

MEMORANDUM

TO: OEWD Workforce Grantee
FROM: OEWD Workforce Division Program Staff
DATE: 6/27/2022
SUBJECT: Client Data and Release of Information

Below you will find some essential information about client data and their release of information. These changes are being made to improve our ability to evaluate the effectiveness of all workforce development programs through increased access to participant employment information and wage data.

Improved Ability to Evaluate Program Outcomes

Until now, the primary collection of data used to document employment placements and wage information for clients enrolled in non-Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded programs was the sole responsibility of the provider. Agencies were responsible to obtain proof of post-program outcomes and report them in Workforce Central. OEWD only had direct access to wage or other placement data from the Employment Development Department (EDD) for clients in WIOA-funded programs.

In response to new state legislation, OEWD has established a partnership with the EDD to gain access to client wage information for three quarters before they were enrolled in services and four quarters after they exit from our programs, as well as the sector in which they are employed, regardless of funding source. This will allow us to better understand the employment related outcomes of our programs such as whether there has been an increase in wages one year after exiting the program, and for our sector-training programs to know if clients are working in the sector in which they were trained. This is a monumental success for our department and workforce partners as we will have significantly more and higher quality data to assess the long-term impacts of our programs.

In order to have access to this data from EDD, we must collect full Social Security numbers on the workforce application for all participants enrolled in an OEWD-funded workforce program. All workforce applications will now request a full Social Security number to reflect this change. While this is currently a standard process for all of our WIOA-funded programs, it will now be expanded to include all of our workforce programs.

Updated Release of Information Forms

In order for OEWD to have access to pre- and post-program wage and employment information, we must ensure that we have a signed Release of Information form on file for all clients. EDD will be auditing our files to verify that we have a signed Release of Information form for each client. This is not a new requirement as it is the current compliance practice for participant applications and case file management. However, we are asking all providers to upload a signed Release of Information form into Workforce Central to ensure that we have a current and signed agreement. It is essential both for quality assurance and to ensure that clients understand their rights regarding the use of their information. We have revised the form to make it easier for clients to understand what information we will have access to and how that information will and will not be shared with other agencies. The updated form explains what information we are collecting, why we are collecting it, and how this information will or will not be shared.

The wage and employment data or the Social Security number will not be shared with any agency, organization, city department, or state agency. Only staff from our Data and Performance Unit at OEWD will have access to this confidential client data. It will only be reported out in an aggregate and "anonymized" format with all individual client information removed. For example, we may report out on the percentage of total clients in a sector training program who are still working in that sector after they exit the program, but we would never provide the names of individual clients who are working in that sector.

It is important to note, if a client does not have a Social Security number or chooses to not provide it, they are still entitled to receive workforce services from your agency, and we still require a signed Release of Information form to be uploaded in Workforce Central for that client. We just won't be able to access their wage and employment information from the EDD for that client. We are leaning on your partnership to articulate the importance of attaining this information from program clients.

The changes above will take effect in the new Fiscal/Program year, starting July 1, 2022. All workforce application forms, instructions, the updated Release of Information form, and the Workforce Central User Guide will be updated to reflect these changes. Our goal is to have all new forms, including all language translations, available for download by July 5th. Until these forms are made available to you, please continue to use the existing Release of Information and application forms.

If you have any questions about any of the upcoming changes or anything described above, please contact your OEWD Program Specialist.

Thank you for your work and your assistance in implementing these changes which will allow us to better demonstrate the important impact that your programs have for jobseekers and the community. As always, we are grateful for your partnership.

