

CHAPTER SIX:
SUPPORTING ACTIVITIES

As stated in Chapter Three, the Department of Labor mandates the provision of 10 required service elements for WIA-funded programs. Chapter Five covered the first five service elements, in the context of foundation activities for Basic Skills, Work Readiness, and Occupational Skills Training. The last section of Chapter Four discussed the importance of Follow-up services to ensure positive outcomes.

In this chapter, we will discuss how to utilize the supporting activities of Leadership Development Training, Adult Mentoring, Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling, and Support Services to support the successful attainment of goals and positive outcomes.

LEADERSHIP AND YOUTH DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Often, when we think of Leadership Development opportunities, we think of youth councils. Although the youth council can be an effective means of providing this service element to youth, it is certainly not the only means.

What is it?

The term, “leadership and youth development opportunities,” refers to community service and peer-centered activities that encourage responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours.

Leadership development can be defined as both an internal and external process leading to (1) “the ability to guide or direct others on a course of action, influence the opinion and behavior of other people, and show the way by going in advance (Wehmeyer, Agran & Hughes, 1998); and (2) “the ability to analyze one’s own strengths and weaknesses, set personal and vocational goals, and have the self-esteem to carry them out. It includes the ability to identify community resources and use them, not only to live independently, but also to establish support networks to participate in community life and to effect positive social change.” (Adolescent Employment Readiness Center, Children’s Hospital, n.d.).

What is the requirement?

Leadership Development is one of the 10 required service elements under the Federal WIA Youth Grant and is a required customer service in your City contract.

Assessment: How does it work?

There is no set assessment method for determining whether Leadership Development is a service element appropriate to provide to any given client. The most dependable method of assessment is the interest level of the client to participate in non-work experience activities outside of school, and recognizing when a given client would benefit from Leadership Development activities, in conjunction with or as opposed to work experience/immediate job placement activities.

How do I capture it in terms of JTA-related activities?

When you work with either an older or younger youth on Leadership Development, the activity can be captured as Activity Code 73, “Citizen and Leadership Services.” This way, you can ensure that any extended leadership development services you offer to a youth can be reported to the State. This is especially important if the primary focus of the youth’s service plan is Leadership Development.

You can also set a specific Leadership goal in JTA for younger youth. The code for this goal is 014, and the specific skills you can work toward are available in a pre-packaged skill set created by the City (see page 42 of Chapter Five). The *10 Skills Worksheet* on leadership can also be used to develop specific skills for older youth. This pre-packaged skill set is especially effective in measuring the progress of a youth who has both Leadership Development and Work Experience/Job Placement as a part of his or her service plan.

How do I capture it in terms of service elements?

Contract section 202.C.9.a.13 further defines the provision of this service element to include but not be limited to the following:

- Exposure to post-secondary educational opportunities
- Community and service learning projects
- Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring
- Organizational and team work training
- Training in decision-making
- Citizenship training including life skills training such as parenting, work behavior, and budgeting of resources
- Employability
- Positive social behaviors often referred to as soft skills (positive attitudinal development, self-esteem building, cultural diversity training and work simulation activities)

One effective way of organizing and delivering Leadership Development services is through the creation of a local area Youth Council. Youth Councils commonly engage youth in leadership development activities that teach civic responsibility. Youth are empowered to become active and vocal members of their community, and are encouraged to take responsibility for identifying and meeting community needs. As a result, Youth Councils can facilitate the development of skills that are complementary to those gained from work experience.

Goal Attainment: How does it tie into performance?

If you choose to set Leadership as a goal in ISIS, then the attainment of this goal is based upon the 10 skills you set for a particular client.

