Operational Guidance 04-2024 – Case Notes

This guide is to provide guidance on case notes. While comprehensive, please recognize that it may not encompass every aspect. It remains the responsibility of the program operator and staff to thoroughly review all relevant policies to ensure proper documentation and allowable expenditures.

Case notes should tell the 'story' of the participant from the time of enrollment to current, so that any staff member or monitor is able to understand the activity that has occurred thus far. Case notes are vital for detailing what is being provided to participants and justifying WIOA enrollment. Several data validation elements, such as last date of service, last date of training, and employment at participation may be verified with case notes.

Case notes must be entered to document every point of contact with a participant. Case notes should be factual and not reflect personal opinions. If an opinion is necessary, it must be relevant to the individual's WIOA participation and progress and must be labeled as an opinion.

Case notes should vary for each individual and should not be copied and pasted from another participant's file. Case notes should contain:

- Date of the interaction
- Context of the interaction
- Purpose of the interaction
- Content of the conversation
- Outcome of the interaction
- Plans and next steps or next appointment

To meet data validation requirements, at minimum, case notes must include the following:

- When the service was delivered or provided. The date of the service should be in the text box of the case note in addition to the contact date drop down.
- What the Career Advisor did for the individual, or what partner funded service the participant received.

The following items do not constitute a WIOA service. While they should be documented in case notes, the Career Advisor should not record an activity code that a service was provided.

  - Leaving messages or sending text messages
  - Speaking with family members
  - Sending flyers, letters, or postcards to a participant
  - Speaking with a participant's probation/parole officer
  - Casual conversation with participant (unrelated to the program) in a public place
  - Having the participant bring in time and/or attendance records for payment when no meaningful service/discussion/guidance has been provided
  - Sending "contact me" or "contact our office" messages via email, text, US Postal Service, or phone
  - Regular contact with participant to "only" obtain information regarding employment, educational status, need for supportive service; - there must be a "meaningful" service provided to record an activity code

    - Commentary/opinions about the participant’s personal circumstances that are unrelated to employment and training activities and pursuits

Case notes tell the participant’s story to someone who does not know nor work with the participant daily.

Additional notes:

- View every case note as a legal document and remember, this is a federal program and we are required to maintain compliance with all federal, state, and local laws
- Use clear, concise language and professional terminology – no slang, abbreviations, street language, clichés, or jargon
- Do not include any comments or details that are not directly related to the participants enrollment
- There are many types of case notes, be sure you are aware of them and what needs to be recorded in each one

Applicable Policies, TEGLs, and other Documents:

http://riverseastwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/2021-09-ss.pdf
http://riverseastwdb.org/wp-content/uploads/PY21PolicyUpdates/Activity-codes-Definitions.pdf
https://www.commerce.nc.gov/guidance-case-notes-and-exit-dates-ncworks-online-0/open
https://www.dol.gov/sites/dolgov/files/ETA/advisories/TEGL/2020/TEGL_23-19_Attachment_2.pdf