EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION WIA/Youth
	CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL OWI
	DATE July 16, 2004

TRAINING EMPLOYMENT AND GUIDANCE NOTICE NO. 3-04

TO: ALL STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
ALL STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS

FROM: EMILY STOVER DeROCCO
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: The Employment and Training Administration's (ETA's) New Strategic Vision for the Delivery of Youth Services Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

1. **Purpose**. To inform states and local areas of ETA's new strategic vision to serve out-of-school and at-risk youth under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

2. **References**.

   - Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Pub. Law 105-220, 29 USC 2801 et seq.), available at http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/

   - Final WIA Regulations, 20 CFR parts 652, 660-671 (published at 65 Fed. Reg. 49294, August 11, 2000), available at http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/

   - Training and Employment Guidance Letter No.20-03, March 25, 2004, FY 2004 Rescissions for WIA Adults and Dislocated Workers; Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Allotments for Program Year (PY) 2004; Additional Funding from Dislocated Workers National Reserve for Adults and Dislocated Worker Activities for Eligible States; Wagner-Peyser Act Final Allotments for PY 2004; and Work Opportunity and Welfare-to-Work (W-t-W) Tax Credit Allotments for FY 2004, available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives

3. **Background**. The realities of today's global economy make it imperative that publicly-funded workforce systems for youth be demand-driven, and the programs and services made available through those systems be aimed at preparing our country's most at-risk and neediest youth for real job opportunities. Despite the billions of Federal, state, local and private dollars spent on needy youth and their families, many out-of-school youth are currently being left behind in our economy because of a lack of program focus and emphasis on outcomes. Well-designed workforce investment programs offer youth who have become disconnected from mainstream institutions and systems another opportunity to successfully transition to adult roles and responsibilities.

RESCISSIONS	EXPIRATION DATE Continuing

The Administration is committed to trying bold, innovative and flexible initiatives to prepare the most at-risk and neediest youth for jobs in our changing economy. The White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth, released in December 2003, articulated a set of broad goals for disadvantaged youth in the country, including that they "grow up ready for work, college and military service." The report also recommended that youth programs focus on serving the neediest youth, with priority given to out-of-school youth, high school dropouts, runaway and homeless youth, youth in foster care, court involved youth, children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth.

ETA has set an overarching priority for the entire workforce investment system: meet the demands of business by providing adults and youth with the necessary educational, occupational, and other skills training and services needed for high demand occupations in the 21st century. In that regard, ETA has developed a new strategic vision to serve out-of-school and at-risk youth through the workforce investment system. This vision represents new strategies for the investment of WIA resources. The vision's focus on connecting youth with high quality education and employment services can be achieved under current law and reflects the principles articulated by the Administration for the reauthorization of WIA.

VISION: Out-of-school youth (and those most at risk of dropping out) are an important part of the new workforce "supply pipeline" needed by businesses to fill job vacancies in the knowledge economy. WIA-funded youth programs will provide leadership by serving as a catalyst to connect these youth with quality secondary and postsecondary educational opportunities and high-growth and other employment opportunities.

ETA's new vision for serving youth will present challenges for how state and local WIA programs interact and link with state and local education and economic development systems. To achieve this vision, ETA will adopt a new strategic approach across four major areas:

- Focus on Alternative Education
- Meeting the Demands of Business, Especially in High-Growth Industries and Occupations
- Focus on the Neediest Youth
- Focus on Improved Performance

This TEGL is meant to provide information to state and local WIA systems on ETA's new strategic vision for serving youth, the proposed focus areas, and the goals and critical strategies that Federal, state and local youth workforce programs should be implementing for Program Year (PY) 2004.

During PY 2004, ETA will be issuing specific program guidance to states and local areas on implementing components of the new strategic youth vision.

4. **Critical Strategies**. The new vision for serving youth and the following proposed critical strategies will require ETA and state and local workforce investment system leaders to serve as catalysts for bringing together employment, education and economic development. If the vision is realized, state and local workforce investment systems serving youth will be

positioned as strategic partners in the development and deployment of the emerging labor force.

a. **Focus on Alternative Education.** The No Child Left Behind (NCLB) act holds schools, school districts, and states accountable for student outcomes and requires that students meet standards in core subject areas. The implementation of NCLB has important implications for "second chance" alternative education programs since the public workforce investment system often contracts with these programs to provide educational services to economically disadvantaged high school dropouts and out-of-school youth with basic skills deficiencies, some of whom may have diagnosed or undiagnosed learning disabilities.

