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**<u>SUBJECT</u>**: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Formula-Funded On-the-Job Training (OJT) Policy

**PURPOSE:** New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development (NJDOL) offers this policy to guide the New Jersey Local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) investment of WIOA Title I funds in OJT opportunities. The investment of funds should be driven by WDBs strategic priorities, high priority occupations and related targeted industry clusters, and the skill needs of local employers with an unmet workforce need.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This NJWIN is effective **Immediately.** 

**BACKGROUND:** The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) defines "On-the-Job Training" (OJT) as training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that:

- Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;
- Provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training and additional supervision related to training; and
- Is limited in duration to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, considering the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant, as appropriate.

Individuals participating in WIOA-funded OJT opportunities must be eligible for Title I funding through Adult, Dislocated Worker, and/or Youth eligibility criteria. These individuals must have access to the full range of services and supports available through Title I funding – including, assessment, development of an Individual Employment Plan (IEP) or Individualized Service Strategy (ISS), and supportive services.

OJT opportunities help to bridge employer skill demands and participant skill levels by building training into the initial phase of employment and supporting opportunities for learning through direct engagement in a position. Experiential and classroom-based training may both be offered as part of an OJT. OJTs support the goal of long-term employment for employees by integrating skill development and targeting in-demand, sustainable job positions. OJTs may include attainment of specific industry-valued credentials as part of training opportunities, however OJT participants are not counted in Title I credential attainment measures.

#### **KEY DEFINITIONS**

**High Priority Occupations** are job categories, within selected industry clusters, that are in demand by employers, have higher skill needs and are likely to provide family-sustaining wages.

**Individual Employment Plan** is an individualized career service that is developed jointly by the participant and the career planner when determined appropriate by the one-stop career center. The plan is an ongoing strategy to identify employment goals, achievement objectives, and an appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve the employment goals.

# **Individual with a Barrier to Employment** means a member of 1 or more of the following populations:

- Displaced homemaker.
- Low-income individuals.
- Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiian, as such terms are defined in WIOA section 166.
- Individuals with disabilities, including youth who are individuals with disabilities.
- Older individuals.
- Ex-offenders (having some type of criminal background).
- Homeless individuals (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6))), or homeless children and youths (as defined in section 752(2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434(a)(2)))
- Youth who are in or have aged out of foster care.
- Individuals who are English language learners, individuals who have low levels of literacy, and individuals facing substantial cultural barriers.
- Eligible migrant and seasonal farmworkers, as defined in WIOA section 167(i).
- Individuals within 2 years of exhausting lifetime eligibility under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 601 et seq.).
- Single parents (including single pregnant women).
- Long-term unemployed individuals.

**On-the-Job Training (OJT)** is training by an employer that is provided to a paid participant while engaged in productive work in a job that

- Provides knowledge or skills essential to the full and adequate performance of the job;
- Is made available through a program that provides reimbursement to the employer of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of the participant, except as provided in WIOA section 134(c)(3)(H), for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training; and
- Is limited in duration as appropriate to the occupation for which the participant is being trained, considering the content of the training, the prior work experience of the participant, and the service strategy of the participant, as appropriate.

#### POLICY OVERVIEW

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) offers a number of different types of work exposure and training activities to support the development and success of jobseekers and employees in the state of New Jersey. Work-Based Training opportunities, and specifically On-the-Job Training (OJT) contracts, offer mechanisms for including employers as trainers and/or in linking training directly to the needs of employers and specific employment opportunities. OJT provides reimbursements to employers to help compensate for the costs associated with skills upgrade training for newly hired employees and the lost production of current employees providing the training, including management staff.

This policy provides an overview of specific guidance related to eligibility, additional program details and expectations, and setting up operations of OJT programs locally – including the development of application, contracting, and monitoring processes. The maximum amount for each WIOA funded OJT per participant should not exceed \$10,000 over a six-month period. Local WDBs will typically reimburse an eligible employer up to 50 percent of an OJT participant's wage rate during the OJT. Local areas must disclose and document any OJT opportunities that exceed these caps to New Jersey Department of Labor (NJDOL).

