

**PIERCE COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (WDC)
POLICIES FOR CERTIFICATION**

March 2017

Approved by the Executive Board and WDC on March 16, 2017

1. Certification Process

There is a *two-part* process for becoming certified.

Part I: Quality Standards. Submission of the Application based on the Quality Standards requires three steps. The first step is to conduct a *Self-Evaluation*. The second step is to complete and submit the *Application*. The third step is an *On-Site Review* if the application meets the score threshold to trigger a site visit.

Part II: Fiscal and Contract/Performance Integrity. If a site ‘qualifies’ for certification through the review of their written application and an on-site review, then an internal review is conducted to examine the site operators standing with regard to fiscal and contract/performance integrity.

- ◆ Meeting performance set by the WDC – inclusive of WIOA performance measures, if applicable - are a condition for certification once the application and site visit criteria have been met.
- ◆ Being fiscally sound is a condition for certification once the application and site visit criteria have been met.

2. Certification Initial Implementation

Phase I: Getting Ready (April 2017 thru November 2017)

- **Build awareness among current sub-recipients, required WIOA partners, and any other interested parties**
 - WDC Quality Assurance and Certification Committee to host an overview session that covers, in general, the reason for setting standards and the framework selected:
 - How the standards will be used:
 - Initially to help organizations move toward organizational effectiveness and quality practices based on the standards
 - For improvement and organizational development
 - What is certification and when the certification process will ‘kick in’
 - The implications of being certified and not being certified
- **Build capacity among current sub-recipients, WIOA required partners, and any other interested parties**
 - Provide technical assistance, training and coaching
 - Conduct training on:
 - Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) processes and practices

- The Quality Standards and key practices organizations use to meet them
- The WDC’s application process and schedule, including an overview of the indicators found in the application.
- Offer onsite technical assistance (TA) to help any individual site:
 - Facilitate their self-assessment process
 - Coaching on various strategies, processes and systems that may be put in place for that specific organization.
- Each site that is interested in becoming certified creates a CQI Team (reviewed in training as part of the requirements), begins their self-assessment process and creates their first CQI Plan.

Phase II: Execution

- First ‘round’ of certification – any current sites during 2018-2019 that respond to an RFP to deliver services for the program year July 2018 thru June 2019 must be certified by April/May of 2018 to receive the award. See number 4 below.
- Continue training and technical assistance
- Receive applications, review, conduct site visits when appropriate, and deliver TA reports.

3. Benefits of being certified.

The WDC is articulating a set of organizational standards proven to assist organizations sustain quality in the delivery of their services and their outcomes. Being certified has the potential of helping agencies obtain funds from other grant making institutions. Certification holds the promise to customers of obtaining consistently high quality services at any entity that holds the WorkSource Pierce brand when certified by the Pierce County WDC.

A comprehensive technical assistance report is provided to both certified and non-certified sites. This TA report provides an organization with actionable opportunities for improvements.

4. WDC funds will not be provided to sites that are not certified.

Beginning July 1, 2018, the comprehensive one stop center must be certified in order to receive funding. If a sub-recipient wins an award from the WDC for the first time, they will have up to 12 months to become certified while they deliver services. If they are not certified within the 12-month period, their contract will not be renewed.

If the contract is awarded to a sub-recipient who has already been under contract, their certification must be up to date at the time of the award.

If any site loses certification during a program year (July thru June of any year) they may deliver services thru the end of the program year (June) and then they become ineligible for any contract renewal or to respond to any new RFP for a 24-month period.

The name, WorkSource Pierce, will become an identifying “good housekeeping seal of quality” and may only be displayed by certified centers and affiliate and satellite sites. Only certified sites and organizations can wear the brand name to build customer recognition of the level of quality certified by the Workforce Development Council (WDC).

5. Certification Scores

To become certified, an applicant must meet the 70%¹ minimum passing score on all Quality Standards and Indicators within the application and at the site visit. If the site has met the quality standards at the 70% minimum score, then an internal review is conducted by staff/certification consultant (See Section #1 above). If there are formal findings in this part of the certification process, a site will be given up to 45 days to resolve them. If they cannot be resolved within that timeframe, the site will not be certified.

