work systems

Operational Communication

Number: 0. 0.12.72000.0 **New ☑ Revision ☐**	**Date: March 15, 2006**
Topic: Assessments for Interpersonal (Soft) Employment Skills	
Affected Programs: Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs	

Purpose

To establish standards for interpersonal (soft) employment skills assessments using the LRI/AccuVision tools for WIA enrolled adult and dislocated worker customers.

Background

Employers have long valued the somewhat intangible interpersonal skills of potential jobseekers over many technical skills which they feel they can train-to on the job. In fact, over the past few years many employers have begun using such assessments in their screening process, alongside the more traditional skill tests, for math, reading, office equipment, etc.

As workforce development specialists, assessing our customers' interpersonal skill levels and providing assistance in developing those skills that are lacking has been a challenge. In order to continue to provide our jobseeker customers with a full array of personal development opportunities and also to keep up with standards our employers are moving toward, Region 2 has embraced the concept of assessing and educating around interpersonal skill development (soft skills) using a validated tool that has been adopted by employers nationwide.

Assessment Process

All sites will implement an interpersonal skills assessment process using the LRI/AccuVision products to meet the following guidelines:

- Each contractor will identify a staff person(s) as the Technical Administrator of the assessment data. This staff person(s) will be responsible for maintaining the AlignMark software, entering assessment data, and receiving assessment reports for distribution to program staff.
- Each contractor will identify staff as Assessment Administrators, who are responsible for conducting pre- and post-assessments in either an individual or small-group setting.
- Each contractor will review their Intensive classes and workshops to identify opportunities for incorporating interpersonal skill development activities that support a customer's successful growth in this area. Tools are discussed later in this communiqué.
- Pre- and post-assessments (as described below) <u>may</u> be conducted for any <u>enrolled</u> customer engaged in Intensive services, at the discretion of program staff.
- Pre- and post-assessments (as described below) <u>must</u> be conducted with all customers who are pursuing an individual career plan that includes a Training component. Documentation and plan content are discussed below.

Assessment Tools

Region 2 will implement the use of two assessment programs for interpersonal skills from LRI/AccuVision. Each is designed for use with specific types of customers, and program staff will want to determine which assessment they will use to meet regional assessment requirements (noted above). A description of each assessment program and the suggested customer base for that assessment is outlined below.

Workforce Readiness Skills (WRS)
This assessment is designed to assess skills required for entry level positions. When all modules are used, the broad skill sets measured include:

- Integrity, responsibility, self-esteem, self-management, and sociability
- Customer relations, decision-making, and commitment to quality
- The ability to comprehend and recall verbal information, including instructions

Customers suggested for assessment with the WRS system include those with limited work experience and/or education; those whose work history has stayed within entry-level jobs; those who have been out of the workforce for an extended period; those who have limited English proficiency (in which case the assessment may be actively, rather than passively, facilitated).

There are three modules within this assessment– Personal Qualities, Customer Care, and Listening. The Listening module may be used with either of the other two components, but need not be used with both.

Standards for Workforce Readiness Skills Assessment
- When the WRS assessment is used, participants will be assessed with pre- and post-testing for both Personal Qualities and Customer Care.
- The Listening Module is recommended but not required.
- The Individual Career Plan should include skill development action items identified through the assessment process.
- Post-tests should be given when sufficient time for skill development and improvement has passed, but prior to exit from WIA programs.

Workplace Success Skills (WSS)
This assessment is designed to assess skills required for a wide range of good-paying, pre-supervisory jobs (higher wage/higher skill positions). When all modules are used, the broad skill sets measured include:

- Motivating and encouraging others in a group to participate and perform
- Actively guiding the actions of others
- Taking action to insure the quality of work being performed
- Taking action to meet or exceed the performance expectations of others
- Exercising good judgment in determining courses of action to pursue
- Understanding factual and implied information
- Absorbing and applying new information
- Organizing work to facilitate accomplishments
- Interpreting information presented in graph or chart formats

Customers suggested for assessment with the WSS system include those with more work experience, such as dislocated workers coming out of high skill/high paid positions (entry-level dislocated workers may be better assessed using the WRS – this would be a program staff decision); those with some college and/or college degrees; those coming out of mid-management or higher positions.

There are five modules available within this assessment:

Module 1 includes interacting with others; influencing others; problem-solving; commitment to quality; and customer service orientation.

Modules 2 through 5 cover listening skills (2); trainability (3); structuring work activities (4) and interpreting charts and graphs (5).

Program Note: Modules 2 through 5 may be used with Module 1, but are not required. However, please note that for billing purposes, if you plan to assess your customer using more than Module 1, all modules you plan to use must be completed before the data is input and submitted for scoring and reporting (and subsequent billing).

Standards for Workplace Success Skills Assessment

- When the WSS assessment is used, participants will be assessed with pre- and post-testing with module one.
- The Listening Module is recommended but not required.
- The Individual Career Plan should include skill development action items identified through the assessment process.
- Post-tests should be given when sufficient time for skill development and improvement has passed, but prior to exit from WIA programs.

