

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this youth policy is to provide operational procedures guidance for work2future service staff on the implementation of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Program. The WIOA Youth Program serves two groups of Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth. Eligible individuals in the youth program shall receive case management for education and employment preparation resources, supportive services, and follow-up services. The program details for serving the two groups of youth are provided in this operational policy, and work2future will verify adherence to youth eligibility policies and procedures for the implementation of program services with misalignment of requirements resulting in disallowed costs.

## REFERENCES

- Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act Sections 3(2), 3(5), 3(36), 123, 127(b)(2)(C), 129(a)(1)(B)(ii), 129(a)(1)(C)(ii), 129(a)(1)(C)(iv), 129(c)(3)(A)(i) and (ii), and 189(h)
- Title 8 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 274a.2
- Title 20 CFR Sections 680.650, 681.210, 681.220, 681.250, 681.260, 681.290, 681.300, 681.310, 681.420(a)(3), 681.570, 681.580, 681.640, and 1010.200
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 09-22, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance* (March 2, 2023)
- TEGL 10-9, *Implementing Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses in all Qualified Job Training Programs Funded in whole or in part by the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL)* (November 10, 2009)
- TEGL 10-16, *Change 3, Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Programs* (June 11, 2024)
- TEGL 21-16, *Third WIOA Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance, Change 1* (July 30, 2021)
- TEGL 23-14, *WIOA Youth Program Transition* (March 26, 2015)
- Employment Development Department Workforce Services Directive (EDD WSD) 16-18, *Selective Service Registration* (April 10, 2017)
- EDD WSD 17-07, *WIOA Youth Program Requirements* (January 16, 2018)
- EDD WSD 18-03, *Pathway to Services, Referral, and Enrollment* (August 29, 2018)
- EDD WSD 24-15, *Priority of Service for Veterans and Eligible Spouses*, (February 14, 2025)
- work2future *Technical Assistance Guide*

## **POLICY AND PROCEDURES**

work2future has established youth eligibility policies and procedures. work2future service staff must evaluate an individual for WIOA Title I general eligibility based on age (16-24 years), selective service registration (if applicable), and authorization to work in the United States. Additionally, youth program eligibility is based on income, one or more qualifying barriers, and school attendance. For implementation of the WIOA Title I Youth Program, a robust youth recruitment strategy can include activities as follows:

- Build rapport with local school districts, community organizations, and government agencies for referrals and/or cross-referrals of youth services (e.g., high school districts providing adult education, County Social Services Agencies, County adult and juvenile detention centers, and community colleges offering adult literacy, career technical education, and disabled-student support programs)
- Organize sufficient outreach to target and recruit youth within the service delivery area(s) that meet the eligibility requirements for the WIOA Title I Youth Program
- Conduct an intake process with youth that will involve prescreening for eligibility determination and providing an orientation of youth program services
- Refer youth who cannot be served under the WIOA Title I Youth Program to other community partners who may provide services to youth, or refer youth to self-help basic career services available online or at the America's Job Center of California (AJCC)

Youth program eligibility is determined during the intake of enrollment, and individuals shall complete a WIOA Title I application to determine eligibility for work2future youth programs and services. Veterans and eligible spouses interested in the youth program are encouraged to disclose their status during the initial program intake process as they are provided priority of service earlier and/or instead of other youth when there are limited available resources. For more information on veterans priority of service, refer to the work2future Technical Assistance Guide and the Veterans and Adult Priority of Service policy.

### **Military Selective Service Registration**

An individual must be age 16 to 24 years at the time of work2future youth program participation. A youth born male is required to comply with Selective Service registration requirements prior to participation in WIOA-funded programs, and work2future must ensure that each applicable male ages 18 to 25 years that participates in any employment program or activity established under WIOA, or receives any assistance or benefit under WIOA, has not knowingly and willfully failed to register. A youth who becomes 18 years of age while participating in a WIOA program must register within 30 days of his 18th birthday. If a youth fails to register within 30 days of his 18th birthdate, WIOA-funded service will discontinue. Occasionally, a male who was subject to Selective Service registration, but did not register and is now beyond the 26th birthdate, apply for assistance from the WIOA program. WIOA program services will be denied to a male applicant 26 years or older, if it is determined that he knowingly and willfully failed to register. However, when it can be determined that the applicant did not knowingly or willfully fail to register, he can be considered for participation, and he must complete the Selective Service Failure to Register Self-Attestation Statement. More information regarding Selective Service registration requirements, acceptable documents, and exceptions is available in the work2future Technical Assistance Guide.

