

**West Central Arkansas Workforce
Development Board**
Lisa Greene, Chairperson

YOUTH COUNCIL AGENDA
West Central Arkansas Planning & Development District, Inc.
1000 Central Avenue, Hot Springs, AR
Friday, July 11, 2025, 10:00 a.m.

Call to Order.....Kimberly Darling, Chair

Agenda Item 1 – Informational..... Kimberly Darling, Chair

- Review Information Youth Program Design
- Review Policies
 - a) Incentive
 - b) Work Experience
- Scheduling Future Meeting

Adjournment

**West Central
Arkansas Workforce
Development Area**

Program Title: “Ready4Work: West Central Arkansas Youth Success Program”
Serving the Full West Central Arkansas Workforce Development Area (WCAWDA)

I. Program Overview

Mission: To empower youth in the ten-county region of WCAWDA to achieve meaningful education and employment outcomes through tailored career pathways, supportive services, and strong regional partnerships.

Counties Served:

- Clark, Conway, Garland, Hot Spring, Johnson, Montgomery, Perry, Pike, Pope, Yell

Target Youth:

- **Out-of-School Youth (OSY)** ages 16–24
- **In-School Youth (ISY)** ages 14–21 (priority to those with barriers)

Regional Challenges Addressed:

- High youth unemployment in rural and semi-urban pockets
- Disengaged youth in tourism-heavy and post-industrial areas
- Transportation barriers and limited access to broadband
- Substance abuse and mental health issues

Disproportionate impact on foster, homeless, and justice-involved youth

II. Regional Economic Alignment

High Growth Industries in Expanded Area:

Sector	Counties	Examples
Healthcare	Clark, Garland, Pope	CNA, LPN, medical billing
Hospitality & Tourism	Garland, Hot Spring, Montgomery	Hotel operations, food service
Manufacturing	Clark, Pike, Yell	Timber, paper, poultry, plastics
Skilled Trades	All	Welding, HVAC, plumbing
Forestry/Agriculture	Montgomery, Pike, Yell	Logging, small farm entrepreneurship
Logistics/Transportation	Garland, Johnson, Pope	CDL, warehouse tech

III. WIOA Youth Elements

Customized activities for counties.

Element #	WIOA Element	Regional Strategy
1	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 or for a Recognized Postsecondary Credential	Mobile tutors & rural broadband workarounds (hotspots/laptops)
2	Alternative secondary school offerings, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate	Regional Adult Education centers located at the following campuses: Clark County - Ouachita Area Adult Education, Conway and Perry Counties - U of A Community College at Morrilton and Literacy Action of Central AR, Garland County - National Park College Adult Education and Literacy Council of the Ouachitas, Hot Spring County - ASU Three Rivers Ouachita Area Adult Education, Montgomery County – U of A Rich Mountain, Pike County – UA Cossatot Community College Program, Pope County – Russellville School District, Yell County – Danville Adult Learning Center and Dardanelle Adult Education Center

3	Paid and unpaid work experiences that have a component academic and occupational education, which may include – Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs; internships and job shadowing; and on-the-job training opportunities	Tourism (hotels, spas), manufacturing, clinics, city gov etc.
4	Occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123	CNA, CDL, Welding, Hospitality, Business Admin etc.
5	Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for as specific occupation or occupational cluster	Dual enrollment with Adult Education and local colleges
6	Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate	Regional youth leadership conferences, service projects
7	Supportive services	Travel, uniforms, trauma-informed care, bus passes (HS) etc.

8	Adult mentoring for a period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months	Career-aligned mentors from local industries
9	Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate	In-person/virtual hybrid model due to large service area
10	Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate	Partners: Ouachita Behavioral Health, Harbor House, Mid-South
11	Financial literacy education	Sessions by local banks (e.g., Southern Bancorp, Regions), Credit Unions, etc.
12	Entrepreneurial skills training	Workshops with Chamber of Commerce
13	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	Job market data from all WIOA Partners
14	Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training	Exploring postsecondary education options, assisting youth to prepare for SAT/ACT test, assisting with college admission applications searching and applying for scholarships and grants

IV. Local Partners (Sample)

Partner	Counties	Role
Arkansas State University at Three Rivers (ASUTR)	Hot Spring	Technical training & dual enrollment

National Park College (NPC)	Garland	Hospitality, CNA, workforce prep
SAU Tech	Clark	Industrial maintenance, CDL
Adult Education Centers	All	GED, HiSET, basic ed
Workforce Centers	All	Co-enrollment, referrals
Chambers of Commerce	All	Internships, business engagement
Behavioral Health Partners	Clark, Garland, Pope	Trauma support, mental health, substance use

