

QUALIFYING OCCUPATION LIST POLICY #: 105

Date of Current Revision: May 17, 2006

Effective Date: 5/17/2006

PURPOSE:

This policy sets the process by which the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council (SWWDC) will maintain a list of occupations and skill sets that are in demand or decline in the Clark, Cowlitz, and Wahkiakum tri-county region.

BACKGROUND:

Senate House Bill 3077 requires that local workforce development councils, in cooperation with Employment Security Department (ESD) and its Labor Market Information Division (LMI), identify and make available a list of occupations and skill sets for which the demand is increasing or declining. Once identified, these occupations comprise the Qualifying Occupations List. This list, which is to be updated at least annually, must be used in the process of approving or disapproving training requests and payment for the following:

- Office of Administrative Hearings
- Unemployment Insurance Funded Training Benefits
- Unemployment Insurance commissioner Approved for Training
- WorkFirst Funded Training
- Workforce Investment Act Title I-B Funded Training

It should be noted that the WDC does not make decisions to approve or disapprove training and training benefits for programs not under its jurisdiction. Such decisions are the responsibility of the cognizant agency and not that of the WDC.

POLICY AND PROCEDURE

To fulfill this statutory requirement, the SWWDC will make available a "Qualifying Occupations List" that catalogs occupations and skill sets that are in high demand and those that are declining. The approved Qualifying Occupations list will be posted online and made available to WorkSource partnership staff and other interested parties. Any changes to the list will be posted as they are made.

One comprehensive list will be issued for all three counties within the SWWDC Workforce Development Area (WDA).

Procedure

The SWWDC Board has authorized WDC staff and/or a sub-committee of the board to conduct an annual review of the demand and decline list utilizing labor market information and supplemental data as warranted for the development and maintenance of the Qualifying Occupations List. Sources of this information include but are not limited to:

1. Annual Information obtained through the Labor Market Information Division of the Washington State Employment Security Department.
2. Analysis of occupational projections for the Portland, Oregon tri-county area.
3. Additional local economic analysis including but not limited to: number of jobs, future job growth/turnover, mean annual wage, retirement projections and other criteria identified by the SWWDC.

Whenever possible, validation of the final occupational determination will be sought utilizing input from Skill Panels and local Economic Development Councils. When warranted, additional information or verification of demand will be obtained through Industry Advisory Groups, business organizations, employer surveys or additional analysis conducted by the SWWDC or a designated entity.

Utilizing the criteria above, the list of occupations will be divided into "demand" and "decline" categories. For the purpose of this policy, those classified as "all other" shall be defined as any occupation without a demand or decline designation. [Such occupations may have no designation or be listed as "all others" on the list.]

Once the annual review has been completed and applicable changes made to the list, it will be submitted to the Southwest Washington Workforce Development Council for adoption.

Revisions to the Qualifying List

The SWWDC authorizes the Executive Director or their designee to make revisions when there is a documented major shift or change in the local labor market that results in an occupational cluster being re-designated among the three categories of demand, decline, or "all other". Major shifts usually occur with plant closures, an influx of a new industry, changes due to training capacity, or funding changes to federally funded businesses. In addition, the list may be revised to reflect "real time" demand information obtained from industry groups/skill panels, economic experts, new research or other credible sources.

Exceptions

Requests for specific exceptions to the list which do not denote a major change in the local labor market but rather are based on individual situations may be approved on a case-by-case basis. Such requests for exceptions must be initially approved by the requesting organization's administrator prior to submission to the WDC's Executive Director or designee. It is the responsibility of the organization requesting the exception to provide documentation substantiating the requested exception. Examples of documentation include, but are not restricted to, a training plan which includes relevant information; local labor market information including employer contacts; existence of a hiring commitment; and training provider's placement rates for program completers. Approval of exceptions will not require an update to the list unless a pattern denoting a major shift or change to the local labor market is noted. See ITA policy for additional information on exceptions and waivers.

Communication Procedure

Once approved or modified by the SWWDC, the Qualifying Occupations List will be made available on the State of Washington website at <http://www.wilma.org/wdclists/>.