

## **YOUTH OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE**

**January 21, 2021**

**8:30 A.M.**

**Zoom Platform**

**PRESENT:** K. Shanks-Booth, V. Zepplin, S. Kittel

**EXCUSED:** T. Watts

**GUEST:**

**STAFF:** N. Branosky, S. Alvord, D. Achilles

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Ms. Shanks-Booth called the meeting to order at 8:33 a.m.

### **APPROVAL OF MINUTES – December 17, 2020**

It was moved by Ms. Kittel and seconded by Ms. Shanks-Booth and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the minutes of December 17, 2020.

### **CAREER CENTER UPDATE**

Ms. Mouillesseaux updated the committee that the Career Center is still closed to the public. NYSDOL staff have returned with the supervisor and staff on a rotation of one in the office at a time. Career Center staff are answering phones still with an increase to 15 to 20 calls a day with questions. Ms. Mouillesseaux has requested to use a conference room from NYSDOL to use for serving customers who do not have computer access or need help navigating the system to get all required information into the system.

Ms. Mouillesseaux informed the committee that she has hired Ms. Callahan as the Workforce Development Coordinator. Ms. Callahan started with Workforce NY as a Project Assistant working on social media and was hired in October into her new role. Ms. Callahan reported on Youth Program (WIOA Job Link, DEI and SYEP) with a power point that is attached.

### **WIOA POLICY REVIEW – Basic Skills Deficiency and Objective Assessment**

Ms. Alvord reported to the committee that the WIOA Youth “Work Experience” policy and “Incentive” policy have been approved by the Board at the Tuesday, December 15<sup>th</sup> board meeting. Ms. Alvord reported that we are working on revising the Basic Skills Deficiency Policy and Objective Assessment Policy to update with alternative assessments to assess basic skills. These updates are due to no longer having access to METRIX online assessment tools, which provided us with the additional assessments needed to make those policies robust under NYSDOL requirements. The modification to the Basic Skills Deficiency Policy and Objective

Assessment Policy have been modified and will be on the Workforce Development Board Agenda for Tuesday, February 23, 2021 for approval.

#### **APPROVAL OF BASIC SKILLS DEFICENCY POLICY**

It was moved by Ms. Zeppelin and seconded by Ms. Kittel and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the revised Basic Skills Deficiency Policy.

#### **APPROVAL OF OBJECTIVE ASSESSMENT POLICY**

It was moved by Ms. Kittel and seconded by Ms. Zeppelin and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the revised Objective Assessment Policy.

#### **REVIEW AND APPROVE SYEP RFP RELEASE**

Ms. Alvord reviewed two timeline options to have the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) RFP approved for release. Ms. Alvord reviewed the 2021 SYEP RFP. The committee reviewed and approved with modifications to release the 2021 SYEP RFP. This will ensure that the Executive Committee can approve and release RFP at the February 2, 2021 meeting on behalf of the Workforce Development Board. The full WDB will vote to affirm actions of the Executive Committee at the Tuesday, February 23, 2021 board meeting.

It was moved by Ms. Kittel and seconded by Ms. Zeppelin and unanimously adopted by voice vote of members present to approve the Summer Youth Employment Program RFP with modifications.

#### **DIRECTOR'S UPDATE**

Ms. Branosky thanked Ms. Alvord for an Op-Ed article that was published in Tompkins Weekly in January. Ms. Branosky informed the committee that the unemployment rate according to IMSA is 3.5 to 4.5% for Tompkins County. Ms. Branosky informed the committee members that they will receive a calendar invite to the Workforce Development Board meeting to hear the Cornell/ILR School researcher presentation on the Pandemic Labor Market Assessment and Skills Mapping. Ms. Branosky informed the committee that she is in the process of writing the Deputy Director's job description and will move forward with hiring to be filled by the end of March.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Ms. Shanks-Booth adjourned the meeting at 10:01 a.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 18, 2021.