V. Staffing Model (Adapted for Geographic Coverage)

Role	Coverage Strategy
Director of Workforce Development	Based in Central Office -
Assistant Director of Workforce Development	Based in Central Office -
Program Services Coordinator	Based in Morrilton – responsible for the day-to-day supervision of program staff who work with workforce services
Career Advisor	Based in local workforce centers - responsible for working with eligible and suitable WIOA youth, adults, and dislocated worker applicants and participants. Services include eligibility verification, case management, interviewing, assessment, basic career services, individualized career services, and training.
Intake Specialist	Based in Hot Springs - Conduct applicant interviews to determine needs and requirements. Determine and explain eligibility requirements with each individual applicant. Complete intake paperwork, including application, with potential clients.
Resource Facilitator	Based in Morrilton and Russellville – provides support and assistance to customers utilizing the workforce center
Business Development and Communications Coordinator	Develop and execute strategies for job Development and placement, Build collaborative relationships with employers

VI. Funding & Budget Allocation (Sample)

Category	% Allocation	Example
Staffing	35%	7 Staff working multiple counties
Training/Education	15%	Tuition, supplies for occupational training
Work Experience	30%	Paid work experience, summer employment, internships, On-the-Job training
Supportive Services	10%	Transportation, clothing, mental health, etc.
Administration	10%	Audit, compliance, reporting, payroll, etc.

VII. Outreach & Engagement Strategy

COUNTY	OUTREACH APPROACH
Clark	
Conway	
Garland	
Hot Spring	
Johnson	
Montgomery	
Perry	
Pike	
Pope	
Yell	

VIII. Outcomes & Metrics (Aligned to WIOA Performance Goals)

YOUTH

Measures	PY 24 Negotiated	PY 24	PY 25
Employment Rate 2nd quarter after exit	76.60 %	56%	76.6%
Employment Rate 4th quarter after exit	79%	53.13 %	79.0%
Median Earnings in the 2nd quarter after exit	\$3,950.00	\$4,103.93	\$3,950
Credential Attainment Rate	60%	37.50 %	60.0%
Measurable Skill Gains	67.90\$	55%	67.9%

IX. Objective Assessment

The WIOA ([Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)) Youth program mandates an objective assessment for each participant to evaluate their academic levels, skill levels, and service needs. This assessment helps identify appropriate services and career pathways, and informs the development of an [Individual Service Strategy](#) (ISS). The assessment should consider various factors, including basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs.

Key Components of the WIOA Youth Objective Assessment:

- **Basic Skills:** Reading, writing, and math skills.
- **Occupational Skills:** Skills related to specific jobs or career fields.
- **Prior Work Experience:** Previous employment history and skills gained.
- **Employability:** Ability to find and keep a job, including skills like interviewing and resume writing.
- **Interests:** Areas of work or study that the youth finds engaging.
- **Aptitudes:** Natural talents or abilities.
- **Supportive Service Needs:** Needs beyond academic and occupational skills, such as transportation, childcare, or housing.
- **Developmental Needs:** Areas where the youth needs to grow or improve, such as social skills or time management.
- **Strengths:** Positive attributes and skills that the youth possesses.

Options for Assessing Basic Skills:

Option 1: A High School Diploma, High School Equivalency (GED), or passing report card*/Transcript** dated within six months prior to date of application identifies the youth as **not** Basic Skills Deficient (BSD)

*Passing report card is an overall grade of 65 or higher

**Passing transcript is a GPA of 2.0 or higher

(Grades below 65 or 2.0 would identify the youth as BSD)

Option 2: TABE 11-12 or current version used by Adult Education, dated within six months prior to date of application. TABE scores of 9.0 and above identifies the youth as **not** BSD. (Grades below 9.0 on TABE 11-12 identifies the youth as Basic Skills Deficient.)

Option 3: An Assessment not named above may be used if within six months of the date of application/enrollment.

NOTE: If the assessments are not on the NRS they cannot be used for a measurable skills gain.

Assessments that must be used:

TABE (current version) as listed above

<https://www.discover.arkansas.gov/> - O*NET My Next Move, O*NET Interest Profiler, Real Life Arkansas, Career OneStop Videos

Purpose of the Assessment:

- **Identify appropriate services:**

The assessment helps determine which WIOA program elements and services best match the youth's needs.