#### Participant, Employer, and Role Eligibility

#### **Participant Eligibility**

New Jersey One-Stop Career Center customers who meet the eligibility requirements for Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth programs have access to OJT opportunities. The development and refinement of Individual Employment Plans (IEP) and/or Individualized Service Strategies (ISS) is a critical step in ensuring that an OJT opportunity matches the skill needs, interests, and assets of the individual participant being served. OJT opportunities may be made available to unemployed participants and dislocated workers who are:

- Assessed as benefiting from an OJT opportunity: After assessment and career planning<sup>1</sup>, staff have determined that the individual is unlikely or unable to obtain or retain employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency or unable to obtain wages comparable to or higher than wages from previous employment through career service without additional training. In addition, the individual has been assessed to have the skills and qualifications to participant successfully in an OJT opportunity.
- Align with priority populations and sectors identified by the local area: Individuals determined eligible in accordance with the State and local priority system, particularly

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> When appropriate, a recent interview, evaluation or assessment may be used for the assessment purpose

within adult funding streams, must be prioritized. Additionally, participant interest and priority sector alignment in local areas offer criteria for prioritizing OJT opportunities.

• Interested in occupations with available employment opportunities: An individual has selected a program of training services that is directly linked to the employment opportunities in the local area or the planning region, or in another area to which the individuals are willing to commute or relocate.

The participant's case file must contain a determination of need for training services as determined through ongoing assessment and career planning activities and informed by local labor market information and training provider performance information. In addition to objective trainee assessments, all OJT requests must be reasonable based on factors such as trainee experience, appropriate hourly wages, trainee needs, work experience and any other relevant factors.

#### OJT for Employed Workers

An individual who is employed may also qualify for an OJT if they are considered underemployed. An individual is determined to be underemployed if:

- The employee is currently working but not earning the self-sufficient wage of \$15.00/hour;
- The employee is currently working in a temporary capacity and the OJT facilitates a transition to full-time employment;
- The employee meets all other applicable requirements; and
- The training relates to the introduction of new technologies, introduction to new
  production or service procedures; upgrading to new jobs that require additional skills;
  workplace literacy or other appropriate purposes as identified by the local workforce
  board.

An individual who was previously employed in a full-time position that paid more than the selfsufficient wage will not be eligible for an OJT if that individual intentionally resigned from their previous position in order to receive OJT funding.

#### **Employer Eligibility**

OJTs are available to employers or Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors in the public, non-profit, or private sector.<sup>2</sup> An OJT contract will not be approved for an employer who has received payments under previous contracts under WIOA or the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), if the employer has exhibited a pattern of failing to provide OJT participants with continued long-term employment as regular employees with wages, benefits (including health benefits) and working conditions at the same level and to the same extent as other employees working a similar length of time and doing the same type of work.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> WIOA allows both OJT and Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) funds to be used simultaneously, to support Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities. (For use of OJT contracts for apprenticeship programs see *The NJDOL WIOA Apprenticeship Policy.*)

In addition, employers must demonstrate the following:

- Registration for UI/DI taxes
- A W-9 on file with the Treasury
- Less than \$750 in open tax liability

OJT funds will not be used to directly or indirectly aid in the filling of a job opening which is vacant because the former occupant is on strike, or is being locked out in the course of a labor dispute, or the filling of which is otherwise an issue in a labor dispute involving a work stoppage. OJTs are intended to assist career seekers in reaching and surpassing a self-sufficiency wage threshold. Employers engaging in OJTs for lower waged jobs <u>must</u> demonstrate career pathways that lead to positions exceeding \$15.00 per hour.

#### OJT and the ETPL

Employers providing OJT are not subject to the requirements of the eligible training provider list and are not included on the State list of eligible training providers and programs.

#### **Position Eligibility**

In order to qualify for an OJT, an employer must certify that the position will minimally meet the wage of \$12.50/hour at a minimum of 30 hours per week with evidence that the position is on a career pathway towards higher level and/or higher paying jobs upon completing the OJT. Please note, the minimum wage will be rising to \$15.00 in 2024 with incremental increases planned until then. Any OJT experience, must comply with the state's current minimum wage rate.

