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ADVISORY: **TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO.** 18-11

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS

FROM: JANE OATES
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Improving Literacy and Numeracy Gains of Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth Program Participants

1. Purpose. The purpose of this Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) is to provide guidance to state and local workforce investment area staff and WIA Youth Program service providers to increase literacy and numeracy gains of out-of-school, basic skills deficient youth and to further clarify reporting policies and requirements. This TEGL does not change or replace any previous guidance related to the literacy and numeracy gains measure.

2. References.

- Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), as amended (Public Law 105-220, 29 United States Code 2801 et seq.);
- WIA Performance Accountability Regulations, 20 Code of Federal Regulations part 666;
- TEGL No. 17-05, *Common Measures Policy for the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Performance Accountability System and Related Performance Issues*, http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2195; and
- TEGL No. 17-05, Change 2, *Common Measures Policy for the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) Performance Accountability System and Related Performance Issues*, http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2759.

3. Background. The literacy and numeracy gains measure is one of three youth common performance measures used to assess performance of the WIA Youth Program. ETA has provided policy guidance related to literacy and numeracy gains in TEGL 17-05 and TEGL 17-05, Change 2. This TEGL builds on previous guidance and provides additional policy clarification and technical assistance to states and local areas to enhance programs and practices that increase literacy and numeracy skills of out-of-school WIA youth. It does not replace or supersede previous guidance.

Section 203 (12) of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, Title II of WIA, defines "literacy" as "the ability to read, write, and speak in English, compute, and solve problems, at

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levels of proficiency necessary to function on the job, in the family of the individual, and in society." Without these skills, youth struggle in entering the world of work, unable to transition from low-skilled jobs to careers that offer family sustaining wages.

The literacy and numeracy gains rate has steadily improved since common measures were implemented, increasing from a rate of 30.4 percent in Program Year (PY) 2007 to a rate of 42.5 percent in PY 2010. However, some states and local areas continue to face challenges with the measure, both in terms of developing effective program models and in calculating and reporting the measure. In PY 2010 for instance, nearly half of states did not meet the national target of 40.7 percent. Regardless of whether a state is a "common measures" or "statutory measures" state, assisting out-of-school, basic skills deficient youth in increasing literacy and numeracy skills is essential to their success in the workplace and should be a priority in all youth programs funded by WIA. Additionally, results must be reported to ETA whether the State is accountable for the measure or not.

Based on data of WIA Youth exiters in PY 2009, 70 percent of out-of-school youth were found to be basic skills deficient at initial assessment, as were half of out-of-school youth who had already completed high school or a general educational development (GED) prior to entering the program. These numbers suggest that all programs that serve out-of-school youth must build strong basic skills remediation into effective program models in order to assist youth in becoming competitive in the workforce.

4. <u>The Importance of Literacy and Numeracy Skill Development</u>.

Earning a high school diploma or GED is typically not enough to obtain and retain jobs with family sustaining wages. In its 2010 Employment Projections, the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported that occupations typically requiring a postsecondary degree are projected to grow the fastest during the 2010-20 decade. These newly created jobs, often called "middle skill" jobs, require education and training beyond high school but not necessarily a four-year degree. Understanding this workforce need, President Obama has called on the United States to have "the best educated, most competitive workforce in the world" by 2020, once again leading the world in the percentage of individuals with postsecondary degrees and/or industry-recognized certificates and credentials. The President's goal is to have every American complete at least one year of postsecondary education or career training.

In step with the President, and as part of the Department of Labor's (Department) strategic plan for 2011-2016, the Secretary of Labor announced as one of the Department's High Priority Performance Goals to increase by ten percent the number of participants in the public workforce system who receive training and attain a degree or certificate by June 2012. As the workforce system strives to achieve this goal, the first step is to ensure youth have access to programs designed to increase literacy and numeracy skills that will enable them to be successful in postsecondary education or training.

This TEGL provides strategies the workforce system can utilize to:

- Improve program design, service delivery, staff development and basic skills assessment;
- Implement performance-based contracts and cultivate strong partnerships with providers to facilitate joint responsibility for skills gains; and,

- Clarify reporting requirements and associated processes.

For informational and illustrative purposes, this TEGL provides examples of and links to programs, practices and strategies developed by WIA Youth programs and other organizations. This guidance is not meant to endorse any particular organization, program or approach.

