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## **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy Letter No. 15-03 (Youth Program Eligibility)**

### **I. Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to communicate guidance and parameters when determining eligibility requirements of individuals for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)-funded youth employment and training programs.

It will be the policy of the Workforce Development Board to follow the most recent State policy 15-03 (Youth Program Eligibility) with the following additions highlighted in yellow:

### **II. Effective Date with WDB and COG motion #s**

July 1, 2015; COG motion 5-15 on 10/5/15; WDB motion 2-15 on 9/28/15

### **III. Background**

### **III. Definitions**

### **III. Requirements**

#### **In-School Youth Eligibility Requirements**

Eligibility for in-school youth, who at the time of enrollment, is:

- a. Attending school;
- b. Not younger than 14 or (unless an individual with a disability who is attending school under state law) older than age 21;
- c. Is a low-income individual; and
- d. Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - Basic skills deficient;
  - An English language learner;
  - An offender;
  - A homeless individual (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.S.C. 14043e-2(6))), a homeless child or youth (as defined in section 725 (2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2))), a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system, a child eligible for assistance

under the John H.Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, or in an out-of- home placement;

- Pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability; or

An individual who requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure or hold employment as defined by the local area. Our local area has identified additional assistance as: An individual who lacks significant work experience; or is behind at least one grade level; or receives or is a member of a family that receives or is at risk of receiving public assistance (TANF/OWF/PRC/SNAP/Medicaid); or a child living in out-of-home placement; or a youth that has a disability to include emotional dependency, behavioral disorder, psychological or physical, including those medicated; or an individual who requires additional financial assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

This local barrier is limited to 5% of the YIS population and the area has decided that any YIS enrolled into this barrier must be screened by the youth standing committee and accepted PRIOR to enrollment using this barrier. Documentation of this screening must be signed by the Area WDB Chair and maintained in the participant's file.

#### Out-of-School Youth Eligibility Requirements

Eligibility for out-of-school youth, who at the time of enrollment, is:

- a. Not attending any school;
- b. Not younger than 16 or older than age 24; and
- c. Has one or more of the following barriers:
  - A school dropout;
  - A youth who is within the age of compulsory school attendance, but has not attended school for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
  - A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a low income individual and is basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
  - An individual who is subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
  - A homeless individual (as defined in section 41403(6) of the Violence Against Women Act of 1994 (42 U.X.C. 14043e-2(6))), a homeless child or youth (as defined in section 725 (2) of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C. 11434a(2))), a runaway, in foster care or has aged out of the foster care system a child eligible for assistance under the John H.Chafee Foster Care Independence Program, or in an out-of-home placement;
    - An individual who is pregnant or parenting;
    - A youth who is an individual with a disability; or

A low-income individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment as

defined by the local area. Our local area has identified additional assistance as: An individual who lacks significant work experience; or is behind at least one grade level; or receives or is a member of a family that receives or is at risk of receiving public assistance (TANF/OWF/PRC/SNAP/Medicaid); or a child living in out-of-home placement; or a youth that has a disability to include emotional dependency, behavioral disorder, psychological or physical, including those medicated; or an individual who requires additional financial assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

5% Exception of Youth Eligibility – 1<sup>st</sup> 5% Both in and out of school

Up to five (5) percent of in-school and out-of-school youth participants served by youth programs in a local area may be individuals who would be covered individuals except that the persons are not low-income. For both 5% barriers, the area has decided that ANY youth enrolled through this exception must be screened by the youth standing committee and accepted PRIOR to enrollment using this exception. Documentation of this screening must be signed by the Area WDB Chair and maintained in the participant's file.

5% Exception of Youth Eligibility – 1<sup>st</sup> 5% Both in and out of school

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5% Limitation of In-School Youth Eligibility – 2<sup>nd</sup> 5% In-school only

Not more than five (5) percent of in-school youth may be eligible based upon being an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. For both 5% barriers, the area has decided that ANY youth enrolled through this limitation must be screened by the youth standing committee and accepted PRIOR to enrollment using this exception. Documentation of this screening must be signed by the Area WDB Chair and maintained in the participant's file.

**VI. Technical Assistance**

At the county level, it is the county's discretion to contact the state directly or to start with the Area Executive Director. However, regardless of choice, the Area Executive Director must be consulted, whether directly or by cc: on email, so that the WDB is informed and engaged in local implementation.

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### **Basic Skills Assessment:**

- The use of standardized assessments ( ACT, SAT, etc) and the TABE locator taken within the last six months is allowable.
- The following list of assessments and evaluations for Basic Skills determination is allowed as well:

#### Other Basic Skills Assessment Options

- Test of Adult Basic Education: TABE Locator
- Standardized tests from secondary schools taken within the last six months
- Other formalized testing instruments designed to measure skill related gains (may not work for educational functioning level)
- WorkKeys (not for educational functioning level)

The assessments below will provide an Educational Functional Level (EFL) when needed.

#### Adult Basic Education (ABE)

- Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test: MAPT – Math, Reading
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems: CASAS ABE – Reading GOALS, Math GOALS
- Test of Adult Basic Education: TABE CLAS-E – Listening and Speaking, Reading and Writing
- Test of Adult Basic Education: TABE 11 (L, E, M, D, A) – Language, Mathematics, Reading
- Test of Adult Basic Education: TABE 12 (L, E, M, D, A) – Language, Mathematics, Reading

#### English as a Second Language (ESL)

- Basic English Skills Test: BEST– Plus 2.0
- Basic English Skills Test: BEST Literacy – Literacy
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems: CASAS ESL – Listening, Reading

### **Youth Enrollment:**

Enrollment after exit:

Reentry of youth within 90 days of exit is allowed, bringing the participant back into the program, if additional services are needed beyond what is allowed during follow-up.

Enrollment hold:

That putting a participant on ‘hold’ two times for up to 90 days at a time is an option.

This feature is for those who might be incarcerated, hospitalized, and in temporary absence situations where it could be a reasonable use of the “hold” feature.

Co-Enrollment:

Youth can be co-enrolled in the WIOA Adult program at the same time.

### **Low Income Definition:**

"Low-income individual" means an individual who:

(a) Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that is receiving or in the past six months has received, assistance through the supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP) established under the Food and Nutrition Act of 2008, the TANF program under part A of title IV of the Social Security Act, or the supplemental security income (SSI) program established under title XVI of the Social Security Act or state or local income-based public assistance;

(b) Is in a family with a total family income that does not exceed the higher of:

(i) The poverty line; or

(ii) Seventy per cent of the lower living standard income level;

(c) Is a homeless individual or a homeless child or youth;

(d) Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act (02/2014). This does not include students in school districts participating in the community eligibility provision (CEP) Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 as in effect January 1, 2019);

(e) Is a foster child on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made; or

(f) Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the income eligibility requirements of paragraph (A)(11)(b) of this rule, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet this requirement as permitted in WIOA under section 3(36)(A)(vi) and 20 C.F.R. part 681.280.

(g) Is an individual who resides within a High Poverty area as determined by the following guidelines:

(i) If the poverty rate for a county, census tract or a set of contiguous census tracts where an individual resides is at least twenty-five per cent using the American community survey five-year data, the individual is considered low income for purposes of determining WIOA youth eligibility.

(ii) See attached information for Census Tract determination