

YOUTH OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

December 17, 2020

8:30 A.M.

Zoom Platform

PRESENT: K. Shanks-Booth, V. Zeplin, S. Kittel

EXCUSED: T. Watts, N. Branosky

GUEST:

STAFF: S. Alvord, D. Achilles

CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Shanks-Booth called the meeting to order at 8:43 a.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES – November 18, 2020

It was moved by Ms. Zeplin and seconded by Ms. Shanks-Booth and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of November 18, 2020.

WIOA POLICY REVIEW – Basic Skills Deficiency and Objective Assessment

Ms. Alvord reported to the committee that the WIOA Work Experience policy and Incentive policy have been approved by the Board at the Tuesday, December 15th board meeting. Ms. Alvord reported that we are working on revising the Basic Skills Deficiency Policy and Objective Assessment Policy to update with alternative assessments to assess basic skills. These updates are due to no longer having access to METRIX online assessment tools, which provided us with the additional assessments needed to make those policies robust under NYSDOL requirements.

UPDATES & DISCUSSION

Ms. Alvord reported that the Career Center has hired Ms. Callahan to be the Workforce Development Coordinator (Ms. Callahan previously worked at the Career Center as Communications Specialist and supported the Youth program this year's summer youth employment program.) The Career Center has also hired a new Workforce Development Specialist (to replace B. Hardesty who retire over the summer) and will be hiring for a new Communications Specialist this year.

Ms. Alvord will be modifying RFP's for Summer Youth Employment Program 2021 and will be getting them to committee to review. The committee offered many suggestions for improvement of the SYEP RFP to push for increased diversity and equity in recruitment and job placement. The committee also discussed ideas for increasing the diversity of RFP applicants and would like to see more competition and innovation this year.

Ms. Alvord informed that the January 21, 2021 YOC meeting will include Career Center staff for a quarterly update on the JobLink program. Ms. Mouillesseaux (Interim Director) will attend to introduce Ms. Callahan (Workforce Development Specialist). Committee asked that they come prepared to discuss current JobLink status and plans for outreach and recruitment.

ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Shanks-Booth adjourned the meeting at 09:28 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 21, 2021.

Tompkins County Workforce Development Board

WIOA YOUTH Basic Skills Deficiency Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for determining eligibility of youth based on Basic Skills Deficiency criteria.

Background

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 20 CFR 681.290(a)(1) states that LWDBs must use standardized testing instruments to demonstrate that a youth reads and/or computes math at or below the 8th grade level.

WIOA 20 CFR 681.290(b) states that LWDBs must create a basic skills deficiency policy for youth who are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

In order to assess whether a youth meets the Basic Skills Deficiency definition, LWDBs must:

- Use valid and reliable assessment(s) that are appropriate for the target population, showing that the youth is unable to demonstrate the competencies described in the definition;
- Use appropriate, fair, and cost-effective assessments that are well-matched to the test administrator's qualifications, easy to administer, and have results which are easy to interpret
- Provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for special populations (i.e. individuals with disabilities and individuals who are English Language Learners)

Policy

For eligibility under WIOA using "Basic Skills Deficiency" as the youth's eligibility criteria, **Out of School Youth (OSY)** must be:

- between the ages of 16-24 at the time of eligibility determination, and
- have a high school or HSE diploma, and
- be basic skills deficient, and
- be low income.

Being Basic Skills Deficient alone **does not** make a youth eligible for WIOA services. All four (4) criteria must be met: age 16-24, HS/HSE diploma, Basic Skills Deficient and low income.

For eligibility under WIOA using "Basic Skills Deficiency" as the youth's eligibility criteria, **In School Youth (ISY)** must be:

- between the ages of 14-21 at the time of determining eligibility, and
- attending or enrolled in secondary or for-credit postsecondary school at the time of eligibility determination, and
- be low income, and
- be basic skills deficient (either deficient in basic skills **or** an English Language learner who is deficient in basic skills).

Being Basic Skills Deficient alone **does not** make a youth eligible for WIOA services. All four (4) criteria must be met: age 14-21, attending/enrolled in school, low income, and Basic Skills Deficient.

It is the policy of the TCWDB to determine eligibility under Basic Skills Deficiency by using **one (1)** of the following assessments. **Use of previous basic skills assessment results are permitted if the assessments were conducted within the past six (6) months.**

Reasonable Accommodations will be provided for individuals with documented disabilities and individuals who are English Language Learners. Accommodations to include, but not be limited to: extending test taking time, distraction-free spaces, use of technology aides, paper-based exams, accessible testing stations, web-based accommodations, and other accommodations as based on the policies of the test creators. More information regarding accommodations can be found at: www.ada.gov.

