
DWD Memorandum 2026-02: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act-Funded Training for Commercial Driver's License (CDL)

To: Indiana's Workforce System
From: Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD)
Date: October 02, 2026

PURPOSE

To clarify the English language proficiency requirements for Commercial Driver's License (CDL) training participants and to provide best practices for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) case management staff when assisting English language learners seeking employment and training in careers requiring a CDL.

REFERENCES

- WIOA Section 134
- 20 CFR 680.210
- 49 CFR 391.11
- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA)¹
- TEN 01-26: *Public Workforce Training for Acquisition of a Commercial Driver's License*

CONTENT

Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration

The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA) is the primary federal agency governing commercial driving. A person is qualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle if they:²

1. Are at least 21 years old;
2. Can read and speak the English language sufficiently to converse with the general public, to understand highway traffic signs and signals in the English language, to respond to official inquiries, and to make entries on reports and records;
3. Can, by reason of experience, training, or both, safely operate the type of commercial motor vehicle they drive;
4. In accordance with the physical qualifications identified in 49 CFR Part 391 Subpart E;
5. Have a currently valid commercial motor vehicle operator's license issued only by one State or jurisdiction;
6. Are not disqualified to drive a commercial motor vehicle; and

¹ <https://www.fmcsa.dot.gov/>.

² 49 CFR 391.11(b)(2).

7. Have successfully completed a driver's road test and have been issued a certificate of driver's road test or has presented an operator's license or a certificate of road test which the motor carrier that employs them has accepted as equivalent to a road test.³

Commercial driver qualifications place a high level of importance on English proficiency to ensure public safety and successful employment outcomes.

WIOA Training

WIOA also places a high level of importance on the participant's ability to qualify for and successfully complete Title I-funded training. WIOA Sec. 134(c)(3)(A) provides detailed participant eligibility requirements to receive training services including "having the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services."

Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards)

Given the federal requisite under 49 CFR that requires English language proficiency to obtain a legal CDL, WIOA staff should take immediate steps to effectively assist job seekers that want to pursue a career requiring a CDL.

Local One-Stop Staff Best Practices

WIOA case manager best practices can include, but are not limited to the following:

- Conducting initial interviews with interested candidates seeking a license to accurately disclose the existing language and other requirements for licensure.
- The use of valid assessments of skills and English language proficiency through interviews to inform the decision for enrollment (or non-enrollment) in CDL training.
- Determining the potential for co-enrollment in the WIOA Title II Adult Education program for participants seeking a CDL who need English language education.
- The use of integrated education and training (IET) approaches, wherever possible, as a method to integrate programs and funding and strengthen career pathway programs.

ACTION

Local Boards are to ensure WIOA case manager staff implement service delivery strategies detailed in this memo when assisting English language learners seeking employment and training services for careers requiring a CDL.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Questions regarding the content of this publication should be directed to policy@dwd.in.gov.

³ These requirements apply to all states and cannot be waived at the state level for interstate commerce.