Even if you don't set a specific Leadership activity or goal for a youth, the positive effects of such services are undeniable. Youth who are engaged in a well-structured Leadership Development activity often have the opportunity to:

- Improve communication skills (generally through gathering and conveying information)
- Problem solve (through community service projects and gaining practice in reaching consensus)
- Goal set (through evaluating their community's needs and opportunities for improvement)
- Identify and relate to local leaders (through trips to local WIB youth council meetings or other governmental gatherings)
- Promote healthy lifestyles (through identification of resources and solutions to problems specific to their community)
- Participate in Strategic Planning (through identifying local needs and planning activities accordingly with their peers)
- Relate to public institutions (through feeling an active part of their community and a contributing member of their civic structure)
- Plan successful careers

When a Leadership Development program is structured around the idea that youth can be the leaders of today (not just the leaders of tomorrow), it can become a powerful means of keeping youth engaged and encouraging their positive outcomes in the working world.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN THE FILE?

12. Assessment and ISS in ISIS indicate that this was a part of the service plan
13. Sign-in sheets for Youth Council meetings, if applicable
14. Parent consent forms, if applicable, for field trips, etc.
15. Case notes, to track the progress of the leadership development activities

ADULT MENTORING

Adult mentoring is a WIA service element that often is presented as a part of subsidized work experience or on-the-job-training. Although these methods of providing youths with meaningful adult guidance can be effective when properly planned, this section will focus more on independent adult mentoring programs that are separate from the work experience component.

This section utilizes information from two excellent sources: Idaho State's WIA Youth Program and the OneSource Mentor Program at Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC). For more specific information regarding the program in Idaho (including a comprehensive Technical Assistance Guide, outline of forms you will need to start your own mentoring program, and a list of helpful mentoring resources) please visit <http://cl.idaho.gov/wial/tags/mentoringtag.doc>. For more information on the OneSource Mentor Program at WLCAC, you can contact the agency directly.

What is it?

Adult mentoring can be defined as “the involvement of caring, competent adults to provide support, structure, and expectations for youth.”

Mentoring has been described many ways; among them, as a “sustained one-to-one relationship between a caring adult and a child who needs support to achieve academic, career, social, or personal goals” (McPartland & Nettles, 1991) and “a one-on-one relationship between a caring adult and a youth who could benefit from the relationship” (Weinberger). Mentoring may be “planned” or “natural”; natural relationships are informal and develop independently between youth and their friends, teachers, employers, or relatives, whereas planned relationships are more formal and involve a structured program between a young person, the "mentee", and a mentor, with specific objectives and goals. (Floyd, 1993, Weinberger)

Mentoring programs can be divided into three general, and somewhat overlapping, categories:

- *Educational mentoring* – aimed at improving academic performance and behavior
- *Career mentoring* - focusing on helping youth develop skills needed in chosen occupational or career paths
- *Personal development mentoring* – geared toward helping youth during times of personal or social stress and providing guidance for decision-making (Floyd, 1993)

Mentoring activities supported with WIA funds may take on aspects of all three of these categories. WIA mentoring is not intended as a stand-alone activity, but rather should be considered in the context of the overall needs and goals of the participant. As one of the twelve required services, the exact form it takes in individual cases will depend on the service plan for that participant. In general, WIA mentors should be looked upon to serve as positive role models for WIA clients, to assist them with the development of social and life skills, and to assist them in accessing needed resources.

Mentoring may also be categorized according to the setting in which the activity occurs—*site-based mentoring*, which occurs only at specified sites, and *community-based mentoring*, which may take place throughout the community. Both provide learning and support opportunities for youth.

Site-based mentoring can be an effective choice when many volunteers have limited time available and are more comfortable in a more protected, supervised, and monitored environment. This type of mentoring offers the greatest protection and the most support for participating youth and mentors, as this model limits mentor/mentee meetings to supervised public settings where support staff are available to assist with any problems that might arise.

Community-based mentoring is less restricted, offering a wider variety of activities, but requires significantly more intensive screening of prospective mentors because it involves unsupervised encounters between mentors and mentees in a broader array of settings. Big Brothers/Big Sisters is an example of community-based mentoring.

While mentoring activities offer youth valuable opportunities for positive role modeling, mentoring (because it involves the establishment of relatively unstructured one-on-one relationships between volunteers and youth participants) carries with it certain risks that must be minimized to ensure protection for all parties involved.

Recruitment of Mentors

Before you can decide whom to recruit, you will need to decide what it is you are looking for in a mentor, what you have to offer them, and what it is you want from them.

