

**Chapter 1: Youth  
Introduction to WIA Youth Programs**

**Issue Date:**

**Effective Date:** April 1, 2000; updated May 12, 2005

**Required Action**

**Action:** Establish policies, procedures and definitions for services authorized under the Youth Formula Grant/Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

**Who:** All WSAs and youth service providers in the State of Minnesota.

**Background:** The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was signed into law on August 7, 1998 and become fully effective on July 1, 2000. Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 3-04, dated July 16, 2004, informs states and local areas of ETA's new strategic vision to serve youth in a demand-driven workforce system.

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**Policies and Procedures:**

The local Workforce The Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) and Youth Councils carry out the vision of the GWDC to ensure local collaboration between the workforce system, education (secondary, adult education and alternative schools), human services, community corrections, health, DEED's Rehabilitation Services and State Services for the Blind programs, Job Corps, higher education, and the business community.

ETA's new vision for serving youth includes the following major themes:

- Focus on the neediest youth
- Collaboration and leveraging of resources at the State and local level
- Coordination with local educational agencies (including alternative education)
- Meet the demands of business, especially in high growth areas
- Youth connections and access to the WorkForce Center System
- Performance accountability and a commitment to improving the quality of services provided

**Focus on the Neediest Youth**

The White House Task Force (see: [http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/report/whitehouse\\_taskforce.htm](http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/fysb/content/report/whitehouse_taskforce.htm) for the "Report on Disadvantaged Youth") identified youth in foster care (particularly those aging out of foster care), youth in the juvenile justice system, children of incarcerated parents, and migrant youth as those most in need of services.

ETA is making investments in a number of new initiatives to focus on and develop new strategies for serving these identified populations.

ETA will prioritize investments that serve youth in foster care, those aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth.

WSA/service provider staff should be knowledgeable about youth assessment, development of individual service strategies, integration of needed services, provision of follow-up services, and explicit documentation of services and outcomes. WIA youth professionals should ensure that training funds will be prioritized for eligible youth pursuing high-growth opportunities and that training investments meet industry-specific requirements leading to an industry-recognized credential, when appropriate.

### **Collaboration with Local Educational Agencies**

State and local workforce systems are encouraged to partner with public school systems implementing state No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requirements around mutually beneficial issues, such as:

- Assisting school districts in meeting their adequate yearly progress (AYP) measures by providing high quality, diploma granting alternative learning environments for youth at-risk of dropping out of school.
- Providing supplemental educational services for Title I schools that do not meet their AYP measures through after-school and Saturday programs.
- Working with alternative schools to establish high quality programs that meet state standards.

LWIBs are also encouraged to increase their knowledge of alternative education opportunities. This can be done by engaging in a resource mapping of alternative education offerings in the community to be used by both the education and workforce systems to help students make smart choices. Local areas should ensure that alternative education students are exposed to job opportunities in growing occupations, including requirements for further education and training and possible career pathways.

WIA youth programs, working through the WorkForce Center system, should ensure that alternative education institutions have and use information on local workforce training programs and local labor markets, including information in the Regional Economic Profiles (see <http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/rws>).

### **Meeting the Demands of Business, Especially in High-Growth Industries and Occupations**

The investment of WIA youth resources will be demand-driven, assuring that youth obtain the skills needed by businesses so they can succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy.

WIA youth professionals must be knowledgeable of the high-growth industries/occupations in their respective area, what the career pathways are for these jobs, and what options are available for at-risk youth to access these jobs.

WIA youth professionals should ensure that training funds will be prioritized for eligible youth pursuing high-growth opportunities and that training investments meet industry-specific requirements leading to an industry-recognized credential, when appropriate.

## Focus on Improved Performance

In order to ensure the success of an increasingly at-risk youth population in the knowledge economy, the workforce investment system must be committed to utilizing the strategies that lead to higher levels of performance and outcomes.

All youth professionals will be expected to be knowledgeable about their local economy (e.g., current status, future projections, high-growth industries, career paths). See Regional Profiles at <http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/apps/lmi/rws>.

The new set of common measures for youth programs will include: placement in employment or education; attainment of a degree or certificate; literacy and numeracy gains; and an efficiency measure. The introduction of these new measures for the workforce investment system places a new emphasis on literacy and numeracy gains for youth. It is important that service strategies for youth participants be directly linked to one or more performance outcomes within these common measures. Also, it is important to note that the certificate measure is a demand-driven measure in which certificates are awarded in recognition of an individual's attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers.

Attainment of literacy and numeracy gains is viewed as most appropriate for youth with basic skill deficiencies as determined by a basic skills assessment. The increased focus on literacy and numeracy gains for youth provides an impetus to ensuring that state and local WIA programs incorporate high quality adolescent literacy programs.

### Reference Section:

**Cites/References:** The Workforce Investment Act of 1998, Public Law 105-220, Title I, Subtitle B, Sections 106 and 129(a)(1); Final Rules published in the August 11, 2000 Federal Register; <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/finalrule.pdf> .

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 18-00 (dated April 23, 2001), TEGL 28-01 (dated May 20, 2002) which is a supplement to TEGL 18-00 and TEGL 3-04 (dated July 16, 2004).

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[http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All\\_Programs\\_Services/Office\\_of\\_Youth\\_Development](http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/All_Programs_Services/Office_of_Youth_Development)