## **Eligible to Work**

To receive program services, work2future local policy requires youth to have original copies of authorization to work documents. For guidance on work authorization, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website ([www.uscis.gov](http://www.uscis.gov)) has information on acceptable documents. work2future service staff shall take into consideration vulnerable youth populations (e.g., homeless, ex-offenders, and transient) who may lack valid work documents due to their circumstances. It is recommended that work2future service staff refer youth to organizations that can assist in obtaining work documents as deemed appropriate. Once enrolled in the youth program, supportive services are available to assist youth with maintaining valid work documents and obtaining other necessities during participation in the program.

## **Program Eligibility**

The WIOA Youth Program serves two groups of both Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth based on qualifying eligibility. Information about age, income, a qualifying barrier, and school attendance is collected from youth participants for evaluation during the application process. Some categories of youths are required to be low-income individuals to receive program services. For instance, low-income status is required for all In-School Youth services. However, low-income status is only required for Out-of-School Youth if the individual is a recipient of a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent) and is either basic skills deficient, an English language learner, or requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment. An Out-of-School Youth does not need to have low-income status if eligible under one or more of the other criteria for the program. A youth can be considered low-income based on one or more reasons depending on the circumstances.

### **A Low-Income Individual**

For the purpose of determining eligibility for the youth program, a youth residing in a high-poverty area is automatically considered to be a low-income individual. A high-poverty area can be derived from a Census tract, a set of contiguous Census tracts, an American Indian Reservation or other tribal land, or a county with a poverty rate of 25 percent or more, as reported every five years by the American Community Survey (ACS) 5-Year data. work2future service staff may access the ACS 5-Year data on the US Census Fact Finder website or utilize other State-recognized sources to determine the poverty rate, such as the low-resource census tract area.

As an alternative to the census tract approach for evaluating a low-income individual, other income-based methods evaluate one or more sources of income. For WIOA program participation, only the income from the prior six-month period is considered in determining low-income status. In some cases, only the youth's income is evaluated if the youth is not considered a dependent child, rather than evaluating the total family income. Below is a list of income sources and the alternative criteria for being considered a low-income individual:

- Receives, or in the past six months has received, or is a member of a family that receives or in the past six months has received:
  - Supplemental nutrition assistance program (SNAP).
  - Temporary assistance for needy families (TANF).
  - Supplemental Security Income (SSI).
  - Federal, State, and Local income-based public assistance.

- Is in a family with a total family income that does not exceed the higher of the following:
  - The federal poverty line.
  - Seventy percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL).
  - Qualifies as a homeless individual.
- Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch under the Richard B. Russell National School Lunch Act.
- Is a foster child on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made.
- Is an individual with a disability whose own income meets the requirements of a program described above, but who is a member of a family whose income does not meet such requirements.

### **Lower Living Standard Income Level and Poverty Guidelines**

The 70 percent Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL) comes from the U.S. Department of Labor and the annual poverty guideline comes from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The LLSIL and poverty guidelines can also be used to establish low-income status for the youth program. Only the gross income received during the six-month period immediately prior to the individual's application for WIOA-funded services is used for income determination. The guidelines contain income figures for a family size of up to six individuals and the amount to be added for each additional person beyond a family size of six. For more information on how to use the LLSIL and poverty guidelines to determine low-income status for the youth programs, refer to the most recent State of California Employment Development Department LLSIL and Poverty Guidelines Directive or the guidelines in the Federal Register.

### **Youth Low-Income Exceptions**

The WIOA Title I Youth Program allows a low-income exception where five percent of youth may be participants who ordinarily would be required to be low-income for eligibility purposes and meet all other eligibility criteria for the WIOA Title I Youth Program except the low-income criteria. For example, not all Out-of-School Youth are required to be low-income, but all In-School Youth must be low-income. The five percent low-income exception under WIOA Title I Youth Program is calculated based on the five percent of youth participants newly enrolled in a given program year who would ordinarily be required to meet the low-income criteria may include Out-of-School Youth, In-School Youth, or a combination of both youth groups. For work2future, the five percent low-income exception shall be reserved for special circumstances, and prior approval is required for enrollment.

