

24.8 JOB SEARCH AND JOB READINESS ASSISTANCE (JR)

Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance means the act of seeking or obtaining employment and preparation to seek or obtain employment. SPOKES and EXCEL are designed to improve work attitudes and behavior, center on general workplace expectations to help participants prepare for work, and to help participants to successfully compete in the labor market. For federal participation purposes job search and job readiness assistance is a single component. This activity must be supervised no less frequently than daily.

Daily supervision does not necessarily mean daily in person. The case manager or other responsible party provides oversight; knows what the participant is supposed to be doing and is responsible for ensuring that the participant is actually performing these tasks. Contact may be by phone or electronic where available.

There is a limit on the number of weeks that Job Search and Job Readiness Assistance may be used to meet the individual's work requirement. The limit is 6 weeks for the last 12-month period, no more than 4 of which may be consecutive. The 6 week limit is 120 completed hours for an individual with 20 hours per week work requirement or 180 completed hours for an individual with 30 hours per week work requirement. A week of participation may begin any day of the week and ends 20 or 30 hours later, regardless of the number of days the individual participated during those hours. Each time an individual uses 20 or 30 hours, a week is used up. If a client participates longer than this period, the participation hours will not count in meeting the work requirement. The 12-month period is the current month plus the 11 previous months. Time used in JR before October 1, 2008 is not considered in the look-back period.

Any holiday or excused absence hours that are used for participation credit for the JR component count toward the time limits.

Due to the 4 consecutive week limit, each month that a participant is enrolled full-time in this component, he must also be enrolled in another allowable component for an average of 5 or 8 hours monthly to meet required monthly participation.

Participants assigned to EXCEL or SPOKES full time will have their participation hours counted in the same manner.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Lee has a 13-year-old son and is assigned to SPOKES beginning December 1st for 30 hours/week. Once he completes the 4-week Job Readiness class, he must be enrolled in a different allowable activity such as VT for the customer service portion of SPOKES for his participation hours to count. If he had 10 excused hours, his time would be entered as below:

Component	Scheduled Hours	Completed Hours	Monthly Excused Hours	Monthly Holiday Hours
VT	8	8		
JR	120	110	10	

NOTE: WV may qualify to count up to 6 additional weeks for participation credit in Job Search and Job Readiness when declared a needy state by ACF. When this occurs the time limit will be 12 weeks for the last 12 month period; 240 completed hours for an individual with 20 hours per week work requirement or 360 completed hours for an individual with 30 hours per week work requirement. No more than 4 of these weeks may be consecutive. All other activity requirements and restrictions remain the same.

Changes in the hourly requirement due to changes in WV’s status as a needy state are effective the month after the change occurs.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Smith has a 20 hours/week participation requirement. He attends substance abuse treatment 5 hours per week and works 15 hours per week for a total of 20 countable participation hours. The substance abuse treatment is counted as Job Search and Job Readiness and may be counted as participation for up to 120 or 240 hours.

Participation for JR may be counted as follows: 5 hours of participation could be counted for each week and recorded in eRAPIDS. This would total 20 hours of participation or the 1st week of the 6- or 12-week limit of JR.

Component	Scheduled Hours	Completed Hours	Monthly Excused Hours	Monthly Holiday Hours
PU	65	65		
JR	20	20		

NOTE: Each parent in a two-parent household has his own limit.

EXAMPLE: Mr. and Mrs. Jones have 2 children and do not use federally funded child care so their participation requirement is 35 hours/week. Mrs. Jones participates in CWEP based on the FLSA calculation and is deemed to be meeting the core work requirement of 30 hours. Mr. Jones completes structured job search 5 hours/week to meet the family’s participation requirement.

Participation for JR may be counted as follows: Five hours of participation could be counted for each week and recorded in eRAPIDS. His participation in JR could continue to be counted in this manner until the total counted participation hours reached 180 or 360 hours for the last 12-month period. Ms. Jones would also be able to participate in JR which would count towards participation for up to 180 or 360 hours.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Wilson has a child age 3 and he participations in JR for 40 hours each week for 2 weeks; this uses the 4 consecutive weeks of his 6- or 12-week limit and any participation hours in JR for the next week must not be counted toward meeting his work requirement.

Changes in the hourly requirement due to the child’s age or changes in household composition are effective the month after the change occurs.

EXAMPLE: Ms. Young's youngest child turns 6 in March, beginning in April she will be required to complete 30 hours/week and the Case Manager may count up to 180 or 360 hours of participation for the last 12-month period.

EXAMPLE: Ms. Williams is a single parent with a 7-year-old daughter. She has a participation requirement of 30 hours/week. In January, she has a new baby. If 120 or 240 hours have already been counted in JR in the last 12 months, then participation in JR cannot be counted again until the total is less than 120 or 240 hours in the last 12-month period.

A. JOB READINESS

Job Readiness must be a structured and supervised program and includes two types of activities.

- Preparation for seeking or obtaining employment. This includes activities such as preparing a resume or job application, training in interviewing skills, instruction in work place expectations, training in effective job seeking, parenting, financial literacy, relationship education, and life skills training.
- Substance abuse treatment, mental health treatment, or rehabilitation activities

B. JOB SEARCH

Job Search must be a structured and supervised activity which may include the following:

- Making contacts with employers by phone
- Making contacts in person
- Use of the Internet to learn of suitable job openings, applying for jobs, and interviewing for jobs

The Employer Contact Form, DFA-WVW-25, may be used to verify time spent on self-directed job search.

NOTE: Travel time to and from job interviews does not count as participation hours. However, the travel time between multiple interviews may be counted as participation.

Structured Job Search follows a recognized Job Search model that is provided by a contractor, another agency, or by WV WORKS staff. Existing programs offered through WORKFORCE West Virginia, Department of Education, and other agencies must be used first when services are available without cost. These providers are not reimbursed, unless all existing training positions have been filled and it is necessary to create additional positions for WV WORKS clients, or if there is a contractual agreement between DHHR and a grantee.

SPOKES and EXCEL classes fall under job search and job readiness assistance activities. The customer service portion is coded as VT.

Referrals to the SPOKES program are limited to those participants who have at least a 4th grade academic level in reading and math. Exceptions to this requirement may be made only after WV WORKS staff consults with and receives approval from the local SPOKES staff.

EXAMPLE: Mr. Cox attends a structured job search activity from 10/6 – 10/31 at the WORKFORCE WV Center and completes 4 weeks of supervised job search 30 hours each week. On 12/4, he is placed in a SPOKES class full-time. Although his Worker may leave him in the SPOKES activity through completion, his attendance in SPOKES may only count for the first 2 weeks in meeting the federal work participation requirement unless WV had been declared a needy state, then his attendance may count for up to 8 more weeks, no more than 4 of which may be consecutive.

As part of the Stronger Family Job Retention column of the WV Bridge Model, the job retention component of SPOKES and EXCEL is designed for participants who have completed or nearly completed that program and who have returned due to losing employment. When a participant returns due to loss of employment and has not completed the initial modules, then he should be referred for the entire program.