

3.3.1 Individual Responsibility Plan and Stacking Activities

Revised ~~on: September 20, 2021~~ ~~August 5, 2020~~

Legal References:

- [RCW 74.08A.260](#)
- [WAC 388-310-500](#)

The 3.3 *IRP and Stacking Strategy* section has two separate sub-sections:

- Section 3.3.1 *Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP)* . This section describes the IRP process by including:
 - [3.3.1.1 What is an IRP?](#)
 - [3.3.1.2 When is an IRP done?](#)
 - [3.3.1.3 How to write an IRP?](#)
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 - [3.3.1.5 Does sanction status require a special IRP?](#)
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 - [3.3.1.8 Special Records](#)
 - [3.3.1.9 eJAS Codes](#)
 - [3.3.1.10 IRP step-by-step guide](#)
- [Section 3.3.2 Stacking Activities](#) .

3.3.1.1 What is an IRP?

An Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) is a working document that clearly defines the specific activities, timeframes and expectations for each WorkFirst participating family member. The IRP may also indicate what support services WorkFirst ~~can~~will provide to help the person to participate. The IRP is developed by the ~~parent-participant~~ with ~~her or his~~their WFSSS/WFPS to:

- Describe the ~~individual's-participant's~~ responsibilities, activity requirements and authorized support services.
- Keep ~~him or her~~them moving toward independence.
- Document the action steps the ~~individual-participant~~ has agreed to do. This is essential to holding them ~~individual~~ responsible for ~~her or his~~their participation.
- Direct the ~~individual-participant~~ to find and accept employment
- Describe DSHS responsibilities to document which support services will be provided.

- Describes what happens if for the participant individual does not follow through with the consequences for not meeting the program requirements.

3.3.1.2 When is an IRP done?

Create or update an individual participant's IRP when the individual participant:

- Has been determined eligible for WorkFirst and, has and he or she is required to completed the comprehensive evaluation (using the Pathway Development Tool), and needs to be assigned an engagement pathway/services.
- Has an eligibility evaluation and, if there are any changes to the family's situation.
- Must apply for Washington Apple Health through the Health Benefit Exchange to access needed health care coverage (such as chemical dependency treatment). (See [WAH Application IRP](#) for suggested IRP language)
- Has a change that affects her or his existing IRP (like homelessness or family violence issues).
- Has new activities such as training or services approved.
- Gets a job. (This may include other services such as retention services or needed support services.)
- Is within two weeks of completing a component (to keep her or him them continually participating).
- Has updated completed a comprehensive evaluation, or screening, or assessment/evaluation, which provides recommendations for a new pathway or service.
- Has disclosed, or there is an indication, that they are involved with Children's Administration the Department of Children, Youth and Families (DCYF) (CA) and are required to do activities like counseling or treatment.

In two parent families, both parents must have an IRP (unless one qualifies for, and chooses to take an exemption). Once a parent participant goes off WorkFirst, an IRP is no longer required to access services or support services.

NOTE: Parent Participants who do not have Washington Apple Health due to citizenship verification requirements and who have an activity requirement that is dependent on Washington Apple Health coverage are not required to participate in these activities until Washington Apple Health eligibility is established. Until Washington Apple Health coverage is established, these parent participants will be coded with the component code 'CV'. This is an indicator code only and has no IRP or monitoring requirements.

For more information, please refer to [section 6.3.5](#)- How do we treat parent participants with medical issues who do not have Washington Apple Health.

3.3.1.3 How to write an IRP?

We build an IRP by talking to the individual participant about their her or his family's circumstances. We using the Pathway Development Tool to support this discussion, whether completed as part of the comprehensive evaluation or social service assessment process. The engagement pathways noted

in WFHB 3.2.1.8 and the stacking activities strategy in WFHB 3.3.1 can help with determining what activities may be best for the participant, while helping to maximize countable participation and, when a comprehensive evaluation is done, by reviewing the results.

Conversations with the parent participant are very important, as they will help us build the initial IRP and subsequent IRPs that are relevant to their family's individual's situation.

The IRP spells out what needs to be done to get the person employed as quickly as possible, and then break those tasks into action steps. The comprehensive evaluation and eJAS notes types also help indicate issues that may need assessment, referrals and resolution.

When appropriate, the WFPS/WFSSS/WFPS can create or update the IRP while the parent participant is meeting with a WorkFirst partner. The WorkFirst partner can then print the IRP for the parent participant's record and signature. If there are confidential items in the IRP, the partner will can only be able to print the non-confidential portion of the IRP. The WFPS/WFSSS will need to must mail the full IRP to the client.