### **Basic Skills Deficient**

In some cases, a youth may have a deficiency in one or more basic skills, which can be considered a barrier. The definition of Basic Skills Deficient with respect to a youth barrier can be one or more of the following:

- A youth who has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level of a generally accepted standardized test. 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.
- A youth who 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. Limited English Skills proficiency can be documented by staff through observations and case notes.

- A youth who lacks a high school diploma or high school equivalency and is not enrolled in secondary/post-secondary education.
- An individual enrolled in a Title II Adult Education/Literacy program.
- Other objective criteria determined to be appropriate by the work2future-Director, Program Manager, or the authorized representative of the WIOA Service Provider and documented in the case file such as through case note of the participant status for a specific data element, the date which the information was obtained, and the authorized representative gathering the information.

### **Require Additional Assistance**

work2future defines a youth who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment as a youth with a serious barrier. For purposes of program eligibility, a youth who requires additional assistance due to a serious barrier can be enrolled as an Out-of-School Youth or an In-School Youth. A five percent enrollment limit applies to In-School Youth with a serious barrier who require additional assistance in a given program year and note that this is not the same as the five percent low-income exception. A youth must meet the age **AND** low-income eligibility criteria and must have one or more of the serious barriers listed below to require additional assistance:

- Has repeated at least one secondary grade level or is one year over age for the grade level
- Has a core grade point average (GPA) of less than 1.5
- Is at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school
- Has been suspended five or more times, or expelled
- Has court/agency referrals mandating school attendance
- Has been a dropout or deemed a dropout risk by a school official or was a dropout by self-attestation for an individual age 18 to 24.
- Has become an emancipated youth
- Has aged out of foster care
- Has been referred to or is being treated by an agency for a substance abuse-related problem
- Has experienced recent traumatic events, was a victim of abuse, or resides in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or a qualified professional
- Has serious emotional, medical, or psychological problems as documented by a qualified professional
- Has been fired from a job within the 12 months prior to program application (Out-of-School Youth only)
- Has never held a job or has not had a full-time job (30+ hours per week) for more than 3 consecutive months (Out-of-School Youth only)

### **School Attendance**

School Attendance is defined by State law. In-School Youth must be attending a secondary or a postsecondary school. Secondary schools include high schools and alternative schools such as continuation, magnet, and charter schools that provide education at or below grade 12. Postsecondary schools provide education beyond grade 12 and include California Community Colleges and accredited public and private universities. For WIOA Title I Youth Program eligibility, adult education funded by WIOA Title II, YouthBuild programs, the Job Corps program, high school equivalency programs, or dropout re-engagement programs are not considered schools. For example, an individual who is an Out-of-School Youth at the time of

enrollment and is subsequently placed in a GED program at an adult school, or any school, is still considered an Out-of-School Youth. Similarly, an individual attending postsecondary education but only enrolled in non-credit courses shall be an Out-of-School Youth. However, an individual can attend secondary school equivalency programs funded by the public K-12 school system that are considered schools, and/or an individual can attend postsecondary education, such as credit-bearing community college and/or continuing education courses, shall be considered an In-School Youth.

work2future local policy requires an individual enrolled as an Out-of-School Youth to be ages 18 to 24. As an example, an individual who is an Out-of-School Youth between the ages of 18 to 24 at the time of enrollment and is now beyond the age of 24, is still considered an Out-of-School Youth until exited. Additionally, an In-School Youth must be an individual aged 16 to 21, unless an older individual has a disability and is attending school under State law.

work2future service staff may use the table below as a guide to determine eligibility for youth program enrollment and must have acceptable source documents on record in the participant's file. The table shows WIOA Title I Youth Program requirements and eligibility criteria for both Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth, which can be used for comparison purposes.

