

COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA  
VIRGINIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

**WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT**

**VIRGINIA WORKFORCE LETTER (VWL) #12-06**

**TO** LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS  
**FROM:** WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES  
**SUBJECT:** YOUTH WORK READINESS and LIFE SKILLS  
**DATE:** DECEMBER 03, 2012

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**Purpose:**

To provide local workforce areas with guidance and information regarding the provision of Work Readiness Skills and Life Skills training to eligible WIA youth.

**Background:**

The Workforce Investment Act strongly considers that “Leadership Development” skills such as work readiness skills and life skills are valued skill sets along the path of workforce development that will contribute to successful employment and retention, and better daily living based on informed decision-making. These skills sets must be the foundation and platform on which to build and provide other services/training activities that will lead to gainful employment and economic security in their lives.

These skill sets consist of world-of-work awareness, labor market knowledge, occupational information, values clarification and personal understanding, career planning and decision making, and job search techniques (resumes, mock job interviews, applications, and follow-up letters). They also encompass survival/daily living skills such as using the phone, telling time, financial literacy, budgeting, shopping, renting an apartment, opening a bank account, and using public transportation. They also include positive work habits, attitudes, and behaviors such as punctuality, regular attendance, presenting a neat appearance, getting along and working well with others, exhibiting good conduct, following instructions and completing tasks, accepting constructive criticism from supervisors and co-workers, showing initiative and reliability, and assuming the responsibilities involved in maintaining a job. This category also entails developing motivation and adaptability, obtaining effective coping and problem-solving skills, and acquiring an improved self-image.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM DESIGN**

Activities should be designed to encourage participants to take responsibility for their learning, to understand and manage their career options, and to develop social skills and a maturity level that will help them interact positively with others. This is especially true for at-risk students, high school dropouts and out-of-school youth generally, as the WIA program may be one of the few opportunities they come across to learn how to enter and interact in the world of work and develop constructive daily living skills. These efforts should rely on developmentally or age-appropriate strategies: what is appropriate for an out-of-school youth may not be appropriate for an in-school youth. Consequently, the services provided to these youth participants and the work readiness goals and life skills goals set for these youth should be age appropriate.

Note: Appropriate work readiness activities must be provided to participants prior to enrollment in work experience.

### **Action Required:**

All WIA youth participants shall receive work readiness and life skills activities during their enrollment in the WIA program. Participation in these activities should be captured in the VWC and documented in individual case files. In order to ensure that all WIA youth participants receive access to the activities outlined in this guidance, Youth Councils and WIBs are encouraged to include a specific reference to work readiness and life skills activity requirements in contracts negotiated with youth program service providers. The VCCS office of Workforce Development Services will work with local areas upon request to determine appropriate methods for formally including this requirement in RFPs and contracts for youth programs.