

New Jersey

Workforce Innovation Notice 8-17(P)

TO: Workforce Development System

SUBJECT: Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gain Indicators of Performance

DATE: January 17, 2018

Purpose

To provide guidance related to the Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills Gain indicators of performance.

Background

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 10-16 provided guidance on the six indicators of performance under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These indicators are used by all four titles of WIOA; two of the indicators, Credential Attainment and Measurable Skills gain will be covered in this guidance. These indicators apply to all core one-stop partner programs-WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated and Youth; Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy(AEFLA); Title III Wagner-Peyser Labor Exchange Services; Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Services. This guidance will detail the different ways the indicators are applied to each program.

Credential Attainment

Credential Attainment is an indicator of the percentage of customers who attain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma or *its recognized equivalent*, during participation in or within one year after exit from the program. Participants who are enrolled in an education or training program, excluding on-the-job (OJT) and customized training.

A participant who has attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent is included in the percentage of participants who have attained a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent **only** if the participant also is employed or is enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential **within one year after exit from the program**.

Definition of Credential: This indicator measures attainment of two types of credentials: either a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.

A recognized postsecondary credential is defined as a credential consisting of:

- An industry-recognized certificate or certification
- A certificate of completion of an apprenticeship
- A license recognized by the State involved or Federal government
- An associate or baccalaureate degree,
- Graduate degrees for purposes of the VR program ONLY

A recognized postsecondary credential is awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation. These technical or industry/occupational skills generally are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations. Neither certificates awarded by workforce development boards (WDBs), nor work readiness certificates, are included in this definition because neither type of certificate documents the measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. Likewise, such certificates must recognize technology or industry/occupational skills for the specific industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., even if such general skills certificates are broadly required to qualify for entry-level employment or advancement in employment.

Below are entities that issue recognized post-secondary credentials:

- State educational agency or a State agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a State;
- An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by title IV of that Act. This includes:
 - Community colleges,
 - Proprietary schools,
 - All other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs;
- An institution of higher education that is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes.
- A professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc., Machining Level I credential) or product manufacturer or developer (e.g., recognized Microsoft Information Technology certificates, such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP), Certified Novell Engineer, a Sun Certified Java Programmer, etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities;
- Employment and Training Administration's Office of Apprenticeship or a State Apprenticeship Agency;

- A public regulatory agency, which awards a credential upon an individual’s fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., Federal Aviation Administration aviation mechanic license, or a State-licensed asbestos inspector);
- A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons.
- Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry skills standards and certification requirements.

Definition of a Secondary School Diploma: For purposes of the credential attainment performance indicator, a secondary school diploma (or alternate diploma) (commonly referred to as high school diploma) is one that is recognized by a State and that is included for accountability purposes under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act. A secondary school equivalency certification signifies that a student has completed the requirements for a high school education. The types of recognized equivalents, for those not covered under ESEA, that would satisfy this performance indicator are those recognized by a State.

Examples of secondary school diplomas, alternate diplomas, and recognized equivalents recognized by individual States include:

- Obtaining certification of attaining passing scores on a State-recognized high school equivalency test.
- Earning a secondary school diploma or State-recognized equivalent through a credit bearing secondary education program sanctioned by State law, code, or regulation.
- Obtaining certification of passing a State recognized competency-based assessment.
- Completion of a specified number of college credits.

Types of Acceptable Credentials: The following are acceptable types of credentials that count toward the credential attainment indicator:

- Secondary School diploma or recognized equivalent
- Associate’s degree
- Bachelor’s degree
- Graduate degree for purposes of the VR program
- Occupational licensure
- Occupational certificate, including Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Education educational certificates
- Occupational certification

- Other recognized certificates of industry/occupational skills completion sufficient to qualify for entry-level or advancement in employment

Items that are not considered credentials

- Work readiness credentials
- Locally-developed credentials
- OSHA certification
- CPR/AED Certifications

In general, “foundational” certifications are not considered industry-recognized credentials.

Who is included in the Calculation of the Credential Attainment Indicator: Participants who exit and are in a postsecondary education or training program, or who are in a secondary education program (at or above the 9th grade level) without a secondary school diploma or equivalent. Participants in work-based OJT or customized training are excluded.

