

Summary of Comments and DWD-DET's Responses - 13.2 Serving People with Refugee/Humanitarian Parolee/Asylee Status

Policy Effective October 1, 2022

1. One commenter noted that they field many questions on immigrant status, visas, DACA youth etc. and finding answers is often difficult. The commenter shared a document developed by the state of Michigan that they find helpful for front line staff who receive inquiries from individuals with less common immigrant statuses. They recommended that this policy be included within a Chapter that covers all non-citizen (Eligible to Work) information.

Thank you for sharing this information. The link to the Michigan document, "How do I know if an Immigrant or Refugee is Eligible for WIOA Title I Services?" has been included in the Resource section of this policy. At this time, DWD-DET has not moved the location of the policy within the policy manual, or added any additional information. More information about how authorization to work impacts WIOA Title I program eligibility can be found in Chapters 8.2.1, 8.2.2, 10.3.2 and 10.3.3 for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, In-School Youth, and Out-of-School Youth programs respectively. Documentation requirements related to the authorization to work criteria follow federal I-9 requirements, and are detailed in Chapters 12.3.1, 12.4.1, and 12.5.1 for the Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs respectively. These requirements do not change based on an individual's immigration status.

2. One commenter stated "[t]he policy implies there could be eligibility as a Dislocated Worker, however it is not clear which DW eligibility criteria would be suitable to use and it would be difficult (outside of self-attestation) to document anything related to employment. Is it really possible to determine eligibility as a Dislocated Worker? It almost seems that there should be a category specific to this population within the DW policy that addresses refugee/asylum status."

Eligibility determination for the Dislocated Worker Program is detailed in Chapter 8.2.2 of the WIOA Titles I-A and I-B Policy Manual and is not impacted by immigration status. Career planners should conduct an eligibility determination, as required by the WIOA Title I Application Process Guide, to determine eligibility for WIOA programs. Individuals may be served in any program for which they are eligible, regardless of immigration status. If the career planner is unable to obtain required eligibility documentation for the Dislocated Worker program eligibility criteria, then eligibility should be considered for the Adult or Youth Programs.

3. One commenter requested technical assistance related to the statement "may consider the individual's likelihood to retain their current employment as compared to their previous occupation, as well as their knowledge, skills, and abilities" and how to apply this criterion when determining a participant's eligibility to receive funding for training. The commenter noted that many refugees take the first job that comes along due to feelings of uncertainty with their current plight, and that when WDBs apply the training eligibility criteria, their current employment may prevent them from qualifying even though they have the potential and drive to do much more.

DWD-DET believes the policy statement "Many refugees who have been relocated by a resettlement agency to a permanent or semi-permanent residence may have been placed in employment unrelated to their past employment history, educational achievement, and/or *their desired industry or occupation*," addresses these concerns.

Please contact your assigned local program liaison if there are further questions related to this topic.

4. One commenter recommended that DWD-DET include some kind of cost-of-living conversion? The commenter opined that for most refugees/asylees, what was considered a good middle-class income in their own countries will be very low if just converted to U.S. dollars.

Career planners must take all factors into consideration for these individuals when determining eligibility for training services. As noted in this policy, "Training services, and other licensing/certification assistance, may be appropriate for these individuals even if they are currently employed in an occupation leading to economic self-sufficiency." Career planners must provide detailed case notes when documenting all the factors they took into consideration when determining training service eligibility for these individuals. DWD-DET has revised the policy to provide clarity around this documentation requirement, and has added a link to a common Cost-of-Living comparison tool in the Resource section of the policy.