A.) Approved standardized testing instrument to demonstrate a youth reads and/or computes math at or below the **8th grade level**, determined using the National Reporting System (NRS) **Educational Functioning Level 4** (“High Intermediate Basic Education”):

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)

B.) Approved standardized testing instrument(s) to demonstrate a youth reads and/or speaks English at or below the **NRS Educational Functioning Level 5** (“High Intermediate English as a Second Language”):

- Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy or
- Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 2.0

Tompkins County Workforce Development Board WIOA YOUTH Objective Assessment Policy

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for program staff to follow for completing Objective Assessments in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program prior to a youths' enrollment. The outlined policy provides a process that will identify youths' service needs, academic levels, goals, interests, skill levels, abilities, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and measure their barriers and strengths. This process includes a review of a youth's basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability potential, and developmental needs. The result of completing this process is having comprehensive information to work with in establishing an appropriate Individual Service Strategy as well as providing the youth with an understanding of how a variety of their personal attributes affect their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments.

Background

For a youth to be enrolled in the WIOA Youth program, Objective Assessments must first be completed. The U.S. Dept. of Labor Employment & Training Administration's (DOLETA) TEGL 21-16 states that "the WIOA youth program design requires an objective assessment of academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant". The required Objective Assessments review includes the following areas:

- Basic Skills
- Occupational Skills
- Prior Work Experience
- Employability
- Interests
- Aptitudes
- Supportive Service Needs
- Developmental Needs
- Strengths

The DOLETA TEGL 21-16 states that the Objective Assessments must consider a youth's strengths rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement. The TEGL 21-16 further states that assessments used must be: valid and reliable; appropriate, fair and cost effective; be well-matched to the test administrator's qualifications; and be easy to administer and interpret results. Alternatively, skills-related gains may also be determined through less formal assessment techniques such as observation, folder reviews, or interview. These assessments may be provided directly through WIOA youth program staff, and/or through referrals to national and community-based partners and resources.

Policy

Prior to enrollment in the WIOA Youth program, youth must complete the following Objective Assessments. This policy defines what will be used to assess each of the required steps and how those methods will be recorded in the youths' paper files and in OSOS. **All youth must complete the requirements listed below prior to being enrolled in the youth program** (i.e. before first service is entered in OSOS).

The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) will be utilized to record and document notes regarding each Objective Assessment criteria with selected strategy for working with that youth on maintaining or improving their skills in each area. Program Staff will use the ISS to document that the initial Objective Assessments have been completed prior to enrollment with date and signature of staff. Any changes to the ISS will need to be dated and signed by the youth as well. ISS documentation (paper file) will match what is input in OSOS (electronic file).

Example:

BASIC SKILLS – Method of assessment used: TABE test, math and reading (test date xx-xx-xx). Results of assessment: Youth scored at 6th grade reading level and 5th grade math level. Determined that youth is lacking basic skills in reading and math. Strategy: Refer youth to XX agency to provide academic support, tutoring services.

Procedure

To assess the Objective Assessment criteria, please utilize the following directives issued by the LWDB. In all pertinent circumstances, **Reasonable Accommodations** will be provided for individuals with disabilities, individuals who are English Language Learners, and individuals assessed as being Basic Skills Deficient for eligibility purposes (see LWDB Basic Skills Deficiency Policy for more information). Accommodations to include, but not be limited to: extending test taking time, distraction-free spaces, use of technology aides, paper-based exams, accessible testing stations, web-based accommodations, and other accommodations as based on the policies of the test creators. More information regarding accommodations can be found at: www.ada.gov.

Use of previous basic skills assessment results are permitted if the assessments were conducted within the past six (6) months.

Please keep copies of all corresponding assessments/documents (i.e. interest profilers, test scores, etc.) in the youth’s paper file, along with their updated ISS form.

Basic Skills:

Option 1 – A H.S. Diploma, H.S.E., or passing report card*/transcript** dated within 6 months prior to date of enrollment identifies the youth as “not Basic Skills Deficient” (BSD).

**Passing report card is an overall grade of 65 or higher (less is considered BSD)*

***Passing transcript is a GPA of 2.0 or higher (less is considered BSD)*

Option 2 – TABE score of below 8th grade reading or math level, dated within 6 months prior to date of enrollment, identifies the youth as “Basic Skills Deficient”. A score at or higher than an 8th grade level would identify the youth as “not BSD”.

Interests:

Option 1 – O*NET Interest Profiler (available online at <https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/> - youth will be required to create a profile on Career Zone; if youth do not want to create a profile at this time, the same

assessment tool can be located at: <https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>) – print a summary of the results for youth’s file. For youth ages 18+, it is recommended to create a profile with Job Zone (instead of Career Zone) – <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov> – the “Career Interest” profiler on Job Zone will produce similar results to the O*NET Interest Profiler.

Option 2 – If youth can already identify a specific career interest, please use the American Job Center Network’s <https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org//Target.aspx> to explore that career and identify the skills and training that correspond with that career. Print record of results for youth’s file.