6. Certification Schedule

The WDC will set a submission schedule. The WDC will accept applications quarterly. All reviews will be conducted in the quarter immediately after the submission of the application (the submission quarter). To ensure that the review process is conducted during the quarter immediately after submission (the review quarter), any application must be received on or before the deadline date specified by the WDC.

NOTE: It is the site’s responsibility to ensure they renew their certification in a timely fashion, e.g. that the application is submitted to ensure that their current certification does not expire prior to receiving a new ‘license to operate’ as a WorkSource Pierce site.

Initial submission schedule:

Review Quarter 2017-2018	Application Submission Deadline**	Review of Applications Received by the Deadline
July – September 2017	June 23, 2017	Begins in July 2017
October – December 2017	September 22, 2017	Begins in October 2017
January – March 2018	December 15, 2017	Begins in January 2018
April – June 2018	March 23, 2018	Begins in April 2018
July – September 2018	June 22, 2018	Begins in July 2018
October – December 2018	September 21, 2018	Begins in October 2018
January – March 2019	December 14, 2018	Begins in January 2019
April – June 2019	March 23, 2019	Begins in April 2019

Applications are accepted at any time during the quarter. This is the deadline for the **LAST DAY WITHIN A QUARTER an application may be submitted to have the application reviewed in the quarter directly after the submission deadline.

This schedule is subject to revision for the second year of the cycle: July 2018 – June 2019.

¹ This is the recommended **initial** ‘cut’ score. Over time, the cut score increases and in WDBs across the country that use this process within the first 2 cycles (4 years) the cut score has risen to 75%.

7. Any entity seeking certification may receive technical assistance and participate in WDC sponsored training.

The WDC will provide training and technical assistance on quality practices to interested sites through consulting services and/or trained Workforce Central staff. RFPS will also allow the sites to budget for continuous quality improvement (CQI) activities and training.

8. Certification provides sites a license to operate for two years.

To build an infrastructure and organizational culture focused on continuous quality practices and high performance requires time and focus. Certification will be for 2 years for at least 2 cycles – 2018 thru 2022. After that, consideration should be given to increasing the certification expiration from 2 years to 3 years.

9. Certification Review Process

Who: The WDC Quality Assurance and Certification Committee will conduct the certification process. Only individuals with no real, perceived, or potential conflict of interest/financial stake will serve on the Committee – business primarily.

Purpose: To conduct the review of certification applications when submitted and to conduct site visits when appropriate. To produce the Technical Assistance report as a result of the process. To make the certification decision based on the criteria – met the score required on each criteria and quality standard; have no outstanding fiscal, performance, or monitoring issues.

Process: The Committee will break into teams for each application. Teams have up to 3 individuals plus the certification consultant/or trained staff. A reviewer has to commit to reading an application, making the site visit, and reviewing the TA Report for the same application. A reviewer may not participate in the review if they can only do a part due to scheduling or time commitments or any other reason.

Time Commitment: About 3 hours to review and rate the application; 2 hours to participate in the consensus meeting (face to face – so factor in travel time); and up to 4 hours on site (plus travel time) if the application scores at the level to allow a site visit. Certification Consultant writes the TA Report based on the teams comments. 30 minutes to review the report and provide feedback, electronically.

Training: Must participate in a 3.5 hour training prior to becoming a reviewer.

Recruitment: Members may come from the business community and do not need to be WDC members. However, the Committee Chair must be a WDC member. Individuals working in companies that have had some ‘quality’ experience either with an internal program, Baldrige, or ISO is useful, but not a requirement.

10. The system to become certified is ‘open,’ meaning the WDC provides certification as a service to customers and any entity, whether funded by the WDC or not, may submit applications.

Any organization that wants to display the brand name, WorkSource Pierce, of the workforce system may apply to receive it through the certification process. **Certification does not guarantee funding;** however, funding is linked to certification. An organization can be certified without being funded, however, no organization may be funded without being certified. An organization may value the process and the “label” as a marketing tool and never apply for funding to the WDC.

11. Appeal Process

Any site that is not certified has the right to appeal. The appeal panel will consist of the WDC chair and two other WDC members not on the WDC Quality Assurance and Certification Committee. A separate appeal process will be developed. In general, the appeal will be received within 5 days of notification on not being certified. The decision by the WDC appeals panel is final.