You may wish to start by identifying the mentor qualities you believe are critical to the success of the particular kind of mentoring in which you are engaging. In general, mentors should be caring, non-judgmental individuals with outstanding records of employment who can serve as positive role models for WIA youth clients. In addition to the basic characteristics of interest in and concern about young people, characteristics to look for in mentors might include particular kinds of expertise, educational background and/or interests, ethnic diversity, and certainly a commitment to maintaining a mentor/mentee relationship within the structural and functional limitations established for WIA.

Your conclusions on this will determine where, within your local community, you can begin to recruit volunteers. Look to businesses, civic groups, faith-based groups,

educational institutions, government agencies, professional associations, labor organizations, community-based organizations, the medical community, law enforcement, and retirees – the possibilities are endless!

Take some time to think through what the experience of mentoring offers to the mentor, as this could be a “selling point” as you recruit. Although the primary beneficiaries here are the WIA youth, you are not asking for something for nothing; there are benefits to the mentor as well, not the least of which is the satisfaction of having made a difference in the life of a youth. Being able to identify the benefits to the mentor and his employer may be particularly valuable if you are trying to enlist the support of employers to allow participation by their employees.

Advertise. Use the media, word-of-mouth, Youth Council, meetings of civic groups, whatever it takes to get the word out. Keep in mind, though, the quality of mentors you successfully recruit is far more important than the quantity.

Most experts recommend informational meetings for prospective mentors that explain program expectations, their roles and responsibilities, and general procedural issues (that background checks will be conducted, that they will have to participate in training, and that you will be available for support and oversight) At these informational meetings, be sure to collect applications from those individuals who express an interest in continuing with the program. The application is where you will get the information you need to conduct background checks.

What is the requirement?

City contract Section 202.C.9.a.17 states:

“Contractor shall provide adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, **for a total of not less than 12 months**. Contractor shall screen and provide training to prepare all potential mentors to assist and motivate youth. Contractor shall match youth to appropriate mentors.”

Adult mentoring is one of the twelve required service elements of the OneSource program.

Beyond that, however, research done by the American Youth Policy Forum indicates that “Adults who take time with young people, who advocate and broker on their behalf, who guide them, who connect them to the broader institutions of society, and who have the training and professional skills to help them develop and grow are central to effective youth policies and programs. The effectiveness of adults is enhanced by program settings that have coherence and structure, that offer challenging content, that give youth responsibility, and that establish rules and set practical limits for participating young people.” Mentoring provides valuable opportunities to youth and can enhance their learning experiences.

All providers of WIA mentoring services, whether contractors or subcontractors, are required to comply with the policies and procedures set forth in this manual.

Assessment: How does it work?

To assess whether a client is a good candidate for a Mentoring program, there are a series of “suitability criteria” you will need to address.

- In the context of the client’s ISS/Service Plan, would participation in mentoring enhance the prospects of success for the youth in question?
- What characteristics/interests/needs of the client would you be looking to match with a mentor? Are there possibilities for arranging a successful match? Are there circumstances (behaviorally, for example) that would limit the potential for success in matching the youth with a mentor and/or maintaining a successful relationship?
- Is the youth interested in being matched with a mentor?
- Is the youth willing and able to commit the required time and energy needed to make the mentoring experience a productive and effective one (in other words, will they be around long enough to give the mentoring relationship time to develop)?
- Do the client and (for youth under 18) his/her parents or legal guardian fully understand the requirements for participation and agree to cooperate with the structural and functional limitations established for WIA? A parent/guardian consent form should be generated for your mentoring programs, to be signed by parents and guardians of youth under the age of 18.

In mentoring programs, assessment must not just occur to establish the needs of the youth for a mentoring activity. The mentors themselves must be properly assessed to assure appropriate matches and to ensure the safety of the clients.