Out-of-School Youth	In-School Youth
Not attending secondary/postsecondary school (as defined by State law)	Attending secondary/postsecondary school (as defined by State law)
Age 18 - 24	Age 16 - 21 (or an individual age 22 with a disability who is attending school under State law)
Low-income status is required for <b>BOLD</b> items	A <b>LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL</b>
<b>Youth have one or more barriers below</b>	
A secondary 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 defined by the local school district	
<b>A recipient of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent who is a LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner</b>	Basic skills deficient or an English language learner
An offender	An offender
An individual with unstable housing (e.g., homeless or a runaway)	An individual with unstable housing (e.g., homeless or a runaway)
An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement	An individual in foster care or who has aged out of the foster care system or who has attained 16 years of age and left foster care for kinship guardianship or adoption, a child eligible for assistance under sec. 477 of the Social Security Act (42 U.S.C. 677), or in an out-of-home placement
An individual who is pregnant or parenting	An individual who is pregnant or parenting

An individual with a disability or	An individual with a disability or
<b>A LOW-INCOME INDIVIDUAL who <u>requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment</u></b>	An individual who <u>requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment</u>

Note: No more than five percent of In-School Youth enrolled in a given program year can be eligible based solely on the requires additional assistance category.

### Source Documentation

Once enrolled, a youth participant remains eligible for youth services until exited, and work2future service staff must upload supporting source document files and provide case notes in the participant's file for internal review, program audit, and monitoring. Refer to the WIOA Title I Acceptable Source Documentation Tables in the Appendix of the work2future Technical Assistance Guide for acceptable forms of supporting documentation.

### Documentation of Service Delivery and Case Management

- Ensure that 100 percent of all enrollment supporting documents (e.g., WIOA application, eligibility verifications, and Individual Service Strategy/Individual Employment Plan) are signed and non-expired as applicable and entered in the State CalJOBS system
- Case notes will include details of services delivered during interactions with participants
- Confirm timely entry in the State CalJOBS system (e.g., activity codes, measurable skill gains, and credentials) to provide case management services while participants remain active in a WIOA-funded program and during post-job placement in the follow-up period

There must be reasonable efforts made to collect source documents for WIOA-funded programs. Difficulty in obtaining documentation does not need to entail undue hardship to justify using an applicant's self-attestation. Self-attestation in place of a source documentation is only to be used when the preferred options of paper documentation or third-party corroboration are not available and should never be used as the primary method of gathering documentation to verify data elements. In taking an applicant's self-attestation, it is NOT necessary to obtain corroboration unless there is reason not to believe the individual. The self-attestation document shall state his or her status for a particular data element, such as disabled or homeless status, and then signs and dates the self-attestation document acknowledging this status. The completed self-attestation document with signature remains part of the participant's file.

### YOUTH PROGRAM SERVICES

After youth program eligibility determination, enrollment, and documentation, each youth shall receive an objective assessment, individual service strategy development, and receipt of one or more of the 14 WIOA Youth Program Elements.

### Objective Assessment

The case manager shall conduct an objective assessment with the youth participant to determine both strengths and improvement areas for all youth interested in pursuing education, training services, and employment. The evaluation process identifies academic levels, skill levels, and service needs, which can include an evaluation of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes (e.g., interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs), supportive service needs, and

developmental needs for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways. The objective assessment document on record may include, but is not limited to, the following information:

- Personal information
- Interests, skills, and work readiness information
- Educational and employment history
- Financial and living situation as it relates to employment goals

### **Individual Service Strategy (ISS) or Individual Employment Plan (IEP)**

The case manager and the youth participant shall develop an individual service strategy that directly links to one or more performance measures and that identifies career pathways to include appropriate education, training, and employment goals. The ISS/IEP documents clear, measurable, achievable goals based upon the educational and job/career attainment goals of the youth and describes a plan for intervention services that is mutually supported and agreed upon in writing, bearing the signature of both the youth and the work2future service staff. It can specify services that will be provided to help youth attain goals as well as any obligations of the youth in terms of program participation, expectations, and requirements. A portion of the ISS/IEP development process is described below, for example:

- Use the information gathered during the objective assessment phase to develop an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and/or Individual Employment Plan (IEP)
- Identify youth participant's education, training, and/or short- and long-term employment goals, achievement objectives, and planned services for the participant to achieve stated goals
- Ensure that youth participants are evaluated for and have adequate information about the need for training, such as information regarding the eligible training providers list, as appropriate
- The ISS/IEP will be discussed with the youth and recorded in the State CalJOBS system

