



### Case Notes

#### Effective Date

12/12/2025

#### Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish uniform standards for documenting case notes in IowaWORKS for all WIOA Title I programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth). Case notes serve as the official record of services provided, participant progress, and the decision-making process. They ensure compliance with federal and state requirements, provide transparency for monitoring, and support continuity of services.

Case notes also serve as the primary documentation of coordination among WIOA core and required partners, ensuring transparent communication, co-enrollment alignment, and efficient use of multiple funding streams (“braided” service delivery).

This policy aligns with federal guidance at **20 CFR 683.300(a)**, requiring accurate, timely and complete documentation of participant records to support eligibility, services, and outcomes.

#### Policy Statement

All staff providing WIOA Title I services must maintain accurate, timely, clear, and complete case notes. Case notes are mandatory for all services and interactions with participants and must demonstrate a clear connection to the participant’s goals, barriers, and outcomes.

#### Policy

##### Standards for Case Notes

Case notes must be:

- **Clear:** Easily understood by someone unfamiliar with the participant.
- **Concise:** Includes only relevant details in a straightforward manner.
- **Useful:** Follows the “Who, What, Where, When, Why, and How” format.
- **Relevant:** Directly related to participation in WIOA Title I.
- **Timely:** Entered within **10 calendar days** of the service or interaction.
- **Identifiable:** Includes accurate date/time stamps and staff entry identification.

##### Required Elements



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All case notes must demonstrate continuity of service, including how the activity or contact supports the participant’s Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individual Service Strategy (ISS). When applicable, note any coordination with partner programs (e.g., IVRS, Title II, SNAP E&T, etc.) to document service integration as required under **WIOA Sec. 121(b)**.

Each case note must contain:

1. **Description of the interaction** (context of the contact).
2. **Purpose** of the interaction.
3. **Content** of the conversation or service provided.
4. **Outcome** of the interaction, including goals met or challenges identified.
5. **Plans/Next Steps** agreed upon by staff and participant.

Case notes documenting services must answer:

- What service was provided?
- When was it provided?
- Why was it provided?

When documenting problems or barriers, case notes must also include planned or actual solutions.

### Case Note Types

Staff must document case notes in the following order and categories, as applicable:

- Intake and Eligibility
  - Initial Individual Information: Case notes must clearly capture who the participant is and why they are seeking services. This includes relevant household information, work and education history, and any barriers that may impact eligibility or service planning. Documentation should provide a clear contextual picture of the individual’s background and needs.
- Eligibility Determination
- Enrollment
- Assessments (OBA, ISS/IEP)
- Training and Services (OST, WEP, TRN, Support Services, Incentives)
- Progress and Updates
- Partner Services and Referrals
- Exits and Follow-up



## Local Policies – Participant Services

### Rules for Documentation

- Do not use personal opinions, judgments, or irrelevant information.
- Use professional and respectful language at all times.
- Opinions relevant to service decisions must be clearly identified as opinions.
- Case notes must never contain discriminatory or offensive language.
- Case notes must be written in a neutral, factual tone, and in the third person. Avoid abbreviations not commonly used statewide. All acronyms must be defined on first use.
- “Batching,” defined as entering multiple backdated case notes for past services in a single session, is a programmatic violation per monitoring standards. Each note must be dated contemporaneously with the service delivery date and entry date.

### Timeliness and Frequency

- Case notes must be entered in IowaWorks within 7 business days of the service of contact whenever possible, and no later than 10 calendar days, consistent with best practice
- Active participants must have documented contact at least every 30 days for Youth and 90 days for Adult and Dislocated Worker. Contacts must demonstrate active case management, not administrative updates only. Consultants are required to engage in substantive contact with participants to discuss progress, goals, barriers, and next steps. Uploading documents—such as Credentials, MSGs, or other paperwork—does **not** constitute a contact and cannot be used as evidence of participant engagement or progress. All contacts must reflect meaningful interaction that supports the participant’s ongoing case management and service strategy.
- Workforce Consultants must run regular reports to ensure compliance with these standards.