The effectiveness of mentoring services depends on a variety of factors, the most critical of which are the appropriate selection and screening of mentors (including background checks on prospective mentors), adequate training of mentors to equip them to do quality mentoring, and the provision of ongoing support and supervision of mentoring activities. Effective mentor assessment processes protect your WIA clients by adequately screening prospective mentors, properly educating and training all people involved in the mentoring effort, and conducting general abuse prevention policies and procedures.

In order to ensure that mentoring services offer maximum protection and quality experiences for mentors and WIA clients, each OneSource Network is required to establish procedures that ensure:

- Adequate screening of mentors (including background checks on all prospective mentors) and record-keeping;
- Mentor training; and,
- The provision of ongoing support and supervision of mentoring activities.

Screening of mentors and record-keeping

The screening of mentors for your WIA program must include a comprehensive application process, an interview, reference checks, and criminal background checks. Because such screening processes include the handling of confidential information, it is recommended that you assign a staff member familiar with confidentiality statutes and trained in the handling of sensitive information to serve as the custodian of confidential records. Your agency's Human Resources section may be a good place to find such an individual, although the City does not require this.

In addition, once mentors are deemed appropriate for your program, you must keep a file for each individual mentor to record their progress in the program and any issues that may come up. Remember, it is essential to ensure the safekeeping, accuracy, and accountability of all prospective mentor records. Service providers should treat their files on mentors the same way they treat their personnel files, which are not subject to review by City monitors.

Mentor Training

At a minimum, mentor training should include an introduction to the WIA program, information on OneSource Network contacts, a review of a sample individual service strategy (ISS), an overview of WIA Grievance and Complaint Procedures, information on appropriate activities, and an overview of the specific purpose of the mentoring relationship for the WIA client.

All mentors should be provided with a job description that includes:

- Mentor role
- Time commitment
- Participation requirements
- Desired qualities
- Details of the application and screening process

Mentor training should be provided in conjunction with a similar training for the WIA client who will be mentored.

Supervision of Mentoring Activities

You will need to make contact with mentors, WIA clients/mentees, and parents periodically to ensure that the mentoring relationship is progressing smoothly, is positive and offers value to both parties. Contacts should be in person whenever

possible, but may also be by phone or email, and are required no less frequently than *monthly*. More frequent monitoring may be prudent during the early months of a mentoring relationship. When any of these contacts indicate problems with the mentor/mentee relationship, you may need to increase both the frequency and/or intensity of your monitoring to identify the source of the problem and determine an appropriate course of action. All such concerns need to be logged in both the client's and the mentor's file.

How do I capture it in terms of JTA-related activities?

Mentoring activities can be captured in JTA as code 72, "Employment Services;" code 73, "Citizenship and Leadership Activities;" or as code 74, "Other Youth Services," depending on the nature of the mentoring relationship.

How do I capture it in terms of service elements?

It is essential that all OneSource Networks organize formal mentoring efforts, creating the infrastructure to offer mentoring services and build support within the community for the effort. Be careful to distinguish between *building support* for your mentoring efforts and *establishing partnerships* for the delivery of mentoring services. While both are important and may be necessary for the operation of successful mentoring activities, the establishment of a formal partnership for mentoring requires a formal delineation of the sharing of responsibilities and liability.

Goal Attainment: How does it tie into performance?

An important principle to keep in mind in selecting mentors is to *be selective*. Not all people make good mentors; just because someone is *willing* to be a mentor doesn't necessarily mean they *should* be one. Do not feel pressured to make a quick match between a mentor and mentee. The spirit of WIA is that the program will offer services to youth from which they can benefit. It is important to remember that no match at all is better than a bad match, as a WIA youth will not likely derive benefit from a negative experience. Taking the extra time to make matches with the greatest potential for success will not compromise program quality or compliance.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN THE FILE?

Client

1. Assessment and ISS in ISIS indicate that this was a part of the service plan
2. Proof of orientation on the mentoring program
3. Parent consent form, if applicable
4. Case notes, to track the progress of the mentor/mentee relationship

Mentor (these files are not subject to WIA monitor review)

1. Mentor application
2. Documentation of interview
3. Background check clearances
4. Proof of orientation on the mentoring program
5. Case notes, to track the progress of the mentor/mentee relationship

COMPREHENSIVE GUIDANCE AND COUNSELING

What is it?