Goal: ETA is committed to providing leadership to ensure that youth served in alternative education programs will receive a high quality education that adheres to the state standards developed in response to the NCLB act.

In collaboration with the Department of Education, ETA will issue guidance to the workforce investment system on the following:

- A process for the workforce investment system to ensure that any particular alternative education institution receiving WIA youth funds is able to make progress towards the standards for success.
- A model of what constitutes "alternative education programs" that characterizes the various forms/components of these programs required to meet the varied needs of out-of-school youth.
- A description of how alternative education institutions can serve as an integral part of state and local educational systems' success in meeting the goals of the NCLB act.
- Information to help understand how average daily attendance funding applies to the students in alternative education institutions.
- Information to help workforce investment areas understand state NCLB implementation systems and their impact on alternative schools.
- Proven literacy/numeracy strategies targeted to the at-risk adolescent population.

State and local workforce systems are encouraged to partner with public school systems implementing state NCLB requirements around mutually beneficial issues, such as:

- Assisting school districts in meeting their adequate yearly progress (AYP) measures by providing high quality, diploma granting alternative learning environments for youth at-risk of dropping out of school. In this model, average daily attendance funds will follow youth to the alternative program while the youth will remain in the sending school district's count.
- Providing supplemental educational services for Title I schools that do not meet their AYP measures through after-school and Saturday programs.
- Working with alternative schools to establish high quality programs that meet state standards. This may include collaboration between state and local public education

systems and workforce investment systems to improve teacher quality, develop flexible funding mechanisms and promote collaborative services.

Local level workforce investment areas are also encouraged to increase their knowledge of alternative education opportunities. This can be done by engaging in a "mapping" of alternative education offerings in the community to be used by both the education and workforce systems to help students make smart choices.

Lastly, WIA youth programs, working through the One-Stop Career Center system, should ensure that alternative education institutions have and use information on local workforce training programs and local labor markets, including national electronic tools such as "Career Voyages" (www.CareerVoyages.gov), public and proprietary career information, and state workforce information. Local areas should ensure that alternative education students are exposed to job opportunities in growing occupations, including requirements for further education and training and possible career pathways.

b. Focus on Business Demands, Especially in High-Growth Industries and Occupations.

Goal: The investment of WIA youth resources will be demand-driven, assuring that youth obtain the skills needed by businesses so they can succeed in the 21st century economy.

Accomplishing this goal will entail three priorities:

- ETA will provide guidance to the WIA youth system on how to incorporate successful models of employer-driven youth development programs such as SKILLS USA, Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG) and Automotive Youth Educational Systems (AYES) that combine skills training with instruction in employability skills, including professional development, community service and leadership.

- ETA will promote strategic partnerships within the workforce system to ensure that resources are invested effectively to help youth gain the skills necessary for jobs and career pathways in high-growth and high-demand industries. WIA funds should be invested based on the skills needs of employers and strategies developed to address those needs. Building connections between the workforce system and community colleges helps ensure the creation of industry-focused pathways or career ladder programs that are market responsive. Model programs will be developed that demonstrate partnerships between local businesses, local workforce and educational organizations, and community colleges that allow for the rapid development of training curriculum to meet changing workforce demands. Specifically, partnerships developed can identify high-growth high-demand industries and target the appropriate resources for training programs that provide workers, particularly out-of-school youth, the skills required to receive an industry certificate and/or a postsecondary credential.

- State and local professionals in WIA youth-funded programs must be versed on what the high-growth industries/occupations are in their respective areas, what the career pathways are for these jobs, and what options are potentially available for at-risk youth to access

these jobs. The following Web sites are ETA sources of workforce information:

- ✓ America's CareerOneStop Portal
  http://careeronestop.org

- ✓ CareerOneStop Portal Links
  America's Career Information Network: www.acinet.org
  America's Job Bank: www.ajb.org
  America's Service Locator: www.servicelocator.org
  O*NET OnLine: http://online.onetcenter.org
  Workforce Tools of the Trade: www.workforcetools.org
  Career Voyages: www.CareerVoyages.gov

In addition, staff should be knowledgeable about youth assessment, development of individual service strategies, integration of needed services, provision of follow-up services, and explicit documentation of services and outcomes. WIA youth professionals should ensure that training funds will be prioritized for eligible youth pursuing high-growth opportunities and that training investments meet industry-specific requirements leading to an industry-recognized credential, when appropriate.

c. **Focus on Neediest Youth**. The White House Task Force Report on Disadvantaged Youth notes that the Federal government is spending billions of dollars to address the problems of youth. According to the report, youth training funds appear to be focused on ineffective and duplicative practices, and public money needs to be targeted to where it is most needed. The Task Force identified youth in foster care (particularly those aging out of foster care), youth in the juvenile justice system, children of incarcerated parents, and migrant youth as those most in need of services.

