

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 01-26
	DATE July 8, 2026

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION DIRECTORS
STATE ADULT EDUCATION DIRECTORS
COMMUNITY COLLEGES AND TRIBAL COLLEGES
JOB CORPS CENTERS
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARDS AND DIRECTORS
LABOR COMMISSIONERS
AMERICAN JOB CENTERS

FROM: HENRY MACK, ED.D. 
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Public Workforce Training for Acquisition of a Commercial Driver’s License

1. **Purpose.** To clarify English language proficiency requirements for Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training participants.
2. **Action Requested.** Workforce development and education grantees should review their training policies to ensure that individuals seeking a CDL are prepared to meet all of that occupation’s licensing requirements, including language requirements. Please also share this Training and Employment Notice (TEN) with relevant staff in the public workforce and education systems and American Job Center (AJC) staff.
3. **Summary and Background.**
 - a. Summary – This TEN contains important considerations for the public workforce system when assisting English language learners seeking employment and training in careers requiring a CDL.
 - b. Background – English language proficiency remains a key component of the CDL determination of eligibility at the federal governance level and through each stage, from training enrollment to testing to on-road operation. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety Administration (FMCSA), the primary federal agency governing commercial driving, mandates English proficiency as a condition of CDL eligibility. Under 49 CFR § 391.11(b)(2), a driver must be able to:
 - Read and speak English sufficiently to converse with the general public
 - Understand highway traffic signs and signals written in English
 - Respond to official inquiries (e.g., from law enforcement or inspectors)
 - Make entries on reports and records required by federal regulations

This is an absolute federal requirement. It applies in all states and cannot be waived at the state level for interstate commerce. In April 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14286, *Enforcing Commonsense Rules of the Road for America's Truck Drivers*, and FMCSA subsequently updated its enforcement policy guidance making it clear that if a driver is found to be in violation of 49 CFR Section 391.11(b)(2), a citation and placement in out-of-service status will follow. Lastly, on May 14, 2025, the Employment and Training Administration published sub-regulatory guidance in the form of frequently asked questions (FAQ) to clarify the information employers are required to provide when seeking foreign workers who may be CDL holders. This FAQ is linked in the reference section below and should inform partner education and training providers.

4. Considerations for the Public Workforce System for CDL-Related Job Seeker Services

Demand for workers with CDLs remains steady, and careers in truck driving are a popular choice among job seeker customers. Many states include CDL training programs on their list of training programs approved for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds, which participants can access if approved for an individual training account or on-the-job training. The majority of CDL training programs—whether conducted by community colleges, truck driving schools, or carrier-sponsored schools—require the individual's possession of basic English literacy before enrollment. The written curriculum, manuals, and tests should be in English, and the tests should be administered in English.

Given the federal mandate for English language proficiency to successfully obtain a CDL, public workforce system staff should take immediate steps to effectively assist job seekers that want to pursue a career requiring a CDL. As required under WIOA section 134(c)(3)(A) and 20 C.F.R. 680.210, training services through the adult and dislocated worker programs may only be provided to individuals that “have the skills and qualifications to participate successfully in training services”.

The following actions for such job seekers should include:

- Conduct 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 can inform the decision for enrollment (or non-enrollment) in CDL training.
- Determine the potential for co-enrollment in the WIOA Title II Adult Education program for participants seeking a CDL who need English language education.
- Use integrated education and training (IET) approaches, wherever possible, as a method to integrate programs and funding and strengthen career pathway programs.

An IET approach provides adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. An IET program includes the following three components: adult education and literacy activities, workforce preparation activities, and workforce training. The U.S. Department of

Education’s Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education has developed a toolkit that can prove useful in the development or review of an IET program.¹ As best practices for English language acquisition for CDL contexts, training programs should:

- Heavily weight oral communication, listening comprehension, and pronunciation of safety-critical terms, because much of the CDL English requirement is spoken (conversing with the public, and responding to inspectors about loading, tie down, weight distribution, how different materials affect braking and turning, etc.).
- Develop or adopt English second language curricula specifically built around trucking and transportation vocabulary. This includes regulatory and safety terminology, hazmat placard reading and emergency response language, and communication with dispatchers, shippers, receivers, and law enforcement.
- Establish explicit, written proficiency benchmarks, including such details as vocabulary and fluency, mapped to the federal regulatory standards—not vague thresholds—so that both instructors and learners have a clear target.

Education and workforce partners should not lower the bar, but invest in the ramp, e.g., pre-training language acquisition, bridge programs, and integrated instruction, so learners can meet federal requirements before they are licensed and operate commercially. Licensing someone who cannot meet federal requirements exposes them, the public, and the training provider to significant risk.

5. Inquiries. Please direct inquiries to the appropriate Regional Office.

6. References.

- Federal Motor Carrier Safety Regulations, [49 CFR § 391.11\(b\)\(2\)](#)
- [Executive Order 14286](#), *Enforcing Commonsense Rules of the Road for America’s Truck Drivers*, April 28, 2025
- [Executive Order 14224](#), *Designating English as the Official Language of the United States*, March 1, 2025
- [Minimum Job Requirements for the Operation of Commercial Motor Vehicles](#), published by the Employment and Training Administration’s Office of Foreign Labor Certification, May 14, 2026
- Press Release: [US Department of Labor reinforces English language proficiency requirements for foreign workers operating commercial motor vehicles | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

7. Attachment(s). N/A

¹ See *Integrated Education and Training Design Toolkit*, <https://lincs.ed.gov/sites/default/files/2025-05/IET-Toolkit-2025.pdf>