Some families may also be involved with Department of Children, Youth & Families (DCYF) CA and required to do activities like counseling or treatment to help keep their families together. It is critical to take these activities into consideration when developing the parent participant's IRP.

As shown in the chart below, there are key techniques to create an effective IRP.

How to build an IRP:	
Involve the individual participant	Give a clear picture of the goal of financial independence for the family and what <u>the program WorkFirst</u> will do to support <u>their efforts this goal</u> . Talk about what the individual plans to do after employment to get a better job and move up the wage ladder. Are the plans achievable? If so, how?
Focus on the goal	The goal, for most families, is independence from WorkFirst. Getting a job or increasing employment or wages is the path. When setting the <u>individual participant's</u> goal, also take into consideration: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was discovered during the comprehensive evaluation <u>and, where necessary, subsequent assessments?:-</u> • <u>Whether there are Are there</u> short-term issues to be resolved for faster progress (like homelessness)? • What supports or other income will be available while seeking work or once working?
Discuss the options	Use all the available information and the stacking strategy to develop the IRP and create a step-by-step plan. As you do this: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Take the family's circumstances and participant's interests into consideration</u>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver a strong message ofFrame work as a goal of participation; • Use the IRP to document support services;and • Build participation expectations using the hours of activities that add up to full-time participation (32-40 hours), <u>when appropriate</u> and that take the person's circumstances into consideration.
Write the IRP	<p>Write the IRP in the first person (like "I will report to my Community Jobs assignment.")</p> <p>The templates for each activity are to be included in the IRP so the <u>individual participant</u> knows the specific details about their activities.</p>
Use action steps	<p>Use the IRP to give the <u>individual participant</u> a step-by-step explanation of what she or he is <u>expected of them</u> supposed to do and what supports are available. Include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whom to contact, • When to report to an activity, and • What her or his <u>their</u> responsibilities are.

3.3.1.4 How to monitor IRPs

~~WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS~~ will monitors IRPs closely to make sure that everyone is engaged in full-time activities and making progress. Service providers are required to verify participation and progress on a monthly basis to the ~~WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS~~.

In addition, non-participation will-must be reported immediately. ESD uses eJAS to send an electronic message to the ~~WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS~~ when the participant fails to attend as directed. ESD staff will sometimes refers the participant back to the WFPS as part of their "Continuous Activity Planning" process and document in eJAS notes if the participant is failing to participate as directed. The ~~WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS~~ must immediately begin the sanction process by sending the ACES letter 0085-01 for non-participation.

The ~~WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS~~ includes all activities that meet the participation requirements in the IRP and track participation, even those that are not approved by the program. For example, a participant may work 20 hours a week and go to school 20 hours and meet the participation requirements even if the training cannot be approved or supported with support services or child care. This participation must be tracked to ensure progress is being made and that the person is attending.

There are two types of participation verification:

1. Automated monthly verification by provider through eJAS, where available.

2. Written monthly verification signed by the provider where eJAS is not available, using a standard form with a release of information. The individual participant submits the form to the WFSSS/WFPS.

3.3.1.5 Does sanction status require a special IRP?

An individual participant in sanction status does not require a special "sanction IRP" just because they have entered sanction. Everyone is required to have a current IRP based upon his or her their assigned activities. If a family member participant enters sanction status, the IRP should reflect the activities they failed to do, without good cause.

When the person participant agrees to cure his or her a sanction, the IRP must be updated to include current dates and any new activities or components need to be changed to meet the individual participant's new circumstances.

3.3.1.6 How IRP helps with coordination?

The IRP is a valuable tool for the individual participant, the WFPS/WFSSSSSSS/WFPS, and others working with the person. It ensures that everyone is clear about the individual participant's responsibilities, requirements, and supports.

- The IRP is available in eJAS and can be read and reviewed by Employment Security Department staff ESD staff and others who work with the person and have eJAS access.
- Both the WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS and the individual participant sign the IRP and a copy is given provided to him or her so the person knows what action steps to follow.

3.3.1.7 Stacked Services

Stacking services requires the individual participant to engage in more than one activity at a time - perhaps working with different providers to access services. We "stack" (or combine) activities to make sure the person moves from welfare to self-sustaining work as soon as possible. It also helps an individual participant to build new strengths while resolving issues in her or his life.

