

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIVISION
Workforce Policy and Service Delivery Branch
Technical Assistance Bulletin 179

Program: Workforce Investment Act

Subject: Attainment of Degree or Certificate

Date: June 25, 2008

This Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin provides Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with:

- information regarding the Attainment of Degree or Certificate performance measure, which only applies to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) youth who have a common exit;
- suggested solutions to issues that may be having a negative effect on performance in this measure; and
- information on using performance and management reports to ensure outcomes are attained and appropriately entered in The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST).

Attainment of Degree or Certificate

Youth exiters are included in the denominator for this measure if:

- upon receiving their first youth service, their school status in TWIST is coded as one of the following:
 - 1 – In School, High School or less
 - 2 – In School, Alternative School
 - 3 – In School, Post High School; or
- it is determined that during their period of participation, they were enrolled in another type of education or training intended to result in a recognized degree or certificate.

The numerator for this measure is the number of youth exiters from the denominator who receive a recognized degree or certificate by the end of the third calendar quarter after exit. The degree or certificate must be entered on the *Performance Data – Performance Outcomes* tab in TWIST for the exiter to be in the numerator.

Suggestions for Solving Performance Issues

A Texas Workforce Commission review has discovered areas that may have a negative effect on performance in this measure. Below is a list of issues and suggested solutions:

Issue: A degree or certificate has been attained, but the attainment date has not been entered in the *Performance Outcomes* tab.

Solution: Enter the date of attainment in the *Performance Outcome Detail* under the *Performance Outcomes* tab for the attainment to be counted in the performance measure.

Issue: *Counselor Notes* indicate the successful attainment of a degree or certificate, but it was not entered in the *Performance Outcomes* tab.

Solution: Ensure that Texas Workforce Center staff understands that the successful attainment of the degree or certificate must be entered in the *Performance Outcomes Detail* for the youth to be included in the numerator.

Issue: The wrong outcome type is used. Not all outcome types in the drop-down menu in the *Performance Outcomes* tab are used in calculating this performance measure.

Solution: When a positive outcome is achieved, ensure that one of the following positive outcome types for the Attainment of Degree or Certificate performance measure is used:

- 1 – GED
- 2 – High School Diploma
- 7 – Bachelor’s Degree or equivalent
- 9 – 6th year of College, Master’s Degree
- 10 – Doctorate Degree
- 19 – Associate’s Degree
- 20 – Occupational Skills License
- 21 – Occupational Skills Certificate

Issue: *Youth service* indicates the training should lead to a recognized degree or certificate. The *Service Completion Reason* indicates that the service was completed successfully, but no degree or certificate was entered in the *Performance Outcomes* tab.

Solution: Establish a tracking system to ensure that documentation of the degree or certificate is received from the participant, school, training, or licensing/certifying institute after the successful completion of an education or training service. The Common Measures (CM) Exiter Alert report (described below) may be used to assist with this.

Issue: Youth who are in high school at the first qualifying youth service and who are tracked in TWIST using service code *93–High School* are exiting prior to completing their education.

Solution: Service code *93–High School* is used for tracking compulsory high school attendance and is not a qualifying service that prevents exit. When a youth is in high school and service code *93–High School* is used, a qualifying service must be entered to make the youth a participant and prevent exit.

The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has confirmed that the purpose of enrolling youth attending high school in WIA should be to enhance their high school experience through the use of WIA youth-funded activities. In addition, DOL indicated that Boards are encouraged to provide qualifying services to youth enrolled in high school in order to count those youth as positive outcomes under the Attainment of Degree or Certificate performance measure.

According to DOL, enrolling a high school student and not providing qualifying services is similar to parking someone in case management for years and waiting for a positive outcome. Boards are encouraged to review their current service delivery design to ensure that all WIA youth attending high school receive a qualifying service that is beneficial and provides the youth with the appropriate level of support.

Issue: The wrong school status is indicated in the *Program Detail – Education* tab when the first youth service is provided. (For example, a youth registers in May while in high school but receives his or her first youth service in June, at which time the youth has graduated from high school.)

Solution: The youth’s current school status should be reflected on the *Program Detail – Education* tab. Ensure that Texas Workforce Center staff reviews the school status at first WIA youth service and updates the status if there has been a change since registration.

Issue: There is a lack of follow-up services to determine if a degree or certificate was attained—and to assist in the successful attainment of a degree or certificate—by the end of the third calendar quarter after exit.

Solution: Degrees and certificates can be attained during the three quarters after the participant’s exit quarter. Require follow-up services to assist in the successful attainment of a degree or certificate if one was not attained prior to exit.

Performance and Management Reports

The CM Exiter Alert report can be used to manage this performance measure to ensure outcomes are attained and entered appropriately in TWIST. The report can be run at regular intervals to anticipate:

- the need to enter a degree or certificate; or
- the need for additional service for the participant prior to CM exit to ensure the successful attainment of a degree or certificate.

Also, the CM WIA Youth Attainment of Degree or Certificate report can be run without the *mature data* box checked to anticipate performance outcomes by the end of the performance year. The mature data box can be used as follows:

- To view the exiters who have reached the end of their third quarter after exit, leave the mature data box checked.
- To view exiters who have *not* reached their third quarter after exit, uncheck the mature data box. Additional services can be provided to assist these youth with:
 - the successful attainment of a degree or certificate; or
 - verification that a degree or certificate had been attained but was not previously discovered by a Case Manager.

For more information regarding this performance measure, see the following:

- The *Integrated Data Collection and Performance Management Reference*, included as Attachment 1 to WD Letter 27-07, issued on August 1, 2007, and entitled “Integrated Data Collection and Performance Management.”
- WD Letter 37-07, Change 1, issued on January 2, 2008, and entitled “Workforce Investment Act: Application of Definitions of Credential, Degree/Diploma, and Certificate: *Clarification.*”
- TA Bulletin 157, issued on August 21, 2007, and entitled “Attainment of a Degree/Diploma or Certificate.”

Please distribute this information to appropriate staff. Direct inquiries regarding this TA Bulletin to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.