5. **Program Design, Service Delivery, Staff Development and Basic Skills Assessment.**

Program Design: ETA encourages literacy and numeracy skills development to be an integral part of WIA Youth programs. When possible, local areas should infuse literacy and numeracy skills building into each of the required program elements. "The Literacy/Numeracy Gains in Massachusetts WIA Youth Programs Manual," found at http://www.commcorp.org/resources/documents/LiteracyNumeracyMarch2009.pdf, suggests that youth can be encouraged to read and discuss materials that pertain to work experience, summer employment, or service opportunities. These activities can be integrated into all aspects of the program through coordination with other staff as well as with community partners. The Manual provides examples of how to integrate literacy and numeracy into key service elements, including employment and career development activities (e.g., summer employment opportunities; paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing; occupational skill training; and leadership development services).

Additionally, WIA Youth programs, in partnership with secondary and postsecondary education and social service providers, can take a systemic approach to ensuring literacy and numeracy skills development supports a broader strategy that moves youth towards the ultimate goal of postsecondary education and training and/or employment. To that end, programs can establish more comprehensive partnerships among state workforce agencies, local workforce investment boards, youth councils, state and local boards of education, and community college systems, among others, through coordinated, innovative approaches such as:

- Integrating basic and remedial education with occupational skills training. Models such as Washington State's I-BEST program pair basic skills instructors with technical instructors, providing students with both literacy and numeracy education and workforce skills. In this model, literacy and numeracy instruction is contextualized within occupational training, allowing learners to advance simultaneously in basic skills and workforce training. (See Washington State's I-BEST model at http://ccrc.tc.columbia.edu/Publication.asp?UID=692. Other state models include Minnesota's FastTRAC program, http://www.fasttrac.project.mnscu.edu/ and Wisconsin's RISE program, http://risepartnership.org/.)

- Strengthening bridge programming. Bridge programs provide contextualized learning within a career framework to prepare individuals who lack adequate basic academic and/or English language skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and employment. The essential features include a modular and contextualized curriculum; connection points on a career ladder; industry certification that articulates with academic degrees; project-based learning assessments; specific criteria for entry and exit; articulation to other bridges and to postsecondary education; academic supports incorporated into lesson plans; career counseling; and non-academic support services as part of the regular schedule. (See *How to Build Bridge Programs that Fit into a Career*

Pathway: A Step-by-Step Guide Based on the Carreras en Salud Program in Chicago, at https://learnwork.workforce3one.org/view/2001103402930253015/info.)

- Implementing innovative program models such as Career Academies and Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS). Career Academies aim to keep students engaged in education and prepare them for successful transitions to postsecondary education and employment. They are organized as small learning communities, combine academic and technical curricula around a career theme, and establish partnerships with local employers to provide work-based learning opportunities. (See MDRC's study on Career Academies at http://www.mdrc.org/publications/366/overview.html.)

  CEPS programs, developed by the Youth Development Institute, help community-based organizations strengthen their services for youth who have dropped out of school with low reading and math levels (below eighth grade). CEPS is a highly structured approach to youth services focusing on youth who are ineligible for GED preparation due to low academic skills, and builds the capacity of organizations to serve them effectively. CEPS also develops partnerships with colleges so young people with GEDs or those who were marginalized in high school, but completed through a special program, can enter and remain in college. (See the Youth Development Institute's CEPS model at http://www.ydinstitute.org/initiatives/pathways/ceps_work.html.)

Service Delivery: In addition to developing program models that are strategically designed to address basic skills needs, service providers can also employ multiple service delivery strategies to increase literacy and numeracy skills of WIA youth. Through effective basic skills assessment, support, and joint planning, programs can increase the likelihood that youth remain engaged and experience success in all program areas, including building literacy and numeracy skills. Programs should consider employing strategies that take into account the needs and skill levels of youth, such as:

- Joint Planning and Individual Service Strategy (ISS) Development. Youth providers develop individual service plans or strategies to help guide youth through the program and beyond. Case managers and youth can ensure the ISS clarifies specific literacy and numeracy goals and the steps needed to attain them based on an initial assessment of the youth's literacy and numeracy levels. Of critical importance to the development of an effective ISS, case managers must interpret assessment results and incorporate those results into service planning and activities to help youth achieve established goals and obtain desired outcomes. In this regard, case managers should assist youth in mapping out expected progress that takes into account individual needs, abilities and goals.

- Increasing the amount and intensity of instruction based on need. WIA programs serve youth with a variety of basic skills levels. Therefore, programs must take into consideration individual youths' needs to determine the amount and intensity of instruction that should be provided. Programs should also consider breaking down goals into smaller, more tangible units for youth with greater need and take into account the pace at which a youth is expected to achieve those goals. In addition, providing youth with immediate feedback helps youth and instructors understand where to focus additional attention.

