



Policy: Local Youth Basic Skills Deficiency Policy

Effective Date: 05/19/2026

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Summary

This policy outlines how WDA 09 determines whether a youth is basic skills deficient in alignment with federal WIOA requirements, Minnesota statutes, and DEED's Office of Youth Development policies.

Relevant Laws, Rules, or Policies

WIOA Sec 3(5)

20 CFR 681.290

TEGL 19-2

TEGL 21-16

TEGL 09-22

DEED's Office of Youth Development Policies

Background

WIOA identifies specific eligibility criteria for youth to participate in WIOA programs. Per WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 681.290, Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) must create a basic skills deficiency policy for youth meeting the definition of basic skills deficiency.

Policy

WIOA Sec 3(5) defines a basic skills deficient individual as an individual with 1) "English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test;" or 2) "who is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society." To demonstrate that a youth is reading below the 8th grade level, only standardized testing instruments including records from the schools, should be used. LWDBs may use previous basic skills assessment results if the assessments were conducted within the past six months. Assessment options may include the following.

Accepted Assessments:

- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAs)
- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)
- Basic English Skills Test (BEST)
- Assessments administered by Local School Districts
- Alternative valid, reliable assessments may be accepted if first reviewed and approved by Hennepin County Youth Programs Manager.

Acceptable Documentation:

- Detailed case notes that clearly attest to the youth's inability to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society
- Applicable records from education institution (transcripts, academic assessments, signed attestation from school official, or other school documentation) demonstrating the youth is performing below the 8th grade level or unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society

- Assessment Test Results (must be results from an accepted assessment, listed above).

Basic Skills Deficiency Screening Tools

WDA 09 Youth Program providers may implement a Basic Skills Deficiency screening tool, defined as a short questionnaire that is completed by the youth under observation of the employment counselor. The questionnaire should include questions that prompt the youth to attest to their English reading, writing, and computing skills as well as their ability to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. If the participant indicates that they cannot meet the requirements in the questionnaire, or if the Employment Counselor observes the youth struggling to complete the form by themselves, the youth should be administered one of the acceptable assessments listed above to verify Basic Skills Deficiency. If a Youth Program Provider chooses to implement a Basic Skills Deficiency Screening Tool, it must first be reviewed and approved by the Hennepin County Youth Programs Manager.

Contact

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