

MEMORANDUM

February 15, 2011

TO: Managers, Northern Virginia **SkillSource** Centers

FROM: David Hunn 
Executive Director

SUBJECT: NVWIB Support of Workforce Competency Standards

The Northern Virginia Workforce Investment Board and the **SkillSource** Group, Inc. recently allocated \$10,000 in FY 2011 to support continued staff certifications to meet State Workforce Council expectations of front-line service providers throughout the Virginia Workforce Network.

Attached to this memorandum is a FAQ sheet on Staff Certifications for the Virginia Workforce Network, prepared by State officials in 2010. The FAQ sheet highlights several ways that local workforce staff can seek certification or to be recertified. Note that the State minimum standard for local workforce board staff is that at least 60% of front line staff at the Northern Virginia **SkillSource** Centers shall be certified.

The identified Board funding will be used to reimburse **SkillSource** Centers for worker costs associated with obtaining workforce certification. Note that the Board funding will only reimburse Centers, Partner Agencies or staff for the certification test or application costs. We will not reimburse Centers, Partner Agencies or Center staff for the staff time associated with preparing for or taking the actual certification exam or other related tests. In seeking reimbursement, please forward a memorandum or letter, on agency letterhead and under your signature, detailing the requested reimbursement and the Center staff person(s). To avoid a lengthy wait for reimbursement, your requests for reimbursement can be forwarded to our office as often as necessary.

I hope that this new Board funding provides a solution to supporting your Center's certification requirements. Please contact me with questions at (703) 752-1606 or email at david.hunn@myskillsource.org. Please circulate this memorandum to all Center staff and partner organizations.

Attachment

Cc: Dai Nguyen, Fairfax County Department of Family Services

Virginia Workforce Network Staff Certification

In June 2007, the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC) approved a policy that described the options available to outline the credential competencies and criteria to certify a front-line staff member in the Virginia Workforce Network. Under the policy, every front-line staff member must be certified. The objective of this required certification is to ensure that all front-line service providers have the skills needed to provide effective and consistent customer service throughout the entire Virginia Workforce Network.

Subsequently, the Commonwealth contracted with Dynamic Works Institute to provide coursework, exam services, and administrative support related to the certification process, with local program management assistance provided by the University of Virginia. Over 1,200 staff members in the Virginia Workforce Network have begun coursework through Dynamic Works, and over 600 of them have achieved certification as a Workforce Development Professional and/or a Business and Employer Services Professional. The contract with Dynamic Works, which provided training and certification at no cost to the staff member, state partner agency, or the local Workforce Investment Board, expired October 31, 2009.

During the past year, the VWC's Workforce Services Committee discussed the need for continuing the promotion of professional development, questions regarding the number of staff required to be certified, alternative pathways to certification, and recertification requirements. Following are frequently asked questions regarding staff certification.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Q: What is the minimum standard established for the Local Workforce Investment Board to meet the staff certification mandate?

A: At a minimum, 60 percent of front-line staff shall be certified.

2. Q: Who is required to be certified?

A: Staff co-located at a Virginia Workforce Center and/or Satellite Center who works directly with the customer (face-to-face, correspondence in writing or electronically, phone, and video conferencing) and provides a mandated program service within the four main functional areas: customer service (core Services), Career/Job Seeker Services, Employer/ Business Services, and Leadership/Management.

- Temporary staff and volunteers are exempt from attaining a certification (i.e. SNAP volunteers); however, it is highly encouraged that they take the Virginia Workforce Development Course.

3. Q: What is the process and cost to obtain certification?

A. There are two options to obtain certification to meet the required ten Core Skills competencies.

Option 1: The National Association for Workforce Development Professional (NAWDP) will provide a national certification for coursework and other professional development activities that meet the ten Core Skills competencies. NAWDP has agreed to streamline the application process and provide a \$25 discount off the application fee for Virginia professionals who have successfully completed the Dynamic Works training Institute. Outlined below are three different options and associated costs

A. Individuals that have already successfully completed DWI training

Step 1: Download the [CWDP application](#)

Step 2: Make sure that you have the required combination of experience and education

- Graduate Degree – 12 months Workforce Development Experience

- Bachelor's Degree – 24 months Workforce Development Experience
- Associates Degree – 48 months Workforce Development Experience
- High School/GED - 72 months Workforce Development Experience

Step 3: Complete the first part of the application, including personal information, professional affiliation, release of education information, and Code of Ethics

Step 4: Attach your certificate of completion for your Dynamic Works training in lieu of completing the Competency Rating Form

Step 5: Secure your two references as indicated in the packet

Step 6: Have the Experience Form completed as indicated in the packet

Step 7: Complete the Description of Experience as a Workforce Development Professional section of the packet

Step 8: Submit packet with the required discounted fee to NAWDP

- Already a NAWDP Member? \$50
- Joining NAWDP? \$125
- Not Joining NAWDP? \$150

B. Individuals that take the Dynamic Work's training on their own

Once you have successfully completed it – use the same steps as above.

C. Individuals that use other methods for demonstrating competencies

Follow the same steps outlined above, except with Step 4, you are to complete the Competency Rating Form and with Step 8, submit packet with the required fee to NAWDP.

- Already a NAWDP Member? \$75
- Joining NAWDP? \$150
- Not Joining NAWDP? \$175

Option 2: If you wish to take the on-line courses with Dynamic Works Institute (DWI), they will continue to offer their 20% statewide discount to anyone in the Virginia Workforce Network. All training curriculum and materials as well as the certification exam are included in the price. You can register directly with DWI at www.dynamicinstitute.com.

