board by mail, e-mail, or hand delivery to:

State Workforce Investment Board
RE: One-Stop Certification
P.O. Box 1728
Helena, MT. 59624

Application for initial certification will be accepted on an on-going basis. Applications for re-certification may be sent in up to 6 months prior to certification expiration. Re-certification submissions should be submitted 3 months prior to certification expiration.

Workforce Systems and One-Stop centers are encouraged to contact the State Workforce Investment Board staff with any questions concerning application submission or related criteria. Staff will offer technical assistance and is committed to serving all systems seeking certification.

X. Non-Compliance

At the discretion of the State Workforce Investment Board, One-Stop Certification may be revoked if the Operator is determined to be in non-compliance for any of the following reasons:

- Non-performance as established by performance data, site review, or other documentation
- Lack of responsiveness in resolving performance or other cited problems
- Lack of inclusion of mandatory services, partners, or lack of universal access
- Criminal indictment or participation in fraudulent activities or fiscal management
- Discrimination against or mistreatment of customers or partners
- Consistent negligence for any of the following: blatant disregard for physical safety, cleanliness, accessibility or lack of compliance with applicable state, federal, and local laws and regulations.

The State Workforce Investment Board is responsible for ensuring that each One-Stop operator who receives certification remains in compliance as noted above. The State Workforce Investment Board, staff, and the Montana Department of Labor will provide technical assistance to One-Stop operators who are in danger of revocation of their certification.

If certification or re-certification is denied or revoked for any reason, the One-Stop operator may petition the Full Board for an appeal.

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