

YOUTH ADMINISTRATIVE BULLETIN NO. 7

TO: WIA YOUTH CONTRACTING AGENCIES

SUBJECT: YOUTH SKILL ATTAINMENT (Younger Youth, ages 14-18)

EFFECTIVE: July 1, 2007

I. BACKGROUND

The South Central Workforce Council has adopted a set of three Youth Skill Attainments. The three skill attainments are Basic Skills (BSK), Work Readiness Skills (WRS), and Occupational Skills (OCS).

- A. The attainment benchmarks to be achieved must be quantifiable, measurable, and verifiable learning objectives that specify the proficiency to be achieved as a result of program participation.
- B. The level of achievement selected should enhance the youth's employability and opportunities for post-program participation.
- C. All assessment tools, pre-tests, post-tests, and curricula for all non-state certified training used in skill development must be pre-approved by Council staff.

II. PROCEDURES

A. Assessment

1. Each youth participant may receive any of the three skill attainments as long as there is a demonstrated benefit to that participant based on a standardized documented assessment of deficiency. Assessment information may be drawn from individual interviews, work and school records, and specific testing.
2. Assessment of youth skill attainment needs must occur before the start of the training activity to determine if the youth requires assistance and is capable of benefiting from available services.
3. All assessment techniques must be objective, unbiased, and conform to widely accepted measurement criteria. Measurement methods used must contain clearly

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4. defined criteria, be field tested for utility, consistency, and accuracy, and provide for the training/preparation of all raters/scorers.
5. Use of assessment will result in assigning a youth to the appropriate learning activities/sites in the proper sequence to promote participant growth and development, remedy identified deficiencies, and build upon strengths.
6. The assessment for deficiencies for each skill attainment will be documented on the Skill Attainment Assessment forms (attachments 4 and 5).
7. Following assessment, the specific skills to be achieved by each individual participant must be prescribed in writing in the ISS.

B. Skill Attainment 1: Basic Skills (BSK)

1. Background:

The goal of basic skills training is to obtain a measurable increase in deficient areas. Youth who are assessed deficient in BSK, whether Younger Youth (age 14-18) or Older Youth (age 19-21), must receive BSK services to address the deficiencies; however, only BSK benchmarks achieved by Younger Youth may be counted as attainments for performance measures.

2. Definition:

BSK are those skills that result in the achievement of basic education skill levels necessary for entry into the labor market. Basic skills include reading comprehension, math computation, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, reasoning, and the capacity to use these skills in the work place.

3. Assessment for deficiency:

Each participant will be assessed for deficiency in BSK using the TABE or other pre-approved diagnostic test. The minimum level of deficiency will be:

**Computes or solves problems, reads, writes or speaks English at
or below grade level 8.9.**

4. Benchmarks:

Skill Attainment is as follows:

- a.) **One grade level increase in any one deficient area of reading, writing, and/or math. Attainments can be set multiple times for deficient areas.** Basic Skills proficiency is grade level 9.0 or above on all of the deficient areas.
- b.) **A measurable level of achievement as reflected in the student's IEP and verified by school district staff.** To qualify for this attainment, the student must be diagnosed as learning disabled and have a school district approved IEP. The measurable level of achievement must be objectively measured and encompass basic literacy skills to include reading comprehension, math computation, writing,

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- c.) speaking, listening, problem solving, reasoning, and the capacity to use these skills in the work place. Appropriate documentation from the school district must be maintained.
 - d.) **A measurable level of achievement as reflected in an approved learning plan and verified by a qualified medical and/or mental health professional.** To qualify for this attainment the participant must be diagnosed as learning disabled and have developed a learning plan with a qualified medical and/or mental health professional. The plan must be approved by Council staff before implementation. The measurable level of achievement must be objectively measured and encompass basic literacy skills to include reading comprehension, math computation, writing, speaking, listening, problem solving, reasoning, and the capacity to use these skills in the work place. Appropriate documentation from the qualified professional must be maintained.
 - e.) **Has acquired all required high school credits needed as appropriate for grade level and age as determined by the school in which the youth is enrolled.** To qualify for this attainment the individual must be assessed as lacking credits, unable to graduate on time, and functioning below grade level. The file must contain school district documentation that clearly states the need for credit retrieval and the specific academic areas needing improvement.
 - f.) **Has attained a minimum of 1 full secondary school credit in any deficient area of reading, writing, and/or math.** To qualify for this attainment the individual must be assessed as lacking credits, unable to graduate on time, and functioning below grade level. The participant file must contain school district documentation that states the need for credit retrieval and the specific academic areas needing improvement.
 - g.) **Has passed a post-secondary academic class level 100 or above in reading, writing, and/or math with no lower than a 2.0 GPA and a "C" grade in the attainment class.** To qualify for this attainment the individual must be a younger youth that has received a high school diploma or equivalency and is assessed as lacking in basic skills in math, reading, and/or writing prior to or at the time they are attending post-secondary education.
 - h.) **Has acquired a High School Diploma or GED.** To qualify for this attainment the individual must be a **school dropout** in need of a high school diploma or GED.
5. Post-test/Attainment Documentation:
- a.) The post-test for grade level increase will consist of the TABE diagnostic or other approved test. Pre- and post-assessment will utilize the same testing tool. The attached Basic Skills Form will be used to document pre- and post-test scores and attainment of the basic skill.
 - b.) The attainment documentation for an achievement level documented in an IEP will consist of an objective evaluation by school district staff.