For each core program, a description of who is considered to be enrolled in an “education or training program”, and thus included in the credential attainment indicator, follows:

- **Title I Adult:** All Adult program participants who received training that was not OJT or Customized Training
- **Title I Dislocated Worker:** All Dislocated Worker program participants who received training that was not OJT or Customized Training
- **Title I Youth:** All in-school Youth (ISY) are included in the credential attainment indicator since they are attending secondary or postsecondary school. Only out-of-school Youth (OSY) who participate in one of the following are included in the credential attainment indicator:
 - The program element occupational skills training
 - Secondary education during participation in the title I Youth program
 - Postsecondary education during participation in the title I Youth program
 - Title II-funded adult education during participation in the title I Youth program
 - YouthBuild during participation in the title I Youth program
 - Job Corps during participation in the title I Youth program

Title II AEFLA: The following AEFLA program participants are included in this measure:

1)For the secondary school credential: Participants without a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent, who were enrolled in a secondary education program at or above the 9th grade level.

2)For the postsecondary credential: Participants who were co-enrolled in a postsecondary education or training program.

Title IV VR: The following VR program participants are included in this measure:

1) All participants who have participated in an educational or training program leading to a postsecondary credential.

2) All participants who are enrolled in secondary education and who have the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its equivalent identified on their Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE).

Exclusions from the Measure:

Participants who exited a program and who were enrolled in the following are excluded from the credential attainment indicator:

- a. OJT only;
- b. Customized training only; or
- c. The title III Employment Service program (Wagner-Peyser) only.

Credential Attainment Summary

- Includes participants enrolled in education or training program
- Excludes customers in OJT and customized training
- Achievement of a recognized post-secondary credential or secondary school diploma/equivalent
- Exit-based, can be attained up to one year after exit
- Participant must be employed **or** enrolled in recognized post-secondary credential within one year of exit for a successful outcome.

Who is included in the Calculation of the Credential Attainment Indicator: Participants who exit and are in a postsecondary education or training program, or who are in a secondary education program (at or above the 9th grade level) without a secondary school diploma or equivalent, are included in the credential attainment indicator, subject to the “Special Rule” below. However, participants enrolled in work-based OJT or customized training are excluded from this indicator because such training does not typically lead to a credential.

Special Rule Relating to Secondary School Diplomas and Recognized Equivalents in the Calculation of the Credential Attainment Indicator:

Participants who obtain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent must also meet an additional condition before they are counted as a successful outcome and included in the numerator of the credential attainment indicator. These participants must be ***employed, or enrolled in an education or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential*** within one year following exit.

Measurable Skill Gains Calculation

The percentage of program participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains, defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

| |
|--|
| 1. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level |
| 2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent |
| 3. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards |
| 4. Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training |
| 5. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks such as knowledge-based exams |

Examples:

A participant is enrolled in a 4-year registered apprenticeship program: the measurable skill gains indicator tracks the skills the participant gains throughout the reporting period, not just at the end of the 4-year training program

Low-skilled adult participants of an adult education program: the measurable skill gains indicator provides an opportunity to track and report gains in reading, writing, mathematics, and English proficiency.

Documenting Progress for Types of Measurable Skill Gains

1. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary level – Programs may measure educational functioning level gain in one of three ways:

(a) States may compare the participant's initial educational functioning level, as measured by a pre-test, with the participant's educational functioning level, as measured by a post-test;

(b) States that offer adult high school programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent may measure and report educational gain through the awarding of credits or Carnegie units; or

(c) States may report an educational functioning level gain for participants who exit a program below the postsecondary level and enroll in postsecondary education and training during the program year. A program below the postsecondary level applies to participants enrolled in a basic education program

2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent – Programs may document attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent if the participant obtains certification of attaining passing scores on all parts of a State-recognized high school equivalency test, or the participant obtains a diploma or State-recognized equivalent documenting satisfactory completion of secondary studies or an alternate diploma, including a high school or adult secondary school diploma.

3. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit’s academic standards – For secondary education, this gain may be documented through receipt of a secondary transcript or report card for one semester showing that the participant is achieving the State unit’s policies for academic standards. For postsecondary education, this gain must demonstrate a sufficient number of credit hours—which is at least 12 hours per semester or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over the course of two completed consecutive semesters during the program year—that shows a participant is achieving the State unit’s academic standards (or the equivalent for other than credit hour programs).

4. Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training – Documentation for this gain may vary, as programs should identify appropriate methodologies based upon the nature of services being provided, but progress reports must document substantive skill development that the participant has achieved. The gain may be documented by a satisfactory or better progress report from an employer or training provider. Progress reports may include training reports on milestones completed as the individual masters the required job skills, or steps to complete an OJT or apprenticeship program. Increases in pay resulting from newly acquired skills or increased performance also can be used to document progress.

5. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams – Documentation for this gain may include passage of a component exam in a Registered Apprenticeship program, employer-required knowledge-based exam, satisfactory attainment of an element on an industry or occupational competency-based assessment, or other completion test necessary to obtain a credential.

The following participants in education or training programs are included:

Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker – All participants who are in a title I Adult- or Dislocated Worker-funded training program are included in the measurable skill gains indicator (which includes funding a training program for a secondary school program equivalent). This includes all participants in work-based training.

Title I Youth – All ISY are included in the measurable skill gains indicator since they are attending secondary or postsecondary school. Only OSY who are in one of the following are included in the indicator:

- The program element occupational skills training
- Secondary education during participation in the title I Youth program
- Postsecondary education during participation in the title I Youth program
- Title II-funded adult education during participation in the title I Youth program
- The YouthBuild program during participation in the title I Youth program

- Job Corps during participation in the title I Youth program

Title II AEFLA – All participants in title II AEFLA programs are considered to be in an education program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and, as such, would be included in the measurable skill gains indicator.

Title IV VR – All VR program participants who are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential, which is identified on the individual's IPE, would be included in the measurable skill gains indicator.

Additional Information

Participants are only included in the denominator one time per reporting period (i.e., program year), regardless of how many skill gains they achieve in a given program year unless the individual has more than one period of participation in a given program year. Likewise, participants are only included in the numerator one time per reporting period (i.e., program year), regardless of how many skill gains they achieve in a given program year unless the individual has more than one period of participation in a given program year;

A participant who exits the program and re-enrolls in the program during the same program year and is in an education or training program will be in the indicator two times for that particular program year,

The measurable skill gains indicator is different from the other indicators because it is not exit-based, meaning that a participant can achieve a measurable skill gain while still participating in a program; and

Programs should not delay enrollment or services to participants until a new program year even if programs believe there is insufficient time for the participant to make any type of measurable skill gain by the end of that program year.

For performance accountability purposes, the measurable skill gains indicator calculates the number of participants who attain at least one type of gain during each period of participation within a given program year. **Since this indicator is not exit-based, each unique program entry date (not exit date) triggers inclusion in the calculation.** Participants will achieve a successful outcome in the indicator as long as they attain one type of gain applicable to the core programs.

Measurable Skill Gain Summary

- Includes participants who are in an educational or training program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential OR employment
- “Real-time” indicator; attained *during* program participation
- All ISY are included
- OSY may be included in indicator depending on the service(s) received

Exclusions-All Programs

- The participant exits the program because he or she has become incarcerated in a correctional institution or has become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support such as a hospital or treatment center during the course of receiving services as a participant.
- The participant exits the program because of medical treatment and that treatment is expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program.
- The participant is deceased.
- The participant exits the program because the participant is a member of the National Guard or other reserve military unit of the armed forces and is called to active duty for at least 90 days.
- **VR Program Only**-The participant, who was determined to be eligible for program services, is later determined not to have met the program's eligibility criteria. This exclusion applies only to the VR program, in which participant eligibility is routinely revisited during the participation period. For example, in the VR program, an individual may be presumptively eligible in accordance with program regulations and later the individual is found to be too severely disabled to benefit from VR services. As another example, a participant may decide, after receiving some services, to pursue sheltered employment. Because an individual must pursue an employment outcome, and sheltered employment does not meet the definition of an employment outcome for purposes of the VR program, this individual would be determined to be no longer eligible for the VR program. For titles I, II, and III, program eligibility is determined at the time an individual becomes a participant and such eligibility is not revisited during the individual's participation in the program.

Definitions

Employment- When an individual is working in a paid, unsubsidized job or, for participants in titles I, II, or III, working 15 hours or more a week in an unpaid job on a farm or business operated by a family member or participant. A participant enrolled in the title IV VR program must be employed in a job that meets the definition of competitive integrated employment, (see below) (including customized employment, self-employment, telecommuting, or business ownership), or supported employment, as defined in 34 CFR 361.5(c)(53), in competitive integrated employment that is individualized and customized, consistent with the unique strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of the individual, and includes ongoing support services for individuals with the most significant disabilities.

