

**MAR
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POLICY REFRESHER

Defining Cultural Barriers to Employment

POLICY INFORMATION

TEN 28-16, Change 2

Informs the workforce system with examples, best practices, partnership models, and information on how to align resources available under WIOA to increase services to English Language Learners (ELL) with substantial cultural and language barriers to employment.

SUBSTANTIAL CULTURAL BARRIERS

NJDOL defines one with substantial cultural barrier as someone who “perceives him or herself as possessing attitudes, beliefs, customs or practices that influence a way of thinking, acting, or working that may serve as a hindrance to employment” (**NJWIN 9-17(A)**).



UNIQUE NEEDS OF INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS (ELL) AND WHO FACE SUBSTANTIAL CULTURAL BARRIERS (TEN 28-16, CHANGE 2)

Individuals who are ELL and face substantial cultural barriers, including immigrants, refugees, and new Americans, often encounter challenges that make it difficult to find and retain jobs. Below are some unique needs that may vary among individuals:

English proficiency

English proficiency is key to an individual's access to higher-paying jobs. Additionally, it increases one's ability to perform basic life functions, as well as to find and retain jobs. ELL are eligible for prior of services under WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E).

Cultural competency

Immigrants, refugees, and new Americans may need help to become familiar with United States job application processes, interviews, workplace customs and culture to become job-ready. This may include learning how to grow their professional network socially. For example, AJCs may offer mock interviews to assist participants in learning the cultural nuances of questions asked in the United States.

Trauma

These individuals may need referrals to additional services that are designed to address symptoms of previously experienced trauma. Access to supportive services through a referral process, such as trauma-informed mental health counseling, culturally appropriate support groups, medical care, or legal services may help them more successfully engage in the employment and training process.

Degrees, licensing, and credentials

Many immigrants, refugees, and new Americans hold degrees, licenses, and/or credentials in other countries that they need to transfer to the United States. Receiving credit for prior learning helps these workers quickly advance with their career paths and ensure successful economic integration.



REFUGEE AND ASYLEE GUIDANCE

The U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services has provided guidance for individuals who identify as a refugee or an asylee to prove authorization to work in the United States. For more information: [nj.gov/labor/wioa/documents/resources/USCIS%20-%20Refugee-Asylee%20Guidance.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2020/08/USCIS-Refugee-Asylee-Guidance.pdf)

CREATING A CULTURALLY INCLUSIVE ONE-STOP CAREER CENTER



PARTNERSHIPS

Developing targeted outreach and inclusive programming with specialized partners will allow for a high-quality service delivery model. That means working intensively and intentionally with One-stop-required and optional partners. TEN 28-16 highlights great partnership models occurring across the U.S. that offer examples of engaging special populations with targeted high-quality service delivery.

KEY RESOURCES

- NJ Combined State Plan 2020
- WIOA Title I Youth Eligibility Determination and Documentation
- U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services – Refugee and Asylee Guidance
- WorkforceGPS - Navigating Language and Cultural Barriers Webinar: workforcegps.org/events/2017/07/13/13/56/Navigating-Through-Language-and-Cultural-Barriers



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