Based on the priorities outlined in WIOA and the guiding principles of OJTs generally, Local WDBs may utilize discretion to extend the time in which an individual is expected to reach the self-sufficiency wage level. Local areas must integrate wage and career pathway progression timelines that align with standard industry practice and/or with collective bargaining agreements or similar formal arrangements, if they exist. Local areas must consider and build in plans for attaining selfsufficient wages within a reasonable period of time.

#### Non-Traditional Position Structures

For positions that are not designed around a traditional 40hour week, waivers may be obtained. Employers must demonstrate that the position is aligned with industry standards and that the position will lead to a combination of wages levels and hours that will support a selfsufficient income level within a reasonable period of time.

The Local WDB must follow procedures for notifying NJDOL about any positions that fall outside of the standard position eligibility criteria highlighted in this policy. Individuals in OJTs must be compensated at the same rates, including periodic increases, as trainees or employees who are similarly situated in similar occupations by the same employer and who have similar training, experience and skills. Individuals in OJTs must also be offered benefits and working conditions at the same level and to the same extent as other trainees or employees working a similar length of time and doing the same type of work.

# **Employer Referrals**

- Employers are encouraged to refer interested candidates to the New Jersey One-Stop Career Centers for services.
- Employers must accept referral of, consider and interview Local WDB-referred OJT candidates.

# **Program Details and Expectations**

# **OJT Reimbursement Rates and Caps**

The maximum amount for each WIOA funded OJT per participant should not exceed \$10,000 over a six-month period. Local WDBs will typically reimburse an eligible employer up to 50 percent of an OJT participant's wage rate during the OJT (for the extraordinary costs of providing the training, including the potential lower productivity of the OJT participants, and additional supervision for OJT participants). Local WDB staff must review actual costs to ensure they are commensurate with the type of training being proposed.

In limited circumstances, based on factors including employer size, career seeker barriers, availability of funding, and other applicable factors, the local workforce board may determine it appropriate to develop plans that exceed the \$10,000 funding cap to provide additional support. Local WDBs must formally request a waiver from the NJDOL Director of Career Services via the WIOA Title I Program Oversight and Development (POD) team to waive the \$10,000 funding cap or six-month limitation.

For those OJT opportunities that are funded through temporary, grant or any other federal/state dollars, the costs per trainee can exceed the training cap established by this policy up to the maximum amount permitted by the relevant funding source.

In limited circumstances, local workforce boards may increase the reimbursement level to up to 75 percent or extend the period of reimbursement beyond six months, considering the following factors:

- The characteristics of the participants taking into consideration whether they are individuals with barriers to employment;
- The size of the employer, with an emphasis on small businesses;
- The quality of employer-provided training and advancement opportunities, for example if the OJT contract is for an in-demand occupation and will lead to an industry-recognized credential;
- Other relevant factors, as appropriate.

Local Workforce Development Boards must document the factors used when deciding to increase the wage reimbursement levels above 50 percent up to 75 percent or subsidizing employment for more than a six-month period. This documentation must be submitted to the WIOA Title I Program Oversight and Development at NJDOL with any waiver requests.

#### **Waiver Requests**

Any OJTs that fall outside of the standard criteria outlined in this policy with regards to employer and position eligibility, and wage, hour, and duration caps must be reported to NJDOL's Workforce Unit. A waiver may be obtained from the Director of Career Services. Local WDBs must submit documentation and requests to their technical assistance liaison on the WIOA Title I Program Oversight and Development (POD) team.

#### **Developing Training Plans**

Employers, local WDB staff, and OJT participants must co-develop specific training plans that outline the specific skill requirements for the OJT position, the specific skill needs and assets the trainee brings to the position, and a general overview of the training resources that will be dedicated to support the OJT participant. A training plan serves as a position-specific assessment, a plan for training delivery, and an opportunity to track skill attainment during the training. A sample training plan is included in Attachment A.