- Ensuring that instruction and assessment are founded upon rigorous standards of college and career readiness. For example, the Common Core Standards (available at: http://www.corestandards.org/) provide a consistent, clear understanding of what youth are expected to learn, so instructors and parents know what they need to do to help them. The Common Core Standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that young people need for success in college and careers. Developed under the auspices of the National Governors Association and the Council of Chief State School Officers, the Common Core Standards are one example of college and career readiness standards that have been adopted by 44 states and the District of Columbia.

- Utilizing applied learning techniques. Youth often learn better when curriculum is linked with the type of tasks and activities required in the workplace. This includes providing youth opportunities to connect classroom-based learning with life beyond the classroom through hands-on activities that solve real-world problems. Additionally, partnering with employers to develop curriculum ensures learning is relevant to workforce needs.

- Creating smaller learning cohorts for young people. Creating small student cohorts based on academic or career interests and assigning projects that require students to collaborate and cooperate strengthen youth engagement and the probability of achieving skills goals. Providing targeted and appropriate services and creating environments conducive to learning, wherever possible, can benefit both youth and overall program performance.

- Utilizing technology to promote optimal learning. Especially for youth of the digital age, the use of technology is a critical element of instruction, learning, and self-expression. Technology affords instructors and youth the flexibility to customize materials, assignments, presentations, and engage in authentic inquiry. It can also be used to extend the learning beyond the classroom or overcome barriers to class attendance of time and distance. For more information on using technology to increase basic skills, see *Adolescent Literacy: What's Technology Got to Do With It?* http://www.adlit.org/article/35792/.

- Emphasizing the importance of literacy and numeracy skills for education and employment goals. Case managers should communicate the relevance of basic literacy and numeracy skills, helping youth understand that the ability to read and write is critical if short- and long-term education and employment goals are to be met. Case managers should also communicate the skills employers require in today's knowledge-based economy. Reading, for instance, should be stressed as a fundamental skill necessary for youth to accomplish their stated goals, such as:

  i) Completion of technical training. A high school diploma or GED alone may not prepare an individual for success in a technical training or apprenticeship program. According to the report, *Bridging the Readiness Gap: Demystifying Required Reading Levels for Postsecondary Pursuits*, as the text demands in K-12 have trended downward, reading demands in high-growth industries have trended upward. http://www.lexile.com/m/uploads/downloadablepdfs/Policy_Brief_1_Bridging_the_Readiness_Gap.pdf. For example, the majority of books on a typical 11th and 12th grade English/language arts reading list are written at the 7th grade level, while the reading demands of Automotive Technology service manuals have increased over the

past 20 years to the 11th grade level as technology has advanced and "Automotive Technicians" replaced "Auto Mechanics."

ii) Passing an industry certification exam. Employers seek employees who possess both school- and industry-based credentials. Almost all certification exams are written exams. Therefore, they not only test technical knowledge, but also reading and writing skills.

iii) Earning a living wage. A longitudinal study of adult literacy found that the level of literacy proficiency affects both initial earnings and the rate of subsequent earnings growth. The report of this study, *Adult Literacy Development and Economic Growth,* by Stephen Reder can be found at: http://lincs.ed.gov/publications/pdf/AdultLiteracyDevEcoGrowth.pdf.

iv) Continuing on a career pathway. Typically, ongoing education and training is required in order to get promoted in a high-growth industry or enter employment in a new industry. Reading proficiency is directly tied to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills. Typically, ongoing education and training is required in order to acquire new skills and get promoted in a high-growth industry or enter employment in a new industry. Helping youth to visualize and learn about multiple job options that are available as they progress through a career should be an important component of case management. It helps attract youth to an industry by showing potential career progression beyond entry points, helps focus workforce development efforts, and informs youth about the training, education, and developmental experiences that would enable them to accomplish their career objectives. Reading proficiency is directly tied to the acquisition of new knowledge and skills.

- Engaging and supporting youth to ensure program completion. Too often, youth become discouraged and drop out of programs. Youth need to feel supported and encouraged by the adults who provide services, and youth frequently require additional supportive services, including individual tutoring, in order to stay in a program and demonstrate success. Other supportive services, such as child care or transportation assistance, can also support continued participation. It is also important to help youth establish a sense of self-worth through program participation by providing incentives for measurable performance increases; providing positive feedback for attained goals; and helping youth realize their contributions matter. Cultivating positive youth-adult relationships from the very beginning and providing opportunities for one-on-one instruction through tutoring and/or class time are also fundamental. Service providers can also increase youth engagement through the innovative use of smart technology and social media. For additional information, resources, and training tools on increasing youth engagement, youth providers can access the "Toolkit for Effective Frontline Services to Youth," http://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/Toolkit-improve.cfm. Also, the presentation, "Improving literacy/numeracy outcomes," offers youth engagement strategies and tips for youth-friendly programming, http://www.doleta.gov/performance/trainingtutorials/ppt/improving_literacy_and_numeracy_outcomes.ppt.