### Documentation for Specific Services

Case notes must include required details for specific services such as:

- **Occupational Skills Training (OST):** justification for training, program details, schedules, transcripts, financial aid status, School and program name, planned start and planned end dates.
- **Support Services:** barrier addressed, type of assistance, cost, and supporting documentation, planned start and end dates.
- **Incentives (Youth only):** milestone achieved, date, type, and uploaded verification.
- **Work Experience (WEP):** site details, duties, hours, wages, start and end date, and signed contract.
- **Job Search Assistance:** employer(s) contacted and purpose of the contact.
- **Workshops/Group Activities:** workshop name, date, and next steps.



## Local Policies – Participant Services

- **Exit Case Notes:** last date of service, confirmation of no future services, ~~and~~ exit reason (including exclusions, if applicable) and outcomes.

### Cross- Program Coordination and Partner Referrals

WIOA Title I service delivery occurs within an integrated system of core and required partners. Case notes must document when coordination, referral, or co-enrollment occurs with another program or partner agency.

### Requirements for Partner Coordination Case Notes:

- Record the name of the agency or partner, the purpose of the referral or coordination, and the expected follow-up date.
- Document any information shared (within allowable confidentiality limits) and note whether participant consent for information exchange has been obtained, as required under privacy regulations (20 CFR 683.300(b)).
- When services are jointly planned, the case note must identify which program or partner is funding or providing each service to demonstrate collaboration and avoid duplication.
- A follow-up case note must be entered to confirm the referral outcome or the result of partner coordination.
- Partner and referral case notes should show how services are braided or sequenced to meet participant goals outlined in the IEP/ISS.

This documentation supports system integration under **WIOA Section 121(b)**. Accurate partner coordination notes ensure accountability, prevent duplication of effort, and strengthen alignment with local MOUs and cooperative agreements.

### Compliance

Supervisors must review case notes quarterly for accuracy, timeliness, and alignment with service entries. Findings must be documented in internal monitoring logs. Noncompliance may result in staff retraining or corrective action consistent with local policy and IWD monitoring expectations.

Failure to comply with this policy may result in programmatic findings during monitoring or audits. Supervisors will review case notes regularly to ensure accuracy, timeliness, and completeness.

### PARTS OF A CASE NOTE

#### *Subject Line*

The subject line of the case note should be:

- A. The name(s) of the service(s) provided



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OR

B. A summary of what happened if a service was not entered

*Example of subject line and case note with no service:*

**Subject line:** *Appointment rescheduled*

**Body:** *Warren called today to state he needs to reschedule our meeting for 03/11/20 due to illness at home. We will be going over career exploration activities, I sent him the link to ONET's interest profiler and said he could take care of that at home and we can go over the results when he comes in on the 11th.*

Initial Case Note for Intake/Eligibility:

This case note is critical as it documents registration into IowaWORKS and will be reviewed during monitoring and data validation activities. This case note must include the following:

- Who is this individual, provide background (household, where they live, etc.)
- Why the participant is being enrolled into WIOA Title I (Adult, DW, Youth).
- Participant has a completed work registration. This includes up to date contact information, highest education, work history (previous 10 years or all work history if fewer than 10 years) with wage information. This will be completed prior to creating a Title I Application (Eligibility Assessment).
- How they are eligible for the Title I Program.
- Program specific eligibility
- Adult – Income (what documents used)
- Dislocated Worker – How are they eligible and if needed – documentation for Unlikely to Return.
- Youth – In/Out of School determination and how they are eligible.
- Next Steps (OBA, etc.)

**Sample Note: Initial Case Note for Intake/Eligibility**

*Jess is a 26-year-old single parent with 1 dependent (Anna – 8 years old). She lives in Mason City.*

*Jess is currently employed part-time at Franny's Restaurant, working 25 hours per week as a cook at \$10.00 per hour. Prior work history has been updated and is current in IowaWORKS.*

*Jess came into the office today to complete the intake process. She provided all required documentation needed to determine eligibility. Jess meets eligibility requirements for Adult services based on eligibility for SNAP benefits within the last 6 months. Eligibility documentation was scanned and uploaded in the application, and hard copies were added to the participant's file.*

