



**WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
(WIOA)
PROGRAM POLICY NOTICE NO. I2., Rev. 2**

EFFECTIVE DATE: September 15, 2025
SUBJECT: SELF-SUFFICIENCY WAGE RATE PURPOSE

This provides policy on general guidance on Self-Sufficiency Wage Rate Standard under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

BACKGROUND

The NALWDB is responsible for reviewing and updating the self-sufficiency standard for each local area using a living wage model or comparable data that draws upon geographically specific expenditures that incorporates the income need of individuals, families and sub-state geographical considerations. This information is then applied by the LWDBs when determining eligibility for employed individuals to determine if they meet Self-Sufficiency Wage Standards before approving Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services. The self-sufficiency wage is included in the annual NALWDB grant agreements and may be revised as needed.

LWDBs are directed at using the following definition of "self-sufficiency" as it applies to a currently employed worker who is applying for WIOA Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services through the local workforce development system:

- An individual who is employed in a full-time job (employment that provides compensation for at least 32 hours each week) at a pay rate at or above the designated self-sufficiency wage shall be considered to have achieved employment that allows for self-sufficiency. Therefore, the individual should be self-sufficient, and a determination shall be made that Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services are not required.
- If the individual's current job does not meet the definition of "Employment leading to Economic Self-Sufficiency," Individualized Career Services and/or Training Services may be offered as determined appropriate.

EXCEPTION: Northern boards can determine the eligibility of an employed worker using the most current lower living Standard Income Level (LLSIL). If a worker's current pay rate is at or below 100% of the LLSIL, a determination shall be made that the individual does not meet the definition of "Employment Leading to Economic Self-Sufficiency".



Exceptions for Determining Self-Sufficiency

Under **WIOA Section 3(36)** and **20 CFR §680.320**, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) have the authority to establish self-sufficiency criteria for employed and dislocated workers. The following exceptions apply within the **Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB)** service area:

1. Employed Workers

For employed individuals seeking WIOA-funded training services, the Northern Board may determine eligibility for assistance using the most current Lower Living Standard Income Level (**LLSIL**) published by the U.S. Department of Labor. If the worker's current hourly wage or annualized income is at or below 100% of the LLSIL, the individual shall be considered not self-sufficient and therefore eligible for services.

This determination recognizes that the individual's current employment does not meet the WIOA definition of "*employment leading to economic self-sufficiency*" under **20 CFR §680.320(b)** and corresponding state guidance.

2. Dislocated Workers

For individuals meeting the definition of a Dislocated Worker under **WIOA Section 3(15)** and **20 CFR §680.130**, self-sufficiency shall be defined as full-time employment earning a rate of pay equal to or greater than the individual's pre-layoff wage.

If the new employment wage is below the pre-layoff wage, the individual may continue to receive WIOA services as part of a plan to restore self-sufficiency, even if the pre-layoff wage exceeds the designated self-sufficiency wage threshold.

Determination Procedures

Staff must document all determinations of self-sufficiency clearly in the participant's electronic case file (**NMWCOS**) and ensure that eligibility decisions are fully supported by verifiable documentation. The following procedures apply when assessing and recording employed workers and dislocated worker eligibility:

1. Verification of Earnings

Current wages must be verified using reliable source documentation, such as recent pay stubs, employer verification letters, or other official records. For employed workers, staff must calculate the gross hourly rate and annualized income to determine whether the individual's current earnings fall at or below 100% of the current Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) for the appropriate family size and geographic area. The current LLSIL chart must be included in the participant's case file and referenced in case notes.

2. Comparison to Pre-Layoff Wage (Dislocated Workers)

For dislocated workers, the case manager must obtain proof of pre-layoff wages (e.g., final pay



stub, employer verification, or separation notice) and compare the pre-layoff wage rate to the participant’s current wage rate. If the participant’s new employment is below the pre-layoff rate, the case must include documentation supporting the ongoing need for training or career services to restore economic self-sufficiency.

3. Case Note and File Documentation

Each determination must be clearly described in the case notes, citing:

- The verification method used (e.g., pay stub dated XX/XX/XXXX).
- The applicable LLSIL rate or pre-layoff wage; and
- The rationale for eligibility under the self-sufficiency standard.

The case note should include a reference to this policy section and the supporting documentation uploaded to NMWCOS.

4. Ongoing Monitoring and Review

Supervisors or designated monitoring staff must review eligibility determinations for accuracy during quarterly internal monitoring and ensure that wage verification and LLSIL calculations are up to date. Any discrepancies or missing documentation must be corrected immediately to prevent potential disallowed **costs** under **2 CFR §200.403**.

5. Confidentiality and Data Security

All income and employment information collected must be handled in compliance with confidentiality provisions under **20 CFR §683.220** and the **NALWDB Electronic File Management Policy**. Sensitive documentation must be stored only in approved secure electronic systems and may not be retained in personal or unencrypted formats.

ACTION

The Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board (NALWDB) will follow the self-sufficiency wage rate established by the State, New Mexico Department of Workforce Solutions (NMDWS).

Program Year 2023 — Self-Sufficiency Wage Standards (Hourly)

Local Workforce Board	Hourly Standard
Eastern Area Workforce Development Board	\$53.92/hr.
Northern Area Local Workforce Development Board	\$53.88/hr.
Southwestern Area Workforce Development Board	\$53.40/hr.
Workforce Connection of Central New Mexico	\$56.51/hr.

Source: **NMDWS Policy 22-002 – State WIOA Self-Sufficiency Wage Standard** (table labeled “PROGRAM YEAR 2023 SELF-SUFFICIENCY WAGE STANDARDS”). [NM Workforce Solutions](#)




Governing statutes & guidance to cite alongside the table

- **WIOA §134(a)(3)(A)(xii)** – Authorizes individualized career/training services and allows states/locals to define **self-sufficiency** thresholds for eligibility. [NM Workforce Solutions](#)
- **20 CFR §680.210–§680.230; §680.320** – Federal regs allowing states/LWDBs to set **self-sufficiency criteria** (including for employed workers). [NM Workforce Solutions](#)
- **NMDWS Policy 22-002 (7/3/2023)** – Establishes the **board-specific hourly self-sufficiency standards**

This policy rescinds any previous NALWDB policy regarding subject.

INQUIRIES: Contact the NALWDB at 505-986-0363.



Joseph Weathers (Oct 24, 2025 22:25:07 MDT)

NALWDB CHAIR

10/24/25

DATE






Self-Sufficiency Wage Rate Policy # 22 Rev.2

Final Audit Report

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