Sometimes, WIA clients require guidance that goes above and beyond the routine case management provided by agency staff. “Comprehensive guidance and counseling” is a catchall phrase that can encompass anything from intensive career counseling to drug and alcohol counseling.

What is the requirement?

In the case of a youth who requires counseling that goes beyond the capacity of their regular assigned WIA case manager, counseling should be by a certified counselor on an on-going basis. Counseling may be of limited duration but should not be on a one-time/one-shot basis.

If the individual is receiving guidance and counseling for job search it should be conducted by a qualified individual other than the case manager to be reportable as comprehensive guidance and counseling.

Assessment: How does it work?

Although every situation and need will be unique, there are a few things to remember about making an effective referral.

1. Keep a resource book in a common area of your youth center so that case managers and clients can utilize it as needs arise. A good resource is the County of Los Angeles’ Rainbow Resource Directory. You can order the directory online at <http://www.rainbowreferralguide.com/main.html>. Another good resource is the Healthy City website, www.healthycity.org
2. Be sure to establish contacts with organizations that provide counseling for issues that are common among youth. Know whom to contact in case of an immediate need for services, the common duration for intake, and eligibility requirements.
3. When a client expresses a need for counseling services beyond the capacity of your WIA program, work with the client to identify the best services.
4. Once a service is selected, contact your point person to let them know you have a youth in need of services. Whenever possible, establish a meeting date between the service provider, the youth, and yourself to ensure a warm handoff.
5. Be sure to let your client know what the services can and can’t do for them. You do not want your client to expect something from a referral that will not happen.
6. You may want to use the *Checklist for Making Successful Referrals* on the next page (Figure 6.a) to help you in assuring you have gone over the necessary information with you client.

Checklist for Making Successful Referrals

- I have an adequate understanding of the client's situation and perceived needs.
- The client and I have talked about how to prioritize these needs and what options exist to help address them.
- The client is willing and ready to be referred.
- We have discussed what issues might make it difficult for the client to follow through with the referral."
- I am familiar with the agency to which I am referring the individual, including its eligibility requirements and services
- The agency has the capacity and willingness to serve youth in a knowledgeable and respectful manner.
- I have a working relationship with at least one staff person at this agency that can provide useful information and help advocate for the client.
- I have considered whether or not to accompany the client based on the individual's:
 - Ability to negotiate complex social situations
 - Ability to provide and receive information
 - Ability to tolerate waiting
 - Level of ambivalence about seeking help
 - Interpersonal style (passive to argumentative)
- If the person is going alone, I have provided sufficient information and "coaching" to help make the referral successful.
- I have made a plan to follow up with the client to see how things went and to determine next steps
- I have a backup plan if this referral fails to work out for any reason.

References: Long and Jacobs (1986:4-32--4-33); Schutt and Garrett (1992:61-64); Wood (1992:41-42)

How do I capture it in terms of JTA-related activities?

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling is reportable to the state system as code 74, “Other Youth Services.”

It is important to remember that you can initiate a Planned Break in Services (JTA Activity Code 83) for a client who is in need of intensive, short-term counseling.

Clients in need of longer-term treatment that precludes entry into employment should be exited under Exit Code 10, “Health/Medical.”

How do I capture it in terms of service elements?

Much of the information that is disclosed to you when a client is in need of intensive comprehensive guidance and counseling will be sensitive, highly confidential information. It is essential that you keep confidential and medical information in separate, secured files. The only information that need go into the regular client file is documentation (be it a referral slip or case notes) to prove that a referral was made.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN THE FILE?

1. Proof of referral/Referral slip OR
2. Case notes to document that a referral was made

SUPPORT SERVICES

What is it?