Key training plan elements include:

- **Job Description:** A job description may be obtained from the employer or local WDB staff may assist the employer in writing a job description for the on-the-job training position.
- **Skill Requirements:** Skill requirements include the list of skills needed to perform the job to the standards specified by the employer. Skill requirements may include use of specific mechanical tools, technology skills, communication skills, and/or project management skills.
- **Participant's Starting Capability:** A training plan must include an assessment of the skills identified for the trainee, usually through an interview with the participant's supervisor or by utilizing another skill assessment method. The assessment offers the employer the opportunity to customize and target skill development to best leverage the assets and meet the needs of the individual.
- **Participant's Ending Capability:** A training plan must also include an assessment of the identified skills at training's end to measure progress toward skill attainment result from on-the-job training activities.
- **Training Length:** The period of time required for a participant to become proficient in the occupation for which the training is being provided. Training plans should include details about the number of hours that the employer will dedicate to building the capacity in specific skill areas. This will be unique to the individual depending on their academic and occupational skill level, prior work experience, and the participant's individual employment plan.

#### **Title I Assessment and Plan Development**

In addition to the development of an OJT-specific training plan, as Title I participants, individuals must have access to a range of assessment opportunities and the development of a holistic employment/service plan through an IEP or ISS. Employment and service plans should align with OJT training plans and outline additional supports such as supportive services that Title I WIOA staff will help the participant to manage as part of their engagement in an OJT opportunity.

# **Regulatory Limitations and Prohibited Activities**

USDOL policy offer specific information about restrictions in the use of WIOA funds regarding OJT opportunities.

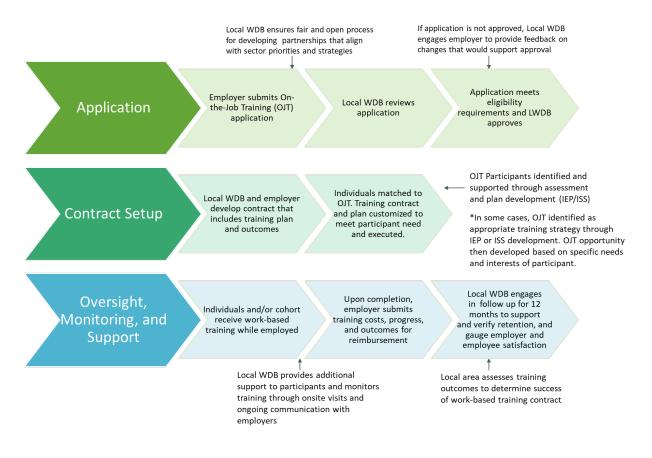
- 1. WIOA Title I funds must not be spent on specific types of costs or expenses.
- Construction, purchase of facilities or buildings, or other capital expenditures for improvements to land or buildings;
- Sectarian activities;
- Wages of incumbent employees during their participation in economic development activities provided through a Statewide workforce investment system; Public service employment, except to provide disaster relief employment, as specifically authorized in section 194(10) of WIOA;
- Expenses prohibited under another Federal, State or local law or regulation;
- Subawards or contracts with parties that are debarred, suspended, or otherwise excluded from or ineligible for participation in Federal programs or activities;
- Contracts with persons falsely labeling products made in America;
- Foreign travel
- 2. Expenditure of WIOA Title I funds must not be used to deter organized labor activities in any way.
- Funds provided to employers for OJTs must not be used to directly or indirectly assist, promote or deter union organizing.
- OJTs are not intended to impair any existing contracts for services or collective bargaining agreements. When a program or activity authorized under Title I of WIOA would be inconsistent with a collective bargaining agreement, the appropriate labor organization and employer must provide written concurrence before the program or activity begins.
- 3. The expenditure of WIOA funds must not support any efforts that result in the dislocation of workers.
- Funds must not be used or proposed to be used for the encouragement or inducement of a business or part of a business to relocate from a location in the United States if the relocation results in any employee losing his or her job at the original location.
- Funds must not be used or proposed to be used for any business or part of a business that has relocated from a location in the United States, until the company has operated at the

new location for 120 days, if the relocation has resulted in any employee losing his or her job at the original location.

