

SUBJECT: **Attainment of a Degree or Certificate Performance Measure**

REFERENCE: Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA), Section 136; 20 CFR: 666.100; TEGL 17-05; Federal Register/Vol. 70, No. 133/Wednesday, July 13, 2005; Private Postsecondary Career School Act; and State Workforce Investment Plan.

BACKGROUND: In 2001, the Office of Management and Budget and other Federal agencies developed a set of common performance measures to be applied to certain Federally-funded employment and training programs with similar strategic goals. As part of this initiative, the Employment and Training Administration of the U.S. Department of Labor issued TEGL 28-04, Common Measures Policy. In February, 2006, TEGL 17-05 was issued and it rescinded and replaced TEGL 28-04. There are three common measures that apply to programs serving youth: Placement in Employment or Education; Attainment of a Degree or Certificate; and Literacy and Numeracy Gains. This policy addresses “Attainment of a Degree or Certificate” from a Workforce Investment Act Title I-B program perspective in Nebraska.

POLICY: **Definition of Certificate**

A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual’s attainment of measurable technical or occupational skills necessary to gain employment or advance within an occupation. These technical or occupational skills are based on standards developed or endorsed by employers.

Certificates awarded by workforce investment boards or awarded in recognition of the attainment of only pre-employment or work readiness skills are not included in this definition.

A certificate is awarded in recognition of an individual’s attainment of technical or occupational skills by:

- A state educational agency, or a state agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a state.
- An institution of higher education described in Section 102 of the Higher Education Act (20 USC 1002) that is qualified to participate in the student financial assistance programs authorized by Title IV of that Act. This includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs.

- A professional, industry, or employer organization (e.g., National Institute for Automotive Service Excellence certification, National Institute for Metalworking Skills, Inc., Machining Level I credential) or a product manufacturer or developer (e.g., Microsoft Certified Database Administrator, Certified Novell Engineer, Sun Certified Java Programmer) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills, and abilities.
- A registered apprenticeship program.
- A public regulatory agency, upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience, or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., FAA aviation mechanic certification, state certified asbestos inspector).
- A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons.
- Job Corps centers that issue certificates.
- Institution of higher education which is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned, or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes.

The definition is intended to ensure that certificates are: developed or endorsed by employers; tied to specific technical/ occupational skills; and approved or awarded by an appropriate educational, governmental or employer entity. Certificates offered by non-accredited private career schools that have not been authorized by the Nebraska Department of Education do not meet the criteria outlined in the certificate definition. The Private Postsecondary Career Schools and Veterans Education section of the Nebraska Department of Education has the responsibility of authorizing private postsecondary career schools to operate educational programs in Nebraska. A directory of schools and programs is provided at <http://www.education.ne.gov/PPCS>.

The Nebraska Department of Labor Website at <http://www.dol.nebraska.gov> [go into Labor Market Information – Career & Occupation Resources - Nebraska Licensed Occupations] provides information on occupations in Nebraska requiring licensing or certification and contact information for the licensing authority.

Performance Measure Definition

Attainment of a Degree or Certificate

Of those enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program):

of youth participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the third quarter after the exit quarter

of youth participants who exit during the quarter

Specific Requirements

- All diplomas, GEDs, or certificates can be obtained while a person is still receiving services or at any point by the end of the third quarter after the exit quarter.
- Education refers to participation in secondary school, post-secondary school, adult education programs, or any other organized program of study leading to a degree or certificate.

[Note: A program of study consists of a series of lessons or classes which are coordinated as a curriculum or program of instruction to prepare or qualify individuals or improve or upgrade the skills needed for employment, career opportunities, or any specific occupation. The term “other organized program of study” incorporates all formal education and training programs that award diplomas, certificates, or degrees, i.e., apprenticeship programs, Eligible Training Providers programs, except that it does not include leisure/recreational courses, training at non-accredited (or non-authorized in Nebraska) private career schools, or generic pre-employment or work readiness skills training.]

- Individuals in secondary school at exit will be included in this measure. These youth are included in the measure in order to ensure that WIA program youth participants successfully achieve a high school diploma or equivalent as research indicates greater success in the workforce for those with diplomas than those without.
- The term diploma means any credential that the Nebraska Department of Education accepts as equivalent to a high school diploma. It also includes post-secondary degrees including Associate’s Degrees (AA and AS) and Bachelor’s Degrees (BA and BS). [Note: Alternative secondary school exit documents or certificates of attendance/completion are not recognized as equivalents to regular high school diplomas or GEDs and will not count as a positive outcome for this measure.]

Exclusions

Participants in the following categories, either at the time of exit or during the three-quarter measurement period following the exit quarter, will be excluded from the computation of this measure:

- Institutionalized – The participant is residing in an institution or facility providing 24-hour support, such as a prison or hospital, and is expected to remain in that institution for at least 90 days. Individuals with disabilities (as defined in 29 CFR 37.4) residing in institutions, nursing homes, or other residential environments cannot be excluded under this reason.
- Health/Medical – The participant is receiving medical treatment that precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program. This does not include temporary conditions or situations expected to last for less than 90 days.
- Deceased – Self-Explanatory.
- Reservists Called to Active Duty – The participant is a member of the National Guard or a military Reserve unit and is called to active duty for at least 90 days.
- Family Care – The participant is providing care for a family member with a health/medical condition that precludes entry into unsubsidized employment or continued participation in the program. This does not include temporary conditions or situations expected to last for less than 90 days.
- Relocated to a Mandated Residential Program – The participant is in the foster care system or any other mandated residential program and has moved from the area as part of such a program.
- Invalid or Missing Social Security Number - The participant does not voluntarily disclose a valid social security number.

Partner Collaboration

Workforce programs (including the required U.S. Department of Labor funded One-Stop partner programs) share accountability under the common measures when the participant has exited all services funded by the program or funded by a partner program.

Obtaining Degree or Certificate Information

Local areas are allowed to use administrative records as the data source for the attainment of a degree or certificate measure. Some examples of data sources include: 1) case management notes and surveys of participants to determine that the individual has received a degree or certificate; or 2) record sharing and/or automated record matching with administrative/other

data sources to determine and document that the participant has received a degree or certificate. These data sources may include:

- State Board of Education/State Board of Vocational Education
- Nebraska Community College Association/Area Boards of Governors
- University of Nebraska Board of Regents
- Board of Trustees of the Nebraska State Colleges
- State licensing boards for private schools
- Nebraska education associations
- Nebraska Coordinating Commission for Postsecondary Education
- State Department of Professional or Occupational Regulation (possibly other units such as health care administration or specific boards like the “Board of Nursing”)
- Professional, industry, or employer organization or a product manufacturer or developer
- Training institutions/providers
- Adult Basic Education providers (GED/equivalent testing agencies)

Documentation

All data and methods used to determine achievement of degrees or certificates must be documented and are subject to audit. Computer records from automated record matching are considered a valid written record. A telephone response from the participant must be accompanied by a written document such as a transcript, certificate, degree, or notice from the school. Any reason that excludes the participant from this common measure calculation must be fully documented in accordance with the State Data Validation policy.