Staff Development and Training: For staff working with youth, it is essential to not only understand the importance of assisting youth to achieve literacy and numeracy gains, but also to understand the measure itself. Both are critical to a youth's success as well as success of the overall program. States and local areas should consider:

- Increasing the capacity and knowledge base of state and local staff through training and enhanced communication. It is essential that those who work in the WIA Youth program at the state level have a strong knowledge base of WIA Youth policies and performance measures in order to assist local workforce investment areas in accurately collecting and reporting performance data, including the inputting of required data by youth service providers. ETA encourages states to communicate with their ETA Regional Office, and with local workforce areas on an on-going basis to assess performance progress and address any issues that arise. In the State of Maryland, for instance, the state provides local workforce areas with quarterly performance updates. If an area is close to 80 percent of its target or fails a measure, the state contacts the local area to discuss what the data show and strategies to improve performance. A PowerPoint presentation that highlights Maryland's strategy, *Peeling Back the Layers of Literacy Numeracy Gains,* can be found here: http://www.doleta.gov/regions/reg02/documents/ETA-ASTD-Forum-2011/Youth%20Performance-%20Literacy-Numeracy%20Gains%20Measure.pdf.

  In addition, communication and information sharing across staff is critical to capacity building. In some local areas, for instance, regularly scheduled staff meetings generally include a discussion of performance and reporting issues and recommendations for improvements. For example, program staff and reporting staff provide input and discuss data integrity issues and ways to enhance data accuracy. Program staff may recommend strategies or changes that would assist with case management and program reporting; reporting staff can then discuss how those strategies or changes could be accomplished. This type of communication not only maintains a performance-related focus for staff, it can also enhance staff capacity.

- Continued staff development for case managers and frontline staff. Generally, case managers are responsible for documenting services, activities, and outcomes, which means they must fully understand the program and performance-related policies and associated procedural requirements. Therefore, continual training opportunities and ongoing staff development are critical components for successful WIA Youth programs, especially to mitigate the impact of staff turnover. Local areas are strongly encouraged to incorporate training on performance measures into staff orientations and on-going professional development activities. At a minimum, staff should receive training on the definition of the measure, trigger points for action, required reporting elements, and documentation requirements, in addition to policy and procedural requirements. Local areas are also strongly encouraged to include performance-related discussions in staff meetings in order to encourage dialogue and the opportunity for immediate clarification.

- Using management reports and technology wisely. States and local management information systems (MIS) often provide real-time and/or ad-hoc reports or queries to allow staff to proactively respond to program requirements. For example, reports or programmed reminders (e.g., pop-ups) may list youth nearing their anniversary date; those without a pre- or post-test; out-of-school youth without a basic skills deficient determination; and participants nearing exit. Similarly, calendar reminders can alert

service provider staff to take appropriate action to ensure effective service provision, accurate reporting, and positive outcomes. Utilizing reports and available technology to support case management and service delivery minimizes unintentional or accidental exits, which often contribute to negative outcomes.

ETA developed a technical assistance presentation to help state and local staff better understand the literacy and numeracy measure. The presentation, *Achieving Successful Outcomes: Literacy and Numeracy Gains*, is available at: https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4201120336716954175/info.

Basic Skills Assessment: Administering tests appropriately and analyzing test results are critical to determining the necessary instruction, service and supports to be provided. The effective administration of tests, and subsequent reporting of test results, not only help youth achieve measurable learning gains, but will help ensure programs receive credit for positive outcomes. A number of factors must be considered when determining the assessment instrument and its effective utilization. For a current list of approved tests, staff should refer to the U.S. Department of Education's (ED) announcement published annually in the Federal Register. The current announcement can be accessed at http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2011-09-12/pdf/2011-23263.pdf. For the current Educational Functioning Levels table, refer to ED's National Reporting System (NRS) Implementation Guidelines (http://www.nrsweb.org/.

Common issues related to identifying and administering assessments include:

- Utilizing approved assessments. WIA providers must use only tests approved by the NRS and identified in its Implementation Guidelines to assess literacy and numeracy levels and to measure learning gains. In this regard, state and local staff must keep in mind that specific tests are approved for specific literacy levels; for instance, "WorkKeys Reading for Information and Applied Mathematics" can be used to assess high intermediate Adult Basic Education (ABE) and above *only* and is not appropriate for assessing basic ABE Literacy, Beginning Basic Education, and Low Intermediate Basic Education levels (below the 6th grade). The Massachusetts Adult Proficiency Test (MAPT) can only be used to assess beginning basic education and above.