- A participant in an OJT will not be employed in or assigned to a job if:
  - ✓ Any other individual is laid off from the same or any substantially equivalent job;
  - ✓ The employer has terminated the employment of any regular, unsubsidized employee or otherwise caused an involuntary reduction in its workforce with the intention of filling the vacancy with the participant; or
  - ✓ The job is created in a promotional line that infringes in any way on the promotional opportunities of currently employed workers.
- A participant in a program or activity authorized under Title I of WIOA must not displace (including a partial displacement, such as a reduction in the hours of non-overtime work, wages, or employment benefits) any currently employed employee (as of the date of the participation).

#### **Setting up OJT Operations**

Key functions that local WDBs must set up to support OJT opportunities include (1) developing an application process, (2) setting up contracts, and (3) establishing oversight and monitoring procedures. Figure 1 provides an overview of key steps.



#### Figure 1: Overview of Local WDB Functions Related to OJTs

#### **Application Requirements**

The first step in establishing OJT programs is developing an application process that supports assessment of value of the training to both the employer and the employee and ensures that eligibility criteria of the employer, employee, and position are met. In addition, a review of applications must include considerations regarding additional funding sources that might be leveraged to support specific work-based training plans and activities, in addition to WIOA funds. Finally, the application must also support an assessment of the appropriate cost level of the OJT opportunity and wage reimbursement rate given the needs and resource of the employer.

Table 1 provides an overview of specific information and details that employers must provide as part of applications for OJT programs.

	Employer Information	Role Information
	Company Name Address Billing Address (if different than physical address) City/Zip Phone FEIN DUNS Employer layoff history Length of business operations in NJ Name/Title of Person(s) Authorized to Sign Documents Employer's Product or Service	<ul> <li>Role Information</li> <li>Position (Actual Job Title) at start of training</li> <li>Position (Expected Job Title) at end of training</li> <li>Training Period (Dates)</li> <li>Hourly Wage During Training</li> <li>Number of Weeks Requested for Training</li> <li>Hourly Wage at the end of training</li> <li>Expected Training</li> </ul>
• • •	Person(s)/Title(s) Responsible for Supervision/Training of Trainee Number of Full-Time Employees (working 32 hours or more) Location/Telephone Number of Training/Worksite Email address	<ul> <li>Expected Training Benchmarks</li> </ul>

Table 1: Overview of Employer and Role Application Requirements

# **Contract Requirements**

Once an application has been approved, the next step is the development of an OJT contract. The contract incorporates information from the application process and the development of the individualized training plan for the OJT participant (see page 8). The training contract must include:

- Information related to participant, employer, and position eligibility
- Cost sharing and employer contribution specifications
- Information about expected training hours and sequence
- Information about skill development and training outcomes (wages and role at OJT completion)

In addition, the plan must be signed by the local WDB, the employer, and the employee.

#### **Oversight and Monitoring Requirements**

Once a training program is in its implementation phase, the Local WDB provides ongoing support as needed to participants and monitors and oversees training activities and outcomes, ensuring alignment with OJT contracts.

Monitoring is the responsibility of both the state and the Local WDB. OJT program monitoring must include onsite reviews to ensure and support a high quality of training experiences and ensure the validity and propriety of employer costs claimed.

Onsite monitoring of OJT must include (1) documentation of information received directly from the participants with the participant supervisor's perspective about how the training is progressing, and (2) a review of the employer payroll records to ensure wage costs are aligned with planned costs. Furthermore, local WDB monitoring should include a minimum of monthly communication with the employer to assess training progress, deter discontinuation of employment at the conclusion of the contract, and identify additional areas where supplemental Title I services can support participant success.

In addition, as part of WIOA monitoring, employers are also subject to monitoring from NJDOL to ensure that training plans and costs are aligned with WIOA policy, and that the execution of activities aligns with OJT contracts and plans established at the onset of training.

As highlighted in this policy, monitoring and oversight must include review of training plans, contracts, and implemented activities and outcomes to ensure alignment of expectations and actual training implementation, as well ensure that the cost of the specific OJT opportunity is ultimately commensurate with the benefit to employers and employees.

Past performance based on monitoring and oversight efforts regarding work-based training contracts must be considered in establishment of future contracts with employers.

