

WIOA Youth Workgroup
September 25, 2015
Meeting Notes

Members in Attendance: *Tricia Lucier (Employment and Training Resources), Susan Lange (Commonwealth Corporation), John Oliveira (Mass Commission for the Blind), Vicky Palantzas (Brockton Area Workforce Investment Board), Barbara Dulin (EBNHC), Christine Abramowitz (Hampden REB), Larry Smith (Office of Workforce Development), John Niles, (Commonwealth Corporation), Kamaria Moore (Department of Transitional Assistance), Shailah Stewart (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education), Lynne Courtney (South Shore WIB), Mary Giordano (ACLS), Sacha Stadhard (Department of Career Services)*

Non-Members in Attendance: *Ed O’Sullivan (for Mary Sarris from the North Shore Workforce Investment Board), Cassie White (Office of Workforce Development), Jolanta Conway (Adult Basic Education), Leslie Leslie, (Federation for Children with Special Needs), Amanda Green (Department of Elementary and Secondary Education)*

Agenda Topics:

Youth Workgroup Mission Statement:

To provide a framework for an integrated service delivery system that supports positive outcomes for disconnected youth. – Approved as the mission statement for the Youth Workgroup.

State Plan Required Definitions:

The State Plan requires the State to define the following: (1) Alternative Education, (2) Not Attending School and Attending School, (3) Basic Skills Deficient, and (4) Requires Additional Assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment. The Youth Workgroup discussed whether the existing definitions and policy are reflective of the new WIOA youth provisions.

Alternative School

Discussion:

- Does the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education provide a broad enough definition to encompass alternative education as intended under WIOA?
- The definition should encompass a federal vision of alternative education.
- It was suggested to change the General Educational Development (GED) definition within the alternative school definition to high school equivalency.
- Alternative schools should refer to settings that yield high school diplomas.
- For WIOA eligibility purposes an alternative school would refer to an in-school youth – unless the alternative school is a non-diploma granting program in which case the youth would be referred to an out-of-school youth.

- It was agreed that the DESE definition of an alternative school in relation to WIOA in-school and out-of-school youth is appropriate.
- Students 14-22 yrs of age who have 504 plans or an IEP are considered to be in-school youth. (Suggested definition youth who are enrolled in alternative schools and who have a 504 plan and IEP are considered in-school).
- Age limit for enrollment in alternative school is 22 yrs old.

Basic Skills Deficient

Discussion:

- Relative to the second part of the Basic Skills Deficient definition, It was suggested that a baseline come from the State as to how a youth is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individuals' family, or in society.
- Local areas should also be allowed to further define and document in their local annual plans how youth are unable to compute or solve problems based on the demographic and labor market needs in the local area.
- There was discussion of youth who are not basic skills deficient but are not at the grade level to meet the level of education defined in their career pathway. These youth would be considered "pathway deficient."
- It was also suggested that the approved testing tools from the National Reporting System (NRS) be used as standard assessment tools to use to assess basic skills deficient.

Attending School and Not Attending School

Discussion:

- According to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Student Information Management System, an individual who is enrolled in a non-diploma granting alternative education program is considered a dropout.
- An individual who is enrolled secondary or post-secondary educational program is considered in-school unless the individual attends a non-diploma granting alternative education program (HiSET) in which case the individual is considered out-of-school and a dropout.
- It was agreed that the definition of attending school should be tied to the status of the youth.
- Enrolled and attending should be included in the definition of attending school.
- Public schools are required to conduct outreach to youth who have 10 consecutive days of unexcused absence before they are dropped from the attendance..

Youth Requires Additional Assistance Policy:

- Local areas will need to revise their local area Youth Requires Additional Assistance policies in accordance with WIOA.

- The group suggested the local areas should have the flexibility to identify barriers that affect their local area youth in addition to the barriers that WIOA has set forth as eligibility criteria.
- The Youth Requires Additional Assistance policy will need to be revised under WIOA. The following individuals agreed to draft the Youth Requires Additional Assistance policy: Christine Abramowitz, Larry Smith, Les Abramowitz, Cassie White, Barbara Dulin, and Sacha Stadhard.
- The Youth Requires Additional Assistance Policy will be reviewed at the next WIOA Youth Workgroup meeting.

State MOU Partnerships and Overview of Title II Adult Basic Education:

- The State MOU between the Core WIOA Program partners will act as the “floor” for framing partnership expectations for the local areas to follow.
- Jolanta Conway, State Director for Adult Basic Education gave an overview of the ABE and Adult Career Pathway programs.
- There is a need to help youth transition from ABE programs to next steps – occupational skills trainings, and work experiences.
- A population of students enrolled in ABE programs fall into the category of OSY age 16-24 years.
- ABE youth do not need to provide social security numbers as is the requirement for youth enrolled in WIOA.
- There about 160 individuals in the Adult Career Pathway who would be considered a shared customer with the WIOA Youth Program.
New policies are need to strengthen collaboration between Title I and Title II.
- Integrated, education, and training – there is an opportunity for collaborations between the two programs by identifying the students who are enrolled in the ABE program and identifying the available occupational skills training and work experience programs.
- Does the ACP do occupational skills training? No, but trying to move ABE program in the direction of incorporating training into their programs.
- It makes sense to leverage the system and build relationships between WIOA Title I and ABE Title II. It would be helpful to know the number of ABE youth who are enrolled in the local area and then be able to link them to training which would meet the ABE mandate of integrated education, and training programs.
- This collaboration would work for a portion of the ABE population as some youth will not be able to participate in ABE programs based on work or other obligations.
- WIOA encourages collaboration between the partners. There needs to be a connection between CORE partners to align and leverage services to connect youth to the next steps.
- As WIOA focuses on a career pathway development it needs to be clear that education, training, and support services are aligned.
- It is more likely that performance measures will be achieved when collaboration with other programs exists which will result in a broader array of services for youth.

Youth Workgroup Presentation to the WIOA Steering Committee:

A syntheses of work, meetings, recommendations, and products that the Youth Workgroup has put forth so far will be presented to the WIOA Steering committee Tuesday, September 29th. Members of the group reviewed the PowerPoint Presentation and provided the following comments:

- It was suggested to add the role of the OSCC in the referral process between Title I and the Title II ABE programs.
- The number of referrals between the WIOA Core programs and workforce partners is one way to measure how well the partners are working collaboratively to refer youth back to Core partners for services.
- A longitudinal measure of youth who are receiving services from Core programs and partners. Data should demonstrate that youth who have multiple providers receive better outcomes.
- The Youth Workgroup presentation to the WIOA Steering Committee will be posted to the Youth Workgroup website.

Expanding Work Experience through Strategies for serving out-of-school youth:

- John Niles provided information on examples of program models and strategies from other states that are serving OSY.
- The OSY subgroup will meet to review service strategies for serving OSY as well as to start the discussion about program models and best practices for serving OSY.
- Strategies to serve OSY can be enhanced by incorporating internships, pre-apprenticeships, work experiences, summer jobs, subsidized employment, and on –the –job training.

Resource Mapping:

- The group reviewed a list of state-level agencies in which the Youth Development Resource survey will be distributed.
- The Youth Development Resource survey will be distributed to programs within the state-level agencies.
- It was suggested to include to following State Agencies:
 - Executive Office of Public Safety
 - Department of Career Services
 - Department Children and Families
 - Department of Transition
 - Department of Higher Education
 - Juvenile Justice System

Next Meeting:

The next WIOA Youth Workgroup will meet Friday, October 30th from 10:00 – 12:00 pm. Location TBA.