***Tompkins Workforce NY -  
January 2021 Youth Program Updates***



# Staff Updates

- **Amy Callahan, Youth Coordinator**  
(transitioned on October 19)
- **Chris Dettmann, Youth Advisor**
- **Emily Torres, Youth Advisor** (began  
December 14)
- **Mary McLaughlin, Disability Resource  
Coordinator**



# JobLink – What is JobLink?

It's more than a job!

We are a **FUTURE-FOCUSED** program that provides:

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**Job Training** (480 hours per participant – most participants work their hours over a period of 6 months to 1 year)

**Individualized Support** from a JobLink Youth Advisor and a Worksite Supervisor – weekly check-ins and worksite visits from your Youth Advisor, a Job Training Plan, and an individual service plan that includes your career goal

**Weekly Workshops for Success** to develop career and life skills - \$25 gift card (Target or Walmart) for each workshop you attend.

**Education** (classroom, online and on the job)

**Support Services** including help with transportation, childcare, connection to mental health services, disability services & more



# Program Updates

- Workshops for Success & Mentoring
- Remote Work Opportunities
- Expanded outreach to businesses and organizations led by people of color and training for staff
- New community working group to focus on employing youths who have had contact with the criminal justice system
- Focus on creating LGBTQ friendly processes, procedures & spaces
- Disability Employment Initiative Projects



# Weekly Workshops for Success: Career Readiness and Life Skills

- 2021 Workshop Topics Include:
  - Mental Health, Manage Your Money, Professionalism, Anti-Racism & Anti-Harassment at Work, Career Exploration (guest speakers from fields of human services, healthcare, manufacturing and more), Resume Writing, Interview Preparation, Leadership Skills and Opportunities, and more!
- 30 minutes of small group mentoring during each workshop – a chance to have meaningful conversations in a supportive group with one staff mentor and 3-6 youth workers
- Currently on Zoom, with breakout rooms for small group mentoring

# Winter 2021 Guest Speakers: Workshops for Success

**Melanie Little, Director of Education and Youth Services**  
The Mental Health Association in Tompkins County

**Antonio Triana and Teen Peer Leaders, Trainers**  
Midstate Council for Occupational Safety and Health

**Joe Cummins, Financial Educator**  
Alternatives Federal Credit Union

**Nicole Roulstin, Contact Center Manager**  
2-1-1 Helpline, Human Services Coalition

**Steven Guevara, MSW, Counselor**  
Family and Children's Services of Ithaca



# New Remote Work Placements

- Tompkins Workforce NY Youth Team (graphic design & illustration)
- Open the Lid LLC (graphic design, illustration & workshop attendant)

Illustration by Dylan, JobLink Youth Intern





# Expanded Outreach to BIPOC Youth & Businesses

- Continued partnership with Village at Ithaca and Southside Community Center, worksites and sites of recruitment and connection to youths of color
- New partnerships with Black-owned businesses including The Learning Farm and Rashida Sawyer Bakery
- Youth staff are participating in the county-wide book read of "How to Be an Anti-Racist" and will continue to pursue further training opportunities in anti-racism, particularly related to employment of youth

# Employing Youths Who Have Had Contact with the Justice System – Working Group

- A new working group had its first meeting on 1/13/2021
- In attendance: Staff from Tompkins Workforce, OAR, URO, Alliance of Families for Justice and Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the owner of Rashida Sawyer Bakery.
- Goals of the group:
  - Recruit youths to JobLink who have had experience in justice system.
  - Better understand and address systemic barriers to employment this group is facing.
  - Form relationships with community leaders who already work with youths in this population, gain trust in the community.
  - Recruit businesses and organizations to serve as worksites for this population.
  - Train staff at interested worksites to work successfully with this population.
  - Train Workforce youth staff to work with this population successfully.

# Working with LGBTQ Youths

- Changed youth application form to include preferred pronouns and preferred names
- Have seen an increase in transgender youths in our program
- Staff attended LGBTQ Cultural Competency Training led by the Cortland LGBT Resource Center
- Staff will attend additional training on working with LGBTQ youths, including a workshop hosted by NYATEP on April 6th
- Staff have reached out to Planned Parenthood youth program to make contacts with youths and learn more about obstacles they are facing

# Disability Employment Initiative Highlights

- **Hands on Tompkins Manufacturing Day** – on Skype with closed captioning, about 50 youths participated. Presentations from Workforce, BOCES, TC3, and area businesses and trade unions in in-demand occupations that are hands on. Many of the youths who attended disclosed a disability.
- **Your Dream Your Team Application** - Mary, our DRC, is continuing work with a web developer to finish an app that youths with disabilities can use to navigate the many services and systems they can use as they pursue their career pathway.
- **Increased partnership and collaboration with Challenge and ACCESS-VR** to provide coordinated support to youths with disabilities. Staff will be introduced to point persons from these organizations over the next few months to increase collaboration/referrals as needed.

Questions? Comments?

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*Thank you!*



<b>2021 SYEP RFP TIMELINE: version 1 Jan. approval</b>	
SYEP RFP Developed	January 2021
Youth Oversight Committee (YOC) Reviews Draft/Comments	January [1/21/21]
YOC Approval of Release of RFP	January [1/21/21]
WDB Approval of Release of RFP	February [2/2/21]* exec committee
RFP Release [County/BidNet]	February 2, 2021
Proposals DUE	March 3, 2021
Bids “opened” by County Finance	March 4, 2021
YOC meets to review proposals	March 11 (extra meeting); March 18, 2021
YOC Recommendations to WDB	March 18, 2021
WDB Award of Contracts	March 23, 2021
Contract Start Date	May 1, 2021
<b>2021 SYEP RFP TIMELINE: version 2 Feb. approval</b>	
SYEP RFP Developed	January 2021
Youth Oversight Committee (YOC) Reviews Draft/Comments	January [1/21/21]
YOC Approval of Release of RFP	February [2/18/21]
WDB Approval of Release of RFP	February [2/23/21]* full board
RFP Release [County/BidNet]	February 23, 2021
Proposals DUE	March 29, 2021
Bids “opened” by County Finance	March 30, 2021
YOC meets to review proposals	April 8 (extra meeting); April 15, 2021
YOC Recommendations to WDB	April 15, 2021
WDB Award of Contracts	April 27, 2021
Contract Start Date	May 1, 2021





## **Tompkins County Workforce Development Board**

### **WIOA YOUTH Basic Skills Deficiency Policy**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for determining eligibility of youth based on Basic Skills Deficiency criteria.

#### **Background**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act 20 CFR 681.290(a)(1) states that LWDBs must use standardized testing instruments to demonstrate that a youth reads and/or computes math at or below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level.

WIOA 20 CFR 681.290(b) states that LWDBs must create a basic skills deficiency policy for youth who are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.

In order to assess whether a youth meets the Basic Skills Deficiency definition, LWDBs must:

- Use valid and reliable assessment(s) that are appropriate for the target population, showing that the youth is unable to demonstrate the competencies described in the definition;
- Use appropriate, fair, and cost-effective assessments that are well-matched to the test administrator's qualifications, easy to administer, and have results which are easy to interpret
- Provide reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for special populations (i.e. individuals with disabilities and individuals who are English Language Learners)

#### **Policy**

For eligibility under WIOA using "Basic Skills Deficiency" as the youth's eligibility criteria, **Out of School Youth (OSY)** must be:

- between the ages of 16-24 at the time of eligibility determination, and
- have a high school or HSE diploma, and
- be basic skills deficient, and
- be low income.

Being Basic Skills Deficient alone **does not** make a youth eligible for WIOA services. All four (4) criteria must be met: age 16-24, HS/HSE diploma, Basic Skills Deficient and low income.

For eligibility under WIOA using "Basic Skills Deficiency" as the youth's eligibility criteria, **In School Youth (ISY)** must be:

- between the ages of 14-21 at the time of determining eligibility, and
- attending or enrolled in secondary or for-credit postsecondary school at the time of eligibility determination, and
- be low income, and
- be basic skills deficient (either deficient in basic skills **or** an English Language learner who is deficient in basic skills).

Being Basic Skills Deficient alone **does not** make a youth eligible for WIOA services. All four (4) criteria must be met: age 14-21, attending/enrolled in school, low income, and Basic Skills Deficient.

It is the policy of the TCWDB to determine eligibility under Basic Skills Deficiency by using **one (1)** of the following assessments. **Use of previous basic skills assessment results are permitted if the assessments were conducted within the past six (6) months.**

**Reasonable Accommodations** will be provided for individuals with documented disabilities and individuals who are English Language Learners. Accommodations to include, but not be limited to: extending test taking time, distraction-free spaces, use of technology aides, paper-based exams, accessible testing stations, web-based accommodations, and other accommodations as based on the policies of the test creators. More information regarding accommodations can be found at: [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

A.) Approved standardized testing instrument to demonstrate a youth reads and/or computes math at or below the **8<sup>th</sup> grade level**, determined using the National Reporting System (NRS) **Educational Functioning Level 4** (“High Intermediate Basic Education”):

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)

B.) Approved standardized testing instrument(s) to demonstrate a youth reads and/or speaks English at or below the **NRS Educational Functioning Level 5** (“High Intermediate English as a Second Language”):

- Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Literacy or
- Basic English Skills Test (BEST) Plus 2.0

## **Tompkins County Workforce Development Board WIOA YOUTH Objective Assessment Policy**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines for program staff to follow for completing Objective Assessments in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program prior to a youths' enrollment. The outlined policy provides a process that will identify youths' service needs, academic levels, goals, interests, skill levels, abilities, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and measure their barriers and strengths. This process includes a review of a youth's basic and occupational skills, prior work experience, employability potential, and developmental needs. The result of completing this process is having comprehensive information to work with in establishing an appropriate Individual Service Strategy as well as providing the youth with an understanding of how a variety of their personal attributes affect their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments.

### **Background**

For a youth to be enrolled in the WIOA Youth program, Objective Assessments must first be completed. The U.S. Dept. of Labor Employment & Training Administration's (DOLETA) TEGL 21-16 states that "the WIOA youth program design requires an objective assessment of academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant". The required Objective Assessments review includes the following areas:

- Basic Skills
- Occupational Skills
- Prior Work Experience
- Employability
- Interests
- Aptitudes
- Supportive Service Needs
- Developmental Needs
- Strengths

The DOLETA TEGL 21-16 states that the Objective Assessments must consider a youth's strengths rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement. The TEGL 21-16 further states that assessments used must be: valid and reliable; appropriate, fair and cost effective; be well-matched to the test administrator's qualifications; and be easy to administer and interpret results. Alternatively, skills-related gains may also be determined through less formal assessment techniques such as observation, folder reviews, or interview. These assessments may be provided directly through WIOA youth program staff, and/or through referrals to national and community-based partners and resources.

### **Policy**

Prior to enrollment in the WIOA Youth program, youth must complete the following Objective Assessments. This policy defines what will be used to assess each of the required steps and how those methods will be recorded in the youths' paper files and in OSOS. **All youth must complete the requirements listed below prior to being enrolled in the youth program** (i.e. before first service is entered in OSOS).

The Individual Service Strategy (ISS) will be utilized to record and document notes regarding each Objective Assessment criteria with selected strategy for working with that youth on maintaining or improving their skills in each area. Program Staff will use the ISS to document that the initial Objective Assessments have been completed prior to enrollment with date and signature of staff. Any changes to the ISS will need to be dated and signed by the youth as well. ISS documentation (paper file) will match what is input in OSOS (electronic file).

Example:

**BASIC SKILLS** – Method of assessment used: TABE test, math and reading (test date xx-xx-xx). Results of assessment: Youth scored at 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and 5<sup>th</sup> grade math level. Determined that youth is lacking basic skills in reading and math. Strategy: Refer youth to XX agency to provide academic support, tutoring services.

**Procedure**

To assess the Objective Assessment criteria, please utilize the following directives issued by the LWDB. In all pertinent circumstances, **Reasonable Accommodations** will be provided for individuals with disabilities, individuals who are English Language Learners, and individuals assessed as being Basic Skills Deficient for eligibility purposes (see LWDB Basic Skills Deficiency Policy for more information). Accommodations to include, but not be limited to: extending test taking time, distraction-free spaces, use of technology aides, paper-based exams, accessible testing stations, web-based accommodations, and other accommodations as based on the policies of the test creators. More information regarding accommodations can be found at: [www.ada.gov](http://www.ada.gov).

**Use of previous basic skills assessment results are permitted if the assessments were conducted within the past six (6) months.**

**Please keep copies of all corresponding assessments/documents (i.e. interest profilers, test scores, etc.) in the youth’s paper file, along with their updated ISS form.**

**Basic Skills:**

Option 1 – A H.S. Diploma, H.S.E., or passing report card\*/transcript\*\* dated within 6 months prior to date of enrollment identifies the youth as “not Basic Skills Deficient” (BSD).

*\*Passing report card is an overall grade of 65 or higher (less is considered BSD)*

*\*\*Passing transcript is a GPA of 2.0 or higher (less is considered BSD)*

Option 2 – TABE score of below 8<sup>th</sup> grade reading or math level, dated within 6 months prior to date of enrollment, identifies the youth as “Basic Skills Deficient”. A score at or higher than an 8<sup>th</sup> grade level would identify the youth as “not BSD”.

**Interests:**

Option 1 – O\*NET Interest Profiler (available online at <https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/> - youth will be required to create a profile on Career Zone; if youth do not want to create a profile at this time, the same

assessment tool can be located at: <https://www.mynextmove.org/explore/ip>) – print a summary of the results for youth’s file. For youth ages 18+, it is recommended to create a profile with Job Zone (instead of Career Zone) – <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov> – the “Career Interest” profiler on Job Zone will produce similar results to the O\*NET Interest Profiler.

Option 2 – If youth can already identify a specific career interest, please use the American Job Center Network’s <https://www.myskillsmyfuture.org//Target.aspx> to explore that career and identify the skills and training that correspond with that career. Print record of results for youth’s file.

### **Occupational Skills & Prior Work Experience:**

*Note: Occupational Skills refers to **employment related skills** (i.e. money handling, lifeguard certification, using computers/programs, etc.) that relate to specific job duties and responsibilities.*

Option 1 – Demonstrated work history via resume; record of certifications/licenses

Option 2 - Interview with youth to include description of past work experience, including volunteer work, “under the table” or gig work, subsidized and unsubsidized experiences.

### **Employability:**

*Note: Employability is based on **professional skills** (i.e. time management, communication, conflict resolution, etc.) to be determined by assessment, self-attestation, and/or ability to produce professional references.*

To determine a youth’s employability, staff must utilize one of the following options:

Option 1 – Demonstrated longevity in work history (i.e. participant has worked continuously for 6 mos.) as documented on youth’s resume and/or the youth can produce a work-related professional reference.

Option 2 – Career Zone Section 05 “Job Readiness”: Youth will self-attest to their skills which will generate a list of career options for their skill sets. <https://www.careerzone.ny.gov/> Youth ages 18+ can take the “Skills Survey” assessment at <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov> for a similar skills-based report.

Option 3 – Job Zone’s “My Employability Score” on <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov/> - This basic employment profile collects data related to employment prospects and weighs this data based on which factors contribute more heavily to employment. The higher the Employability Score, the greater your competitive advantage in the labor market. The Employability Score is based on how well a job-seekers’ employment profile matches their target occupation and labor market demand. Both positive and negative factors contributing to the Employability Score will be identified to determine what factors to target as well as potential barriers to the youth’s employability that will be to be addressed.

### **Aptitude:**

*Note: Aptitude measures the technical aspects of career readiness (i.e. level of suitability and/or fitness for specific tasks).*

To determine a youth’s aptitude levels, staff must utilize one of the following options:

Option 1 – Record of training program completion, certification(s), license(s), or credential(s) needed for specific career pathways and/or occupations.

Option 2 – Career Zone Section 04 “Abilities” – youth will complete this self-assessment of a variety of abilities, including their Sensory Abilities, Physical Abilities, Psychomotor Abilities, and Cognitive Abilities. This tool will generate a list of career options based on the youth’s self-reported strengths. This tool can be found at: <https://www.careerzone.ny.gov>. For youth ages 18+, the Job Zone “Abilities Profiler” is appropriate for this purpose. This tool can be found at: <https://www.jobzone.ny.gov>. Records of completion can be printed for youth’s file.

### **Supportive Service Needs:**

Supportive Services include barriers such as: housing, transportation, communication, childcare, clothing, and other needs. Staff will conduct an interview with youth to identify various barriers to employment based on youth’s self-attestation. Staff will use the local ISS form for recording of barriers and any supportive services provided should be documented in the youth’s paper file and in OSOS following the local WDB Supportive Services Policy.

### **Developmental Needs:**

To determine a youth’s developmental needs, staff must utilize the following options:

Requirement 1 – Conduct a brief mental health assessment using evidence-based assessment tools: Generalized Anxiety Disorder Survey (GAD-7) and the Depression Survey (PHQ-9). Results would determine a youth’s need for supportive services, referral to counseling, and/or general work readiness. Mild results (scoring between 0-5) would indicate that there is not a mental health barrier present at this time; moderate results (scoring between 6-10 points) would demonstrate that the youth are likely suitable for work placement but may need supports (requirements would include to attend a variety of skill-building workshops, referral to external services if needed, etc.); moderately severe-severe (scoring between 11-21 points) would demonstrate that the youth is not suitable for work placement at this time and need mental health referral first. The tools can be found at: <https://www.torbayandsouthdevon.nhs.uk/uploads/score-sheet-gad-7-anxiety-and-phq-9-depression.pdf> ; please maintain a record of the youths’ assessment in their file.

Requirement 2 – Conduct a thorough evaluation of the youth’s developmental needs using the Casey Life Skills Assessment tool. This tool will assess the youth’s skills in the following areas: daily living, self-care, relationships and communication, housing and money management, work and study life, career and education planning, and looking forward. Youths’ responses to the questions in this survey will identify areas of need for assignment to relevant workshop offerings, training and/or external referral services. This assessment tool can be found at: [http://www.casey.org/media/CLS\\_assessments\\_LifeSkills.pdf](http://www.casey.org/media/CLS_assessments_LifeSkills.pdf); please maintain a record of the youth’s assessment in their file.

Optional – Official documentation provided by school or medical professional (i.e. IEP documents or medical note from a licensed professional).

**Strengths:**

Determination of the youth’s strengths should be summarized from the completion of the above objective assessments. Staff should review the summary with the youth and add any additional comments the youth may wish to contribute. Staff observations may be recorded in the Strengths section of the local ISS but should be recorded as such (i.e. Staff observes that this youth demonstrates patience and perseverance in completion of online assessments.). Staff observations must be objective in nature and supported by youth approval (signature/date).

**Individual Service Strategy Plan:** Upon completion of all Objective Assessments, staff will be prompted on their form to complete an Individual Service Strategy Plan, which summarizes all of the “next steps” outlined from the Objective Assessments. Youth will complete a Certification to attest that the information provided is accurate to the best of their ability and that they agree to the steps outlined by the staff person in the ISS Plan.