Skills Development

Contractors will review activities, classes, and workshops delivered as a part of their WIA programs to identify opportunities to incorporate interpersonal skill development activities. Tools are available through our contract with Learning Resources Inc. All sites should review the Soft Skills Discussion and Development Resource. It has been provided via email and is always accessible at:

http://www.learning-resources.com/library/lri_general/Soft Skills Discussion & Development Resource -Full.pdf

Each assessed customer will receive a personal Feedback Report. Each Report contains:

- Skill Rankings
- Performance Analysis, and
- Performance Development Strategies.

Program Note: The pages of a feedback report that are in front of Section I are to be removed from the customer's copy and kept with the file copy only. These pages give the Probability of Success rating, which is an internal score that is not intended to be provided customers. The first page of the customer report is the Skill Ranking.

Using the information in the three sections of the Feedback Report, program staff should counsel the customer and incorporate actions and activities into the Individual Career Plan that will assist them in developing skills where deficiencies were noted and agreed upon.

The Feedback Report and Development Plan should be shared with staff and those who have opportunities to train, instruct or mentor the customer. Assessments are to be maintained in the Participant File, with data input to i-trac (additional information on this aspect below).

Administration of LRI/AccuVision Assessments

The Administrator's Manual provided with the Assessment videos should be used for setting up the assessment sessions; arranging the room, introducing the session, distributing the answer sheets, and starting the actual assessment sessions.

Each contractor is provided with an assessment kit that includes an administration tape and software, assessment video tapes for each module in both English and Spanish, and answer form masters in both English and Spanish to photocopy for use. The region has two sets of closed caption assessment tapes which may be "checked-out" by contacting the contract liaison.

These kits should be maintained in a locked cabinet for use by authorized staff.

Answers to the assessment are to be input by the Technical Administrator into the LRI/AccuVision software and will be scored by AccuVision (please note the input rule for the WSS system, outlined above). All WIA assessments are considered "Applicant" in the software. Group and Department numbers are listed at the end of this Operational Communication.

Results will be immediately posted to the computer used for inputting the answers.

I-trac Data Entry

All assessment scores are to be entered into the customer's i-trac record. A new section on the Participation Screen has been developed for this purpose. Data entry elements include:

For all assessments:

- *Date* – this is the date the assessment was administered
- *Type* – indicate whether Pre- (first) or Post- (subsequent) assessment
- *Probability of Success* – this is the rating provided on the Cover of the Feedback Report (which is not provided to the customer, but kept in the file – please see Program Note above). Selection choices are less than 3 through 9 for both Personal Qualities and Customer Care

The WRS and WSS/Interacting with Others assessments provide space for the Skill Ranking scores from the Feedback Report. The sections of each match the list of skills in that assessments' report. There are two score choices from which to choose:

- *Rank Order* – Scores 1-6 without an "X"
- *Performance Level* – Scores 1-6 with an "X"

If the Feedback Report shows the Rank Order with an X in Performance Level, choose the selection that contains the "X." If the Rank Order does not include an "X" in the Performance Level, choose the score with no "X."

Example 1: WRS Personal Qualities – Integrity. Rank Order on Feedback Report is 1, and Performance Level contains "X." I-trac data entry for Integrity is ***1X***.

Example 2: WRS Personal Qualities – Self-Esteem. Rank Order on Feedback Report is 6 and there is no "X" in Performance Level. I-trac data entry for Self-Esteem is ***6***.

Assessment Coding and Billings

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Group Number		Department Numbers				
		Dislocated Worker	Adult	Reserved: Grant 1	Reserved: Grant 2	Reserved: Grant 3
1A	Central City Concern	001	002	003	004	005
2A	MHCC	001	002	003	004	005
PCC-North/Northeast						
3A 3B	WSPM/North Metro One Stop	001	002	003	004	005
PCC-Washington County						
4A 4B 4C 4D	Capital Center Forest Grove Hillsboro Tualatin	001	002	003	004	005
5A	SE Works	001	002	003	004	005

Assessments for WIA customers will be billed directly to WSI. Payment allocations will be based on the group and department numbers submitted with each assessment.

Contractors may conduct assessments for customers of special grant-funded programs or other funds (BHCD programs, ex-offender grants, TANF customers) to help determine suitability for WIA enrollment. When conducting an assessment for a non-WIA customer, a system must be in place to bill that fund for the assessments used, and book the payment as program income. This program income will offset the cost of the assessments charged by the provider.

Programs that plan to use one of the reserved department numbers for non-WIA grant funded programs should contact their Contract Liaison. WSI will provide you with the fee structure (it will be the per-assessment fee we are charged by LRI) and can assure we maintain an accurate master list for billing purposes.

For questions or assistance in implementing the Interpersonal Skills Assessment Program, contact your Contract Liaison.

Questions concerning i-trac data entry may be directed to the MIS Team.