*She is not a Veteran.*

*Jess expressed an interest in training and is considering LPN. Her highest level of education is High School Diploma with some college credits. Jess is scheduled to the CASAS next week. Results will be shared with*



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*Workforce Consultant to determine basic skills deficiency and the need to take additional classes to complete pre-requisites for the LPN program. Referral to PACE program will be sent as a result of this screening.*

*Options for training were discussed and the ETPL State Provider link was reviewed with her to ensure she is well informed of eligible training providers and programs that are available. Jess was provided a link to the ETPL State Provider List and encouraged to review all options for training.*

*The WIOA application was completed today, and signatures were obtained for all documents. Participant responsibilities regarding monthly contact and follow-up requirements were reviewed with her.*

### **Sample OBA Assessment and Testing Note:**

*Jess completed assessment and testing. Basic Skills Screening results reflect there are no Basic Skills deficiencies. She completed My Next Move – Career Interest and CASAS. Results show that Math at 11th grade and Reading at 12th grade. Interest Profile shows Realistic (24), Investigative (21), Artistic (9), Social (20), Enterprising (16) and Conventional (23). A review of the jobs that match those interest goals confirms that her interest in LPN matches her desired career pathway. Results uploaded to this case note.*

*A conversation showed and revealed the highest level of education is High School Diploma with some college credits. She has a work history which includes house cleaner, cook, and waitress. Various transferable skills she identified from the Transferable Skills Checklist are: The ability to operate a computer, effective communicator, problem-solver, sensitive to others, patient, goal-setter, attention to detail, organized, ability to maintain a budget. She is a single parent and has one dependent.*

*After a review of the assessment and test results, plus a review of the information obtained from our interview, it has been determined no suitable employment is available, even with additional employment and case management services. Barriers to employment include limited work history, lack of higher education, lack of transferable skills needed for occupational goal, single parent, and low income, which are preventing her from reaching self-sufficiency. Jess has been advised that additional training is recommended. A review of training options was discussed, and it has been determined that the results from her assessments support her selection of training in the area of nursing (LPN).*

*After reviewing her options on the State Approved List and completed the consumer choice worksheet (attached) and has decided to pursue a certificate in Licensed Practical Nursing (LPN) at NICC. Labor Market Information from ONET was shared with Jess and validates there is a 10% growth within her commuting area for the occupational area of LPN-Nursing.*

*Recommended services after OBA/ISS for Jess include Occupational Skills Training. She was assessed for Supportive Service needs and reports she has adequate transportation and a valid driver's license to drive back and forth to school. She will also need to purchase nursing supplies as required with Supportive Service assistance. She states she does not need childcare as her mother will provide care for her daughter. Jess does request assistance with travel costs and is eligible for Transportation assistance. Jess*



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*was also provided information for the official FAFSA website and instructed to file for Financial Aid. Jess stated she has applied for her FAFSA but is still waiting for the results. Jess will provide as soon as the information/details are available.*

*Objective Assessment Summary completed, shared with Jess and signed.*

### **Sample Development of Individual Employment Plan/Individual Service Strategy (IEP/ISS) Note:**

*Jess was present today to develop her Individual Employment Plan (IEP). After a review of the assessment and test results, plus a review of the information obtained from our interview, it has been determined no suitable employment is available, even with additional employment and case management services. Barriers to employment include limited work history, lack of higher education, lack of transferable skills needed for occupational goal, single parent, and low income. A review of training options was discussed, and the decision was made to enroll Jess in Occupational Skills Training to best meet her employment goal. Assessment and test results support her choice of training in the occupational area of LPN-Nursing.*

*We developed an employment plan together which includes setting specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based goals. Short-term and Long-term Goals and Objectives were established and linked to her training goal of successfully completing the LPN program at NICC, and employment goal of obtaining full-time permanent employment at a self-sufficient wage as an LPN. A detailed description of the Goals and Objectives can be found on the IEP form in IowaWORKS and the document is signed.*