  It is also important to note that ED periodically updates their NRS guidelines and the list of approved tests; therefore, staff should continually refer to the latest Federal Register announcement and NRS Implementation Guidelines for the most current list of approved assessments and educational functioning levels.

- Clarifying pre-test and post-test policies. The assessment used for the pre-test must be the same assessment used for the post-test. If the pre-test was given within the six months prior to the date of first youth service, staff must determine the assessment used for the pre-test and use the same assessment for the post-test, while ensuring appropriate documentation has been obtained. In addition:

  - All out-of-school youth must be assessed in reading/writing and math to determine skill levels, and those results must be reported in the information management system. Failure to report either the pre- or post-test will cause the record to be rejected in the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) when the state uploads its quarterly WIASRD submissions.

- If prior pre-tests are not available, youth must take a pre-test within 60 days of their first youth program service. Failure to do so means that programs have less time to help youth achieve the gain, which minimizes the opportunity for a positive outcome both for the youth and the program.
- Youth should be post-tested by the end of the first year of participation. The results of the post-test should then be compared to pre-test results. Note: If no pre-test is given or recorded, no post-test can be given, and no gains can be recorded. If the post-test is not conducted by the end of the first participation year, it will be reported as a negative outcome for that year.
- If a youth remains in the program, or a partner program, after one full year, the post-test of the first year becomes the pre-test for the second participation year (and so on through the third year). If no post-test was given for the first year, the pre-test for the first year remains the pre-test for the second year.
- Youth who are in the program for more than 3 years are excluded from the measure after their third participation year.

- Assessing youth with disabilities. As noted in existing policy guidance, reasonable accommodations must be provided to youth with disabilities, which may include utilizing alternative methods of presentation and/or method of response, providing an alternate test setting, or arranging different scheduling of assessment tests. Accommodations are not designed to lower expectations for performance in school or work; rather, they are designed to mitigate the effects of a disability and to level the playing field. It is important that accommodations be carefully selected based on the knowledge, skill or ability being tested since an accommodation may be valid for assessing some skills but not others. ETA's full policy on assessing youth with disabilities is contained in TEGL 17-05. Additionally, ETA released specific guidance in TEGL 31-10 on *Increasing Enrollment and Improving Services to Youth with Disabilities*: http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL31-10ACC.pdf. This guidance includes a listing of organizations and resources that can assist WIA youth providers in the accurate assessment of youth who present with disabilities. Additional resources are provided in the resource section of this TEGL.

- Assessing Limited English Proficient youth. TEGL 17-05 requires all out-of-school youth to be assessed in basic reading/writing and math within 60 days following the date of first youth service, which includes Limited English Proficient (LEP) youth. States and local programs with questions regarding testing LEP youth should consult with the publishers of approved tests to identify appropriate assessment instruments. ETA also encourages local areas to contact their state ABE office for further guidance. Additional resources may be found in the resource section of this TEGL.

- Determining instructional hours between tests. Programs are encouraged to follow the publisher's recommendation on the number of instructional hours required between pre- and post-testing on approved instruments. Based on recent relevant research, 40 hours of instruction or less is not sufficient for youth reading at low levels to make reading gains. Seven studies conducted by the Adult Literacy Research Network on reading instruction of ABE students whose reading was between grade level equivalency 4 and 8 demonstrated that even 100 hours of instruction may be insufficient to realize gains. Knowledge of these and other research findings can help states make informed choices on their State Assessment Policy Guidelines. ETA encourages states to consider the

potential impact of reductions to the minimum number of hours between pre- and post-testing when developing assessment policies.

6. Performance-Based Contracting and Strategies for Partnering with Literacy and Numeracy Instructors/Providers.

Literacy and numeracy services and instruction are provided to youth by a variety of organizations other than WIA youth service providers, such as WIA-funded Title II adult education programs, community colleges, community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, and public libraries. Local Workforce Investment Boards and WIA youth service providers have long partnered with these providers for basic literacy and numeracy services and issued requests for proposals and contracts that require these providers to demonstrate effective and efficient service delivery.

The Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Title II of the WIA, is the major source of Federal support for adult basic skills programs that provide instruction below the postsecondary level. Many disadvantaged youth are eligible for adult education services. Individuals must be at least 16 years old and not be enrolled or be required to be enrolled in secondary school under state law to be eligible for adult education services.

