



Kentucky One-Stop Certification Initiative: Standards for Affiliate Centers

Introduction

One-Stop Center certification standards were written with the intention of describing an ideal, comprehensive One-Stop Center. However, because of the diverse nature of the state and the desire to make services reasonably accessible to all, it was felt that there should be room for Centers that deliver high-quality services, if not a full range of services; and that simultaneously provide direct (hopefully seamless) access to a broad range of services for both jobseekers and employers. As such, it was felt that certification as an Affiliate Center should be available in certain cases.

Affiliate certification is not meant simply for Centers that cannot meet all of the baseline standards because of shortcomings in management or other factors somewhat within the control of the Center. Rather, Affiliate Centers are established to achieve economies of scale based on the characteristics of the local area and on available resources. Affiliate Centers may serve rural areas or areas with smaller/less dense populations, and may seek to accommodate differences in partner availability, resources, and staff or other capacity. In the end, while all Centers should be encouraged to qualify as Full-Service (i.e., “comprehensive”), it may simply not be reasonable to expect that in some areas.

That said, the Core Team felt that standards for Affiliate Centers should be rigorous within the specific context of why they were established. For example, Affiliate Centers must have on-site staff that are trained, enabled, and authorized to provide the services listed below. Most importantly, Affiliate centers must provide **access** to WIA and Trade Act-funded training as well as *all other services offered in a Full-Service Center*. As such, the Affiliate Center’s relationship to the workforce area’s certified Full-Service Center(s) is key. It is in this way that Affiliate Centers help achieve all the overarching themes listed in the introduction to each of the sets of standards – those for job seeker services, employer services, and Center management. It is around those themes, as discussed below, and the Affiliate Center’s capacity to enhance the workforce area’s attainment of those themes, that the criteria for certification are constructed.

To be certified as an Affiliate, the Center must meet minimum expectations for partner presence, breadth of services, customer service, and other elements. The standards that Centers must attain for Affiliate certification encompass the following general requirements:

- ❖ The Center must provide all of the following services:
 - Basic employer services;
 - Basic Unemployment Insurance assistance;
 - Job search assistance and job referral;
 - Access to information about education and training;
 - Assessment;
 - Career advising; and
 - Capacity for information about and facilitated referral to all One-Stop system partners and programs.
- ❖ The Center must be fully-accessible to all customers.
- ❖ The Center must be open full-time during regular business hours (e.g., 8:00 AM – 5:00 PM or similar).





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While it is possible that so-called “stand-alone” offices (that is, offices with only one agency represented) MAY have the capacity to offer all these services, it is intended that such offices NOT be certified as Affiliate Centers. The Core Team felt strongly that *at least WIA and Wagner-Peyser funded staff be present on a full-time basis in order for a Center to qualify as a certified Affiliate*. The overall intent here is not to specify partners, but rather to mandate the capacity to deliver certain customer-focused services. However, given the existence of stand-alone offices in many of the Commonwealth’s workforce areas, the Core Team feels it is important that Affiliates *at a minimum* have OET and WIA presence in order to deliver those services.

In assessing whether an Affiliate Center is meeting the standards, measurement will necessarily have to be less precise and more flexible than with Full-Service Centers. This is so because of the wide variations in size, number of partners, etc., that we would expect to see among Affiliate Centers. However, the measures contained in the standards for Full-Service Centers can serve as a guide for Certification Review Teams in considering whether Affiliates “make the grade.” The standards themselves are discussed in the three sections below.

Employer Services

Business services are organized on a workforce area-wide basis, as expressed in the first standard for Full-Service Centers:

Each workforce area has established a regional (i.e. workforce area-wide) Business Services Team (BST) comprised of knowledgeable business services partners with the ability to connect employers to a full range of partner services.

The thematic element most important for employer services is that the Affiliate Center *connects employers to all of the services and resources they need in a coordinated, seamless, and non-burdensome manner*.

Further, the common menu of basic employer services to be offered in every Full-Service One-Stop Career Center must also be offered in the Affiliate Center:

- ❖ Job postings (online, in-person, via phone and fax);
- ❖ Identifying candidates, screening applicants to employer specifications, and job referral; and
- ❖ Direct connection to BST representative who can broker or deliver workforce area-wide services.

The Affiliate Center must have at least one clearly-recognized, central point of contact for employers, though that individual may also have other duties. That point of contact must participate in all activities, and contribute to goal achievement, of the workforce area-based Business Services Team, including outreach to employers in the Affiliate Center’s service area.





