

TRANSMITTAL # 1

MEMORANDUM

February 20, 2008

TO: Youth Program Design Subcommittee
Workforce Development Council

FROM: Roger B. Madsen, Director

SUBJECT: WIA Youth Program Design for PY 2007

ACTION REQUESTED: Youth Program Design ~ Establish Service Priorities

BACKGROUND:

As part of the WIA Youth Program design process, the subcommittee is being asked to determine *who is served* through the WIA Youth Program in the coming years by establishing priorities for various groups of at-risk youth. Staff have provided federal regulations and current state policies regarding program eligibility and priority of service so that the council may determine what, if any, modifications would be appropriate.

Attachment #1 reflects participant eligibility from the Workforce Investment Act. WIA Youth Program funds may only be used to serve individuals who meet these specific program criteria. A review of the eligibility criteria will reveal that the WIA directs services to the "hard-to-serve" among the youth population by focusing on low income youth with barriers to education and employment. Among the barriers is a category that can be defined by state or local workforce boards (see **Attachment #2**). The council adopted a broad list of barriers which the subcommittee may choose to limit further.

Attachment #1 also includes a discussion of priorities for service among the eligible youth population. The subcommittee will be asked to determine if the current priorities for service are appropriate, whether Idaho should shift focus to groups identified for priority by the U.S. Department of Labor or other groups the council deems most in need. Key among the decisions is what changes, if any, should be made to prioritize services to out-of-school vs. in-school youth.

Discussion/decision points are highlighted and italicized for the subcommittee.

The following statistical reports are also attached and may be referenced during subcommittee discussions ~

- Demographic reports for Program Years 2005 and 2006, and the first six months of the current program year (July – December 2007)
- 2000 Census Population for Counties by Race & Hispanic Origin (2000)
- KIDS COUNT Data, derived from U.S. Census (2000)

Attachment #1

YOUTH PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY FROM THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

- Age 14-21
- **AND** low income
 - Section 129 of the Act provides that up to 5 percent of youth participants served in a local area may be individuals who do not meet the income criterion, if they meet one or more of the following barrier criterion
- **AND** has one of the following barriers to employment:
 - deficient in basic literacy skills
 - school dropout
 - homeless/foster child
 - pregnant/parenting
 - offender
 - requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment. (States and local areas are authorized to define the last term.)

ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE FROM USDOL

A January 31, 2008 memorandum from USDOL reiterates its ongoing guidance regarding a WIA youth vision based on recommendations from the 2003 *White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth*. The report charged all Federal youth-serving agencies with developing more effective interagency collaborations to better serve targeted youth populations, with priority given to serving the following categories of “neediest youth”:

- Children of incarcerated parents
- Court-involved youth
- Youth at risk of court involvement
- Homeless and runaway youth
- Indian and Native American Youth
- Migrant youth
- Out-of-school youth
- Youth in or aging out of foster care
- Youth with disabilities

Should Idaho’s WIA Youth Program strengthen its focus on any of USDOL’s “neediest youth” groups?

Idaho’s WIA Percentage Statistics for Service to Barrier Groups

<i>Group</i>	<i>PY 05</i>	<i>PY 06</i>	<i>July-Dec of PY 07</i>
Children of incarcerated	Not avail	Not avail	Not avail
At risk of court involvement	22%	21%	19%
Homeless, runaway	7%	6%	6%
Indian/Native American	7%	6%	6%
Migrant youth	Not avail	Not avail	Not avail
Out-of-school youth	55%	60%	59%
Youth in/out foster care	Not avail	Not avail	Not avail
Youth w/disabilities	34%	33%	33%

Are other entities in Idaho meeting the needs of these groups?

- ~ Juvenile Justice serving youth offenders
- ~ Chaffee Fund serving youth in and aging out of foster care

If it is determined that additional focus is desired, the council could a) modify the definition for the “requires additional assistance” barrier group or b) incorporate collection/reporting of additional demographic characteristics.

FOCUS ON DROPOUTS AND BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENCIES

The Act also establishes a minimum threshold for a focus on out-of-school youth, defined as “Youth who are school dropouts **or** who have received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent, but are basic skills deficient, unemployed or underemployed. Youth enrolled in alternative schools are not school dropouts.”

A **minimum of 30 percent** of local youth funds must be expended on “out-of-school youth” ~ defined as dropouts (determined at the time of registration) or those graduates with basic skills deficiencies.

For several years USDOL has directed states to increase enrollment of out-of-school youth with a focus on developing their capability and entrance into the workforce pipeline. During the same time period, several congressional attempts have been made to reauthorize WIA, all of which included a focus on out-of-school youth. It is anticipated that, when reauthorization occurs, there will be a greater focus on this group.

Should Idaho's WIA Youth Program increase its focus on out-of-school youth? If yes, the council could increase the federal 30 percent minimum expenditure, or could require that a minimum percentage of enrollments meet out-of-school youth criteria.

<i>Group</i>	<i>PY 05</i>	<i>PY 06</i>	<i>July-Dec of PY 07</i>
Out-of-school youth	55%	60%	59%

Attachment #2

WIA YOUTH ELIGIBILITY FROM THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

In 2005, the Workforce Development Council maintained the local workforce boards' definition for the last eligibility barrier group, "requires additional assistance". This broad list opens program eligibility to a wider array of low-income youth and minimizes a situation where a low-income youth in need of assistance would be deemed ineligible for services. This barrier group is currently defined as an individual who meets one of the following criteria:

- a. Has repeated at least one secondary grade level or is one or more grade levels behind age-appropriate level
- b. Has a core GPA of less than 1.5 or is a postsecondary student deemed by a school official to be on academic probation
- c. Is at least two semester credits behind the rate required to graduate from high school for each year of secondary education
- d. Is an individual who does not speak English as their primary language and who has a limited ability to read, speak, write or understand English
- e. Has a family history of chronic unemployment (during the two years prior to application, family members were unemployed longer than employed)
- f. Is an emancipated youth
- g. Is a current or previous dropout or is deemed at risk of dropping out of school by a school official
- h. Has been suspended two or more times from school or has been expelled
- i. Has been referred to or is being treated by an agency for depression or a substance abuse-related problem
- j. Has experienced a recent traumatic event (within two years of application), is a victim of abuse or resides in an abusive environment as documented by a school official or professional
- k. Has aged out of foster care
- l. Is a youth 16 years of age or older who has not held a job for longer than three months or is currently unemployed and was fired from a job within six months of application
- m. Is participating in alternative education
- n. Receives, or is a member or a family who receives cash payments under a federal, state or income based public assistance program
- o. Has been determined eligible to receive Food Stamps within the six months prior to application
- p. Is 18-21 years of age and has been unemployed for the last six months

Subcommittee ~ does the current definition for “requires additional assistance” remain appropriate?

Idaho’s WIA Percentage Statistics for Service to Barrier Groups

<i>Group</i>	<i>PY 05</i>	<i>PY 06</i>	<i>July-Dec of PY 07</i>
Deficient basic literacy skills	55%	50%	46%
School dropout	29%	36%	36%
Homeless/foster child	7%	6%	6%
Pregnant/parenting	20%	22%	23%
Offender	22%	21%	19%
Requires additional assistance	73%	74%	76%