Instructional adult education services under AEFLA are offered in three program areas: ABE – basic skills instruction below the 9th grade level; Adult Secondary Education (ASE) – instruction at the 9th to 12th grade; and English Literacy – English language instruction designed to help achieve competence in the English language.

The adult education program serves approximately three quarters of a million youth between the ages of 16 and 24 years. Almost a half million of those youth scored below the 9th grade level in reading or mathematics. The adult education program provides basic reading, writing, and numeracy instruction to these individuals and helps them complete secondary school. The adult education program is accountable for educational outcomes of these individuals, as well as outcomes related to employment and entrance into postsecondary education. Partnerships between adult education and WIA youth programs can maximize resources to achieve both educational and employment related outcomes. Program expertise can be blended allowing more efficient case management, support services, and high quality educational interventions that will help disconnected youth to reengage in education leading to credentials and careers.

Numerous strategies can be deployed to establish and cultivate strong partnerships between local youth providers and adult education providers, as well as other literacy and numeracy providers, which include strengthening performance-based contracting and partnering to achieve learning objectives.

Strengthening Performance-Based Contracting: Youth programs do not always provide direct services to increase literacy and numeracy skills for youth, such as basic skills instruction or tutoring. Rather, programs often contract or partner with other providers to deliver associated instruction. One strategy to assist youth programs in meeting their literacy and numeracy goals is to require contracted literacy and numeracy providers to implement effective practices and to meet certain performance goals as part of their contract. To implement such a strategy, local workforce areas should create request for proposals and contracts that spell out the performance measures for which the programs will be held accountable, as well as provide examples of strategies youth service providers should implement as part of the contract. In Baltimore City,

for example, contracts include both WIA and contract-specific goals. Service providers are trained before a program starts and receive training throughout the contract period, with technical assistance and guidance provided as needed. If goals are not met, providers are considered non-compliant and receive corrective action plans. Additionally, quarterly monitoring visits are conducted to ensure providers are on-track to meet their goals. Contract renewal is therefore based upon provider performance. See the *Peeling Back the Layers of Literacy Numeracy Gains* presentation previously mentioned.

When partnering with adult education providers, it may be beneficial to consult with the particular state adult education office regarding its policies and practices around performance-based funding and end-of-year program performance report cards. A resource for finding the contact information for the state agency administering AEFLA in your state is available at: http://wdcrobcolp01.ed.gov/Programs/EROD/org_list.cfm?category_cd=DAE. By contacting the state adult education office in your state, local youth service providers can learn more about the extent to which the state is funding AEFLA providers based upon performance as well as how to obtain performance information for particular local providers with whom the youth program may be considering partnering.

To learn more about performance-based contracting for youth services, review TEGL 13-09, *Contracting Strategies that Facilitate Serving the Youth Most in Need*, at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2854.

Partnering to Achieve Learning Objectives: ETA encourages workforce development and literacy and numeracy service providers to strengthen their collaborative efforts and work together to prepare youth for postsecondary education and training, and employment, particularly in cases where literacy and numeracy instruction is not provided on-site at a local WIA Youth program or when youth are referred to partner organizations or institutions to receive the instruction. In such situations, youth are more likely to function at the literacy level required to reach their education and employment goals when these providers assume shared responsibility for youth successes, including the development of youth learning objectives and the development of joint plans to reach those objectives. Strategies include:

- Developing a Detailed Instructional Plan. Case managers should work with the literacy and numeracy service provider to develop a more detailed instructional/study plan aligned with employment goals and designed to meet specific learning needs. The plan should be based on the literacy goals documented in the ISS and the information gathered from multiple assessments. In addition to employment and personal goals, the instructional/study plan should take into consideration learner characteristics, prior education, and literacy in the first language for LEP youth.

- Ensuring Engagement through an Attendance Plan. The case manager should work with the youth to develop an attendance plan to ensure youth remain engaged. Most learners make progress when provided with more instruction, and regular attendance makes this possible. An agreed-upon plan helps to identify attendance barriers and to ensure that literacy goals are met. The literacy and numeracy service provider can help to improve attendance by recruiting adult learners enrolled in the program to act as peer tutors for youth; increasing student engagement by decreasing the emphasis on a worksheet-driven curriculum and increasing the mix of direct, whole group and software-driven instruction; and selecting reading materials that align with a student's interests and reading level.

- Providing Opportunities for Independent Learning. When youth are unable to attend class, workforce development and literacy and numeracy providers should work together to identify ways for youth to strengthen basic skills outside of the classroom. Case managers and literacy and numeracy instructors can promote independent practice by providing study links to free online practice materials.