Support services for youth are customer services that are necessary to enable your WIA clients, who cannot afford to pay for such services, to participate in authorized WIA activities. Examples of such services include but are not limited to:

- Child care and dependant care for dependants of client
- Clothing – Adequate clothing to allow the client to wear appropriate work attire while participating in WIA activities and during job interviews
- Housing – Temporary shelter, housing assistance and referral services
- Linkages to community services – Alcohol, drug, gang intervention counseling; drop-out prevention; pregnancy prevention; money management; tutoring; or other purposes
- Referral to appropriate medical service providers
- Transportation – Expenses for commuting to and from WIA activities such as public transportation fare, carpool arrangements or gas for personal auto
- Uniforms or work-related tools, including such items as eye glasses and protective eye gear which may be needed for participating in WIA activities and/or employment
- Materials for individuals with disabilities
- Meals

Also included in this category are *Needs-Related Payments* and *Incentive Payments*.

Needs-related payments

Needs-related payments are support services in the form of monetary assistance necessary to enable a youth to participate in an eligible WIA activity if an urgent need is demonstrated and can be documented. Needs-related payments are provided through cash assistance, or by arrangement with another human resource agency.

A participant *cannot* receive needs-related payments for follow-up services, since a participant in follow-up is no longer participating in an eligible WIA activity. However, a participant in follow-up may still receive all other support services for up to 12 months after exiting from the program.

Incentive payments

Incentive payments are funds paid to participants in the form of cash. They are based upon attendance, successful performance, or completion of a WIA activity that leads to the attainment of a goal or other positive outcome. Such payments are intended to provide participants with an incentive to remain in the activity with a reward for good performance.

What is the requirement?

Directive 02-09, dated August 21, 2001, provides a detailed WIA Youth Support Services, Needs-Related Payments and Incentive Payment Policy. Outside of defining these services (similar to what is shown in the above section), the directive also provides other guidelines for the provision of these types of services.

Section 202.C.2.a.(14) of the City WIA contract provides a minimum standard by which supportive services must be provided. An important section to highlight states the following:

“Contractor shall inform and provide or arrange for the provision of services to eligible WIA customers that will enable them to enroll, remain in, and complete training; and obtain and retain unsubsidized employment or other positive outcome within funding availability and budget limitations.”

The maximum needs-related payment is \$1,200 per participant per year unless justification of a higher amount has been submitted and approved by the City prior to release of payment. There is no funding limit placed on all other support services. Because of this, agencies are expected to implement organizational policies that guide case managers in assessing the feasibility of providing any given support service to a client in need.

Assessment: How does it work?

The Assessment tab in ISIS captures many of the key indicators for whether a client will be in need of support services. Among sections of the Assessment that speak to Support Service needs are the questions under “Work Experience” regarding transportation and the entire section on “Family/Living Situation.”

Support service needs for any specific client may arise long after initial assessment. In this case, it is important to note the specific need in the case notes and to ensure that such services are not available through other programs or partner agencies.

How do I capture it in terms of JTA-related activities?

Support services that are planned at the time of the assessment are placed in the ISS tab under the section, “Supportive Service Referrals.” Support services are reportable to the state system as Code 81, “Supportive Services” or Code 82, “Needs-related Payments.”

How do I capture it in terms service elements?

When a client is determined in need of support services, you must capture it in your case notes and carefully document the method by which you determined what specific support services your agency will provide. Whenever possible, you should include copies of the receipts for any support service purchases your agency makes.

Another necessary piece of documentation to include in the file is something that verifies the client received the service. This can be anything from a client-signed copy of the item that was provided (i.e. a bus pass); or a standardized form that your agency implements to track the receipt of such services. You should enter support services as they are provided under the “Supportive Services” section of the Activity/Service tab in ISIS.

Goal Attainment: How does it tie into performance?

Support services are another means of addressing the overall needs of your clients, so that they can be better prepared to enter the working world.

As with any other service element, it is important to constantly be in touch with exited clients and be prepared to offer needed services as they arise. This way, you can ensure that there are no extenuating circumstances that are keeping a youth from retaining employment.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE IN THE FILE?

6. Assessment and ISS in ISIS indicate that this was a part of the service plan
7. Case notes, to track the provision of support services
8. Evidence of referrals to other human resource agencies, when applicable
9. Receipts documenting the purchase
10. Documentation that serves to indicate that the client received the services