

Required Elements of WIA Youth Programs

Background: The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires that 10 program elements be made available to all youth who are served by the WIA youth system. "Make available" does not mean that every youth participant must receive services from all program elements; it means that youth have access to these services if they require them to meet their goals. Local WIA programs can provide these services directly or through referral.

The 10 Required WIA Program Elements

1. Tutoring, study skills, and dropout prevention strategies
2. Alternative secondary school offerings
3. Summer employment opportunities linked to academic and occupational learning
4. Paid and unpaid work experience
5. Occupational skill training
6. Leadership development
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring for at least 12 months
9. Comprehensive guidance and counseling
10. Follow-up activities for no less than 12 months after completion of participation

Tutoring

Definition: Tutoring is designed to improve the academic knowledge and skills of youth in specific areas. It involves a tutor helping a youth acquire knowledge and skills in a specific area. The tutor provides instruction and the youth practices knowledge and skills being taught while the tutor observes. The tutor provides feedback on the youth's performance, allowing the youth to learn from his or her mistakes.

Qualifying Tutoring Activities

- Actual instruction
- Regular, structured sessions in which individualized instruction occurs
- Scheduled sessions during which youth may drop in for tutoring
- Instruction based on goals derived from the youth's individual service strategy (ISS) or goal plans
- Qualified instructor
- Assessment to determine if youth is making progress

Non-Qualifying Tutoring Activities

- Meetings with teachers or tutors to discuss youth's progress (this qualifies as case management)
- Supplying books, school supplies (this qualifies as supportive services)
- Paying school fees (this qualifies as supportive services)
- Self-study
- No stated outcomes
- No assessment

Study Skills Training

Definition: Study skills are a set of abilities that allow youth to learn effectively and efficiently on their own. Study skills training involves instruction and practice activities on a range of strategies from planning and organizing time to reading comprehension, increasing concentration, and test taking. Instruction may be one-on-one or a group activity. Youth may work alone in some practice activities and in groups for others.

Qualifying Study Skills Activities

- Training in specific study skills models such as SQ3R or other test-taking or note-taking strategies
- Teaching the importance of organizing study time
- Instruction in how to organize study time
- Instruction with practice
- Feedback after practice

Non-Qualifying Study Skills Activities

- Providing calendars and notebooks (this qualifies as supportive services)
- Lecture without practice
- Practice without feedback

Dropout Prevention

Definition: Dropout prevention strategies are interventions that address causes of youth dropping out of school – disengagement, lack of successful experiences in school, or learning styles not suited to traditional academic instruction. These strategies ensure that youth stay in school to get their high school diploma and continue with some postsecondary education or long-term employment.

Qualifying Dropout Prevention Activities

- Participation in a program that has evidence that it reduces dropouts
- Placement in an alternative secondary school services setting
- Involvement of families and community
- Individualized approach based on youth's individual needs
- Placement in an alternative program for youth who are at risk of suspension or expulsion

Non-Qualifying Dropout Prevention Activities

- Early intervention with no follow-up
- Single-strategy, "one size fits all" programs
- Ability grouping
- Setting low expectations for achievement, attendance, and behavior
- Teaching basic skills alone
- Work experience without mentoring or involvement of individual case worker
- Adding classes or extending school day

Alternative Secondary School Services

Definition: Alternative schools offer specialized, structured curriculum inside or outside of the public school system which may provide work/study and/or academic intervention for students with behavior problems, physical/mental disabilities, who are at-risk of dropping out, who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth and/or youth who are in legal custody of the Department Human Services (or similar entity) and are residing in an institution.

Qualifying Alternative Secondary School Services

- Second-chance programs for dropouts and out-of-school youth
- Programs that use small learning communities
- Technology-based alternative secondary school services

Non-Qualifying Alternative Secondary School Services

- Programs that do not ultimately lead to a diploma or GED
- Programs that do not meet the academic content standards required by No Child Left Behind (NCLB)

Summer Employment Opportunities Linked to Academic and Occupational Learning

Definition: Summer employment opportunities (SEO) include work experiences that occur no earlier than May 15 and no later than September 30. Youth must be paid a subsidized wage, not stipends or incentives. Additionally, work experience must, to the extent possible, be linked to the youth's career and employment goals as well as include an academic and occupational learning component linked to the employment experience.

Qualifying Summer Employment Activities

- Employment for which youth are paid a wage
- Employment that is linked to the career or employment goal as stated in the youth's ISS
- Academic and occupational skills training provided in conjunction with employment

Non-Qualifying Summer Employment Activities

- Stand-alone summer employment programs that are not linked to year-round programs
- Work experience for which youth receive a stipend or incentives instead of a wage
- Employment that is not in the career field reflected in the youth's ISS
- Tutoring activities that focus on graduation test preparation, GED preparation, or other academic support that is not directly related to the employment placement
- Unpaid work experience

Paid and Unpaid Work Experience

Definition: Work experiences are short-term, planned, structured learning experiences that occur in a workplace and are focused on career exploration and the development of work readiness skills. The primary purpose of work experiences is to expose youth to the requirements of work and to employers' expectations. An employer may benefit from the work done by a youth, but the primary benefit must be to the youth.