7. Reporting.

Accurate program reporting is an essential element to achieving program success. This section highlights reporting challenges identified during ETA monitoring visits, including Program Reporting and Data Validation Reviews, and through discussions between state, local and ETA staff. These clarifications do not revise or otherwise modify current policy.

Where to find policy guidance: Policy guidance related to the reporting of the literacy and numeracy measure is provided in TEGL 17-05, Change 2. Attachment A, found at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05c2a1.pdf, provides a decision path and flow chart that can answer questions pertaining to whether or not a youth is included in the measure. In addition, a new resource available to assist youth providers and reporting staff with data entry is the WIASRD On-Line Training Tutorial, found at https://www.workforce3one.org/view/4011125635182958781/info. This tool provides assistance in the areas of reporting and performance outcomes. The tutorial uses several scenario-based situations to describe the required data entry. Although front line staff and providers may not be familiar with the WIASRD reporting function, the scenarios provide excellent information and examples of service delivery and recording data. In addition, as mentioned earlier, ETA developed a technical assistance presentation, *Achieving Successful Outcomes: Literacy and Numeracy Gains*, to help staff better understand the measure, including issues related to reporting.

Common reporting-related issues and clarifications:

- Basic skills deficient and pre-test Educational Functioning Level (EFL) scores. Youth reported as basic skills deficient must also have their pre-test EFL scores reported. Reporting a youth as basic skills deficient in WIASRD Element #130 (coded 1 for YES) is the "trigger" for youth inclusion in the measure. If an out-of-school youth is reported as basic skills deficient but does not have a pre-test score reported by the end of the first participation year, the youth will be included in the denominator *only* and will automatically be a negative outcome for the measure.

- Co-enrollment and exit. Consistent with TEGL 17-05, it is possible for youth services to end or otherwise be completed, but the youth does not "exit" due to continued participation in partner programs. For example, a youth may no longer receive WIA Youth program services at the end of their first anniversary but continue to receive other WIA, Wagner-Peyser or partner program services. If this youth remains basic skills deficient at the end of their first anniversary and completes a second full year of participation, the youth must be post-tested again or will automatically be considered a negative outcome for the literacy and numeracy gains measure for the second participation year and, if applicable, the third year. This requires the youth case manager and the other partner program staff to work together to ensure success for the youth and for the program overall.

- Second and third year gains. If the youth stops receiving services from all programs before completing a full second or third year, he/she is not included in the measure in those years. (The youth would not be included in the numerator or the denominator and would result in a neutral outcome for the program.) ETA's intention is to hold programs accountable for helping youth achieve a gain, but recognizes that youth are highly mobile and, on average, remain in a program less than a year. Therefore, holding programs accountable for second or third year gains would be unreasonable.

- The importance of post-testing. The lack of post-testing is the single greatest cause for failure in this measure nationwide. WIASRD data show that youth who take a post-test improve their scores by at least one EFL nearly 80 percent of the time. Taking creative steps to engage youth in the program long enough for them to post-test is critical for both youth and program success. Strategies to increase engagement are discussed throughout this guidance.

- Sixty day warning to take a pretest. TEGL 17-05 states that all basic skills deficient out-of-school youth must take a pre-test before or within 60 days of the First Youth Service Date or FYSD (WIASRD Element #306). If a pre-test is not administered within 60 days, it is still required. The Data Reporting and Validation Software (DRVS) will generate a warning in these instances (not a rejection) if the youth has not pre-tested within 90 days of the FYSD, but states should be aware that pre-testing after 60 or 90 days past the FYSD will not exclude the youth from the measure, it will only shorten the time allowed for the learning gains that are necessary for a positive outcome.

- Known calculation issue in DRVS. ETA is aware of a known calculation issue in the DRVS pertaining to this measure. The miscalculation occurs when participants that have a pre-test within the first year of participation but fail to post-test in Year #1 and post-test in Year #2 with an EFL score increase, the DRVS should add +1 in denominator for Year #1 and Year #2, and +1 in the numerator for only Year #2. That is, the DRVS should register a failure in Year #1 and a success in Year #2. However, the DRVS is failing to count the success in Year #2. This error will be corrected in the new DRVS, scheduled for release in the summer of 2012. Until then, a manual data manipulation work-around is available. Below are the steps necessary for PY 2011:

    - For youth with a FYSD of 7/1/2010 to 6/30/2011, only show year 1 post-tests. If the youth have a year 2 post-test, remove the year 2 post-test data from the extract file.
    - For youth with a FYSD of 7/1/2009 to 6/30/2010, only show year 1 post-test and year 2 post-test. If the youth have a year 3 post-test, remove the year 3 post-test data from the extract file.
    - For youth with a FYSD of 7/1/2008 to 6/30/2009, show all post-tests for these individuals – year 1, year 2 and year 3 post-tests.