*Based on Jess's current situation, we discussed what her vision for success would look like after receiving training, education, and a nursing credential. Jess states she is excited to start working on her dream of becoming a nurse and is focused on getting good grades. She states she can envision working as a nurse as she knows her hard work will pay off and her new job will bring financial stability for her family. She also wants to set a good example for her daughter and knows she will be proud of her.*

*Jess is eligible for Training Services based on the following: See Training Justification Case note for all details)*

### **Training Justification Case Note:**

*Unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career services: Jess working PT as a cook is not enough to become self-sufficient. LPN will provide a more stable employment in a demand occupation. It has been determined no suitable employment is available, even with additional employment and case management services.*

*In need of training services to obtain or retain employment leading to economic self-sufficiency or wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment: Barriers to employment include limited work history, lack of higher education, lack of transferable skills needed for occupational goal, single parent, and low income, which are preventing her from reaching self-sufficiency.*



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*Has the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services: Jess's aptitude testing shows that she is capable of completing training services. Jess has been advised that additional training is recommended. A review of training options was discussed, and it has been determined that the results from her comprehensive and specialized assessments support her selection of Occupational Skills Training in the area of nursing.*

*Has selected program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or planning region: Labor Market Information from Northeast Iowa LWDA was shared with Jess and validates there is a 10% growth within her commuting area for the occupational area of LPN-Nursing.*

*Is unable to obtain financial or grant assistance from other sources to pay the costs of such training. Jess has completed her FAFSA and is awaiting results. She states she is not default on any student loans. Once in the LPN program, she will also have possible assistance with Last Dollar Scholarship. Jess will provide Financial Aid Award letter/documentation when available.*

*Is determined eligible in accordance with Adult Priority of Service (only needed for Adults): Jess is eligible for the Adult Priority of Service based on Low Income.*

*Jess is eligible for the following Services: Occupational Skills Training, Supportive Services, and Transportation. These services will assist Jess in achieving her goals and objectives by providing ongoing support from the Workforce Consultant while in training, payment of tuition and fees to financially assist her with training costs, supportive services to help with training supplies, books, uniforms, etc., and transportation assistance to help pay for gas while in school. Training will be provided through an Individual Training Account (ITA) by a training provider that is on the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL). The training service aligns with Jess's existing skills and career readiness using the results from her interest and skills inventory. Projected Training Start Date for LPN program at NICC is 1/18/2023. Projected End Date is 5/15/2026. Estimated total cost of training \$7100.00. The Individual Employment Plan (IEP) will be reviewed with Jess every 90 days at a minimum. The IEP will be updated as often as necessary in the event there is a change or modification to the training and employment goals and objectives. Services will be reviewed to confirm Jess is receiving all services necessary to ensure a successful outcome in meeting her goals and objectives.*

### **Guidelines for Creating a Template:**

A case note is required for each service that is added to the participant plan.

Each service will have at a minimum:

- Service Type
- Start Date
- Planned End Date
- Details (Cost, rate, justification, etc.)



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**Occupational Skills Training:** A case note is required to document when a participant receives assistance with an occupational skills training activity from the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) along with the justification for this service. The following information must also be documented in case note entries:

- Summarize why this training will be beneficial to the participant.
- Consumer Choice Worksheet completed.
- Training program and training institution where the participant will receive training.
- Program start date – planned end date.
- Copy of program curriculum uploaded.
- Current schedule
- Copy of unofficial transcript (if any)
- Detail the status of any Pell grants and/or other sources of financial aid that are available to the participant. If the participant has selected training that is not Pell grant eligible, this should be case noted.

***OST Ongoing Case Notes:***

- Schedule uploaded each quarter/semester.
- Copy of grades uploaded each quarter/semester. Are they eligible for an ITA for next semester?

***Closure:***

Once completed, the actual end date of the training, if the training completion was successful or unsuccessful. Was the training resulted in credential and measurable skill gains attainment.

**Support Services:** Each time a participant is provided with a service designed to reduce barriers to participating in training or work activities, it must be documented in a case note that includes the following information below: (Note: services such as TRN, DPC that are ongoing, only one case note is required. You do not need to create a new TRN or DPC service on the ribbon for each payment. You WILL have to enter a case note for each document received for payment.)

