

# Technical Assistance Guidance

## TAG 40-2020

Issued Date: **April 28, 2020**

Subject: Measurable Skills Gain Indicator for WIOA Title I Programs

### **Purpose**

This TAG provides guidelines for the Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) Performance Indicator, as it relates to Federal definitions, documentation requirements, and reporting procedures for participants of WIOA Title I programs who are enrolled in education or training at any point during the program participation.

### **References**

Public Law P.L. 113-128; 20 CFR parts §651, §652, §677, §680, and §681; TEGL 10-16 Change 1; TEGL 19-16; TEGL, 21-16; TEGL 15-10

### **Background**

Section 116 of WIOA establishes performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of States and Local Areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system's six core programs:

- Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth Programs, authorized under WIOA Title I and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL);
- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act Program, authorized under WIOA Title II and administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED);
- Employment Service Program authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by WIOA Title III and administered by USDOL; and
- Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) Program authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV and administered by ED.

WIOA provides an historic opportunity to align performance definitions, streamline performance indicators and ensure comparable data collection and reporting across all six of these programs, while also implementing program specific requirements. The six WIOA performance indicators are:

- Employment Rate – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit
  - For Title I Youth: Placement into Employment, Education or Training
- Employment Rate – 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter After Exit
  - For Title I Youth: Placement into Employment, Education or Training
- Median Earnings – 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter After Exit
- Credential Attainment
- **Measurable Skill Gains**
- Effectiveness in Serving Employers

This TAG addresses the requirements for the Measurable Skill Gains performance indicator for WIOA Title I Programs.

## **Guidance**

### **A. Defining Measurable Skill Gains**

The Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) indicator is used to measure interim progress of participants who are enrolled in education or training services in WIOA title I programs for a specified period of participation or program year. The participant must be active because MSG is not an exit-based indicator. Rather, it is intended to capture progressions through pathways that offer different services based on program purposes and participant needs and can help fulfill the vision for a workforce system that services a diverse set of participants with a range of services tailored to individuals needs and goals. Depending upon the type of education or training program in which the participant is enrolled, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

1. Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level (EFL) of a participant who is receiving instruction below the post-secondary education level; OR
2. Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent; OR
3. Secondary or post-secondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State's unit's academic standards; OR
4. Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones such as completion of on-the-job training (OJT) or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones from an employer or training provider who is providing training; OR
5. Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

### **B. Period of Participation**

Unlike other WIOA performance indicators, MSG is not an exit-based measure. In addition, participants are only included in the MSG indicator one time per program year (July 1<sup>st</sup> – June 30<sup>th</sup>), regardless of how many skill gains they achieve in that program year. **The exception to the rule is:** If a participant exits the program and re-enrolls in the program during the same program year, and the participant participates in an education or training program, he/she will be in the indicator two times for the particular program year – once for each program enrollment.

If an individual is participating in a non-WIOA program training and/or education activity with the partner program providing the funding for the activity, and the individual is co-enrolled into a WIOA program, the individual will be included in the MSG indicator. It is important to note that in this instance the training and/or education activity would then need to be supported and identified within the WIOA participant's Individual Employment Plan (IEP)/Individual Service Strategy (ISS) and entered into the MIS (currently EmployNV).

Note: The MSG performance indicator is a year-to-year measure. This means that one MSG outcome can be achieved in each continuing program year that a participant is active.

### C. Measurable Skill Gains Denominator

There are two indicators that can put an individual in the denominator of the MSG indicator:

- Student status at time of the WIOA program enrollment – only during the first program year of participation; OR
- Provision of a new training and/or education service during each program year of participation.

#### a. Student Status at Time of Enrollment

During the first program year, a participant is included in the denominator of the MSG performance measure if he/she is in a secondary or post-secondary education program at the time of enrollment, as captured with one of the following education status codes in the MIS (currently EmployNV) program application:

1. Secondary Education Program; OR
2. Post-secondary Education Program; OR
3. Alternative Secondary Education Program.

Note: All in-school youth (ISY) are included in the denominator of the MSG measure for the first program year.

School status at enrollment is no longer looked at to determine the denominator if the participant continues on in subsequent program years. In this instance, a new training or education activity must be entered in the MIS (currently EmployNV) each subsequent program year for the participant to be included in the denominator.

#### b. Training and/or Education Service During Program Participation

If a participant is coded as in-school at enrollment, at least one training or education service must be entered in the MIS (currently EmployNV) to include the participant in the denominator for MSG. If a participant continues on through multiple years, a new training and/or education must be entered into the MIS (currently EmployNV) each subsequent program year to put the participant in the MSG denominator.

