



March 19, 2020

TO: WDB Directors and CCMEP Lead Agency Directors

FROM: Gerrie Cotter, CCMEP Project Manager

SUBJECT: **CCMEP Program Flexibility Guidance for COVID-19**

Thank you for your continued work and dedication with Ohio's most vulnerable young adults during this challenging time. Please review the guidance below along with the attachments for details and suggestions on how to proceed moving forward.

**Verbal Signatures:**

Please see attached, Action Change Transmittal Letter #271, regarding the Ohio Works First (OWF) program and CCMEP participants that are OWF work eligibles. This letter confirms that verbal signatures by phone are allowed for IOPs, CCMEP assessments and Eligibility applications (JFS 3002) while Ohio has restricted travel to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Verbal signatures should be documented in OWCMS in case notes using "On [Insert date] [Insert client name] provided a verbal signature to the [Insert form name(s)]. This verbal signature is in accordance with Action Change Transmittal Letter No. 271. A copy of the [Insert form name(s)] has been mailed to the client."

Prior to accepting a verbal signature, case managers *must* read the contents of the IOP including rights, responsibilities and service/activity details. Following the acceptance of any verbal signature(s), a copy of the IOP, Eligibility application and/or CCMEP assessment *must* be mailed to the client.

**Basic Skills Assessment:**

Instead of in-person testing, it is possible to use online practice assessments available on OhioMeansJobs.com or standardized assessments individuals have taken within the last six months. Please collaborate with your local workforce area on which assessments are acceptable. One option available on OhioMeansJobs.com is the WorkKeys assessment.

This practice assessment provides an estimated score. If the score is less than 3 (3 is a career-ready score), the individual could be tested more thoroughly after travel restrictions end to determine the educational functioning level (EFL). EFL assessments are necessary to show a skill gain for anyone who is basic skills deficient (for more details, see the [CCMEP performance desk aid](#)). For details on accessing the WorkKeys assessment, please see the attached OMJ Resources Guide.

### **Engagement:**

With recent travel restrictions and guidance on social distancing, lead agencies and youth service providers are encouraged to take advantage of virtual options for engagement, including texting, phone calls, and social media direct messaging. It's possible to also keep participants informed by sharing general information and instructions through social media posts.

Please note that if your staff is using text messaging or direct messaging through social media, you must use encrypted applications. The following options are encrypted: Facebook messenger, imessages (iphone), Remind, Signal, and Whatsapp (for texting). Case managers should use county or area equipment for communications and professional accounts for social media rather than personal social media accounts or cell phones. Virtual services and activities can also help keep participants engaged.

### **Virtual Services and Activities:**

With recent travel restrictions and guidance on social distancing, lead agencies and youth service providers are encouraged to consider virtual options for services and activities. CCMEP participant OWF work eligibles negatively impacted by COVID-19 restrictions may qualify for good cause which should always be communicated to the cash assistance case managers on a timely basis to ensure these participants are not sanctioned inappropriately.

Also, please see the attached online activity guide for some suggestions on online resources. Some suggested services and activities include online training available on OhioMeansJobs.com (see OMJ Resources Guide) to obtain a high school diploma by testing. Also, please consider short-term online credential training that may be available for participants since this is an important step toward entering an in-demand career. Eligible training providers for industry-recognized credentials can be researched on the [Workforce Inventory of Education and Training \(WIET\)](#). Another option to consider is online [entrepreneurial training](#) and preparation for participants interested in running their own businesses.

**Work Experiences/Resources:**

The Office of Family Assistance has issued two letters (FAL #183 and 183-A) regarding the use of newly allocated PRC funds for a Summer TANF Employment program and COVID-19 assistance. The use of these funds requires an update to PRC plans.

Many businesses are closing temporarily or may be impacted by COVID-19 in other ways including volume of work. Participants laid off due to COVID-19 may be eligible for [unemployment compensation](#).

As a result of closures and social distancing, it may be difficult to place participants in work experiences. It would be best to focus on employers that are still open for business. Please check Ohio's COVID-19 [website](#) for updates. There is an opportunity for participants interested in childcare who can provide child care in their homes to [obtain a temporary child care license](#) to serve parents in healthcare and other essential services.

There will be temporary positions available through the [Census](#) which is going forward as scheduled so far. Applicants must be 18 and are paid between \$14 and \$21 per hour depending on location. Most of these positions require a driver's license and vehicle. Also, some lead agencies and providers have hired CCMEP participants in the past to help with outreach, especially for out-of-school youth.

Please share your suggestions for work experience and/or other services you have had success with locally so we can share with others around the state.

Please contact [CCMEPQNA@jfs.ohio.gov](mailto:CCMEPQNA@jfs.ohio.gov) if you have questions. We will continue to provide updated guidance related to COVID-19 as changes occur federally and at the state level. Thank you again for your commitment to serving Ohio's youth.