- **Inform the ISS:**

The assessment's findings are used to develop an individualized ISS that outlines the youth's goals and the steps needed to achieve them.

- **Track progress:**

The ISS is a living document that is updated as the youth progresses, and the assessment helps track their skill gains and other achievements.

- **Ensure accountability:**

The assessment and ISS help ensure that WIOA programs are effective in helping youth achieve their goals.

Important Considerations:

- The assessment should be conducted early in the enrollment process, ideally within 60 days of eligibility for fiscal services.
- While some components are objective (like academic levels), others may be subjective (like supportive service needs).
- The assessment should consider the youth's strengths, not just areas needing improvement.
- Tools used for the assessment should be valid, reliable, appropriate, fair, cost-effective, well-matched to the administrator's qualifications, and easy to administer and interpret.
- Alternative assessment methods, like observation or folder reviews, can be used to assess skills-related gains.
- The assessment should be youth-friendly and empowering, giving the youth ownership of the process.

X. Individual Service Strategy

The ISS is **your personal roadmap** under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth Program. It's a **living, collaborative plan** created between a youth participant and their career advisor, grounded in an **objective assessment** of:

- Academic skills (like literacy or numeracy)
- Occupational interests and aptitudes
- Work history, strengths, barriers (e.g., transportation, housing)

From that assessment, the ISS outlines:

1. **A career pathway and employment goal** – e.g., “Complete a welding certificate and work as a licensed welder.”
2. **Educational objectives** – e.g., “Finish high school diploma; Increase Educational Functioning Level.”
3. **Key services and activities** – All of the 14 Program Elements which includes training, job shadowing, internships, supportive services (like childcare or transportation), mentoring.
4. **Measurable outcomes and timelines** – short-term milestones and long-term targets tied to WIOA performance measures (like credential attainment and employment rates)

Why is the ISS important?

- **Required by law** (WIOA Sec 129(c)(1)(B))
- It helps case managers track the youth's progress, update goals, and document services/ referrals .
- It's audited — incomplete, missing goals, or outdated plans can lead to compliance issues

Must use most current ADWS WIOA-3.2 Individual Service Strategy Form. Here's the step-by-step process:

✅ Step 1: Objective Assessment

Before drafting an ISS, complete a thorough assessment of your:

- Basic and vocational skills
- Work readiness
- Career interests
- Barriers or support needs (like childcare, transportation, etc.)

✅ Step 2: Define Goals Together

- **Career/employment goal** — pick an achievable target (e.g., "Gain entry-level graphic design job in six months").
- **Educational goal** — such as finishing high school or earning a certification

✅ Step 3: Map Services & Activities

Lay out the **services** you'll use to reach your goals:

- Classroom instruction or credential programs
- Internships, apprenticeships, or job shadowing
- Supportive services (transportation, tools, childcare)
- Wrap-around support like mentoring.

✅ Step 4: Set Measurable Benchmarks

- Identify short-term targets (e.g., "Complete 10-week welding prep course by Aug 31").
- Identify long-term (Graduate from College and enter full-time employment in field of Study)
- Link them to WIOA performance indicators: earned credential, job placement rate, etc.

✓ Step 5: Make It a Living Document

- **Review regularly** and **update** it as you progress or things change (e.g., add a new milestone or supportive service).
- **Require signatures:** initial and any major updates need to be signed/date-stamped by both participant and career advisor

✓ Step 6: Documentation & Compliance

- Keep a **printed copy**, filed both physically and in SharePoint.
 - Ensure every change, especially new goals, gets signed and placed in participant's file and in SharePoint.
-

In Summary:

The ISS is a **personal plan**, built from an objective assessment, that outlines:

- What you want to achieve (job/education)
- How you'll do it (training, support, milestones)
- And how you'll track progress.

It **must be reviewed and updated** regularly, with both the participant and the career advisor signing off. A clear, active ISS helps you stay on track and keeps your program in compliance.

XI. Services

Based on the outcome of the ISS, career advisor will enroll the youth into AJL and add the services identified in the ISS. If it has been identified to start at a later date, the career advisor will schedule the service on the Service and Training in AJL.

XII. MSG

The **WIOA MSG** (Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Measurables Skill Gains) for youth refers to a specific performance indicator used to track and measure the progress of youth participants in workforce development programs funded by WIOA.

Under WIOA, there are several key performance indicators (KPIs) used to evaluate the effectiveness of workforce programs. One of those KPIs is the **Measurable Skill Gains**

(MSG), which applies to both youth and adult participants. The MSG for youth is a measure of the educational and skill progress a youth participant makes while involved in a WIOA-funded program.