### **Fourteen (14) Youth Program Elements**

With the goal of supporting the attainment of a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent), entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness, the case manager will use the participant's objective assessment and Individual Service Strategy (ISS)/Individual Employment Plan (IEP) to determine which of the following services a youth participant shall receive:

- Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential
- Alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate
- Paid work experiences that have academic and occupational education as a component of the work experience, which may include the following types of work experiences:
  - Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year
  - Pre-apprenticeship programs
  - Internships and job shadowing
  - On-the-job training opportunities
  - Placement in work2future's priority sectors



- Occupational skill training, which includes priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations as identified by work2future
- Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster
- Leadership development opportunities, including community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors
- Supportive services for youth as needed in accordance with the work2future Supportive Service Policy
- Adult mentoring for a duration of at least 12 months that may occur both during and after program participation
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of program participation
- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to additional counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth
- Financial literacy education, such as budgeting, managing financial accounts, and tracking credit reports
- Entrepreneurial skills training to expose students to the skills and knowledge necessary to support self-employment, small business ownership, and entrepreneurship
- Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services
- Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training

## **Job Placement**

With an emphasis given to work2future's priority industry sectors and in-demand occupations, job placement can include connecting youth with employers in need of workers and fostering a work experience program to help youth obtain unsubsidized employment. work2future service staff shall maintain a network of employers interested in youth employment, as a subset of these employers can also serve to advise work2future on youth job placement pertaining to industry trends, employer expectations, and workplace regulations.

## **Work Experience**

For some youth, work experience activities such as summer or year-round employment, pre-apprenticeships, on-the-job training, internships, and job shadowing help youth participants obtain knowledge and experience in the workplace and sustain unsubsidized employment. Work experience program design shall include an academic component and an occupational training component, and the required academic and occupational training (e.g., workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training) must be taught within the same timeframe or sequentially and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway. As an example for healthcare occupations, the academic portion could include learning about human physiology of bodily parts and functions, whereas the occupational training portion could include hands-on learning of workplace duties. As appropriate, youth formula funds may be used to pay program staffing costs, youth wages, and related benefits for work experience in the public, private, for-profit, or non-profit sectors. For more information related to work experience, refer to the work2future Work Experience Policy and Procedure operational directive.

## Follow-Up Services

All youth participants must be informed of follow-up services at the time of enrollment. Follow-up services are a required youth program element that must be made available to youth participants after exit from the program to help ensure the youth participant is successful in the transition to postsecondary education, employment, and/or other training. Follow-up services must be determined based on the needs of the youth, align with the ISS/IEP, and may be extended beyond the 12-month period if the youth participant is in need of such services. For more information, refer to the work2future follow-up policy and procedure.

Examples of follow-up services may include, but are not limited to, the following activities:

- Additional career planning and counseling
- Preparations for the transition to postsecondary education and other training
- Referral to supportive services available in the community

For youth requesting supportive services during the follow-up phase, refer to the work2future Supportive Service policy for allowable items. All follow-up correspondence shall be documented in CalJOBS, and a case manager is required to record youth employment and educational status. Note that follow-up services are not required for any youth who exited from the program due to an exclusionary exit as defined below, and their information is excluded from performance:

- **Institutionalized:** The participant has become incarcerated in a correctional institution under Section 225 of the WIOA or has become a resident of an institution or facility providing 24-hour support, such as a hospital or treatment center, while receiving services as a youth participant.
- **Health/Medical:** The participant receives medical treatment, and that treatment is expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program.
- **Deceased:** The participant is deceased.
- **Reserve Forces Called to Active Duty:** The participant is a member of the National Guard or other reserve military unit of the armed forces and is called to active duty for at least 90 days.
- **Foster Care:** The participant has moved from the area as part of the foster care program or system (Youth Participants ONLY).

## Exceptions

Any exceptions to this policy must be approved by the work2future-Director, Program Manager, or the authorized representative of the WIOA Service Provider and documented in the participant's file.

## INQUIRIES

Please contact the work2future Administrator on duty, [work2future.MIS@sanjoseca.gov](mailto:work2future.MIS@sanjoseca.gov), for any questions regarding this policy.