

**Reminders for WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 Implementation
and Amendments to Reopening Plans for American Job Centers**

TO: Chief Elected Officials
Local Workforce Innovation Board Chairpersons
Local Workforce Innovation Board Staff
WIOA Fiscal Agents and Grant Recipients
WIOA Program Services Administrators
Illinois workNet® Operators
WIOA State Agency Partners
Other Interested Persons

SUBJECT: Reminders about local implementation of WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 and amendments to local American Job Center Reopening Plans

DATE: May 12, 2022

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of [WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09](#), issued June 2021, was to issue guidance for a safe return-to-work and reopening plan for American Job Centers (AJCs) that aligns with the existing [Checklist for Reopening American Job Centers in Illinois in accordance with the Governor’s “Restore Illinois” Plan](#). This WIOA Notice included a required reopening form that all centers listed within the notice must have completed and submitted to the Illinois WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance (TA) Team to start or to continue offering in-person services.

Since the initial enactment of this policy and the submission of local reopening forms, circumstances related to safety, security and mandates have evolved. This memo offers important reminders regarding the requirement to amend local reopening plans when substantive changes to local service delivery occurs at an AJC.

II. CONTEXT

The State of Illinois has been analyzing local data and tracking threats and incidents of violence at American Job Centers, resulting in protocols around known risks and the desire to mitigate risks for in-person staff and customers going forward. The following are some examples contributing to these ongoing safety concerns:

- Staff located at AJCs have encountered substantial security threats, which warrants the need for ongoing diligence to reduce risks and ensure all partners are in agreement before local service delivery models and staffing arrangements change.

- Processing the high volume of Unemployment Insurance claims associated with federal programs created in response to the pandemic.

The State has also monitored local data about the demand of different types of services and the need to consider walk-in services in combination with innovative outreach strategies to reach dislocated workers and other populations in need. Due to processing pandemic-related unemployment insurance claims, IDES plans to continue offering all IDES-administered services by appointment only for the foreseeable future.

Pursuant to best practices and recommendations from the Illinois State Police and Illinois Central Management Services, the WIOA Interagency Team of all required program partners in Illinois offer these reminders to ensure local workforce systems remain safe with processes and procedures in place to de-escalate or respond to situations that arise as various service delivery methods are applied through walk-in, on-demand technology or by appointment.

III. CIRCUMSTANCES THAT REQUIRE AN AMENDMENT TO AN AJC REOPENING PLAN

As described in WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 dated June 24, 2021, reopening plans are intended to be updated as circumstances change in a local area. Local Workforce Innovation Boards (LWIBs) **must resubmit reopening plans to the WIOA Interagency TA Team through the WIOA inbox at wioaplans-mous@illinoisworknet.com when substantive changes are made to the plan.** Substantive changes include but are not limited to:

- Change in service delivery method by any onsite partner from what was already agreed upon in the original reopening plan.
 - Example 1: Walk-in services will be offered for some program services (excluding services that are administered by IDES that will remain by appointment only) for the first time since the original reopening plan was enacted.
 - Example 2: Orientations, job fairs, group classes will be offered in person and by appointment, if not already agreed upon by partners in the original reopening plan.
- Change to hours of operation or public office hours.
- Change to staffing levels or staffing plans to address service delivery changes and security measures.

IV. REQUIRED FORM FOR AMENDING AJC REOPENING PLANS

When substantive changes are planned to an AJC Reopening Plan, partners must complete the required form entitled, “Amendment to an American Job Center Reopening Plan.” (See Exhibit 1 to this memo.)

Responses to the questions in the Amendment form must be completed with as much specificity as possible each time a substantive change in service delivery or staffing commitments are made throughout a program year.

V. REMINDERS ABOUT OBTAINING AGREEMENT OF AMENDED REOPENING PLANS

To recap, the four scenarios that apply to American Job Centers subject to WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09 follow.

- **Scenario A:** Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Designated Affiliate and Specialized Centers or office where IDES staff provide in-person UI services, where a State Agency is the leaseholder of the center and IDES, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, DCEO or DHS staff are currently on-site or plan to return on-site with an agreed-upon reopening plan.
- **Scenario B:** Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Designated Affiliate and Specialized Centers or office where IDES, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, DCEO or DHS staff provide in-person services, but where a State Agency *is not* the leaseholder.
- **Scenario C:** Designated Affiliate and Designated Specialized Centers that are not leased by a State Agency and do not typically have on-site State Agency staff.
- **Scenario D:** WIOA access sites that are not included in other scenarios, including where a State Agency is *not* the leaseholder and State Agency staff members are not typically on-site (e.g., libraries).

The following requirements apply to “Scenario A,” which include Comprehensive One-Stop Centers, Designated Affiliate and Specialized Centers or offices where IDES staff provide in-person UI services, where a State Agency is the leaseholder of the center and IDES, Illinois Department of Veterans Affairs, DCEO or DHS staff are currently on-site or plan to return on-site with an agreed-upon reopening plan (See [WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09](#), IV(B)(3) for a list of centers categorized as “Scenario A”):

- 1) The State Agency Director or designee must agree to the local reopening plan before the plan or modified plan is signed by Local Workforce Innovation Board

Chairs and Chief Elected Officials, submitted to the WIOA Interagency Team, and communicated to the public.

- 2) The State Agency Director or designee will determine whether State Agency employees will transition to or from an on-site presence at a particular center based on ongoing evaluations of security and risk mitigation measures in place.
- 3) Where IDES or DHS is the leaseholder and/or where in-person UI service are offered, the centers have been required to follow a phased-in plan, starting with opening for appointments only, then limited public hours, then walk-in services as permitted by the Governor's [Restore Illinois Plan](#).

