

New Jersey

Workforce Innovation Notice 8-15

TO: Local Workforce Development Board Directors
One-Stop Operators
Employment Service Managers

FROM: John Bicica, Chief
WIOA Office of Technical Assistance and Capacity Building

DATE: November 4, 2015

SUBJECT: WIOA Youth Assessment and Youth Individual Service Strategies

Purpose: To provide the standards for assessment and the development of Individual Service Strategies under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Youth program. This document is subject to revision as additional guidance is provided by the United States Department of Labor.

References: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Sec..3(33) 129; Sec. 188; 20 CFR 681.290 (c); Training and Employment Guidance Letter 17-05

Background:

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that each youth participant be provided an objective assessment of their academic levels, skill levels and service needs., which assessment shall include a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests an aptitudes (including interest and aptitudes for non-traditional jobs) supportive service needs and developmental needs for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for each participant. [WIOA Sec. 129 (c) (I) (A)]

WIOA requires all local areas to provide youth participants with an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) that is directly linked to one or more indicators of performance and shall identity career pathways that include education and employment goals. [WIOA Sec. 129 (c) (I) (B)]

The requirements established in this document will be used during monitoring conducted by Labor and Workforce Development. Failure to provide the required assessments and/or include all required elements on each ISS will be subject to a finding. This guidance provides the requirements in a checklist format. Additional guidance in the form of technical assistance guides will be issued regarding assessment and ISS development, including identifying career pathways. This document

is subject to revision as additional policy and guidance is provided by the United States Department of Labor.

Action Required:

One-stop management is to ensure that this guidance is shared with all youth staff involved in providing assessment and the development of ISS plans. Local workforce development boards must ensure that these requirements are shared with all partners and contracted providers of WIOA youth services.

Assessment Requirements

Youth staff **must** ensure that every youth participant is provided objective assessment of academic levels, skill levels and supportive service needs as described below:

Academic Levels-Assessment of academic levels must include a review of the youth’s basic skills. Out-of-school youth must be assessed for basic skills utilizing a standardized assessment tool. Such assessment tools must crosswalk to educational functioning levels. Examples include the Test of Adult Basic Education and BEST. The academic levels of in-school youth and recently tested out-of-school youth can be reviewed through previous assessments (see **Previous Assessment** below).

Skill Levels-Assessment of skills includes review of occupational skills, prior work experience, employability and interests and aptitudes
Skill levels may be assessed utilizing aptitude tests, career/interest inventories. Examples include Prove-It and NJ Career Assistance Navigator (NJ CAN).

Supportive Service Needs-Assessment of youth must include a review of the youth’s supportive service needs and developmental needs **for the purpose of identifying career pathways**. Supportive services include transportation child care, dependent care, needs-based payments and other needs that must be addressed to facilitate participation the WIOA youth program.

Career Pathway.—The term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

- (A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;
- (B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the National Apprenticeship Act;
- (C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;
- (D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;
- (E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;
- (F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

(G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster [WIOA Sec. 3(7)]

State definition of Career Pathways (Draft)- Career Pathways are a series of articulated education and training strategies and support services that enable individuals to secure industry relevant certification and obtain employment within an occupation and ultimately advance to higher levels of future education and employment.

Youth with Disabilities

In assessing basic skills, local programs **must** use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population, and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for people with disabilities. [20 CFR 681.290 (c)]

"Individual with a disability" means an individual with any disability as defined in Section 3 of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) as follows: (1) a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the major life activities of such individual; (2) a record of such an impairment; or (3) being regarded as having such an impairment. Information regarding documenting and recording disabilities can be found in the WIOA Youth Eligibility Guidelines, which were issued through New Jersey Workforce Innovation Notice 5-16.

TEGL 17-05 states: Accommodations for the assessment process generally fall in to the following categories:

1. Changes to the methods of **Presentation** of the assessment tool: e.g., providing Braille versions, or orally reading direction or test questions to the test-takers;
2. Changes to the methods of **Response** to the test questions: e.g., having the test-taker point to a response or use a computer for responding;
3. Changes to the **Setting** in which the test is administered: e.g., permitting the test to be taken in small groups as opposed to large groups or an institutional setting; and
4. Changes to the **Timing/Scheduling** of the assessment: e.g., extending the amount of time generally provided for completion of the test, allowing frequent breaks, etc.

Previous Assessment

A new assessment of a participant is not required if the provider carrying out such a program determines it is appropriate to use a recent assessment of the participant conducted pursuant to another education or training program. [WIOA Sec. 129 (c)(1)(A)] Therefore, if a youth has had an assessment within the last six months, and the local area determines it is appropriate for the WIOA program, it may be used in place of a new assessment. For example, if a youth received an assessment through NJ CAN within the previous six months, that assessment may be used for their *skill level* assessment. School records can be used to assess in-school youth academic levels.

Individual Service Strategy Requirements

Youth staff must ensure that every ISS identifies and documents the following:

1. Career Pathway that includes
 - a) Educational goal(s)

- b) Employment goals (including, when appropriate, non-traditional employment goals)

Non-Traditional Employment- The term “nontraditional employment” refers to occupations or fields of work, for which individuals from the gender involved comprise less than 25 percent of the individuals employed in each such occupation or field of work. [WIOA Sec. 3 (33)]

2. Appropriate achievement objectives for the participant, including a direct link to one or more indicators of performance
3. Appropriate services, taking previous assessments into account (The results of the objective assessments must be recorded in the ISS, and the services provided to the youth must reflect the result of the assessments. The youth’s career pathway must also be identified)
4. Activities leading to preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities
5. Any referrals to other services/programs
6. Signature of the participant
7. Signature of youth worker

Indicators of Performance

The Achievement objectives in the ISS are to be linked to one or more indicators of performance under Sec. 116 (b)(2)(A)(ii) of WIOA. The relevant indicators are provided below:

- (I) the percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- (II) the percentage of program participants who are in education or training activities, or in unsubsidized employment, during the fourth quarter after exit from the program;
- (III) the median earnings of program participants who are in unsubsidized employment during the second quarter after exit from the program;
- (IV) the percentage of program participants who obtain a recognized postsecondary credential, or a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (subject to clause (iii)), during participation in or within 1 year after exit from the program;
- (V) 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 toward such a credential or employment

Reminder: These indicators take effect July 1, 2016.

Additional Requirements

- Every ISS must be reviewed at least every six months with the youth’s participation; the youth worker and youth must sign an acknowledgment that the ISS was reviewed

as required. Should the youth worker determine during this review, or at any time, that has been a significant event, an update of the ISS must be developed with the participation of the youth. Examples of significant events include, but are not limited to, the following:

- An achievement objective is met
- Any event that affects the ability of the youth to participate in the WIOA program
- The ISS must identify a particular career pathway for the participant; an objective of “Employment” does not constitute a career pathway. The goals and mix of services (program elements) in the ISS must reflect the unique needs of each participant. It is not acceptable for the majority of ISS plans in a local area to have the same goals and services.
- Youth are to participate in the development of the plan in their ISS.
- The ISS must be shared with youth program providers to ensure that the delivery of services is based on the plan in the ISS.
- Program participation must be linked to the youth’s ISS, not to a provider contract or program years.

Services

The ISS is used to identify the services (program elements) that will assist the youth in achieving their educational and employment goals. Each youth must be provided the program elements that are determined appropriate for them, and it is expected that each youth will receive multiple program elements while enrolled in the WIOA youth program. All youth must be provided follow-up service for at least 12 months following their exit from the program. The 14 program elements are listed below:

(A) tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;

(B) alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

(C) paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include—

(i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;

(ii) pre-apprenticeship programs;

(iii) internships and job shadowing; and

(iv) on-the-job training opportunities;

(D) occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123;

(E) education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(F) leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;

(G) supportive services;

(H) adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;

(I) followup services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;

(J) comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;

(K) financial literacy education;

(L) entrepreneurial skills training;

(M) services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and

(N) activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

Previous Service Strategy

A new service strategy for a participant is not required if the provider carrying out such a program determines it is appropriate to use a recent service strategy developed for the participant under another education or training program. **[WIOA Sec. 129 (c)(1)(B)]**

Therefore, if a service strategy has been developed for a participant within the previous six months, and the local area or provider determines that it is appropriate for the WIOA program, a new one does not have to be developed. However, youth staff must still ensure that the service strategy is reviewed and updated as required. An example of an appropriate previous service strategy could be a plan developed by a Child Study Team, if the plan meets all the criteria described for the ISS, including an employment goal. The youth must sign an acknowledgment that the previous plan will be used as their service strategy for WIOA services.

