ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES/PROCEDURES

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Subject: Basic Skills Assessment

Background
The Workforce Development Board of North Missouri is required to assess the basic skills of workforce applicants for Youth eligibility and for an objective assessment of academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant, which includes a review of basic skills.

Purpose
This policy provides guidance to the subrecipients of the Workforce Development Board of North Missouri regarding assessment of basic skills in WIOA Title I financially assisted programs.

WIOA defines a participant as “basic skills deficient” in the following instances:

1. The individual is a youth that has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the eighth (8^{th}) grade level on an accepted standardized test; or is
2. An a youth or adult that is 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 society.

Identifying customers as basic skills deficient allows staff to qualify customers for eligibility, provide for quality and accurate referrals, and monitor effectiveness of the program.

Determination of WIOA Youth Eligibility Based on the BSD Barrier
A formalized assessment will be administered to evaluate the youth’s strengths as well as any areas of deficiency in the academic skills of Reading, Math, and Language. One or more of the following assessments may utilized:

- Test of Adult and Basic Education (TABE), administered by an AEL program approved by DESE
- ACT, TEAS, HESI or other assessments required for admission to post-secondary education that assess Reading, Math, and Language skills.
- Wonderlic/GAIN
- CASAS (Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System)
- Accuplacer

These assessments may be administered by the region’s AEL programs, the client’s chosen training provider or workforce staff as permitted per state issuance.

These assessment results are utilized to document a basic skills deficiency as an eligibility barrier or to determine the youth’s likelihood of success in an academic program. Reasonable accommodations for the testing process will be made available, if

necessary, for individuals with disabilities. Basic skills assessment results administered in the six months prior to WIOA eligibility may also be used.

Determination of Basic Skills for the Objective Assessment (OA)
WIOA requires an objective assessment of each youth to evaluate basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs. The objective assessment must identify the career pathway for the youth participant and is used to develop a corresponding Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

The requirement to review basic skills as part of the objective assessment process is not the same as conducting a basic skills assessment for eligibility determination for the basic skills deficient barrier or as conducting a basic skills assessment for determination of an educational functioning level gain within the measurable skill gains indicator. If using the basic skills deficient component of WIOA Youth eligibility in WIOA (3)(5)(A), programs must use a generally accepted standardized test which DOL defines as an approved test from the list of tests the Secretary of Education determines to be suitable for use in the National Reporting System for Adult Education.[1]

The Workforce Development Board of North Missouri has adopted a screening tool to assess basic skills of applicants. The Basic Skills Screening Tool is required for all WIOA youth applicants. The Basic Skills Screening Tool will help assess the youth for the required basic skills section of the OA and help determine if additional testing is needed to determine the customer “basic skills deficient.” The Basic Skills Screening Tool must not be used to determine a youth’s educational needs.

A youth who is unable to complete the screening tool without assistance or answers “No” to one (1) or more questions must automatically be assessed for basic skills deficiency using at least one of the approved assessments identified in the previous section.

A youth who can complete the screening tool without assistance and answers “Yes” to all the questions has satisfied the basic skills requirement of the OA. However, for youth entering training services additional assessments may be used to determine the appropriateness of the training program.

Determination of BSD for Adult Priority of Service
The Basic Skills Screening Tool will help identify if an individual is basic skills deficient for the purposes of priority of service and referrals for Adults or Dislocated Workers. The screening tool should be given prior to conducting any assessment test. The tool is for identification of priority of service and for referral purposes.

Anyone unable to complete the screening tool without assistance or answers “No” to one (1) or more questions must automatically receive a referral for adult basic education services. Any WIOA Adult participant should receive priority of service as having a basic skills deficiency.

[1] Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Strategies and Considerations: A Brief on Youth Assessments, Youth Connections.

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