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Job Seeker Services

Because of the assumed fewer numbers of staff and partners actually located in the Affiliate Center, the scope and depth of services offered in Affiliate Centers is not as extensive as in Full-Service Centers. To be certifiable, Affiliate Centers must provide “only” the following services:

- ❖ Basic Unemployment Insurance assistance;
- ❖ Job search assistance and job referral;
- ❖ Access to information about education and training;
- ❖ Assessment;
- ❖ Career advising; and
- ❖ Capacity for information about and facilitated referral to all One-Stop system partners and programs

Nevertheless, the primary theme for the job seeker service delivery *process* remains in effect for Affiliates, as follows:

In a seamless, transparent, and efficient manner, One-Stop Career Centers offer and provide direct **access** to the widest possible array of talent, career, and job development services for all job seeker customers.

In considering this theme, the major difference between the two Center types is in the definition of “direct access”:

- ❖ In the Affiliate, such access will often be available only through facilitated referral to a Full-Service Center or to a partner agency not co-located at the Affiliate Center.
- ❖ In the Full-Service Center, the services are available within the certified Center.

It should be expected that Affiliate Centers meet the following standards related to this theme. These standards are re-produced directly from the Full-Service Center standards, with meaning changed only slightly in some cases to accommodate the alternate setting:

- ❖ All One-Stop partner staff co-located at the Center is trained to provide seamless customer service to job seekers and can assist customers in efficiently accessing all needed services.
- ❖ Customers are provided alternative activities or options during waiting periods.
- ❖ A designated “greeter” welcomes customers in a timely, friendly, professional, responsive, and helpful way.
- ❖ Services for job seekers are organized and managed in ways that leverage Center partners’ expertise, minimize duplication, and maximize the strategic alignment of resources.
- ❖ All customers are provided helpful and useful assessment of length and intensity as appropriate to their point in their service process, and on an ongoing basis throughout the service delivery process.
- ❖ Customers are provided information about all services available via the One-Stop Career Center system in a service-focused, customer-friendly mode.
- ❖ The Center clearly communicates expectations to customers.
- ❖ The One-Stop Career Center maintains an operational resource room with trained staff to support customers’ job readiness and employment search.
- ❖ Customers are routed, through facilitated rather than unassisted referral, to the proper services/activities/partners/external contacts that respond to their reason(s) for visiting the Center.

In terms of service management, the following standards should apply:





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- ❖ One-Stop Career Centers ensure that all staff are fully-trained and have access to ongoing professional development and credentialing opportunities.
- ❖ Services and resources are “packaged” as individualized solutions to meet a job seeker’s needs and goals. The One-Stop Career Center provides helpful and useful resources and information to support customers’ job readiness, employment, and career advancement.

All standards for listening to and satisfying job seekers, and measuring effectiveness, are as appropriate for Affiliate Centers as for Full-Service ones, and so should be applied. Therefore, the following theme applies:

In order to ensure ongoing alignment and value of services to customers, One-Stop Career Centers actively solicit feedback from all job seeker customers (and employers), and build that feedback into a unified Center continuous improvement process.

One-Stop Center Management

These standards are divided into integrated service delivery management activities and standards dealing with physical infrastructure and accessibility. All of the management standards are clearly appropriate criteria for Affiliate Centers to meet in order to be certified, as follows:

- ❖ Clear expectations for partner presence and roles at One-Stop Centers.
- ❖ Services are integrated and duplication in service delivery reduced.
- ❖ Centers adopt best practices in internal communication.
- ❖ The management structure at each One-Stop Center is clear and effective.
- ❖ Supervisors and staff in the Center are organized and assigned to each customer-focused function (e.g., reception, resource room, assessment, career counseling), or to a group of closely-related functions (rather than being organized/assigned by agency). Supervisors and staff are assigned to functional units based on skills, abilities, and other factors related to capacity to deliver the service(s).
 - NOTE: Because of the presumed lower numbers of partners and staff members in Affiliate Centers, it is not reasonable to expect that Affiliates would have the same level of functional supervision seen in Full-Service Centers, or that Affiliates would have significant numbers of staff assigned to discrete functions. However, Affiliate Centers and their staff should be expected to be organized by customer-focused function (or groups of related functions), while recognizing that Affiliate Center staff may deliver services across many functions.
- ❖ One-Stop Career Centers provide staff development that is appropriate for each individual’s specialty.
- ❖ On a Center-wide basis, One-Stop Career Centers track customer activity, customer experience, and employment outcomes and utilize this information to improve quality and use resources most effectively.

Similarly, all of the infrastructure requirements are as appropriate for affiliates as for Full Service Centers, as follows:

- ❖ Each Center provides a safe and secure environment for its employees and customers.
- ❖ Centers maintain a professional and welcoming appearance.





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- ❖ Centers have space and capacity that is appropriate for customer needs, customer traffic, and key Center functions.
- ❖ One-Stop Centers are accessible so that all customers can fully utilize services and resources.