# **OJT and Performance Measures**

It is important to note that OJT and customized training are excluded from the credential attainment performance indicator because, although they often provide employment benefits to recipients of these services, they often do not result in a credential. However, USDOL and NJDOL encourage Local WDBs to consider OJTs that do result in a credential.<sup>3</sup> While completion of a credential does not count towards to the credential attainment performance measure, it may as a measurable skill gain performance outcome.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Please refer to TEGL 19-16, section 12.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Pleaser refer to TEGL 10-16 Change 1

It is important to note that a Registered Apprenticeship is one of several training modalities that can result in a credential. Coupling of an OJT with Registered Apprenticeship models may result in a credential attainment performance outcome.

# References

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, enacted July 22, 2014
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Regulations, 20 CFR Parts 680, 683
- TEGL 10-16 Change 1: <u>https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL 10-16-</u> Change1.pdf
- TEGL 13-16 attachment III: <u>Making Registered Apprenticeship Work for the Public Workforce</u> <u>System: Performance Outcomes (doleta.gov)</u>
- TEGL 19-16 (see Section 12): <u>https://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL 19-16.pdf</u>

# Contact:

Inquiries regarding this policy should be directed to <u>WIOAPolicy@dol.nj.gov</u>.

# Attachment A: Sample On-the-Job Training Plan

# INSERT OJT PROVIDER NAME HERE

# ON-THE-JOB TRAINING (OJT) TRAINING PLAN

OJT Contract No: Training Plan No:

#### Section 1: Contact and OJT Information Complete the contact information for the employer and the participant.

EMPLOYER NAME:	CONTACT PERSON:	TELEPHONE #:
TRAINEE NAME:	EMAIL:	TELEPHONE #:
BEGINNING DATE:	END DATE:	TOTAL TRAINING HOURS:
HOURLY WAGE RATE: \$	REIMBURSEMENT RATE: %	MAXIMUM REIMBURSEMENT: \$

# Section 2: Occupational Information Complete the occupational information for the participant's skill level.

JOB TITLE:	O*NET SOC #:	HOURS/WEEK:
JOB DESCRIPTION:		· · · · ·
REQUIRED JOB SKILLS FOR OCCUPATION:		STARTING CAPABILITY:
		DATE MEASURED
1. JOB SKILL NEEDED		NOT SKILLED:
		SOME SKILL:
		SKILLED:
2. JOB SKILL NEEDED		NOT SKILLED:
		SOME SKILL:
		SKILLED:
3. JOB SKILL NEEDED		NOT SKILLED:
		SOME SKILL:
		SKILLED:
4. JOB SKILL NEEDED		NOT SKILLED:
		SOME SKILL:
		SKILLED:
5. JOB SKILL NEEDED		NOT SKILLED:
		SOME SKILL:
		SKILLED:

#### Section 3: Training Information Complete the training outline and estimated time for each skill.

SKILLS TO BE LEARNED:	ESTIMATED TRAINING HOURS:	END CAPABILITY DATE MEASURED
1. SKILL TO BE LEARNED	ESTIMATED TRAINING HOURS	BEGINNING:  INTERMEDIATE:  SKILLED:
2. SKILL TO BE LEARNED	ESTIMATED TRAINING HOURS	BEGINNING: 🗌 INTERMEDIATE: 🗌 SKILLED: 🗌
3. SKILL TO BE LEARNED	ESTIMATED TRAINING HOURS	BEGINNING: 🗌 INTERMEDIATE: 🗌 SKILLED: 🗌
4. SKILL TO BE LEARNED	ESTIMATED TRAINING HOURS	BEGINNING: 🗌 INTERMEDIATE: 🗌 SKILLED: 🗌
5. SKILL TO BE LEARNED	ESTIMATED TRAINING HOURS	BEGINNING:  INTERMEDIATE:  SKILLED:
LIST SUPPLIES AND TOOLS NEEDED FOR TRAINING:		

# Section 5: Signatures

All parties agree to provide or obtain training for the skills outlined in this Training Plan.

Authorized Signatures

DATE:

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE:

TYPE/PRINT NAME:

DATE:

DATE:

**EMPLOYER SIGNATURE:** 

OJT PROVIDER SIGNATURE:

TYPE/PRINT NAME: TITLE: TYPE/PRINT NAME: TITLE: