

TEXAS WORKFORCE COMMISSION LETTER

ID/No:	WD 44-11
Date:	November 3, 2011
Keyword:	Dislocated Worker; TWIST; WIA
Effective:	Immediately

To: Local Workforce Development Board Executive Directors
Commission Executive Offices
Integrated Service Area Managers



From: Laurence M. Jones, Director, Workforce Development Division

Subject: **Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Evaluation**

PURPOSE:

To provide Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information and guidance on:

- U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's (DOLETA) Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Gold Standard Evaluation (evaluation);
- new data fields in The Workforce Information System of Texas (TWIST) that support the evaluation; and
- restrictions on serving evaluation participants.

BACKGROUND:

DOLETA's Training and Employment Notice 37-09, issued April 6, 2010, and entitled "The Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Evaluation" provides guidance to states regarding the evaluation, which is a random assignment assessment of WIA adult and dislocated worker programs.

The evaluation specifically examines WIA adult and dislocated worker programs by:

- analyzing program impact on participants' post-program employment and earnings and the program's cost-effectiveness; and
- comparing outcomes of WIA participants to the outcomes of similar individuals who do not receive WIA services.

Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. (MPR), and its subcontractors, will conduct the evaluation, examining net impact by subgroups including age, gender, race/ethnicity, and veteran status, among others, with additional emphasis placed

on the impact of specific intensive services and the combination of intensive services on customers' employment and earnings.

The 15-month evaluation compares the outcomes of WIA participants to the outcomes of similar individuals randomly assigned to a control group.

MPR designs and implements random assignment procedures, monitors the evaluation throughout the customer observation period, collects project and state administrative data, analyzes the data, and produces interim and final reports.

Individuals can opt out before being assigned to one of three service-level groups; however, as designed, the opt-out provision prevents access to WIA services that the individual would otherwise be eligible for.

Thirty randomly selected workforce investment boards from across the country are participating in the evaluation, including three Boards in Texas:

- Workforce Solutions Gulf Coast
- Workforce Solutions for North Central Texas
- Workforce Solutions South Plains

PROCEDURES:

WIA Gold Standard Evaluation

Boards must be aware that the evaluation's three service-level groups include participants who are eligible to receive one of the following:

NLF

- WIA core, intensive, and training services
- WIA core and intensive services
- WIA core services

The service restrictions apply to the participants for 15 months—beginning with their assignment to one of the service-level groups—even if the participants seek services from a non-participating Board. However, Boards must be aware that the restrictions do not prevent them from providing services to these individuals from other programs such as Wagner-Peyser or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF).

NLF

New TWIST Data Fields

To support the evaluation, TWIST includes the following four new data fields. Participating Boards must:

NLF

- identify the randomly selected evaluation participants in TWIST; and
 - answer all applicable evaluation questions (Attachment 1) on the *Optional Questions* tab by selecting the *Specialized Services* radio button on the *Intake Common* screen.
1. *Participant Evaluation Status*. Select one of the following for the participant:
 - Has been randomly assigned to a service-level group;

- Is exempt from the evaluation and can receive all WIA services (e.g., Trade Adjustment Assistance customers or eligible veterans); or
 - Has declined to participate in the evaluation, therefore is eligible only for WIA core services until the conclusion of the 15-month evaluation.
2. *Group Assignment.* Select one of the following service-level group assignments for the participant:
 - Full WIA—the group that can access all WIA services;
 - Core and Intensive—the group that can access WIA core and intensive services, but not training services; or
 - Core—the group that can access only WIA core services.
 3. *Date of Random Assignment.* Enter the date of the participant’s random assignment to the evaluation (where applicable).
 4. *Restriction Period End Date.* This prepopulated field is the date that the participant’s 15-month, WIA core-only services period ends and is determined by the date entered in the *Date of Random Assignment* field.

Restrictions on Serving Evaluation Participants

To identify evaluation participants and their status, TWIST indicates the service-level group and the restriction period end date (Attachment 1). To prevent contamination of the evaluation findings, Boards must ensure that evaluation participants receive only WIA services permitted under the 15-month service-level group assignment.

NLF

If TWIST identifies an individual as a core, intensive, and training group participant, Boards must ensure that the individual receives all WIA services.

NLF

If TWIST identifies an individual as a core and intensive group participant, Boards must ensure that the individual is not provided WIA training services.

NLF

If TWIST identifies an individual as a core group participant, Boards must ensure that the individual:

NLF

- receives only WIA core services, i.e., access to the resource room and core workshops; and
- receives other non-WIA services, if appropriate.

If TWIST identifies an individual as one who refused to participate in the evaluation, Boards must ensure that the individual receives only WIA core services for the duration of the evaluation in the participating areas.

NLF

However, Boards may provide services to these individuals, if appropriate, through other programs such as Wagner-Peyser or TANF.

LF

INQUIRIES:

Direct inquiries regarding this WD Letter to wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.state.tx.us.

ATTACHMENTS:

Attachment 1: Workforce Investment Act Gold Standard Evaluation
TWIST Screenshots

RESCISSIONS:

None

REFERENCE:

Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (Public Law 105-220)
U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration, Training and Employment
Notice 37-09, issued April 6, 2010, and entitled “The Workforce Investment Act Gold
Standard Evaluation”

FLEXIBILITY RATINGS:

No Local Flexibility (NLF): This rating indicates that Boards must comply with the federal and state laws, rules, policies, and required procedures set forth in this WD Letter and have no local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to comply. All information with an NLF rating is indicated by “must” or “shall.”

Local Flexibility (LF): This rating indicates that Boards have local flexibility in determining whether and/or how to implement guidance or recommended practices set forth in this WD Letter. All information with an LF rating is indicated by “may” or “recommend.”