Summary of Assessment and ISS Requirements

Objective Assessment (1-3 required for all youth)	
1. Academic Levels (Basic Skills-Crosswalks to Educational Functioning Levels)	
2. Skill Levels (Occupational, work history, aptitudes and interests, employability)	
3. Supportive Service Needs (transportation, child/dependent care, needs-based payments, other)	
4. Developmental Needs (as appropriate)	
5. Youth with Disability-Reasonable Accommodations provided as necessary	
Individual Service Strategy	
1. Career Pathways (That are consistent with the results of objective assessment) are identified and include:	
Educational Goals (must be specific)	
Employment Goals	
2. Appropriate achievement objectives for the participant, including a direct link to one or more indicators of performance	
3. Appropriate services (program elements), taking previous assessments into account (Results of the objective assessments are recorded in the ISS, and the services provided to the youth must reflect the result of the assessments)	
4. Activities leading to preparation for postsecondary educational and training opportunities	
5. Signature of the participant	
6. Any referrals to other services/programs	
7. Previous assessment-completed within previous 6 months, meets criteria 1-5 above.	
Other Requirements	
8. ISS is reviewed every six months (signature of youth worker and youth)	
9. ISS is updated as necessary	
10. ISS is shared with the contracted youth service providers	

Sample Individual Service Strategy

Attached is a sample document based on a comprehensive ISS developed by Union County. The only modifications were the revision of the Objectives to specifically require education and employment goals, and the addition of the “Referral to Other Services.” This template provides all required elements of an ISS as described in this guidance. The Monthly Review is a best practice.

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, Office of WIOA Technical Assistance and Capacity Building at john.bicica@dol.nj.gov

Attachment

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

Participant Name: _____ AOSOS Registration No.: _____

Birth Date: _____ Residence/ Community: _____

Education Status:

In-School

Out-of-School Drop-Out Date: _____ High School Grad GED Recipient

Last Grade Completed: _____

Case Manager Assigned: _____

OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT

Basic Skills:

Assessment Instrument: _____

Requires Remediation: Yes No

Pre-Test Scores: Math Grade Level: _____

Reading Grade Level: _____

Post Test Scores: Math Grade Level: _____

Reading Grade Level: _____

Vocational Interests and Aptitudes:

Assessment Instrument: _____ Date: _____

Results: _____

Work History:

Employer: _____ Dates: _____

Duties Performed: _____

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

Employer: _____ Dates: _____

Duties Performed: _____

Career Pathway:

Education Goal(s)

Employment

Goal(s) _____

Supportive Services Needed:

Objective Assessment Summary

(Summarize the information documented to present an overall picture of participant)

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

Referral to Other Services

Date: _____ Agency: _____

Reason: _____

Referral to Other Services

Date: _____ Agency: _____

Reason:: _____

Referral to Other Services

Date: _____ Agency: _____

Reason: _____

PROGRAM ELEMENTS

Based on the objective assessment, documented on pages 1 and 2, please check which of the 14 required program elements will be provided to participant.
(NOTE: not all elements are required for each participant, but all youth must receive follow-up services.)

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential

- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate

- Paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include
 - a. summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
 - b. pre-apprenticeship programs;
 - c. internships and job shadowing; and
 - d. on-the-job training opportunities

- Occupational skill training, which may include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate
- Supportive services
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate
- Financial literacy education
- Entrepreneurial skills training
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

PARTICIPANT CONCURRENCE

1. I have participated in the preparation of this Individual Service Strategy (ISS).
2. I understand and agree with the ISS program elements established for my participation in the program.
3. I agree to participate in program activities as assigned by my case manager to achieve program objectives.
4. I understand WIA is not an entitlement program, and this ISS does not guarantee receipt of any services.
5. I understand that this ISS and/or information in it may be released to appropriate WIA and school personnel.
6. I understand that I have the right to obtain a copy of my ISS at any time.

Age At Program Participation: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Case Manager's Signature: _____

Date: _____

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

NOTE: THIS PAGE MUST CONTAIN BOTH SIGNATURES WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE REPORTED PROGRAM PARTICIPATION DATE

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

Monthly review: _____

(Case manager must initial and date upon monthly review)

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

FOLLOW-UP NOTES

The Contractor is responsible for providing follow-up services for a minimum of 12 months after program participation. Contact must be provided and documented monthly for WIA/WIOA participants and in 6 month intervals for JDF participants to ensure performance measures and participant goals are being achieved. Please include month/day/year for each entry.

1st Month After Exit

Date: _____

2nd Month After Exit

Date: _____

3rd Month After Exit

Date: _____

4th Month After Exit

Date: _____

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

5th Month After Exit

Date: _____

6th Month After Exit

Date: _____

7th Month After Exit

Date: _____

8th Month After Exit

Date: _____

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

9th Month After Exit

Date: _____

10th Month After Exit

Date: _____

11th Month After Exit

Date: _____

12th Month After Exit

Date: _____

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT YOUTH PROGRAM

INDIVIDUAL SERVICE STRATEGY

(Must be kept in client's file)

ADDITIONAL NOTES:
