



LEAD CENTER

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Accessing American Job Center Services Checklist

[NOTE: On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). WIOA restructures American Job Centers (AJCs) and reorganizes their services. AJCs will continue operations as described here, but will be making changes in their operations during the coming year. This document may be revised, as necessary, to reflect the new AJC operating model as guidance from the U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration becomes available.]

This checklist was created to provide an introductory guide to Centers for Independent Living (CILs) staff who refer and facilitate access for job seekers with disabilities to their local American Job Center (AJC). Use this checklist to familiarize yourself with local AJCs' facilities, services, policies, and procedures, and to equip CIL participants with the information they will need to document service eligibility, request necessary accommodations, and fully utilize the robust employment and training resources of AJCs.

As you complete the checklist, note the shared CIL and AJC mission to improve the employment outcomes of job seekers with disabilities. Collaboration and communication between CILs and AJCs allows for the leveraging of each entity's expertise toward improved access to AJC services and increased employment (and economic advancement) outcomes for job seekers with disabilities. Information on American Job Center operations can be found in the LEAD Center's *CIL Guide to American Job Centers: Improving Services for Job Seekers with Disabilities*.

Learn About the AJC

AJCs offer a range of employment and training services that include career and skill assessment, resume preparation, interview skill development, mock interviews, job search, training, internships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, volunteer positions, financial literacy, and enrollment in secondary education that prepares participants for in-demand job opportunities. To effectively support job seekers with disabilities, it is critical that CIL staff visit their local AJC(s) regularly and familiarize themselves with the locations; hours of service; level of accessibility; eligibility requirements; intake procedures; available trainings, programs, and services; how to access available resources; and points in the process where self-advocacy may be necessary. As you seek to learn about the AJC, keep in mind that AJC staff are important partners. Introduce yourself to AJC staff and offer to be a resource for them. AJC

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staff may change frequently, offering multiple opportunities to make a great first impression and extend your supportive services to build the capacity of the AJC to serve individuals with disabilities.

Access to Facilities and Services:

- Request a tour of the AJC, including a visit to the resource room.
- Explore the availability of public transportation to the AJC.
- Confirm the availability of accessible parking at the AJC.
- Observe if routes from public transportation, sidewalks, and parking lots to the AJC are accessible.
- Become acquainted with a variety of AJC staff and their roles (case managers, business services, EEO representatives, reception, etc.).
- Accompany CIL consumers who are job seeking through the AJC service delivery process including intake, orientation, training workshops, use of the resource room, employer recruitments and meetings with job developers and/or counselors for additional services.
- Observe the activities of the reception area. Note any potential access issues.
- Ask about efforts to provide youth financial literacy education, such as guidance about budgeting; managing spending; managing credit and debt; and understanding, evaluating and comparing financial products, services and opportunities.
- Request information about group or individual orientation to the AJC and how individuals request accommodations for this and other AJC activities.
- Review the initial intake process. Note the necessity for an appointment or the option to walk-in.
- If so, ask if disclosing a disability initiates an immediate referral to vocational rehabilitation (VR) and how service delivery coordination and outcome sharing with VR takes place, if appropriate.
- Inquire if the AJC asks job seekers if they have a disability as part of the intake process. If so, ask about what services and supports are made available to jobseekers with disabilities through the AJC and/or its partners (e.g., accommodations, referrals, etc.).
- Observe the activities of the resource room. Note the resources available, the presence and availability of resource room staff, and any potential issues for job seekers who may need assistance accessing the room or resources.
- Request information about the AJC's accessibility features such as assistive technology, accessible computer stations, adaptive devices, and interpreting services.



- Ask if staff know how to use available accessible technology and adaptive devices and are able to coach the job seeker if necessary. If not, offer to provide training to staff as needed.
- Discuss with AJC any staff activities the CIL can undertake to support access to AJC services for job seekers with disabilities (i.e., Person First Language, Disability Etiquette and Customer Soft Skills training).

Services Provided by the AJC:

- Attend an AJC orientation, which can provide a comprehensive overview of services, programs and co-located and off-site partners. Note available accommodations, assistive technology, and/or additional support services discussed.
- Request information on services provided by the AJC, including specific services provided under core and career services.
- Request written eligibility criteria and required documentation for all programs and services.
- Learn about partner programs co-located in the AJC and which services CIL customers may be eligible to receive from them.
- Determine what training is available to job seekers (e.g., basic computer skills).
- Identify special initiatives or grants that have been awarded to the workforce system and any additional resources for training programs (including specific vocational areas) delivered through the AJC that CIL job seekers may be eligible to receive.

