



*A proud member
of America's Workforce Network*

REGION V - The Great Heartland

**John C. Kluczynski Building
230 South Dearborn Street, 6th floor
Chicago, IL 60604-1505**

**City Center Square
1100 Main - Suite 1050
Kansas City, MO 64105-2112**

<http://www.doleta.gov/regions/reg05>

WIA Youth Performance Q & A: An Informal Discussion on the Transition to the Common Measures

November 21, 2003

**Fourth Annual USDOL-ETA Region 5 Youth Development Conference
Chicago, IL**

COMMON MEASURES

Q. Will all the Federal departments use the same definitions for the Common Measures?

A. Twenty-nine programs in the following Federal departments are subject to the common measures: Labor, Education, Health and Human Services, Veterans Affairs, Interior, and Housing and Urban Development. In general, all the departments will use the same definitions to calculate the Common Measures. However, there are some differences in the operational parameters of the measure that are necessary to fit specific programs.

Attainment of a Degree or Certificate

Q. What is the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) trying to accomplish with the new certificate definition in the attainment of a degree or certificate measure?

A. ETA worked very closely with the Department of Education to develop the certificate definition. The definition is intended to ensure that: 1) certificates are recognized by employers and contribute to the development of a demand-driven workforce system, 2) only certificates that have meaningful labor market value count as a positive outcome in the measure, and 3) there is consistency across states in the application of the measure.

Literacy and Numeracy Gains

Q. Is there a waiver for counting youth with disabilities in the literacy and numeracy gains measure?

A. All youth with disabilities are to be counted in the literacy and numeracy gains measure. The Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) feels strongly that youth with disabilities should be included in all the Common Measures. ODEP emphasizes the importance of making accommodations when testing disabled youth, and this point will be addressed in upcoming guidance on the Common Measures.

Q. Are providers required to use one of the tests listed in the guidance to assess literacy and numeracy skills?

A. The assessment test used to determine literacy and numeracy skills must be cross-walked to the Educational Functioning Levels (EFL) outlined in the Department of Education's National Reporting System. Currently, seven tests have been cross-walked to the EFLs – CASAS, TABE, ABLE, AMES, WorkKeys, and SPL and BEST for English as a Second Language individuals. A different test can be used, but it must be cross-walked to the levels.

Q. Do the Educational Functioning Levels equate to two grade levels?

A. There are six Educational Functioning Levels (EFL), and each level roughly equates to two grade levels. Youth will have to increase one or more EFLs to achieve a positive outcome on the literacy and numeracy gains measure. However, this does not mean that every youth will need to increase the equivalent of two grade levels to be counted as a positive outcome in the measure.

Under a normal distribution of pre-test scores, most participants' scores will place the individuals in a range where they have completed some of the skills in that particular EFL. Therefore, for a majority of participants, a positive outcome is not likely to require the equivalent of completing two grade levels, but will average to the equivalent of one grade level.

ETA does recognize that increasing one EFL still represents a challenging goal for many youth. State and local areas should keep this in mind when negotiating performance goals for this measure.

Q. Can test scores from schools be used for the literacy and numeracy gains measure?

A. Yes. Test scores provided by schools may be used to calculate the literacy and numeracy gains measure, however such test scores must be recent (within six months to a year). Test scores provided by schools must either be on the list of tests in the National Reporting System (NRS) or cross-walked to the Educational Functioning Levels (EFLs) outlined in the NRS. In addition, the same assessment must be used for both the pre-test and the post-test.

Q. What is the definition of basic skills deficient?

A. The following definition in the WIA regulations will continue to be used: the individual computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the eighth grade level. Only youth who are basic skills deficient will be included in the literacy and numeracy gains measure.

Q. Will there be research-based resources on the ETA website related to providing literacy and numeracy services?

A. The National Institute for Literacy is a good resource (www.nifl.gov). ETA is currently pulling together promising practices on providing literacy and numeracy services.

Efficiency Measure

Q. What counts as a participant in the efficiency measure?

A. The efficiency measure is calculated by dividing the program appropriation level by the number of program participants. A participant is an individual who is determined eligible and receives any service funded by the program in a physical location (e.g. a One-Stop career center). Participants are the population used to calculate all the Common Measures, including the efficiency measure.

Q. How will the efficiency measure be used?

A. The efficiency measure will likely be used as a budgeting tool at the Federal level. ETA currently submits a similar figure, unit cost, to the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). The efficiency measure will likely not be used to determine incentives and sanction for states.

Q. Does the efficiency measure take into consideration non-Federal resources?

A. No. The efficiency measure is calculated by dividing the Federal program appropriation by the number of program participants.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMMON MEASURES

Q. Does the implementation of the Common Measures depend upon WIA reauthorization?

A. Both the Senate and House WIA reauthorization bills include the common measures. ETA will implement the common measures during calendar year 2004.

Q. When will guidance on the Common Measures be released?

A. A Training and Employment Guidance Letter outlining ETA's Common Measures policy is expected to be released by the end of December 2003. ETA's goal for placing a public comment notice in the Federal Register about the new reporting instructions is February 2004.

Q. Will PY 2004 be a transition year for the Common Measures?

A. ETA is still working on the implementation plan for the Common Measures. PY 2004 may be treated as a transition year, in which baseline data is collected on the measures for use in setting PY 2005 goals, but this has not yet been determined. It would be difficult for PY 2004 to be a full implementation year for the Common Measures due to the timeframes for collecting and reporting data. Providers would need to be currently collecting data on degree/certificate attainment and placement in employment and education to be able to report these outcomes in PY 2004. Data collection for the literacy and numeracy gains measure will start at the beginning of PY 2004 (July 1, 2004).

YOUTH SERVICE DELIVERY

Q. Is there a three-year limit on services to youth?

A. No. Neither the Workforce Investment Act nor the WIA regulations set a maximum time limit for services to youth.

Q. How much funding will be allocated toward in-school vs. out-of-school youth with WIA reauthorization?

A. The WIA reauthorization bill passed by the House allows for no more than 30% of funds to be spent on in-school youth. The Senate reauthorization bill places a 60% limit on funds allocated for in-school youth. The final percentage of allowable spending on in-school youth will not be determined until Congress passes a final reauthorization bill.

Q. Will follow-up services be defined more clearly in WIA reauthorization?

A. Follow-up services are one of the keys to successful youth programs. Both the Senate and House WIA reauthorization bills address follow-up, but the language is not specific. The regulations for the WIA reauthorization bill will more clearly define follow-up services. Currently, all individuals that have exited the Youth program should be receiving follow-up services. However, WIASRD data on exiters indicate that only about 30% of youth are receiving follow-up services. Some local providers do not report these services until the one-year follow-up period has ended, and this may contribute to the low percentage.

DATA VALIDATION

Q. What is the status of data validation?

A. Data validation will be required for PY 2002 data; states must complete validation by April 1, 2004. The first year of data validation is intended to be a learning experience and states will not be held accountable for error rates. Standards for acceptable error rates will not be established until the third year of data validation. New validation software will be released that accounts for the Common Measures.

WIA ANNUAL REPORT

Q. Will the due date for the WIA Annual Report be moved up to October 1st in the future?

A. Yes. The PY 2002 WIA Annual Report is due on December 1, 2003. As outlined in Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 14-03, the due date for the PY 2003 Annual Report will be October 1, 2004.