ETA is making investments in a number of new initiatives to focus on and develop new strategies for serving these identified populations.

Goal: ETA will prioritize investments that serve youth in foster care, those aging out of foster care, youth offenders, children of incarcerated parents and migrant youth.

- Funds will be used to develop model programs for youth aging out of foster care. Model programs will take a comprehensive approach to serving this population, including basic skills remediation, help staying in school or returning to school, employment, internships, help with attaining a high school diploma or GED, post-secondary vocational training, apprenticeships, and enrollment in community colleges and four-year colleges.

- ETA will continue to make funds available to help returning youth offenders reintegrate into and become productive members of their communities by providing education, job training, and supportive services such as mentoring and life skills training after their release from correctional institutions. In addition to helping youth attain employment or an education credential, this effort seeks to ensure that returning youth offenders remain crime-free. This initiative will build on strategies that have been the focus of previous pilot and demonstration projects. They include: (1) the expansion of partnerships

between state and local workforce investment systems and the criminal justice system; (2) the use of faith-based and community-based organizations to train and mentor former prisoners; and (3) the use of intermediary organizations in connecting employers with offenders particularly in high growth industries.

- ETA, in partnership with the Departments of Education and Agriculture, will develop a model program to provide workforce training, placement services and basic education services for high school completion to out-of-school migrant and seasonal farm worker youth ages 16 to 21. Mentoring is expected to be a significant component of this effort to assist migrant students with navigating education and job training systems and to provide the encouragement, tutoring and assistance these students need to achieve their goals.

d. **Focus on Improved Performance.** In order to ensure the success of an increasingly at-risk youth population in the knowledge economy, the workforce investment system must be committed to utilizing the strategies that lead to higher levels of performance and outcomes. ETA will provide the leadership necessary to make this happen.

Goal: Key initiatives will be implemented to assure that funding for youth programs is performance-based and that systems and programs are focused on outcomes.

All youth professionals will be expected to be knowledgeable about their local economy (e.g., current status, future projections, high-growth industries, career paths) and One-Stop Career Center professionals will be expected to make the connection to specialized youth programs for those drop-outs who are using core services and are in need of more intensive assistance.

- ETA will support Regional Forums designed to provide the workforce investment system with an overview of the new policy guidance related to services for youth. The Regional Forums will examine changes in legislation, policy guidance, and operational processes that will form a new strategic response to serving youth through the workforce investment system. The forums will target system leaders from the states and local areas and will work to align state and local practices with Federal policy.

- ETA will lead the way in establishing better "real-time" data and management systems by incorporating investments made in management information systems into the formula program.

- Following the recommendations of the White House Task Force for Disadvantaged Youth, ETA will work with other Federal agencies to improve the Federal role in helping to understand what works. This entails creating a more consistent set of guidelines for assessing the quality of program evaluations. Protocols will be consistent across agencies and will emphasize random assignment evaluations. A cross-agency research agenda will be created based on large, randomized field trials to test different interventions for serving disadvantaged youth.

- ETA will implement a new core set of common performance measures for youth programs that apply across One-Stop system programs. The implementation of common performance measures across Federal job training and employment programs will

enhance the ability to assess the effectiveness of the workforce investment system.

The new set of common measures for youth programs will include: placement in employment or education; attainment of a degree or certificate; literacy and numeracy gains; and an efficiency measure. The introduction of these new measures for the workforce investment system places a new emphasis on literacy and numeracy gains for youth. It is important that service strategies for youth participants be directly linked to one or more performance outcomes within these common measures. Also, it is important to note that the certificate measure is a demand-driven measure in which certificates are 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.

Attainment of literacy and numeracy gains is viewed as most appropriate for youth with basic skill deficiencies as determined by a basic skills assessment. The increased focus on literacy and numeracy gains for youth provides an impetus to ensuring that state and local WIA programs incorporate high quality adolescent literacy programs.

5. **Action Required**. States should share the information in this TEGL with the local areas.

6. **Inquiries**. Questions should be directed to the appropriate regional office.