Activities are combined to add up to full-time participation (32-40 hours). See WFHB 1.2.3 for additional information about adding an additional three hours (preferably core activity hours) in the parent participant's IRP when possible.

eJAS provides language (templates) that can be put on the IRP for most activities and service providers, with the number of hours the individual participant will participate. In the few cases that eJAS does not provide the template language to be used, the WFPS/WFSSS will includes the following information on the IRP:

- The start and end dates of the activities
- The date and time the individual participant must report to the service provider
- The specific participation requirements, including the number of days per week the person must attend and hours of participation
- The number to call if the she or he they can't attend as required

- What support services and the child care the program can provide

3.3.1.8 Special Records

To be effective, the individual participant's IRP must spell out, in detail, what the person will do to become self-sufficient. All personal information is confidential under state and federal law. In eJAS, there are also four categories of client participant information, called 'Special Records', with increased protection. Only DSHS staff are able to view the notes written in these categories (~~For more information, please see WFHB 1.6.4).~~ These categories contain information about:

~~Mental Health;~~

~~Family Violence;~~

~~Chemical Dependency, and~~

~~HIV/AIDS/STD* (Optional category).~~

~~When developing an IRP that includes information on a Special Records topic, *Please note that DSHS staff is not required to screen for HIV/AIDS/STD. This is an optional category to be used when a parent voluntarily provides information about HIV/AIDS/STD issues that could interfere with WorkFirst work activities.~~

~~For these four topics in eJAS, it is important to:~~

- ~~Develop/create the IRP under "Special Record" section,~~
- ~~Document actions in the matching note type, and~~
- ~~Discuss with parent participant how sharing the information with other partners or contractors may provide better services. If the parent participant agrees to share the information then you must get a signed consent form (DSHS 14-012) to share this information or invite the person to discuss the matter(s) directly with the service provider they are going to be working with.~~

3.3.1.9 eJAS coding

When creating an IRP, do the following in eJAS:

- Enter activity component code on the eJAS component/IRP screen.
- Enter the participation requirements using the templates for the activities and for each of the contractor codes.

3.3.1.10 IRP - Step-by-step guide

To develop an IRP, the ~~WFSSS/WFPS/WFSSS/WFPS will:~~

1. ~~Develops the IRP supported by the comprehensive evaluation discussion with the participant (using the Pathway Development Tool), the based on the conversation with the individual, the stacking strategy, recommendations from the comprehensive evaluation, other available the information in eJAS, and observations. Review the results of any comprehensive evaluation and consult with WorkFirst partners or Social Service Specialist if appropriate to determine the best plan for the person.~~

- a. Includes employment, other income, and issue resolution goals.
 - b. Discusses options with the individual participant.
 - c. Writes a sequential, step-by-step plan for achieving the individual participant's goals, including:
 - i. Where to go, when, and who to see,
 - ii. Start and end date for each activity and a description of what the individual participant will be doing, and
 - iii. Any actions needed to prepare for the activity (like making child care or transportation arrangements).
2. Documents support the services made available to the participant or him by DSHS (like child care, or transportation).
3. Has the individual participant sign the IRP, and provides a ~~make a copy for him or her.~~
- a. If the IRP is done over the phone, ~~then a copy is~~ mails a copyed to the individual participant.
 - a-b. If the IRP is done over the phone while the parent participant is meeting in person with a WorkFirst partner, the partner may print the IRP, obtain the parent participant's signature and provide a copy to the parent participant. The signed original IRP would remain in the partner's parent participant file.
- 3.4. Documents that the IRP has been done, that you explained the requirements of the IRP to the individual participant, any referrals made, and enter the activities in eJAS. Document that the IRP was mailed if you mail the IRP to the individual participant. See WFHB 1.6

Resources

Related WorkFirst Handbook ~~Chapters/Attachments~~ Sections

- [1.6 Required Documentation](#)
- [3.1 Resolving Issues - Overview](#)
- [3.2.1 Comprehensive Evaluation](#)
- [3.2.3 Pathway Development Tool](#)
- ~~[WAH Application IRP](#)~~

Forms & Other Resources

- [Customer-Driven Severity Scale – only accessible to CSD staff](#)
- [DSHS 14-381, WorkFirst Individual Responsibility Plan \(IRP\) \(Shana software must be installed to use this form.\)](#)
- [Personal Pathway \(DSHS 11-154\)](#)

- WAH Application IRP
- WorkFirst Partner Directory – *only accessible to CSD staff*
- WorkFirst Website
[WAH Application IRP](#)
- ~~— DSHS 14 381, WorkFirst Individual Responsibility Plan (IRP) (Shana software must be installed to use this form.)~~
- ~~— WorkFirst Website~~
- ~~— Personal Pathway (DSHS 11-154)~~
- ~~— WorkFirst Partner Directory – *only accessible to CSD staff*~~
- ~~— Customer Driven Severity Scale – *only accessible to CSD staff*~~
- ~~— Personal Pathway (DSHS 11-154)~~
- ~~— WorkFirst Partner Directory – *only accessible to CSD staff*~~
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