Competitive Integrated Employment – in general, for individuals with disabilities, work performed by an individual on a part-time or full-time basis, including self-employment within an integrated setting within the community. The individual must be compensated at minimum wage or higher, using the higher of the Federal, State, or local rate, and at a rate comparable to the wage paid to non-disabled workers performing the same tasks, including receiving the same benefits and opportunities for advancement.

Exit – As defined for the purpose of performance calculations, exit is the point after which a participant who has received services through any program meets the following criteria:

(1) For the adult, dislocated worker, and youth programs authorized under WIOA title I, the AEFLA program authorized under WIOA title II, and the Employment Service program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA title III, exit date is the last date of service.

(i) The last day of service cannot be determined until at least 90 days have elapsed since the participant last received services; services do not include self-service, information-only services, activities, or follow-up services. This also requires that there are no plans to provide the participant with future services.

(2)(i) For the VR program authorized under title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA title IV (VR program):

(A) The participant's record of service is closed in accordance with 34 CFR 361.56 because the participant has achieved an employment outcome; or

(B) The participant's service record is closed because the individual has not achieved an employment outcome or the individual has been determined ineligible after receiving services in accordance with 34 CFR 361.43.

(ii) Notwithstanding any other provision of this section, a participant will not be considered as meeting the definition of exit from the VR program if the participant's service record is closed because the participant has achieved a supported employment outcome in an integrated setting but not in competitive integrated employment.

Reportable Individual-A reportable individual is a person who has demonstrated an intent to use program services and who meets reporting criteria, including the following:

1) Individuals who provide identifying information

2) Individuals who use only self-service systems

3) Individual who receive information-only services or activities:

4) VR Programs Only-A student with a disability who solely receives re-employment transition services and who does not apply for VR services, who is not determined eligible, and who does not have an approved Individual Plan for Employment.

For the Title IV VR programs, a participant is a reportable individual who has applied and been determined eligible for VR services, has an approved and signed IPE, and has begun to receive services.

Participant-For the WIOA title I Adult, title I Dislocated Worker, title II, and title III programs, a participant is a reportable individual who has received services other than the services described below (see **Individuals Not Considered Participants**), after satisfying all applicable programmatic requirements for the provision of services, such as eligibility determination.

The definition of participant is generally consistent across the core programs. However, there are some differences based on programmatic requirements.

Youth-A WIOA Title I youth participant is an individual who has been provided **all** of the following:

- 1) An eligibility determination
- 2) The provision of an objective assessment
- 3) Development of an Individual Service Strategy; and
- 4) *Participation* in **any** of the youth program elements (**except follow-up**)

Individuals Not Considered Participants

(i) Individuals in an Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program who have not completed at least 12 contact hours;

(ii) Individuals who only use the self-service system.

(A) Subject to paragraph (a)(3)(ii)(B) of this section, self-service occurs when individuals independently access any workforce development system program's information and activities in either a physical location, such as a one-stop center resource room or partner agency, or remotely via the use of electronic technologies.

(B) Self-service does not uniformly apply to all virtually accessed services. For example, virtually accessed services that provide a level of support beyond independent job or information seeking on the part of an individual would not qualify as self-service.

(iii) Individuals who receive information-only services or activities, which provide readily available information that does not require an assessment by a staff member of the individual's skills, education, or career objectives. **[20 CFR 677.150(a)(3)]**

Period of Participation – for all indicators, except Measurable Skill Gains, a period of participation refers to the period of time beginning when an individual becomes a participant and ending on the participant’s date of exit from the program

Unsubsidized Employment – employment in the private sector or public sector for which the employer does not receive a subsidy from public funds to offset all or a part of the wages and costs of employing an individual.

Action Required

This guidance should be shared with all local workforce development staff and relevant partners.

Rescissions

None

Authority

| | |
|--|----------|
| New Jersey Department of Labor and Workforce Development | X |
| State Employment And Training Commission | |

Questions

For questions regarding this guidance, contact John Bicica, Chief, WDB Coordination and Support, at john.bicica@dol.nj.gov