- Describe the participant's need for the supportive service, including the specific barrier that the supportive service will address.
- Describe the efforts made to leverage the needed supportive service from other community organizations.
- Describe the specific supportive service that is provided, the date the supportive service is/will provided, the obligated amount of the service, and the Start Date and estimated end date. This would include the determination of costs (daily rate, unit, per hour, etc.)
- Appropriate documentation to support supportive service (maps, childcare provider details, etc.)



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**Incentive Payments – Youth Only:** All incentive payments including what goal or milestone was obtained, must be documented in case notes in IWDS, and must include the following:

- The date the incentive was provided to the participant.
- The specific incentive provided.
- The date the milestone was achieved with appropriate documentation.
- The type of incentive that was provided to the participant. (e.g., The participant was provided with a \$100 YIP for obtaining their high school diploma on May 29, 2025)
- Documentation uploaded in the case note.

**Work Experience:** A case note is required to document when a participant receives a paid or unpaid structured learning activity at a worksite along with the justification for this service. The following information must also be documented in case note entries: Note: Each time a WEP timesheet is submitted, a case note needs to be entered. Dates covered, hours attended and date submitted for payment.)

- Describe the specific Work Experience activity the participant will receive (worksite, wage, maximum number of hours allowed, and a brief summary of the duties to be performed).
- Describe the specific skills the participant will acquire as a result of participating in the Work Experience activity.
- Describe how the Work Experience will help the participant achieve his or her employment goal.
- Dates: Start and End Date of the WEP.
- A copy of the signed Work Experience Contract and associated documents (see Procedures document) must be uploaded.

**Partner Services and/or Referrals:** Services that are provided to participants through a partner agency are required to be documented in a case note and must include the following information:

- Describe the partner agency and the specific service that is being provided.
- Describe how these services will assist the participant in attaining his or her education or employment goal(s).

### **Job Search Assistance:**

A case note entry is required whenever an employer contact is made on behalf of a participant. Such contacts should be for the purpose of assisting a participant in finding work with this particular employer. Each time this service is provided, identify the specific employer(s).

### **Workshops or Group Activities:**

WIOA Title I services may be delivered in group or workshop settings. When a participant attends a workshop or group activity, information regarding the activity must be included in the case note.



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- Include the title, date, and location of the workshop, for example: Participant attended the Resume workshop on March 21, 2023.
- Briefly describe the purpose of the workshop and what the next steps are in the WIOA Title I Program.

### WIOA Title I Exits:

As defined for the purpose of performance calculations, Exit is the point after which a participant who has received services through any program meets the following criteria: (1) For the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs authorized under WIOA title I, the AEFLA program authorized under WIOA title II, and the Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA title III, exit date is the last date of service. (i) The last day of service cannot be determined until at least 90 days have elapsed since the participant last received services; services do not include self-service, information-only services or activities, or follow-up services. This also requires that there are no plans to provide the participant with future services. Furthermore, Section 677.150 (c)(1)(i) indicates that follow-up services do not extend the date of exit, and Section 116 of WIOA requires states to ensure data submitted and reported to the Department is valid and reliable.

During the 90-day period prior to exit, no new staff-assisted services may be entered unless additional services are legitimately planned. Only general case notes (not service entries) should be added to document participant status.

Case Note for Exit: “90 Days Prior to Exit” Procedure:

It is critically important when planning participant Exits that Workforce Consultants enter in the appropriate type of case note for the 90-day period prior to Exit. If a Workforce Consultant has determined the participant needs no further Staff-assisted service, it is extremely important during this 90-day time period that case notes and/or services are not entered to simply

Exit Exclusions:

Institutionalized – The participant has become incarcerated in a correctional institution or has become a resident of an institution or facility that provides 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center. The participant’s stay is expected to last longer than 90 days.

Medical – The participant has medical treatment, and that treatment is expected to last longer than 90 days

### References:

20 CFR 683.300(a)

IWD Local Monitoring Guide

20 CFR 677.150

Iowa ePolicy

TEGL 10-16 Change 2

Northeast Iowa Case Notes Best Practices