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Basic Skills Assessment Policy

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) focuses on serving "individuals with barriers to employment" and seeks to ensure access to quality services for these populations.

WIOA states that recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient must receive priority for individualized career services and training services.

For purposes of WIOA, Basic Skills Deficient (BSD) means, an individual:

- a) Who is a youth, that has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the eighth (8th) grade level on an accepted standardized test; or
- b) Who is 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.

Determining basic skills deficiency during intake assists in qualifying customers for eligibility, allows for quality referrals, and can determine program effectiveness.

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. The Southeast Workforce Development Board have approved the below instruments to be valid and reliable to evaluate the basic skills of the Region's population. Basic Skills Assessments:

- Per state policy regarding the assessing of In School Youth, Local WDBs should continue to accept the basic skills assessments provided by the participant's educational institution.
- TABE tests can be utilized for Out of School Youth who have no high school diploma or equivalent. This is necessary to accurately measure the participant's Educational Functioning Level (EFL), ensuring eligibility for program incentives and accurate reporting upon increase of Educational Functioning Level.

- If appropriate, WorkKeys tests may be utilized in place of TABE testing for Out of School Youth who have a high school diploma or equivalent or for those Out of School Youth who have no high school diploma or equivalent; if a TABE test is not available due to the participant not being enrolled into AEL classes. Participants who have WorkKeys scores below the NCRC Silver category are considered basic skills deficient.
- Previous basic skills assessment results (In-School education assessment records, Out-of-School TABE or WorkKeys) may be used if such previous assessments have been conducted within the past six months.
- Testing formats may not be changed throughout the program. For the purpose of increasing the educational functioning level, Post-testing must utilize the same assessment as the Pre-test to ensure accurate results are reported. TABE testing is the only assessment eligible for Educational Functioning Level Gains and the TABE Test must be given by an AEL teacher.
- For youth with disabilities: TABE testing can be utilized, school records can be utilized, or a previous basic skills assessments from another agencies (such as vocational rehabilitation) administered within the past six months can be utilized. Assessment results are utilized to document basic skills deficiencies for an eligibility barrier or to determine the youth's ability to be successful in an academic program. Reasonable accommodation for the testing process will be available, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.

Determination of Basic Skills for the Objective Assessment (OA):

The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is the combination of the Objective Assessment and Employment Plan. The following conditions that apply to the participant must be followed:

- The individual Service Strategy must be developed jointly between the case manager and the youth participant. It is a plan to meet the youth's specific training and employment goals.
- WIOA requires that every youth completes an objective assessment to evaluate the basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs of the participant.
- The objective assessment must be completed entirely, including obtaining all assessment results, before the creation of the employment plan
- The youth's objective assessment should be utilized when developing the Employment Plan. The career path, needs, barriers, skills gaps, referrals, and possible supportive services identified in the objective assessment must be addressed on the Employment Plan.
- The objective assessment must identify the career pathway, if known, 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

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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

Basic Skills Screening Tool

The Southeast Region has adopted a screening tool to help identify if an individual is basic skills deficient. The Basic Skills Screening Tool is required for all WIOA youth applicants. The Basic Skills Screening Tool below will help assess the youth for the required basic skills section of the OA and help determine if additional testing is needed to determine “basic skills deficient”. The Basic Skills Screening Tool must not be used to determine a youth’s educational needs.

Basic Skills Screening Tool Results

- 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 as basic skills deficient 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. [ITA Strategies and Considerations Youth Assess 20210205 \(1\).pdf](#)

Basic Skills Screening Tool

Name: _____ Date of Birth: _____

- 1) Do you have a high school diploma or equivalent? OR
Currently enrolled in high school (not an equivalency Program). Yes No
 Yes
- 2) Can you follow basic written instructions and diagrams with no help
or just a little help? Yes No
- 3) Can you fill out basic medical forms and job applications?
 Yes No
- 4) Without the aid of a calculator, can you add, subtract, multiply and
divide with whole numbers up to 3 digits? Yes No
- 5) Can you do basic tasks on a computer? Yes No
- 6) Do you speak and read English well enough to get and keep a job?
 Yes No

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

For Internal Use Only:

Was the individual able to complete the screening tool without help? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
For the Adult Program Only: If any question is answered, "No" or the form could not be completed independently, the individual should receive priority. Does the individual receive priority? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	For the Youth Program Only: If any question is answered, "No" or the form could not be completed independently, the individual may have a BSD eligibility barrier. Does the individual have a BSD eligibility barrier? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Name of Case Manager: _____	
Case Manager Signature: _____	Date Signed: _____

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