

# COUNTY OF ULSTER

## Workforce Development Board

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Patrick K. Ryan, County Executive

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### Basic Skills Deficiency Policy

**References:** WIOA Final Rule, § 681.290

**Background:** WIOA identifies specific eligibility criteria for youth to participate in WIOA programs. The Ulster County Workforce Development Board (WDB) policy identifies specific criteria for Adult, Dislocated Worker (DW), and Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) participants to qualify for WIOA Individual Training Accounts for classroom training. Individuals who are found to be basic skills deficient will be referred for informal or formal basic skills remediation.

#### Policy:

**Youth:** The WIOA Final Rule states that youth are Basic Skills Deficient (BSD) if they “(1) have English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or (2) are 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 in society.” WIOA further states that “in assessing basic skills, local programs must use assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population, and must provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities.” WIOA Youth customers are considered to be Basic Skills Deficient based upon the WIOA Final Rule and acceptable assessments listed in this policy.

**Classroom Training for WIOA Adult/DW/TAA Customers:** WIOA Classroom Training customers are considered to be Basic Skills Deficient if they do not have literacy and numeracy at 8<sup>th</sup> grade level or above. Customers seeking training in certain career areas may require additional grade levels, such as, Welding or Machinist must score at the 10<sup>th</sup> grade level or above. Please refer to the WDB Individual Training Account (ITA) Policy for more details.

#### Acceptable Assessments:

Basic skills deficiency status must be determined using a valid, reliable assessment according to WIOA law. The case manager will select the assessment which is most appropriate for a particular customer, based on the customer’s abilities and career goals. Assessment options may include the following:

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT)
- Basic Achievement Skills Inventory (BASI)
- STAR Test (often administered by local school districts)
- Kaufman Test of Educational Achievement (often administered by local school districts)
- Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)
- A recent school report card or Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) showing the youth is performing below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level or is unable to compute/solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual’s family, or in society

- ACT National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC)
- Other valid, reliable assessments, upon approval of the WDB Director

Note: LWDBs may use previous basic skills assessment results if the assessments were conducted within the past six (6) months.

**Determining Basic Skills Deficiency as evidenced by a youth 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 in society.**

Examples of less formal screening tools for determining basic skills deficiency under WIOA 3(5)(B) may include the following:

- Records from an educational institution indicating below average GPA.
- Qualifies for Special education services or has an Individual Education Program (IEP) plan or 504 Plan.
- Lacks a high school diploma or equivalency and not enrolled in secondary education.
- Is enrolled in a Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (including enrolled for English as a Speaker of Other Language (ESOL).
- Determined to be Limited English Skills proficient through staff-documented observations.
- Case Manager/Staff make observations of deficient functioning and records those observations as justification in a case note/comment.

**Documentation:**

WIOA case manager and WIOA youth service providers will follow NYS Department of Labor (NYSDOL) guidance regarding source documents required to support the eligibility components. Documentation of basic skills deficiency (either a copy of assessment scores from test administrator, or copy of the assessment itself) must be placed in the youth's case file. Assessment results must be entered in the One-Stop Operator System (OSOS) in compliance with NYSDOL guidelines.

**Effective Date:** This policy will become effective on 9/14/2021.

**\*\* Board year is July 1 – June 30**

Approved by UCWDB 9/14/2021