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- c.) The attainment documentation for an achievement level documented in an approved learning plan will consist of an objective evaluation by a qualified medical and/or mental health professional.
- d.) The attainment documentation for credit retrieval will be school transcripts and/or other appropriate school documentation that clearly indicates attainment of credits in the areas prescribed by the school district.
- e.) The attainment documentation for retrieval of 1 full credit will be school transcripts and/or other appropriate school documentation that clearly indicates attainment of credits in reading, writing, and/or math.
- f.) The attainment documentation for passing a post-secondary class in reading, writing, and/or math will be school transcripts, school grade reports and/or other appropriate school documentation that clearly indicates the class taken and grade received by the individual.
- g.) The attainment documentation for high school diploma will be a copy of the diploma or appropriate documentation from the school district. The appropriate documentation for a GED will be the GED or a copy of the test indicating achievement of the GED.

6. Hours and Activities:

This skill attainment is to be provided as a classroom activity. Attendance records must be maintained. The basic literacy skill must be attained within one year of the goal being set.

- * If the participant requires advanced basic skills to pursue training goals, basic skills activities will be encouraged, although without achievement of skill benchmark attainments.

C. Skill Attainment 2: Work Readiness Skills (WRS)

1. Definition:

Work Readiness Skills can be broken down into two distinct categories, Career Development Skills (CDS) and Work Ethic Skills (WES). **Skill attainments are set and taken separately for each category. The intent is for the Contractor to conduct assessments in both categories and address those deficiencies that are identified in either or both categories.**

a.) Career Development Skills (CDS)

CDS refers to those skills needed to choose a career, search for and obtain employment. They include skills that enable an individual to sell his or her competencies to an employer. Career Development Skills include world of work awareness, labor market knowledge, occupational information, values clarification and personal understanding, career planning and decision-making, and job search techniques (resumes, interviews, applications, and follow-up letters). They also encompass survival/daily living skills such as using the phone, telling time,

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shopping, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, and using public transportation.

b.) Work Ethic Skills (WES)

WES are evidenced by an understanding of, and an ability to respond to, the basic requirements of the work environment. This includes positive attitudes, work habits, and behavior such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance, getting along and working well with others, exhibiting appropriate conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job. This category also entails developing motivation and adaptability, obtaining effective coping and problem-solving skills, and acquiring an improved self-image.

Contractors have the option to develop advanced Work Readiness Skills based on standardized assessments such as WorkKeys, industry standards, SCANS and/or other approved standards. This advanced level of WRS development can only be attempted if the youth has already demonstrated proficiency in both CDS and WES. Development of WRS at this level is subject to approval by Contractor management.

2. Assessment for Deficiency:

The following core topics, at a minimum, must be assessed for and included in CDS and WES training curriculums:

Career Development Skills

1. Making career decisions
2. Preparing resumes
3. Using labor market information
4. Filling out applications
5. Interviewing
6. Networking
7. Dealing with Social Diversity
8. Basic Computer Knowledge

Work Ethic Skills

1. Being consistently punctual
2. Maintaining regular attendance
3. Demonstrating positive attitudes/behaviors
4. Presenting appropriate appearance
5. Exhibiting effective interpersonal relations
6. Completing tasks effectively

If advanced WRS training is to be provided, the Contractor must provide a list of core topics to be included in assessment and curriculum. These topics are subject to Council staff approval.

The assessment must show the participant deficient in at least 2 of the core skill topics in CDS or WES before WRS development takes place. All skill deficient areas must be addressed in the ISS.

Any contractor may provide CDS or WES training, as appropriate, to each individual youth irrespective of previous training done by another contractor, by a school district, or in a previous program year if there is a documented assessment of deficiency. The Contractor may provide advanced WRS development if deemed appropriate. The Contractor is required to provide appropriate assessment tools to measure deficiency and attainment. The assessment tools are subject to Council staff approval.

3. Benchmarks

Skill attainments can be set for both CDS and WES development. In order for attainment to be achieved, an individual must demonstrate proficiency in each of the core topics of either CDS (8 core topics) or WES (6 core topics), as indicated on either the . **At least two learning objectives in CDS or WES must have been achieved during program intervention in order to claim the skill attainment.** Evaluations are required only for deficient areas.