Occupational Skills & Prior Work Experience:

*Note: Occupational Skills refers to **employment related skills** (i.e. money handling, lifeguard certification, using computers/programs, etc.) that relate to specific job duties and responsibilities.*

Option 1 – Demonstrated work history via resume; record of certifications/licenses

Option 2 - Interview with youth to include description of past work experience, including volunteer work, “under the table” or gig work, subsidized and unsubsidized experiences.

Employability:

*Note: Employability is based on **professional skills** (i.e. time management, communication, conflict resolution, etc.) to be determined by assessment, self-attestation, and/or ability to produce professional references.*

To determine a youth’s employability, staff must utilize one of the following options:

Option 1 – Demonstrated longevity in work history (i.e. participant has worked continuously for 6 mos.) as documented on youth’s resume and/or the youth can produce a work-related professional reference.

Option 2 – Career Zone Section 05 “Job Readiness”: Youth will self-attest to their skills which will generate a list of career options for their skill sets. <https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/> Youth ages 18+ can take the “Skills Survey” assessment at <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov> for a similar skills-based report.

Option 3 – Job Zone’s “My Employability Score” on <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov/> - This basic employment profile collects data related to employment prospects and weighs this data based on which factors contribute more heavily to employment. The higher the Employability Score, the greater your competitive advantage in the labor market. The Employability Score is based on how well a job-seekers’ employment profile matches their target occupation and labor market demand. Both positive and negative factors contributing to the Employability Score will be identified to determine what factors to target as well as potential barriers to the youth’s employability that will be to be addressed.

Aptitude:

Note: Aptitude measures the technical aspects of career readiness (i.e. level of suitability and/or fitness for specific tasks).

To determine a youth’s aptitude levels, staff must utilize one of the following options:

Option 1 – Record of training program completion, certification(s), license(s), or credential(s) needed for specific career pathways and/or occupations.

Option 2 – Career Zone Section 04 “Abilities” – youth will complete this self-assessment of a variety of abilities, including their Sensory Abilities, Physical Abilities, Psychomotor Abilities, and Cognitive Abilities. This tool will generate a list of career options based on the youth’s self-reported strengths. This tool can be found at: <https://www.careerzone.ny.gov>. For youth ages 18+, the Job Zone “Abilities Profiler” is appropriate for this purpose. This tool can be found at: <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov>. Records of completion can be printed for youth’s file.

Supportive Service Needs:

Supportive Services include barriers such as: housing, transportation, communication, childcare, clothing, and other needs. Staff will conduct an interview with youth to identify various barriers to employment based on youth’s self-attestation. Staff will use the local ISS form for recording of barriers and any supportive services provided should be documented in the youth’s paper file and in OSOS following the local WDB Supportive Services Policy.

Developmental Needs:

To determine a youth’s developmental needs, staff must utilize the following options:

Requirement 1 – Conduct a brief mental health assessment using evidence-based assessment tools: Generalized Anxiety Disorder Survey (GAD-7) and the Depression Survey (PHQ-9). Results would determine a youth’s need for supportive services, referral to counseling, and/or general work readiness. Mild results (scoring between 0-5) would indicate that there is not a mental health barrier present at this time; moderate results (scoring between 6-10 points) would demonstrate that the youth are likely suitable for work placement but may need supports (requirements would include to attend a variety of skill-building workshops, referral to external services if needed, etc.); moderately severe-severe (scoring between 11-21 points) would demonstrate that the youth is not suitable for work placement at this time and need mental health referral first. The tools can be found at: <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/uploads/score-sheet-gad-7-anxiety-and-phq-9-depression.pdf> ; please maintain a record of the youths’ assessment in their file.

Requirement 2 – Conduct a thorough evaluation of the youth’s developmental needs using the Casey Life Skills Assessment tool. This tool will assess the youth’s skills in the following areas: daily living, self-care, relationships and communication, housing and money management, work and study life, career and education planning, and looking forward. Youths’ responses to the questions in this survey will identify areas of need for assignment to relevant workshop offerings, training and/or external referral services. This assessment tool can be found at: http://www.casey.org/media/CLS_assessments_LifeSkills.pdf; please maintain a record of the youth’s assessment in their file.

Optional – Official documentation provided by school or medical professional (i.e. IEP documents or medical note from a licensed professional).

Strengths:

Determination of the youth's strengths should be summarized from the completion of the above objective assessments. Staff should review the summary with the youth and add any additional comments the youth may wish to contribute. Staff observations may be recorded in the Strengths section of the local ISS but should be recorded as such (i.e. Staff observes that this youth demonstrates patience and perseverance in completion of online assessments.). Staff observations must be objective in nature and supported by youth approval (signature/date).

Individual Service Strategy Plan: Upon completion of all Objective Assessments, staff will be prompted on their form to complete an Individual Service Strategy Plan, which summarizes all of the "next steps" outlined from the Objective Assessments. Youth will complete a Certification to attest that the information provided is accurate to the best of their ability and that they agree to the steps outlined by the staff person in the ISS Plan.