Key Points about WIOA MSG for Youth:

1. Who is Covered?

- The MSG for youth applies to participants aged 14-24 who are enrolled in youth programs under WIOA.

2. What is Measured?

- **Measurable Skill Gains** can be defined as any documented progress made by the youth participant toward achieving their educational or training goals. This can include:
 - Progress toward achieving a high school diploma or equivalent.
 - Completion of a recognized postsecondary credential.
 - Achieving a measurable skill gain in literacy/numeracy or other educational objectives.
 - Other documented milestones, such as achieving a credential or passing an academic assessment.

3. How is MSG Reported?

- Progress toward measurable skill gains is typically tracked through documentation and assessments. Some ways this is measured include:
 - Passing a course or achieving a certain level on a standardized test.
 - Earning a certificate or industry-recognized credential.
 - Meeting specific program milestones, such as completing a portion of a work-based learning experience.

4. Why is it Important?

- **Skill gains** are important because they reflect real progress in a participant's education and ability to secure employment. For youth, this often includes skills that make them more employable, such as:
 - Academic skills (e.g., literacy and numeracy).
 - Work-readiness skills (e.g., communication, teamwork).
 - Technical or vocational skills (e.g., certification in specific fields).

5. Reporting and Evaluation:

- Local workforce boards and programs are required to report on youth participants' progress in achieving these measurable skill gains.
- This data helps to evaluate the success of the program in meeting its objectives for youth participants, and how effectively it prepares them for the workforce or further education.

Example of MSG for Youth:

Imagine a youth program where a 16-year-old is enrolled in a high school diploma program. Throughout their participation in the program, they might achieve several measurable skill gains:

- Passing a state literacy test.
- Completing certain coursework that moves them closer to their diploma.
- Earning a certification in a specific trade, such as IT or welding.

Each of these achievements would be counted as a measurable skill gain, helping the program demonstrate its success in improving the youth participant's skills.

Summary:

The **WIOA MSG for youth** is a way to track and evaluate the progress of youth in acquiring educational and occupational skills while participating in workforce development programs. It focuses on tangible, documented evidence of skill improvement, which ultimately helps to prepare youth for career opportunities or further education.

XIII. Testing

All testing must be entered into the Testing Information page in AJL.

XIV.

XV.

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Youth Incentive Policy

Purpose:

This policy sets forth contractor guidelines for the use of incentives to youth enrolled in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act programs.

Incentive payments to youth participants are permitted for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences [20 CFR 681.640]. Any incentive payments must be in compliance with the Cost Principles in Uniform Guidance at 2 CFR part 200. Incentives may not include entertainment, such as movie or sporting tickets or any other venues whose sole purpose is entertainment. All requirements concerning the control of cash also refer to gift cards, which are essentially cash [TEGL 21-16].

Incentives paid for with WIOA funds must be connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in the program tied to work experience, education, or training, such as the acquisition of a credential or other successful outcome [TEGL 21-16]. WIOA funds may not be used for incentives for recruitment and eligibility documentation, although local areas may leverage private funds for such incentives [Comments in WIOA Final Rule concerning §681.640; TEGL 21-16]

If incentive payments are to be used, local youth program providers must have written policies and procedures in place governing the award of incentives and must ensure that incentive payments meet all of the following requirements [20 CFR 681.640; TEGL 21-16]:

1. Tied to the goals of the specific program
2. Outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments
3. Align with the local program's organizational policies
4. Are in accord with the requirements contained in 2 CFR part 200

References:

2 CFR 200

20 CFR 681.640

TEGL 21-16

Policy:

Incentive specifications - To be allowable, incentives awarded to youth will adhere to the specifications outlined in this policy. The purpose of offering an incentive is to induce behavior in a particular direction either toward achievement of becoming employed and or enrolled in post-secondary education.

The youth participant will meet the incentive criteria specified in Description of Incentives of this policy. Incentives that may be awarded through the provisions of this policy include

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financial and recognition awards. The career advisor will provide incentives only to those youth who:

- (1) are eligible for and registered in the youth program; and
- (2) Must be participating in WIOA for a minimum of 30 days. If an incentive is obtained during the first 30 days, the career advisor cannot request payment for the incentive until the participant reaches 30 days of participation.,
- (3) meet the description of incentive(s),
- (4) participants must be aware of the existence of such incentive and understand the terms and standards of its award to improve the likelihood of success and lead to a successful outcome or achievement of grant performance measures.