4. Post-tests and Evaluations

The attached CDS Assessment/Certification form will be used to document attainment of CDS.

The attached form for the WES Supervisor/Evaluation will be used to document both interim progress and the final attainment of work ethic skills. A minimum of one evaluation per month is required for each activity, or a minimum of three evaluations if training is less than two months in length.

The Contractor will provide appropriate forms to document attainment of the advanced WRS.

5. Provision of Services:

Provision of WRS training shall be accompanied by work experience or other services that are designed to increase the basic education or occupational skills of the participant.

6. Hours and Activities

Career Development Skills will be taught as a structured training activity requiring attendance records and a curriculum. **The CDS curriculum will be taught in a classroom or approved alternative setting.** Council staff must approve all training curriculum. This activity requires the participant to attend the portions of the workshop that address their individual needs.

Work Ethic Skills will be taught in a work or job setting such as WEX, PRX and/or OJO. Attendance records will be maintained. The final evaluation must be completed within the last 5 days of the planned training hours. Maintaining regular attendance, exhibiting effective interpersonal relations and completing tasks effectively can be evaluated in a classroom (occupational or educational) setting.

Skill attainment is based on successful completion of the training plan. There is no time requirement for attainment. The number of hours and/or days in activity is dependent on the individual needs of the participant. Case managers must document their justification for the lengths of time participants are assigned for WRS development. Work readiness skills and occupational skills development may occur concurrently with appropriate documentation.

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The advanced level WRS may be taught in a classroom or work setting depending on the types of skills being taught. There is no time requirement for attainment. The case manager must document the need for the advanced level WRS and justify the training style and hours.

The Work Readiness Skill Attainment can only be met under the following conditions:

- 1.) The participant is assessed deficient in a particular WRS category (CDS, WES, Advanced WRS).
- 2.) The appropriate training is provided.
- 3.) The participant demonstrates proficiency in all deficient areas.
- 4.) The goal is achieved within one year of being set.

D. Skill Attainment 3: Occupational Skills (OCS)

1. Definition:

OCS is training which will prepare participants to meet the entry-level or specific skills relative to their possible occupational goals. OCS development should be age and developmentally appropriate. OCS attainment would include a demonstrated proficiency in the knowledge and skills normally required carrying out tasks of a specific occupation or cluster of occupations. Primary occupational skills encompass the proficiency to perform actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate or advanced levels. Secondary occupational skills entail familiarity with and use of set up procedures, work-related terminology, record-keeping and paperwork formats, tools, equipment and materials, and breakdown and cleanup routines. OCS may be repeated by different contractors and for different program years as long as the skills to be attained are substantially different.

2. Assessment for Deficiency:

Occupational Skills will be assessed using the attached Work Readiness Skills Assessment/Occupational Skills assessment.

3. Benchmarks:

The attached form for the OCS training plan will be used to document the skills to be learned. The skills included on the training plan will be developed using at least one of the following resources:

- 1.) Industry Skills Standards
- 2.) Secondary/post-secondary vocational course-work
- 3.) SCANS
- 4.) Occupational skills standard developed with the training site.

4. Post-test and Evaluations:

The attached form for OCS Supervisor/Trainer Evaluation will be used for evaluations. A minimum of one evaluation per month for each activity is required. A grade report can be used for classroom activities.

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5. Hours and Activities:

OCS can be provided as a worksite activity or a classroom activity. Attendance records must be maintained.

An OCS attainment may be reported prior to the end of the planned training hours provided the requirements of the competency have been met, and the training plan is modified to reflect justification for the change and the need for continued activities. The occupational skill must be attained within one year of the goal being set.

OCS attainment on a worksite requires a minimum of two satisfactory evaluations. One of the evaluations must be the final evaluation. All hours are to be on a worksite. OCS attainment in the classroom requires a minimum GPA of 2.0 or equivalent. There is no minimum hour requirement for occupational skill development. The time in training at the worksite will be determined by the case manager, in conjunction with the worksite, based on the assessed needs of the participant. Appropriate documentation must be maintained to justify training time. The length of time for classroom activities is determined by the requirements of the course of study. Work Readiness Skills training and Occupational Skills Training may run concurrently, with appropriate documentation.

III. Conclusion

In documenting the attainment of skills, the records specific to each skill area should always be filled out, signed, and maintained in the participant file at the contractor level. A Certificate should be awarded to the participant for each skill that is achieved as verification of the accomplishment.

- Attachment:
1. Skill Attainment Rate Information
 2. BSK Pre and Post for Basic Skills
 3. WRS Assessment/ OCS Assessment
 4. Work Ethic Skills Evaluation
 5. Occupational Skills Training Plan
 6. Occupational Skills Evaluation
 7. Skills Outcome Form