##### 1. Services/activities that place an adult/dislocated worker participant into the MSG denominator:

- a. 219 – ABE or ESL in Combination with Training
- b. 239 – Entrepreneurial Training
- c. 301 – Customized Training (requires WC approval)
- d. 302 – Incumbent Worker Skills/Upgrading/Retraining (requires WC approval)
- e. 306 – Occupational Skills Training (ITA)
- f. 308 – On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- g. 310 – Prerequisite Training
- h. 311 – Skills Upgrading and Retraining
- i. 314 – Adult Educ w/ Occ. Skills Training – Approved Provider List (ITA)
- j. 315 – Academic Learning (Adult Basic Ed)
- k. 316 – Apprenticeship Training
- l. 318 – Training Programs Operated by the Private Sector

**2. Services/activities that place a youth participant into the MSG denominator:**

- a. 403 – Alternative Secondary School Services
- b. 406 – Education Concurrent with Workforce Prep Activities
- c. 407 – Enrolled in Secondary School (H.S.)
- d. 408 – Entrepreneurial Training
- e. 417 – Pre-Apprenticeship
- f. 420 – Youth Occupational Skills Training – Non-Approved Providers (requires WC approval)
- g. 424 – Literacy, Basic Skills or GED Preparation
- h. 437 – Youth Occupational Skills Training – Approved Providers (ETPL)
- i. 439 – Apprenticeship Training
- j. 445 – ABE or ESL in Combination with Training
- k. 446 – Distance Learning
- l. 448 – Short Term Pre-Vocational Services

All education and training services/activities must be clearly identified, and expectations for earning a degree/certificate must be stated in the IEP/ISS. Services/activities should provide preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, preparation for employment, and effective connections to intermediary organizations that provide strong links to the job market and employers.

**c. Measurable Skills Gains Numerator**

To be included in the numerator of the MSG measure, the participant must be included in the denominator and have a documented MSG outcome within the appropriate education/training service.

Note: If using the Educational Functioning Level (EFL) outcome, pre-and post-test scores must be entered in the MIS (currently EmployNV) for the first program year of participation.

Note: Only one of the five types of MSG outcomes are required per period of performance per program year. For participants who cross over through multiple program years, a new MSG outcome will need to be recorded for each program year the participant is active, if he/she continues in an education or training service.

**D. Options for Documenting Progress Toward Measurable Skill Gains Outcomes**

Depending on the type of education or training program, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

1. **Educational Functioning Level** – Documented achievement of at least one EFL of a participant who receives instruction below the post-secondary level – Programs may measure EFL gains in one of the following ways:
  - a. Copies of the same version of a pre-test and post-test (e.g., CASAS or TABE) that show an increase of at least one EFL; OR
  - b. Documentation that states the participant exited below the post-secondary level and enrolled in post-secondary education or training.

2. **Secondary School Diploma** – Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent:
  - a. Copy of a High School Diploma; OR
  - b. Copy of the completion of one of the two high school equivalency programs; OR
    - The General Education Development (GED®) Test
    - The High School Equivalency Test (HiSET®)
  - c. Certification of attaining passing scores on all parts of a State-recognized high school equivalency test.
  
3. **Secondary or Post-Secondary Transcript of Report Card** – Secondary or post-secondary transcript or report card for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting academic standards:
  - a. Secondary – Student progress towards meeting standards and MSGs can be determined by successful completion of coursework via an official transcript review. A passing grade on a student’s official transcript demonstrates progress towards graduation.
  - b. Post-secondary – This gain must demonstrate a sufficient number of credit hours – which is at least 12 hours per semester (or equivalent) or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over the course of two completed semesters (or equivalent) during a 12-month period that shows a participant is achieving academic standards (or the equivalent for other than credit hour programs). For example, if a post-secondary student completed 6 hours in the spring semester and 6 more hours in the fall semester and those semesters crossed two program years, they would not count as a skill gain in the first program year, however, they would count as a skill gain the second program year.
    - Copy of official transcript demonstrating successful completion of coursework.
    - Copy of progress report demonstrating successful completion of coursework.
  
4. **Training Milestone** – Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones such as completion of an OJT or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones from an employer or Registered Apprenticeship program that is providing training. Acceptable documentation includes the following:
  - a. OJT – A mid-point or final evaluation demonstrating the participant is achieving satisfactory progress in meeting training objectives outlines by the employer.
  - b. Apprenticeship
    - Upon completion of one year in the program, a progress report documenting satisfactory progress on established milestones.
    - Exam results demonstrating satisfactory progress on key competency areas required by the Registered Apprenticeship program.
  
5. **Skills Progression** – Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks. Acceptable documentation includes the following:
  - a. Copy of exam results indicating a passing score or trade-related exam results indicating a passing score. Examples include Class A Commercial Driver’s License, Certified Nursing Assistance License, or CompTIA A+ Certification.
  - b. Copy of a certificate of completion demonstrating the successful completion of the occupational skills training program.

**Action**

Please share this information with all WIOA Title I staff and other interested parties.

WC will continue to provide technical assistance to support the workforce system. For more information and/or updates, please contact your contract administrator at your earliest convenience.

**Technical Assistance**

Available upon request.