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Final Guidance
Targeting WIA Services to Youth in the Department of Juvenile Justice and Foster Care systems

OF INTEREST TO

Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ), Department of Children & Families (DCF), Agency for Workforce Innovation, Workforce Florida, Inc. (WFI), Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs), service providers, and other entities engaged in implementing Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Programs

SUBJECT

Targeting Services Towards Specific At Risk Populations (Department of Juvenile Justice Youth and Foster Care Youth)

PURPOSE

The purpose of this issuance is to provide guidance to the RWBs, as well as WIA program providers and their agency/program partners, regarding a two-year pilot program that is designed to increase Florida's current level of participation and services to youth in foster care and/or youth in the juvenile justice service system.

BACKGROUND

As stated in the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA's) [New Strategic Vision for the Delivery of Youth Services Under the Workforce Investment Act](#), the White House's Task Force on Disadvantaged Youth identifies both Foster Care youth (particularly those who are aging out of Foster Care) and youth in the juvenile justice system as being among the most in need of services.

Nationally, there are about 542,000 youth in foster care. Thirty-eight percent are African Americans, 37 percent are white, and 17 percent are Hispanic. About 70 percent are school age, and they are among the most likely to be left behind. They score lower on standardized tests, have higher absentee and tardy rates, are most likely to drop out of

school, and are three times more likely to be referred for special educational and related services.

Nationally, between 18,000 and 20,000 youth aged 16 and older transition out of the foster care system annually. Studies of these youth have shown they are more likely to drop out of high school, be unemployed, and be dependent on public assistance. Many become incarcerated, homeless, or parents at an early age.

There are about 106,000 American young people in the juvenile justice system, either in detention, correctional or shelter facilities. Detained and committed youth score below their expected grade levels across subject areas. Studies show correlations between delinquency and low levels of academic aspirations, low levels of academic achievement, high drop-out rates and high levels of aggressive behavior.

These two groups of youth, broadly speaking, have significant barriers. As a result, they are perceived to be "high risk" enrollments for WIA services. The high risk nature of these clients is magnified by the fact that upon "exit" from either their DJJ or foster care relationship, they often relocate to their hometown. That hometown, in most instances, is not within the geographic area covered by the workforce region that initiated services.

The transition of these clients to their hometowns disrupts services, leaves the clients' expectations unfulfilled and negatively affects the performance of the initial workforce board. Regions that are working with DJJ youth once they return home also may be impacted if the youth was housed by DJJ in a region that does not provide workforce or vocational services to the youth.

PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Effective **December 1, 2007**, participating workforce boards that serve youth in foster care or in the DJJ system will be included in this pilot program. Regional implementation is optional but recommended.

For reporting purposes, outcomes for foster care and DJJ youth will not be included in the calculations for the standard youth Balance Scorecard Report measures. These two populations will be excluded from the denominators for all regional workforce boards for both the Youth Positive Outcome Rate and the Youth Average Grade Level Gain Measures. Any general incentives made available based on Balanced Scorecard outcomes will also exclude these two groups.

However, at direction of the Workforce Florida Board, outcomes for foster care and DJJ youth will be tracked separately as part of the pilot effort targeting these two populations. This separate report will be produced for all regional workforce boards with those regions participating in the pilot clearly identified. The separate DJJ/Foster Care report may include the Youth Positive Outcome Rate and Youth Average Grade Gain measures, as well as other indicators deemed appropriate to track the progress of the pilot and

outcomes for these two populations in general. Incentive funds reserved for the pilot will be awarded to those regions participating in the pilot based on criteria to be determined based on the pilot's design and purpose.

Based on federal rules, foster care youth and DJJ youth will continue to be included in the calculations for the WIA core and common measures required for USDOL reporting. In this regard WFI will make every effort to see that the state's pilot effort targeting these two populations is taken into account in the negotiations for the federal performance standards.

Foster care information will be captured in the participant application. Youth served by DJJ will be tracked when DJJ is selected as a partner program. See attachment A for detailed data entry instructions.

