

Massachusetts
Workforce Investment Act
Title I, Youth Program

POINT OF SERVICE CONTACT
SELF – ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Instructions Guide

The survey can be accessed online by one of two methods:

- 1). Direct url: <http://www.zoomerang.com/Survey/?p=WEB227YAGQW9K9>
- 2). Find the url on Commonwealth Corporation's website:
<http://www.commcorp.org/youth/Events.html>

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Overview

The Massachusetts Workforce Investment Act youth programs (WIA Youth) “Point of Contact Online Self-Assessment” is designed to gather information regarding the extent to which services offered by the Massachusetts Workforce System’s youth programs meet recognized standards of quality of youth programming, as rated by individuals working daily to implement youth activities. It contains 16 categories that assess a program’s quality based on recognized standards for youth development practices (See “Quality Standards” section below). The survey also aims to identify relative strengths and challenges that Massachusetts WIA youth programs have implementing youth development strategies compared to the state as a whole.

The survey is intended for individuals who have regular contact with youth; for example, one-stop career centers and Title I WIA youth program sub-recipients. Any individual who takes this survey should meet the following criteria:

1. Work directly with youth in activities designed to assess needs and activities designed to provide skills. Among similar staff, they should be the most knowledgeable about the program operations (i.e. Direct Care/Line Staff); and/or
2. The immediate supervisor of individuals working directly with youth (i.e. Program Manager).

Individuals who complete this survey should respond based on their own knowledge of the program practices. Surveys should be completed without prior consultation or coaching from any individual that is not the respondent. More than one person can take the survey, as long as they meet one of the criteria listed above. Multiple surveys from individuals within the same organization are encouraged.

The information gained from the assessment will help Commonwealth Corporation and the Department of Workforce Development identify and disseminate promising practices as well as develop statewide and local technical assistance strategies. Commonwealth Corporation staff will visit several sites to gain a deeper understanding of the strengths and challenges in the system that are reflective of survey responses. Site selection may be randomized or can occur through self-selection depending on the response rate. Local areas should communicate the necessity of this self-assessment to local youth programs and encourage full participation in this survey.

Quality Standards

This self-assessment provides a variety of topic areas and range of indicators that are reflective of generally acceptable youth development standards. They are based on the National Youth Employment Coalition’s Promising and Effective Practices Network’s *Guide to Quality Standards for Youth Programs*, strategies promoted by the National Transitional Jobs Network, and the Commonwealth Corporation. It does not present the full range of possible standards, however it is intended to measure the quality of a program’s service delivery through self-assessment on these standards.

Instructions

The self-assessment is web-based and is divided into two sections. Section One consists of the organizational profile and Section Two contains the program quality indicators.

Section 1: Organizational Profile

This section of the web-based survey requires the entry of basic contact information including organizational and contact information for the respondent.

Section 2. Youth Program Quality Indicators Self-Assessment

This section contains the self-assessment portion of the survey. There are 16 *quality standards*, each containing a list of corresponding *quality indicators* (See *Illustration 1*) that can be rated using the mini *rating scale*. The rating scale has corresponding *numbered buttons* in columns below the scale that allows a user to rate each of the quality indicators by clicking on the numbered button that best describes the agency's status/progress in implementing/achieving the indicator. The ratings are as follows:

- 1 = Needs Improvement;
- 2 = Meets Standard; and
- 3 = Exceeds Standard

Illustration 1

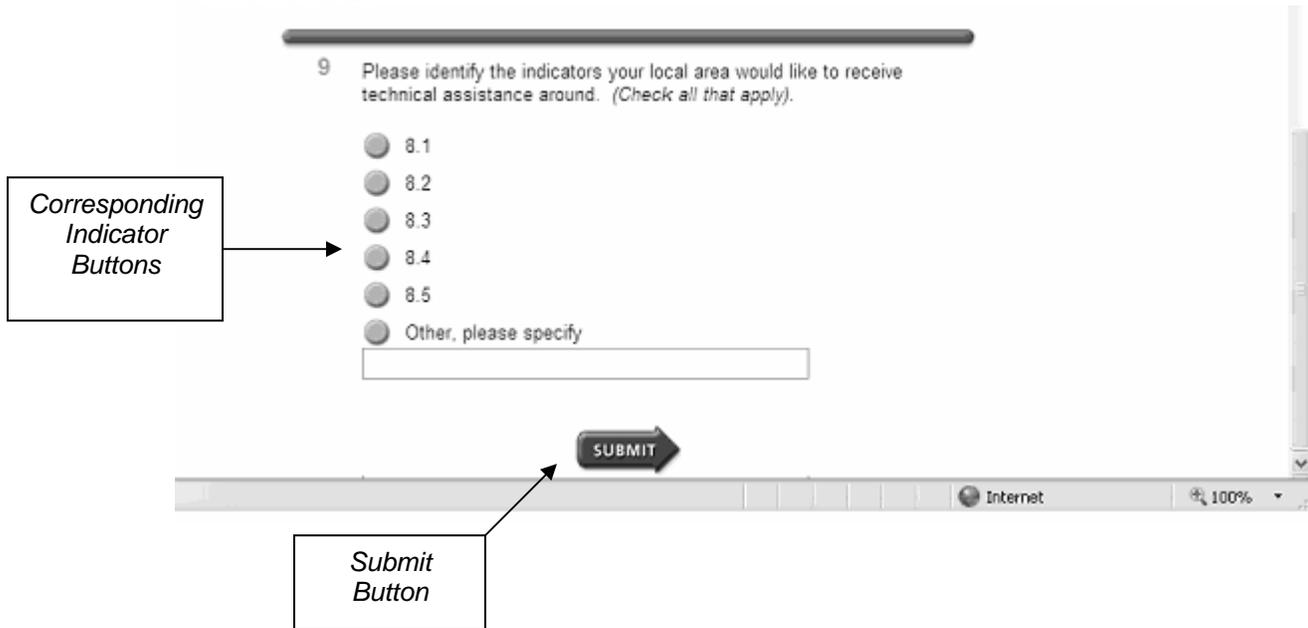
The screenshot displays a web-based self-assessment interface. At the top, a box labeled "Quality Standard" points to the heading "* Organization's Ability to Target Youth". Below this, a "Rating Scale" is shown with three columns: "1 Need Improvement", "2 Meets Standard", and "3 Exceeds Standard". A box labeled "Numbered Buttons" points to the three buttons (1, 2, 3) provided for each indicator. A box labeled "Quality Indicators" points to the list of indicators. The indicators are:

- 8.1 The program targets, recruits and enrolls young people who would benefit from its services and activities.
- 8.2 The program develops referral linkages with other organizations and agencies connected to its target youth.
- 8.3 The program ensures frequency and length of participation are sufficient for targeted youth to achieve performance goals.
- 8.4 The program designs activities appropriate to the ages and developmental stages of the participants.
- 8.5 The program recruitment strategy includes culturally appropriate messaging.

The interface also shows a browser window at the bottom with "Internet" and "100%" visible.

An option that allows a respondent to request technical assistance is also available. This can be achieved through the selection of the *corresponding indicator button* for which technical assistance is required. There is also additional space provided for commentary regarding a particular quality indicator.

Illustration 2:



After completing the set of indicators for the quality standard, select the *submit* button to advance to the next set of quality standards and indicators as shown in *Illustration 2*.

Questions to Consider

Who Should Complete This Survey?

Persons completing this survey should be responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the program and participants. The staff should be knowledgeable about the policies, practices, and procedures of the program. Individuals filling out this survey can include program managers who supervise the direct care staff and have regular contact with youth, or direct care staff with knowledge of program policies and practices. Multiple individuals from any one program can complete this survey. Executive directors and program manager who have little, if any contact with youth are discouraged from completing the self-assessment.

Is this survey Anonymous?

This survey is not anonymous. The primary series of questions requires the entry of information for the respondent and his/her respective organization. Information about any one program will be shared only with that program. Aggregate data derived from this survey will be shared across the system.

How Long Will the Assessment Take to Complete?

The estimated time for completion of the survey is approximately one hour. While not recommended, answers can be saved and revisited later, if needed.

What Role Can the Executive and Program Managers Take?

Executive level directors who manage the front line staff and supervisors should make their staff members aware of the assessment tool and its importance to the system. Executives can also work with the Commonwealth Corporation to document promising practices and challenges that surface as a result of this assessment.

How Many People in My Organization Can Have Input?

This self-assessment should be completed individually. Persons rating the indicators in this survey should answer to the best of their own knowledge. Individuals within the organization who have similar program responsibility can complete additional surveys. These individuals are encouraged to complete a separate survey.

What Actions Could Occur if I Rate my Program too High or too Low?

Ratings that are consistently high or low may be considered for an on-site review to document the extent of the strengths and challenges in the program. There will be no formal rewards or sanctions derived from this survey. However, the purpose of the assessment is to identify both promising practices that can be shared across the

Commonwealth as well as challenges that will inform technical assistance offerings to local areas on a statewide basis.

What Should I Rate?

The person completing this survey should rate his/her current program practices relative to the quality indicators presented. Past practices that have not been implemented regularly and planned activities that have not been realized, should be factored into the thinking of the person who is providing the rating.

What Rating Should I Give?

A person completing this form who has the knowledge and understanding of the program design and activities should complete the self-assessment. He/she should provide, based on personal expertise and experience, the rating that best reflects current program practices as they relate to the indicators. The choices are presented on a scale from “1” = Needs Improvement to “3” = Exceed Standard. A person who believes, based on personal experience, that his/her program requires improvement on a particular indicator, should select “1 = Needs Improvement” or he/she could rate it a “3 = Exceed Standard” if it in fact goes above and beyond “2 = Meeting the Standard”. Programs that consistently exceed standards are likely to be reviewed to better understand what makes them stand out.

How Should I Prioritize the Indicators?

There is no priority or ranking of the indicators so, one is not considered more or less important than another. However, the person completing the survey should review each of the indicators presented and provide what might be considered an overall rating of the standard that best reflects his/her own understanding of how the program is operating.

How Will This Information Be Use?

The Commonwealth Corporation will use this information to improve the quality of youth programming across Massachusetts. The Commonwealth Corporation will meet with a sample of providers to discuss the promising practices and challenges identified through this assessment. This information may be incorporated into future statewide technical assistance offerings including publications, youth forums and training offerings. Some program representatives will be asked, at a future date, to voluntarily participate in sharing their experiences and expertise with others who are interested in addressing program challenges.

If you would like to know more about this self-assessment please call Samuel Martin (617)- 727-8158 for instruction on completing the survey for multiple program sites.