

Mass Workforce Issuance

Workforce Issuance No. 14-77

Policy **Information**

To: Chief Elected Officials
Workforce Investment Board Chairs
Workforce Investment Board Directors
Title I Administrators
Career Center Directors
Title I Fiscal Officers
DCS Operations Managers

cc: WIA State Partners

From: Alice Sweeney, Director
Department of Career Services

Date: September 5, 2014

Subject: **Youth Individual Service Strategy Requirements**

Purpose: To provide guidance to local Workforce Investment Boards, Youth Councils, One Stop Career Centers and Youth Service Providers related to the requirements for the Youth Individual Service Strategy (ISS) for participants in the WIA Title I Youth program.

Background: A well-developed ISS and related documentation is a vital part of case management required by WIA law and DOL regulations. The WIA Youth program requires that every youth participant be provided the benefit of an ISS (20 CFR 664.405 ((a)(2))). As outlined in WIA Section 129 (c)(1)(B), the ISS represents an individual plan for each young person. The ISS is a detailed, unique, individual strategy for each participant that is the basis for the overall case management strategy. The ISS is a living document, to be reviewed and updated on an ongoing basis. The case manager uses the ISS to update strategies and activities as they occur and/or as life circumstances require, and to document referral and contact information for services obtained from partner organizations. When reviewing the ISS, case managers are to document a participant's progress, activities completed, benchmarks reached, and any other accomplishments. Additionally, the ISS is developed and modified in partnership with the participant and used to document achievements in measurable and attainable short-term and long-term goals that reflect the young person's interests and activities, and incorporate career pathway planning.

Policy:

The WIA Youth program requires every youth participant to have an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) in their case file (20 CFR 664.405 (a)(2)). The ISS represents an individual plan for each young person that includes:

- 1) an employment goal, when appropriate;
- 2) appropriate achievement objectives, including educational goals; and
- 3) appropriate services that take into account what is learned from the objective assessment.

The ISS includes educational, career and personal developmental goals, both short-term and long-term. ISS goals and strategies are updated as short-term goals are achieved or the youth's needs change. Youth entering the program need to have a clear understanding that post-secondary education is critical when exploring careers.

Career goals for younger participants are to be age appropriate and may identify a *career interest* that can be developed into a career goal. Goals may change as a youth ages and interests broaden as a result of participation in workforce development activities, which must be reflected in a revision of the ISS and documented in case notes. Skill attainment goals are to be established for all youth needing basic skills, work readiness skills and/or occupational skills training, which is determined by objective assessment, presumptive needs assessment, and TABE scores.

The ISS is the basis for the entire case management strategy. It shall be developed in partnership with the participant and reflect the needs indicated by the objective assessment and the expressed interests and desires of the participant. The ISS is the framework for justifying decisions concerning the appropriate service mix and sequence of services. As part of the ISS, a plan of action is developed for the following:

- Identify academic competencies to be achieved, (e.g. preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities)
- Determine the type of occupational and basic skills training that is needed, (ensure strong linkages between academic and occupational learning)
- Identify employment goals and prepare for unsubsidized employment
- Determine the need for support services and identify appropriate mechanisms to deliver these services
- Identify the mix and sequence of the ten required program elements, as appropriate to the individual
- Establish the achievement goals in the areas of Basic, Work Readiness and Occupational Skills

Once actively receiving WIA services, the youth participant and provider review the ISS as initially established benchmarks are achieved and as goals or service needs change, at a minimum time period of twice per year. The purpose of the review is to assess the continued relevance of the service strategy and the participant's progress towards goals. The ISS is to be viewed as a living document that is continually developed along with the participant's changing needs, interests, and goals. The obligation to review the ISS continues through

completion of the plan, at which time the participant is considered to be exited, triggering the subsequent twelve month follow-up period. The Department of Career Service (DCS) provides a template for the ISS and DCS monitors compliance of the ISS forms with DOL regulations and guidance. DCS does not mandate the use the DCS ISS template, but local areas must ensure that all of the required components are included in the local ISS document as well as in the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) to the extent practicable.

ISS Development

The Individual Service Strategy is a road map of services that will help youth reach their individual goals; the development of the ISS begins with assessments administered during the pre-enrollment period.

It is important to note that enrollment in WIA programming begins when a youth, determined eligible, receives an intensive service. Development of an ISS is considered a WIA service and, therefore, initiates the enrollment in WIA. The ISS may be the first service a youth receives in a WIA program.

The sections of the ISS are as follows:

- Participant identifying information, including name, contact information, and MOSES ID; Social security number is captured in MOSES
- Participant assessments administered, including assessment dates and results
- Educational and work experience background
- Identification of immediate participant needs with documented recommendations for solution
- Participant education goals
- Identification of an initial career goal, as well as employment goals, as applicable
- Participant supportive service needs
- Participant personal goals

Local areas must ensure that the ISS:

- Includes goals and service plans that are open-ended
- Maps services that are consistent with participant needs and goals
- Contains both short and long term goals that are measurable and have target completion dates
- Is customizable to meet the needs and strengths of each participant
- As appropriate, includes referrals made to entities external to the program
- Service element are associated with the goals
- Service plan is drafted in cooperation with the participant
- Includes documentation of periodic review in cooperation with the participant
- Includes participant and program representative signatures demonstrating mutual commitment
- Includes date initially developed, review dates, and date of completion

ISS Review and Completion

In order to assess progress towards benchmarks and goals, and to evaluate the continued relevance of the goals and services planned for the participant, the ISS is reviewed by the case manager and participant as benchmarks initially established are achieved, as well as when goals or service needs change. Once all goals are attained, the ISS is considered *complete*. At this point, the participant is ready for exit from the WIA system.

Local areas must develop an ISS for each WIA Youth Participant and ensure it contains the required elements as specified in this policy. Local areas may exercise flexibility in the format used to capture the required information. In all cases, the Massachusetts One Stop Employment System (MOSES) database must be used to document youth case management services to the extent practicable.

Action

Required: Please assure that all staff responsible for providing services to Youth are informed of and versed in the content of this policy.

Effective: Immediately

Inquiries: Please email questions PolicyQA@detma.org

References: Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), as amended (29 U.S.C. 2801 et seq.)
<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/wialaw.pdf>

WIA Regulations, 20 CFR Part 664
<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/finalrule.pdf>