




COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

VIRGINIA WORKFORCE LETTER (VWL) No. 19-11

TO: Local Workforce Development Boards

FROM: George Taratsas 
Director, WIOA Administration and Compliance

SUBJECT: Measurable Skill Gains

EFFECTIVE DATE: June 25, 2020

PURPOSE:

To provide Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs), their service providers and Community Colleges that receive Title I funds to serve adults, dislocated workers, and youth, with the requirements associated with the WIOA Title I Measurable Skill Gains performance indicator.

REFERENCES:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 116 – Performance Accountability System;
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 169 – Evaluation and Research;
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 185 – Reports, Recordkeeping, and Investigations;
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 189 – Secretarial administrative authorities and responsibilities;
20 CFR 677 – Performance Accountability under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Subpart C – 20 CFR 683 – Reporting Requirements;
OMB Control Number 1205-0526 – WIOA Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL);
OMB Control Number 1205-0521 – WIOA DOL-only Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL);
Training and Employment Guidance Letter – WIOA No. 10-16, Change 1 – Performance Accountability for Core WIOA Programs;
Training and Employment Guidance Letter – WIOA No. 19-16 – Guidance for Services to Adults and Dislocated Workers;

Training and Employment Guidance Letter – WIOA No. 21-16 – Third WIOA Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance;
Training and Employment Guidance Letter – WIOA No. 26-16 – Guidance on Supplemental Wage Information;
Training and Employment Notice No. 08-16 - Implementation of an Integrated Performance Reporting System for Multiple Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) Administered Programs.

REVISION HISTORY:

This a new Virginia Workforce Letter (VWL).

DEFINITIONS:

Measurable Skill Gains indicator is the percentage of participants who, during a program year, are in education or training programs that lead to a recognized post-secondary credential or employment and who are achieving measurable skill gains which is defined as documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment. Measurable skill gains indicator measures progress and is not exit-based.

Participant

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program

For the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, a participant is a reportable individual who has received services other than the services described in 20 CFR 677.150 (a)(3). The individual must satisfy all applicable programmatic requirements related to eligibility determination.

As set forth in more detail in section 677.150, the following individuals are not participants:

- a. Individuals in an Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program who have not completed at least 12 contact hours;
- b. Individuals who only use the self-service system; and
- c. Individuals who receive information-only services or activities, which provides readily available information that does not require an assessment by a staff member of the individual's skills, education or career objectives.

Youth Program

For the WIOA Title I Youth program, a participant is a reportable individual who has satisfied all applicable program requirements for the provision of services, including eligibility determination, an objective assessment, the development of an individual service strategy, and received one of the 14 WIOA program elements:

(2) PROGRAM ELEMENTS—In order to support the attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, entry into postsecondary education, and career readiness for participants, the programs described in paragraph (1) shall provide elements consisting of—

- (A) tutoring, study skills training, instruction, evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary

school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized postsecondary credential;

(B) alternative secondary school services, or dropout recovery services, as appropriate;

(C) paid and unpaid work experiences that have as a component academic and occupational education, which may include—

- (i) summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
- (ii) pre-apprenticeship programs;
- (iii) internships and job shadowing; and
- (iv) on-the-job training opportunities;

(D) 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;

(E) education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(F) leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social and civic behaviors, as appropriate;

(G) supportive services;

(H) adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period for a total of not less than 12 months;

(I) follow-up services, for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate;

(J) comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate;

(K) financial literacy education;

(L) entrepreneurial skills training;

(M) 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; and

(N) activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Reporting Period – for purposes of this VWL, the reporting period is a Program Year (July 1 to June 30).

BACKGROUND:

The measurable skill gains indicator is used to measure interim progress of participants who are enrolled in education or training services for a specific reporting period. *Therefore, it is not an exit-based measure.* Instead it is intended to capture important progressions through pathways that offer different services based on program purposes and participant needs, and can help fulfill the vision for a workforce system that serves a diverse set of individuals with a range of services tailored to individual needs and goals. Depending upon the type of education or training program in which a participant is enrolled, documented progress is defined as one of the following in TEGL 10-16 Change 1:

1. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level;
2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;
3. Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the state unit's academic standards;
4. Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of On-the-Job Training (OJT) or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training; or
5. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

GUIDANCE:

Measurable Skill Gains are one of the WIOA Title I performance indicators. There are a number of different approaches to measuring the skill gains of an adult, dislocated worker, or youth participant. See the following options.

Documenting Progress for Types of Measurable Skill Gains:

1. **Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary level** – Programs may measure educational functioning level based on one of the following three criteria:
 - a. States may compare the participant's initial education functioning level, as measured by a pre-test, with the participant's current educational functioning level, as measured by a post-test. Note: The approved pre- and post-tests must be selected from the list of tests the Secretary of Education determines to be suitable for use in the National Reporting System for Adult Education.
 - b. States that offer adult high school programs that lead to a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, may measure and report educational gain through the awarding of credits or Carnegie units; or
 - c. States may report an education functioning level gain for participants who exit an education or training program below the postsecondary level and enroll in postsecondary education and training during the program year. A program below the postsecondary level applies to participants enrolled in a basic education program.

2. **Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent –** Programs may document attainment of a secondary school diploma, or its recognized equivalent, if the participant obtains certification of attaining passing scores on all parts of a state-recognized high school equivalency test, or the completion of secondary studies, or an alternate diploma, including a high school or adult secondary school diploma.