8. Resources. Below are additional resources that programs may find useful when implementing literacy and numeracy programming.

- LINCS, Literacy Information and Communication System, is a national dissemination and professional development system, providing information on literacy research, practice, and resources. http://lincs.ed.gov.

- Learning to Achieve, through LINCS, provides research-based resources and professional development to increase achievement of students with learning disabilities. http://lincs.ed.gov/programs/learningtoachieve/learningtoachieve.html.

- The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability, funded through the Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy, provides strategies and resources for assessing youth with disabilities. http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/assessment.

- "Learning: Engage and Empower," information from the ED detailing individualized instruction, educational strategies that instructors can utilize, and the use of technology in the classroom. http://www.ed.gov/technology/netp-2010/learning-engage-and-empower.

- Doing What Works (DWW) is a Web site sponsored by ED. The goal of DWW is to create an online library of resources that may help teachers, schools, districts, states and technical assistance providers implement research-based instructional practice. http://dww.ed.gov.

- ELL-U is a National Adult English Language Learning Professional Development Network that provides practitioners with unlimited access to high quality online professional development and learning opportunities. www.ell-u.org.

- The National Clearinghouse for English Language Acquisition's Web site, funded by ED, collects, coordinates and conveys a broad range of research and resources in support of an inclusive approach to high quality education for English Language Learners (ELLs). http://www.ncela.gwu.edu.

- The Center for Adult English Language Acquisition has developed a toolkit that provides a variety of materials to help instructors working with individuals learning English: "Practitioner Toolkit: Working with Adult English Language Learners." http://www.cal.org/caela/tools/program_development/prac_toolkit.html.

- Adult Career Pathways Training and Support Center, developed by Kratos Learning Solutions with funding from ED's Office of Vocational and Adult Education, provides the most up-to-date information and resources on Adult Career Pathways. http://www.acp-sc.org.

- The Partnership for 21st Century Skills (P21) is a national organization that advocates for 21st century readiness for every student. P21 and its members provide tools and resources to help with instruction on the three Rs and four Cs (critical thinking and problem solving, communication, collaboration, and creativity and innovation). http://www.p21.org.

- The National College Transition Network at World Education, Inc.: Promising Practices briefs from professionals serving ABE students making the transition to postsecondary education. http://www.collegetransition.org/promisingpractices.briefs.html.

- Mid-Continent Research for Education and Learning (McREL), one of the regional educational laboratories funded in part by ED, has developed and produced a number of teacher and educational resources. www.mcrel.org.

- "Improving Literacy Outcomes for YouthBuild Students through the Balanced Literacy Approach." Webinar featured on Workforce3one, January 2011. The Youth Development Institute (YDI) discusses how it improved learning results for young people by implementing the Community Education Pathways to Success (CEPS) program, a balanced literacy approach with core youth development principles." https://www.workforce3one.org/view/5001100647710117131/info.

- "Workforce Education Standards for Adult Education Programs" developed by Workforce Solutions Collaborative, March 2011. http://libwww.freelibrary.org/mcol/Workforce_Education_Standards_and_SelfAssessment.pdf.

- "Youthwork Information Brief, No. 26: Why Do Basic Skills Matter?"; "Youthwork Information Brief, No. 32: Effective Numeracy Instruction for Out-of-School Youth"; and "Youthwork Information Brief, No. 28: Project-Based Learning," Ohio Department of Job and Family Services, Office of Workforce Development, http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/WorkforceProf/youthlinksresources.stm.

- "Planning Literacy and Language Services for Texas' Limited English Proficient Workers: The Devil is in the Details: A guide for program design, planning, implementing, and sustaining workforce-related education programs." https://www.workforce3one.org/view/1900.

- "Capitalizing on Context: Curriculum Integration in Career and Technical Education," National Research Center for Career and Technical Education, March 2010. http://136.165.122.102/UserFiles/File/Tech_Reports/NRCCTE_Curriculum_WEB_READY.pdf.

- "Getting In, Staying On, Moving Up: A Practitioner's Approach to Employment Retention," by Tony Proscio and Mark Elliott for Public/Private Ventures, December 1999, http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publication.asp?section_id=-1&search_id=0&publication_id=100.

9. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this guidance should be directed to the appropriate ETA Regional Office.