The educational goals for incentives listed below must be addressed in the appropriate Program Element section in the ISS as well as the goal section. All educational goals must be documented in the Student Learning Plan (SLP) at Adult Education, if applicable. A copy of the SLP must be in the participant's WIOA file and submitted with the incentive request documenting that the goal has been met. All of the incentive must be addressed in the title I-B Individual Service Strategy and AJL Enrollment or Program notes.

The work-related goals for incentives listed below must be addressed in the appropriate Program Element section in the ISS as well as the goal section. Career advisor must also document the incentive in the Enrollment/Program notes in AJL.

Description of Incentives

Educational Related Goals

1. Ready Test passed \$50 each - \$200 Maximum
2. Educational Functioning Level Increase \$50 each – Max 3 - \$150 Maximum
3. Obtainment of GED - \$300
4. Documented mastery of material presented in a required or recommended component by the local Adult Education program, such as Financial Literacy, Ready for Work, or Digital Literacy, WAGE Certificate – Level 1 - \$100 each Maximum of \$400

Educational and/or Employment Goals

5. Attaining a credential or a specific job industry certification, such as ServSafe, OSHA, forklift, etc. - \$100
6. Earning a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRC) - \$100

Employment Related Goals

7. Completing Work Experience - \$ 100 (one time only)
8. Completing Work Experience and Employed in Unsubsidized Employment during participation (must be employed for a full quarter) - \$100

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9. Unsubsidized Employment during 2nd and/or 4th quarter after exit - \$ 200 each quarter for maximum of \$400
10. Unsubsidized Employment and employment is with same employer during 2nd and 4th quarters after exit - \$ 300

Documentation and Procedures for Payment

The career advisors will award incentives to participants and will maintain sufficient written documentation to substantiate that the above-referenced criterion has been met for each participant. An Incentive Request Form will need to be completed as well as the documentation shown below for incentive to be paid.

1. Ready Test passed
 - a. Documentation from Adult Education that show passage of Ready Test
 - b. ISS Update page and AJL showing attainment of goal.
2. Educational Functioning Level Gain
 - a. TABE pre- and post-test results showing an increase in educational functioning.
 - b. ISS Update page and AJL showing attainment of goal.
3. Obtainment of GED
 - a. Copy of GED Certificate
 - b. Documentation from Adult Education verifying obtainment of GED (including date of obtainment)
 - c. ISS Update page and AJL showing attainment of goal.
4. Documented mastery of material presented in a required or recommended component by the local Adult Education program, such as Financial Literacy, Ready for Work, Digital Literacy or WAGE 1 Certificate
 - a. Documentation from Adult Education showing completion of individual component.
 - b. Letter or email from Adult Education verifying the completion of component
 - c. ISS Update page and AJL showing attainment of goal.
5. Attaining a credential or a specific job industry certification, such as ServSafe, OSHA, forklift, etc.
 - a. Copy of credential or certification
 - b. ISS Update page and AJL showing attainment of goal.
6. Earning a Bronze, Silver, Gold, or Platinum ACT National Career Readiness Certificate (ACT NCRS)
 - a. Copy of certificate
 - b. ISS Update page and AJL showing attainment of goal.
7. Completing Work Experience
 - a. Copy of final Evaluation showing completion of the work experience.
 - b. ISS Update page and AJL showing Work Experience as completed.
8. Completing Work Experience and Employed in Unsubsidized Employment
 - a. Copy of final Evaluation showing completion of the work experience.
 - b. ISS Update page and AJL showing Work Experience as completed.

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- a. Letter from employer documenting participant is working for their company or copy of paycheck from employer.
9. Unsubsidized Employment during 2nd and/or 4th Quarters after Exit
 - a. Unsubsidized employment paystub or Statement from Employer for 2nd and/or 4th quarters.
 - b. AJL Program notes showing the participant met this goal.
10. Unsubsidized Employment and Job Retention with same Employer during 2nd and 4th Quarters after Exit
 - a. Unsubsidized employment paystub or Statement from and employer for 2nd and 4th quarters.
 - b. AJL Program notes showing the participant met this goal.

The career Advisor will complete the Incentive Request for Payment form (Attachment A) and attach all verifying documentation and submit for processing.

Attachments:

A. Incentive Request for Payment

Larry Carr, Chair Larry Carr Date JUNE 9, 2022

Approved on: JUNE 9, 2022

WDB is an equal opportunity employer and provider of employment and training services. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to persons of disability.