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STATE INSTRUCTION NUMBER 25-09

To: Local Workforce Area Signatory Officials
Local Workforce Area Board Chairs
Local Workforce Area Administrators
DEW Area Directors
DEW Regional Managers

Subject: Collection and Use of Social Security Numbers

Issuance Date: January 20, 2026

Effective Date: January 20, 2026

Purpose: To provide guidance regarding the collection and use of social security numbers (SSNs).

References:

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Public Law 113-128, Section 512(dd)
- Social Security Act, 42 U.S.C. 403
- Privacy Act of 1974, Public Law 93-579
- 45 CFR Chapter II; 29 CFR § 38
- Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) No. 5-08; 10-23, Change 3; 19-16; 23-19, Change 1 and 2
- South Carolina Financial Identity Fraud and Identity Theft Protection Act
- State Instruction Letters (SILs) 16-11, Change 1; 25-02

Background: The Department of Employment and Workforce (DEW) must balance the need to collect participant SSNs for performance and reporting requirements with the obligation to limit the burden of data collection and maintain participant privacy. Federal and state laws clarify the allowance of and restrict the collection, use, maintenance, and disposal of SSNs.

See the attached *Privacy Statement* for use in the Local Workforce Development Areas (LWDAs).

Policy: DEW requires that LWDAs, DEW staff, SC Works center staff and partners communicate and adhere to the restrictions and procedures relevant to SSNs.

Staff must request the SSN of individuals seeking services other than self-service and information, including all WIOA participants, to calculate program performance measure outcomes. In the request, staff must explain how the participant's SSN will be used and how their privacy will be ensured. For whichever WIOA program the participant is in, staff must:

- Request the SSN and verify with acceptable documentation (such as a driver's license)
- Record and save the SSN in SCWOS, which securely stores all participant documentation
- **DO NOT** make a copy of any documentation

Pseudo-SSN. Participants are not required to provide an SSN and must not be denied participation in workforce programs based on refusal. If an individual refuses to provide an SSN, staff must click the appropriate checkbox for SCWOS to generate a pseudo-SSN. As the SSN is used via crossmatching with unemployment insurance (UI) wage data to identify employment outcomes, staff should conduct follow up to obtain supplemental data as verification of performance outcomes when the SSN has not been provided.

Redaction of SSN. The full SSN must not be required on any forms used in the LWDAs, developed at the state or local level. If necessary, no more than the last four digits of the SSN may be used (e.g., XXX-XX-__ __). Documentation that contains a customer's SSN, as well as documents received from workforce partners, must be maintained in compliance with State Instruction 25-02, *Electronic and Physical Redactions of PII and Other Sensitive Information*.

Disposal. The disposal of customer information must ensure confidentiality. Upon expiration of the record retention period, disposal of participant records must ensure confidential information is unreadable or undecipherable.

Action: Please ensure that all appropriate staff receive and understand this policy.

Inquiries: Questions may be directed to WorkforcePolicy@dew.sc.gov.

Nina Staggers

Nina Staggers, Assistant Executive Director
Workforce Development Division

Attachment:

- Privacy Statement

PRIVACY STATEMENT

The South Carolina workforce system is strongly committed to maintaining the privacy of confidential information provided by its customers. Personally identifiable information is kept electronically in a secure, encrypted database. Hard copy documents and forms are also maintained in a secure and confidential manner. Access to information is restricted to authorized entities associated with the operation and performance of workforce programs. The collection, use, and disclosure of your information is further governed by state and federal laws that protect the privacy of customer information.

Providing your social security number is not mandatory. However, the collection of your social security number and other identifying information will assist us in coordinating services and benefits while you are participating in a workforce program. This information also helps us evaluate the success of our programs to ensure continued funding from the United States Department of Labor.