State Agency Directors or designees have discretion about when State Agency staff expand appointment availability or when services are offered to walk-in customers, as circumstances may arise that require a modification to the reopening plan in coordination with required partners in the applicable center ([WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09, IV\(A\)15](#)).

American Job Centers in all scenarios above must engage required partners with an onsite presence in the center during the process of amending original reopening plans. Following is a general process for amending and obtaining agreement on amended reopening plans in all LWIAs.

- 1) Convene all program partner representatives in good faith negotiations around proposed parameters that will be documented in the amended reopening plan. Any preferred alternative language should be brought to negotiation meetings for discussion and decision making.
- 2) Obtain agreement by all program partner representatives at the local level.
- 3) Then route the agreed-upon plan or amendment through the State Agency Directors or designees of state-administered programs, as applicable to centers where State Agency staff are or will be physically present.
- 4) After State Agency Director or designee confirm agreement, if applicable, then obtain signatures of the LWIB Chair and Chief Elected Officials.
- 5) Submit the fully executed reopening plan or amendment to the WIOA Interagency Technical Assistance (TA) Team as noted below.
- 6) Communicate the updated service delivery options to customers pursuant to the agreed-upon communications plan.

Submit amended and signed reopening plans to wioaplans-mous@illinoisworknet.com. Questions about the amendment process may also be submitted to the same WIOA email address.

Once reopening plans or amendments are fully agreed upon, signed and submitted to the WIOA Interagency TA Team, the plan or amended plan may be implemented.

The WIOA Interagency TA Team will review reopening plans and amendments to offer feedback or assistance to ensure compliance during implementation.

- **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

Resources for safely reopening AJCs may be found at the following links:

- [Illinois workNet WIOA Implementation During COVID-19](#) page
- [WIOA e-Policy, Chapter 1, Section 12.8](#)
- [WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09](#)
- [Required form](#) to document a local reopening plan and amendments for American Job Centers
- [Frequently asked questions](#) document

In addition, a variety of resources are under development to support required partners at the State and local levels in considering and implementing new outreach strategies given the ongoing emergence of service delivery models. Technical assistance and webinars will be announced as new resources become available.

Exhibit I to this Memo

Amendment to an American Job Center Reopening Plan Under WIOA Notice 20-NOT-09

The [Required Form to Document a Local Reopening Plan for American Job Centers](#) must include this completed and agreed upon Amendment form each time substantive changes to service delivery or staffing commitment are made throughout a program year.

All required program partners, including State Agency directors or designees of state-administered programs, if applicable, must agree to responses in this Amendment form before announcing and implementing the amended reopening plan.

1. Describe the process in which all partners reviewed and verified that the information and assurances provided in any initial reopening plan are accurate and current.

[type response here]

2. Explain the steps taken to ensure all staff within the AJC are aware of the reopening plan and are trained on all applicable AJC procedures, especially related to the safety and security such as de-escalation training (click on the link to access a webinar recording).

[type response here]

3. Identify the anticipated volume of customers for walk-in services. This includes reflecting on the volume of customers from pre-pandemic levels, to current levels, to anticipated levels. Examples of information that will inform a local area of anticipated customer volume includes reviewing a combination of data points available from local sources. Select the data points that are most applicable and available. Data points may include but are not limited to:

- a. Volume of phone calls
- b. Resource Room utilization levels
- c. Number of eligibility determinations
- d. Number of UI filings
- e. Number of supportive services/referrals made
- f. Number of career planner visits
- g. Internet utilization levels
- h. Description of specific unmet needs or demographics of individuals not served when walk-in services have not been available
- i. Number of new participants needed to be served or enrolled in services to meet federally required performance metrics

[type response here]

Exhibit I to this Memo

4. List the specific services that are planned to be made available to walk-in customers and that are agreed upon by program partners.
[type response here]
5. Describe the agreed-upon plan for handling waiting lines outside of the AJC entrance, as well as times when public waiting areas have reached capacity limits.
[type response here]
6. Describe the agreed-upon plan for holding in-person orientations, workshops or other group events, including capacity limits for such group events. Include a description of how walk-in events will be handled versus appointment only events. Events include but are not limited to hiring events, orientations and classes.
[type response here]
7. Describe the agreed-upon staffing plan with a designated program position(s) for who will direct walk-in customers at the front door to ensure they have an appointment for IDES services or can access other program services as a walk-in that same day. As a best practice, the staffing plan should specify that a qualified program representative, not a security guard, should be the first point of contact for a customer to determine whether that customer needs an appointment or can access walk-in services on demand. However, the plan may outline any special circumstances that are agreed upon by all partners if someone other than a program representative will be the first point of contact for walk-in customers. In all cases, the staffing plan must be agreed upon by the State Agency Director or designee of state-administered programs present in the AJC.
[type response here]
9. Describe the agreed-upon security plan to ensure initial staff interaction with the public is within the security guard's line of sight, that security guards are aware of the service area, or that protocol for alerting security is known if staff need assistance during service delivery.
[type response here]
8. Confirm how the staffing plan prepares staff to de-escalate tension when walk-in customers also seek UI services while they are in the center even though they need to make an appointment for UI services.

Exhibit I to this Memo

[type response here]
10. Describe the Resource Room protocol when capacity is reached, and customers wait to access the Resource Room services.
[type response here]
11. Describe agreed-upon messaging, signage and communications plan to make it explicit to customers which services are available on a walk-in basis and which require appointments. If there will be external communication, describe the timeline, platform (e.g., email, social media, press releases, etc.) and the general language to be used.
[type response here]
12. Document the date and method of communications between all partners acknowledging their review and approval of this amended reopening plan.
[type response here]