The anticipated program outcome as a result of this pilot strategy is to:

- increase the number of youth served that are in foster care and/or the juvenile justice population;
- increase the level of services for youth in foster care and/or the juvenile justice population;
- develop a "Shared Case Management Statement Model" by which youth can be transferred between counties or regions due to incarceration or foster care placement.

Note: Circuit coordinators will instruct probation officers to note any youth that are being served by RWB's while in a residential commitment facility. If the RWB contacts the RWB in the youth's home community with the intentions of transferring the youth for the continuation of services, the youth's probation officer will insure that contact is made with the youth's home RWB. **See attachments A and B for a list of the Circuit Coordinators and the regional service area for each circuit.**

- increase participation and provision of services by eliminating negative performance outcomes on the existing Balanced Scorecard's "Youth Positive Outcome" measure when serving youth in foster care and juvenile justice. Note: This would not exclude the "Youth Positive Outcome" measure as potentially being used within the pilot.
- disaggregate from the data systems the services and outcomes of youth in foster care and those in the juvenile justice system so that the data can be compared with that of the total served in WIA to guide future program strategies for these most at-risk youth; and
- implement special incentives that have been set aside for RWBs whose performance in the project (to be defined by WFI and AWI in collaboration with the participating RWBs) exceeds benchmarks that the participating regions will help develop.

Each participating region is asked to stay within the framework of the following "Statewide Shared Case Management Model":

- Only regions enrolled upon the effective date of this Guidance Paper will be included in this pilot project. Regions not enrolled will not be eligible for incentives designated for this pilot program.
- The project will only include WIA enrollees who are in Florida's juvenile justice system, defined as "Any youth that has been found to have committed a delinquent act while a minor by a judge and has been adjudicated or had adjudication withheld." This definition captures all youth (not limited to those in residential care) under the care and supervision of the DJJ, and youth who are currently in foster care or have recently aged out.
- This pilot project will include any on-board youth enrolled on or after July 1, 2007.
- The RWBs and agency partners have the flexibility to design this communication protocol. Each board will decide how they will participate and determine what partnerships are needed to form local and cross regional support pipelines as envisioned by a shared case management system. The appropriate mix of the ten allowable WIA youth activities should be provided. Regions will not be given credit for simply enrolling and assessing a youth. Listed below are examples of ways a region can participate:
 - a. Develop an initial service program with DJJ and foster care organizations that provides a broad range of services.
 - b. Become a transitional partner by providing transitional services to enable hometown returnees the necessary tools and support needed to become a productive citizen. Transitional services could be in the form of referrals to existing programs, comprehensive assessment, job counseling, job placement assistance and follow-up services.
- Case managers from the three primary service organizations (One-stops, DJJ and its providers, and DCF and its foster care providers) must take advantage of the hiring opportunity for these at-risk youth by assisting them in becoming job ready and self-sufficient.
- The tight job market has opened opportunities for youth at risk to overcome barriers to employment, and employers are willing to invest training time and support to attract prospective employees, but they have a bottom line and will not provide social counseling and mental health services. Local and statewide regional collaborative partnership and multi-agency involvement must be built and communication networks strengthened to address the common and unique needs of this population that might otherwise not be met.
- The role of a qualified, trained career counselor is essential. Youth professionals must focus on employment matching, skill training that will result in employment, and follow-up to assure job retention.

Action

Regional implementation of this pilot program is optional, but is recommended. Only Regional Workforce Boards enrolled upon the effective date of this Guidance Paper will be included in this pilot project. Regional Workforce Boards who are interested in participating should submit an email notification of intent to Freida Sheffield, at fsheffield@workforceflorida.com on or before **11/30/2007**.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A: Recording Foster Care and DJJ information in EFM

Attachment B: Circuit to RWB Crosswalk

Attachment C: Circuit Coordinators Contact Sheet

Attachment D: _State of Florida Independent Living Staff/Contact

SUPERSESSION

None