Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board

Policy Number:	**20-04**
Effective Date:	**May 6, 2020**
Title:	**Customer Referral Process Policy**

PURPOSE

The purpose of this document is to provide entities awarded a subcontract or agreement for Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act services by the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board with guidance on the referral process for individuals seeking workforce services in the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Area.

REFERENCE

TEGL 4-15 – Vision for the One-Stop System
https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_04-15.pdf

TEGL 16-16 – WIOA General Guidance for One-Stop Operations
https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL_16-16.pdf

BACKGROUND

The vision of WIOA Partnerships in American Job Centers (TEGL 4-15) – VA Career Works® centers is to:

- Connect all customers to the full range of services available in their communities;
- Provide Seamless, customer-focused, integrated service delivery across all programs and enhance access to the programs' services;
- Ensure that businesses and job-seekers have access to information and services that lead to positive employment outcomes.

Subrecipients, and contractors funded under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) must abide by WIOA law, regulations, and guidance, state and local WIOA policies.

In addition, as agreed to in the Memorandum of Understanding (*Referrals* Page 16) core partners agree to:

- Provide substantive referrals in accordance with this policy – to customers who are eligible for supplemental and complementary services and benefits under partner programs.

REFERRAL PROCESS POLICY

The choice of referral process depends on the customer's needs, what arrangements, if any, have been agreed to with the service to which the customer is to be referred. In addition, the capacity of both the referring organization and the service to which the customer is being referred must be considered at any particular point in time.

Referral processes can take many forms. The table below outlines examples of referral processes and the advantage and disadvantages of each. Referral processes can occur in a telephone environment, in face to face settings or in the form of written communication (including e-mail) or a combination of these channels. A referral process selected may combine aspects of each of these processes. For example, referrals may be active and warm or facilitated and cold.

For the reasons outlined in the table, staff are encouraged to use facilitated, warm and/or active referral processes where feasible, especially for customers who are likely to have trouble using other services without assistance.

FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UP

When a referral is made, it is always useful to obtain customer feedback about the referral as well as feedback from the agency(ies) to which referrals are made. A follow up call should be made to each to ensure the referral was effective. Discussion of next steps can be discussed during this time as well.

Possible term	Characteristics	Possible advantages and disadvantages
Passive referral	The customer is given contact information for appropriate service(s) and is left to make her/his own contact at a time that best suits the customer.	This process gives responsibility to the customer to take action on their own behalf. However, there is a greater likelihood that the referral will not be taken up.
Facilitated referral	The customer is helped to access the other service, for example, the referring organization makes an appointment with the other service on the customer's behalf, asks the other service to make contact with the customer/s or a caller is transferred to the other service.	The other service is made aware of the customer, and the customer is helped to access that other service. The customer may need to wait for a response to the other service.

Active referral	The referring organization, with the customer's consent, provides the organization to which it is referring the customer with information that it has collected about the customer or with its professional assessment of the customer's needs.	The customer does not need to repeat all of their story and the agency to which the customer is referred has relevant information about the customer. However, there is a risk that the information is communicated out of context and therefore misinterpreted by the service which is receiving the referral, especially if not done as a 'warm' referral (see below).
Cold referral	The customer is transferred to another service, without any immediate communication between the service providers,	The other service may be unaware of the nature of the call or of any information or services that have already been provided. The customer may be frustrated that they have to re-tell their story or may not communicate their needs in a way that allows the other service to see why the customer has been referred.
Warm referral	A 'live' three-way conversation in the presence of the customer (whether face to face or by telephone) in which the referring organization introduces the customer, explains what has already been done to assist the customer and why the customer is being referred.	This provides an open and transparent process in which information can be exchanged between all service provided involved. Issues can be clarified immediately. The customer does not need to repeat their entire story. The process relies on someone being available at the other service at the time the customer is to be referred.

TRACKING OF REFERRALS

Referrals made by core partners should be made by phone or email, documented on the common referral form reflecting the referral made. This includes referrals made to core and non-core partners. Referrals will be monitored by the One Stop Operator and reported to the Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board on a quarterly basis.

STAFF SKILLS

Sound skills and practices are critical to effective referral. Staff who make referrals must also possess the knowledge and skills needed to support people in accessing other services if required, including negotiating ways to overcome barriers to access to services.

The following checklist may assist staff to make effective referrals:

- I understand the customer's situation and perceived needs.
- The customer and I have talked about how to prioritize these needs and what options exist to help address them.
- The customer is willing and ready to be referred.
- We have discussed what issues might make it difficult for the customer to follow through with the referral.

Some additional points for staff are:

- I have considered whether a facilitated, warm or active referral would be desirable, based on the customer's:

  o ability to negotiate complex social situations
  o ability to provide and receive information
  o ability to tolerate waiting
  o level of ambivalence about seeking help
  o interpersonal style (e.g. passive or argumentative)

- If the referral is a passive or cold referral, I have provided sufficient information and 'coaching' to help make the referral successful.
- (Where appropriate) I have made a plan to follow up with the customer to see how things went and to determine next steps.