Youth Transition/Job Exploration and Career Development Services:

- Identify work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or out-of-school opportunities, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible.
- Learn about counseling services for enrollment in comprehensive transition or postsecondary educational programs at institutions of higher education.
- Request information about workplace readiness training to develop social skills, independent living skills, and post-secondary certifications.
- Inquire about instruction in self-advocacy, including instruction in person-centered planning, which may include peer mentoring. This includes peer mentoring from



individuals with disabilities working in competitive, integrated employment and achieving economic self-sufficiency.

- Inquire about financial literacy education opportunities, including financial education classes and individual counseling.
- Learn about eligibility requirements for any paid summer internships and/or work experience.

Learn About the Job Seeker

- Determine with the job seeker that they meet the following basic eligibility requirements to obtain services at an AJC:
 1. Are they a U.S. citizen or noncitizen authorized to work in the U.S.?
 2. Does he meet Military Selective Service registration requirements (males only)?
 3. Are they 18 years of age or older for adult programs?
 4. Do they meet dislocated worker definitions for dislocated worker program?
 5. Are they 14 to 24 years of age for youth, including transitional youth program services?
 6. Evaluate risk factors to determine necessary support services to eliminate barriers to employment and economic self-sufficiency.
- Obtain the job seeker's education level, skills level, and training and employment history to better understand their abilities, qualifications, and eligibility for specific AJC services, such as the Dislocated Worker Program, and potential service needs.
- Learn about the job seeker's interests, career goals, and objectives.
- Assess the job seeker's desire for training and what training needs may be evident according to career goals, which may influence what training they request during their visit to the AJC.
- Determine what accommodations, assistive technology, or support services will enhance customer participation, training and job placement.
- Identify whether job seekers are current or former VR clients and how to coordinate the shared employment services and outcomes with VR.
- Determine whether the job seeker is receiving Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) or Supplemental Security Income (SSI). If so, connect the job seeker to a Certified Work Incentive Coordinator or qualified benefits planner to make an informed



choice about their level of work, use of work incentives, and participation in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work program.

Prepare the Job Seeker for Their AJC Visit

- Discuss the location and various options for transportation to the AJC, including need for transportation training prior to visiting the AJC.
- Identify whether the job seeker has utilized AJC services in the past and what their understanding or expectations are of the public workforce system.
- Review the services provided at the AJC, including any special programs or services the job seeker may be eligible to participate in or receive.
- Explain the difference between core and career services.
- Discuss other services available at the AJC including:
 - Co-located partner programs or services, such as VR, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, health care or medical insurance, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Child Care and Dependent Care Services, continuing education, or financial literacy.
 - The resource room.
 - Available assistive technology and adaptive devices.
- Help the job seeker gather the necessary information and documentation for intake.
- If the job seeker is requesting training, additional information may be required including, but not limited to:
 - Any required job skills or workplace literacy assessments information (e.g., ACT WorkKeys, CASIS, etc.) necessary to be eligible.
 - Proof of High School Diploma or GED (General Educational Development).
 - Completed Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) forms (available at [FAFSA.gov](https://fafsa.gov)).
- Identify accommodations, assistive technology, and transportation needs the job seeker may need to access AJC services, participate in training, and be successful in a work environment.
- Assess the job seeker's ability to discuss their disability and to request accommodations.
- Provide the necessary self-advocacy guidance and training to the job seeker on disability disclosure and on requesting accommodations, as necessary.
- Offer to accompany the job seeker on his or her visit to the AJC, as appropriate.



- Ask about financial literacy skills development opportunities.
- Ask about internship and apprenticeship opportunities.

After an AJC Visit

- Be available to provide support and follow-up immediately after the job seeker's first AJC visit and determine next steps together.
- Follow up with job seekers regularly so they can discuss their experience and progress and receive support and guidance as necessary.
- Discuss with the job seeker the value of adding the utilization of the AJC into the job seeker's plan for employment.

This checklist is a living document designed to be a relevant tool for CILs. To suggest additions to this checklist, please email info@leadcenter.org. For more information, resources, training, and technical assistance on improving the leadership, employment and economic advancement of individuals with disabilities, connect with National Disability Institute's LEAD Center, www.leadcenter.org.