The Workforce Development Professional Credential (WFD) retail price is \$550.00; Virginia's rate is \$440 and the Business and Employer Services Certification retail price is \$375; Virginia's rate is \$300.

4. Q: How long is the credential valid for?

- A. The credential is valid for three years and staff will be responsible for making application to NAWDP and/or DWI to achieve and maintain certification.

5. Q: Are there specialty areas and how do I acquire an endorsement in a specialty?

- A. Yes. Following acceptance as a Certified Workforce Development Professional (CWDP) through NAWDP, individuals can apply for an endorsement to their CWDP in one or more of four specialty areas:
 - Business and Employer Services
 - Job Seeker Services
 - Management Services, and
 - Youth Services

6. Q: What are the ten Core Skills competencies?

- A. The ten Core Skills competencies are: 1. History & Structure of the Workforce Development System, 2. Career Development Process, 3. Labor Market Information, 4. Diversity, 5. Customer Service, 6. Program Management, 7. Communication, 8. Technology, 9. Collaboration and Problem Solving, and 10. Business and Employer Knowledge

7. Q: Will the Virginia Specific Course continue to be part of the Certification Process?

- A. Yes. In order for all Center staff to meet the credential competencies outlined above, each participant seeking the credential will be required to take a Virginia Workforce Development System Course. This course provides the participant information on the structure and goals of the workforce development system in Virginia and its available resources. This course is offered free of charge and updated periodically. Currently, the course can be accessed on-line through Dynamic Works.

8. Q: What is required for re-certification?

Staff shall receive 60 hours of professional development programming in any of the ten competency areas every three years for recertification. (Includes on-line and/or classroom training, in-service sessions, research, and conference attendance, etc.)

9. Q: How do I document the 60 hours?

- A. It is highly recommended that staff retain a file/portfolio of certificates of attendance, transcripts or other documentation of continuing education for the training hours to facilitate the application for recertification.

10. Q: Does DWI offer any special discounts for re-certification for individuals who attained certification through them and what is the process?

- A. Dynamic Works offers a streamlined and low cost process for recertification of Virginia Workforce Development Professionals upon reaching their 3 year certification anniversary. Dynamic Works will do the following for any individual in the system whose certification will be expiring:
1. Dynamic Works will automatically send out a quarterly reminder and application form to students whose certificate will be expiring.
 2. To recertify, students or Learning Coordinators simply complete sign and fax or mail the application form to Dynamic Works indicating the courses that have been taken to meet the 60 continuing education hour requirement.
 3. If the additional courses taken were Dynamic Works courses, the student needs only check the corresponding Dynamic Works Transcript box and Dynamic Works will automatically verify their student record.
 4. If the courses were not Dynamic Works' courses, the student completes the continuing education form indicating the courses taken and the competency they relate to.
 5. Dynamic Works will review the application and if the student meets the 60 hour training requirement, will produce and mail a new certificate with a new date that will be good for an additional 3 years.
 6. Dynamic Works will send a recertification report to the VCCS and the student's Learning Coordinator.

There is no cost for recertification through Dynamic Works, if two or more of the continuing education courses were taken through Dynamic Works Institute. If that is not the case, the cost would be \$25.00 per student and includes the printed certificate, handling, mailing and report generation and delivery to the VCCS and the student's local Learning Coordinator.

11. Q: Who is responsible for paying the training and application fees for certification and recertification?

- A. The current certification initiative with Dynamic Works is free of charge, if you met the October 31, 2009 deadline to enroll. Following this date, you and/or your employer are responsible for any costs associated with obtaining your certification and re-certification.

12. Q: Where do I obtain additional information for the NAWDP or DWI Certification?

- A. **NAWDP:** Additional information and a copy of the CWDP application can be obtained from the NAWDP website at www.nawdp.org or by calling the NAWDP office at (202) 589-1790. You may also contact Aida Pacheco at the Virginia Community College System, Workforce Development Services, at apacheco@vccs.edu or 804-819-1685.

DWI: You can obtain additional information from the DWI website at www.dynamicinstitute.com or contact Mr. Paul Singleton at 321-205-1576 or psingleton@dynamicinstitute.com

13. Q: Who should I contact at the State Level for policy related questions and information?

- A. You may contact Aida Pacheco with the Virginia Community College, Workforce Development Services, at 804-819-1685 or apacheco@vccs.edu.

14. Q: What is the LWIB Role?

- A. The LWIB's role is to continue to collaborate with the state and local partners to ensure the focus remains on "world-class customer service", and to
- Develop local policies and identify resources to support professional development;
 - Develop a professional development plan.
 - Promote the value for professional development and certification to one-stop partners and document partners' commitment via local plans and MOU;
 - Maintain and support the Learning Coordinator's role; provide recognition of certifications/professional development accomplishments; and
 - Use the functional chart as a framework to help partner programs develop customer service and services integration performance criteria for state and other staff co-located in comprehensive One-Stop Centers. (*Support document: Human Resource Guidance provided by the VA Department of Human Resources Management.*)

15. Q: What is the Learning Coordinator's role?

- A. The Learning Coordinator will be responsible for keeping track of staff that needs to be certified and following-up with their progress, working with immediate supervisors to provide staff the additional support needed, and assisting the State to identify training opportunities and resolve any concerns that can't be resolved locally.