3. **Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the state unit’s academic standards –** For secondary education, this gain may be documented through receipt of a secondary transcript or report card for one semester showing that the participant is achieving the state unit’s policies for academic standards. For postsecondary education, this gain must demonstrate a sufficient number of credit hours – which is at least 12 hours per semester or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over the course of two completed consecutive semesters during the program year – that shows a participant is achieving the state unit’s academic standards (or the equivalent for other than credit hour programs). *Please note that clinicals or practicums that do not provide traditional academic credits, but are considered as a component of counting towards an institution’s definition of a full- or part-time student, should be followed. EX: if a student is taking 9 credit hours of classes and is taking a practicum that is considered by the institution towards the student’s full-time status, then it should be counted the same towards their full-time status for the purposes of measureable skills gains.

4. **Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones, such as completion of OJT or completion of year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training –** Documentation for this gain may vary and programs should identify skills gains as appropriate, based upon the nature of services being provided, but progress reports must document substantive skill development that the participant has achieved. The gain may be documented by a satisfactory or better progress report from an employer or training provider. Progress reports may include training reports on milestones completed as the individual masters the required job skills, or steps to complete an OJT or apprenticeship program. Increases in pay resulting from newly acquired skills or increased performance also can be used to document progress.

5. **Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams –** Documentation for this gain may include passage of a component exam in a Registered Apprenticeship program, employer-required knowledge-based exam, satisfactory attainment of an element on an industry or occupational competency-based assessment, or other completion test necessary to obtain a credential.

Calculation Methodology:

Calculation includes the following participants:

The number of program participants during this reporting period who are in an **education or training program** that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment and are achieving a measurable skill gain based on attainment of at least one type of gain, DIVIDED by the number of

participants during the reporting period who are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment.

Participants who, during any point in the program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment are included in the **denominator**. This includes participants who continue to receive services as well as those who have participated during the reporting period and have exited the program. Data for the denominator in this calculation is drawn from *PIRL 1811: Date Enrolled During Program Participation in an Education or Training Program Leading to a Recognized Credential or Employment*.

The **numerator** is the number of program participants defined above who achieved at least one type of gain. A participant may have achieved more than one type of gain in a reporting period; however, only one gain per participant in a reporting period may be used to calculate success on the measurable skill gains indicator.

Operational Parameters:

All participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment are counted in the calculation of this measure. Participants who exit for any of the reasons listed below are excluded from the measurable skill gains indicator:

- a. Institutionalized
- b. Health/Medical
- c. Deceased
- d. National Guard/Reservists called to active duty
- e. Foster Care

The following participants in education and training programs are included:

- **Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker** – All participants who are in a Title I Adult- or Dislocated Worker-funded training program are included in the measurable skills gains indicator (which includes funding a training program for a secondary school program equivalent). This includes all participants in work-based training.
- **Title I Youth** – All In-School Youth are included in the measurable skill gains indicator since they are attending secondary or postsecondary school. Only Out-of-School Youth who are in one of the following are included in the indicator:
 - the program element occupational skills training
 - secondary education during participation in the Title I Youth program
 - postsecondary education during participation in the Title I Youth program

- Title II-funded adult education during participation in the Title I Youth program
- The YouthBuild program during participation n in the Title I Youth program
- Job Corps during participation in the Title I Youth program

Additional Operational Parameters:

- Participants are only included in the denominator one time per reporting period (i.e., program year), regardless of how many skill gains they achieve in a given program year unless the individual has more than one period of participation in a given reporting period (i.e., program year), regardless of how many skill gains they achieve in a given program year unless the individual has more than one period of participation in a given program year;
- A participant who exits from the program and re-enrolls in the program during the same program year and is in an education or training program will be in the indicator two times for that particular program year;
- The measurable skill gains indicator is different from the other indicators because it is not exit-based, meaning that a participant can achieve a measurable skill gain while still participating in a program; and
- Programs should not delay enrollment or services to participants until a new program year even if programs believe there is insufficient time for the participant to make any type of measurable skill gain by the end of that program year.

For performance accountability purposes, the measurable skill gains indicator calculated the number of participants who attain at least one type of gain during each period of participation within a given program year. Since this indicator is not exit-based, each unique program entry date (not exit date) triggers inclusion in the calculation. Participants will achieve a successful outcome if they attain one type of gain applicable to the core programs. **All skills gains shall be recorded as they occur and must be documented.**

ACTION REQUIRED:

All participants enrolled in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment should have their progress assessed using the documentation and measurements as specified above.

Data Entry Requirements for Measurable Skill Gains in the Virginia Workforce Connection (VaWC)

The Measurable Skill Gain indicator requires that the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, or Youth participant:

- Must be a WIOA Title I program participant.
- Must be enrolled in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment.
- Only one Measurable Skill Gains will be reported during a reporting period (Program Year), regardless of how many a participant attains during that reporting period.

- All Measurable Skill Gains must be documented (using the appropriate documentation sources as outlined in the **Documenting Progress for Types of Measurable Skill Gains** section of this document).
- If a participant has multiple periods of participation during a reporting period, the measurable skills gain will be counted in each period of participation.

INQUIRIES:

Adult and Dislocated Worker Program Coordinator
Workforce Development Services
Virginia Community College System
Arboretum III
300 Arboretum Place, Suite 200
Richmond, VA 23236
Telephone: (804) 819-1683
Fax: (804) 786-8430
Email: wioa@vccs.edu