Qualifying Work Experience Activities

- Paid or unpaid work in the private, for-profit, non-profit, or public sectors with a planned start and end date
- Developing work readiness or employability skills, such as dressing appropriately or answering phones, in a real workplace setting
- Developing personal attributes, knowledge and skills, such as working on a team, in a workplace setting
- Career exploration in a workplace setting
- Developing academic or occupational skills as they relate to a workplace
- On-the-job training for older youth when based on needs identified in objective assessment
- Subsidized employment

Non-Qualifying Work Experience Activities

- Classroom-based activities that talk about work abstractly but do not provide realistic experience in the workplace
- An open-ended, self-generated job at a fast food restaurant or other business
- Work that displaces a regular employee
- Regular employment with no planned start and end date
- Unsubsidized employment

Occupational Skill Training

Definition: Occupational skill training constitutes an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.

Qualifying Occupational Skill Training Activities

- Training programs that lead to the attainment of a certificate
- Participation in programs such as Job Corps
- Apprenticeship programs
- Training programs that provide skills necessary to enter or advance in a specific occupation

Non-Qualifying Occupational Skill Training Activities

- Work readiness training
- Training not tied to long-term goals in the youth's ISS
- Training or education that does not lead to entry or advancement in a specific field
- Training or education that does not result in an occupational certificate

Leadership Development Opportunities

Definition: Leadership development is a broad set of activities that encourage responsibility, employability, and other positive social behaviors. Leadership services may be provided to youth both during participation and after program exit.

Qualifying Leadership Development Activities

- Community volunteering
- Service learning
- Peer mentoring or tutoring
- Character education
- Citizenship education, including how and why to vote
- Serving on youth council, community or advocacy organization boards, etc.
- Leadership training, such as how to work in a team, how to run meetings, and diversity training
- Life skills training such as parent education, financial education, goal setting, and conflict resolution

Non-Qualifying Leadership Development Activities

- Activities that do not encourage responsibility, employability, or positive social behaviors

Supportive Services

Definition: Supportive services include assistance such as transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing that is necessary to enable an individual to participate in WIA youth program activities.

Qualifying Supportive Services

If necessary for the youth to participate in WIA youth program activities:

- Child care
- Transportation
- Work attire or uniforms
- Tools
- Housing
- Referrals to other community services
- Referrals to medical services

Non-Qualifying Supportive Services

- Payments for activities that are not needed in order for the youth to participate in WIA youth program activities
- Purchase of items that are not necessary for youth to participate in program

Adult Mentoring

Definition: Adult mentoring is a one-to-one supportive relationship between an adult and a youth that is based on trust. High-quality adult mentoring programs include an adult role model who builds a working relationship with a youth and who fosters the development of positive life skills in youth. Youth should receive adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.

Qualifying Adult Mentoring Activities

- Participation in mentoring programs such as Big Brothers Big Sisters
- Virtual adult mentoring via e-mail, teleconferencing, or other electronic communication
- Long-term, structured programs that provide training and support to mentors as well as to youth
- Adult mentoring programs that foster career awareness or positive social behaviors
- Supplementing adult mentoring activities with additional materials and resources

Non-Qualifying Adult Mentoring Activities

- Programs designed to last fewer than 12 months
- Activities provided by case managers or service providers unless they meet the definition of adult mentoring
- Only supplying self-help materials on positive life skills
- Any activity that does not include a working relationship and rapport between a youth and an adult
- Case management activities
- Inconsistent or sporadic contact with youth

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling

Definition: Comprehensive guidance and counseling is a process of helping youth make and implement informed educational, occupational, and life choices. It includes imparting skills through counselor-directed learning opportunities that help youth achieve success through academic, career, personal, and social development.

Qualifying Guidance and Counseling Activities

- Drug and alcohol counseling
- Mental health counseling/therapy
- Career counseling
- Educational counseling
- Supplementing guidance and counseling activities with additional materials and resources

Non-Qualifying Guidance and Counseling Activities

- Informal guidance and counseling from well-meaning but inexperienced individuals
- Conferences with youths' teachers without youth being present
- Initial assessment
- Post-test for literacy/numeracy gains
- Supplying self-help resources or materials without personal counseling

Follow-Up Services

Definition: Follow-up services are activities after completion of participation to monitor youths' success during their transition to employment and further education and to provide assistance as needed for a successful transition. Follow-up services must be provided for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation. The type and duration of services must be determined based on the needs of the youth.

Effective Follow-up Services

- Regular contact with appropriate frequency with
 - The youth
 - The youth's employer
 - The youth's post-secondary academic advisor
- Leadership development activities provided after completion of participation
- Supportive services provided after completion of participation
- Case management activities

Ineffective Follow-up Services

- Follow-up activities that consist solely of occasional, ineffective contacts
- Quarterly phone calls to see if the youth is still working or still in school
 - Mail surveys to check if the youth is still working or still in school
 - Letters to inquire about status