

	West Central Region Local Policy		
	Subject: Basic Skills Deficiency	OWD Approval Date: 10/1/2026	Board Approval Date: 9/23/2026
	Reference: OWD Policy 02-2026 and subsequent policies	Revision: 5	Effective Date: 10/1/2026

OWD Policy 02-2026 states that Local Workforce Development Boards (WDB) are required to develop a policy for determining basic skills deficiency as defined in WIOA Section 3(5). WIOA mandates that each Local Workforce Development Board use assessment tools that are valid, and appropriate for the needs of their target populations, to evaluate the basic skills of applicants and participants.

WIOA Section 3(5) defines a participant who is “basic skills deficient:”

(5) BASIC SKILLS DEFICIENT – The term “basic skills deficient” means, with respect to an individual –

(A) that the individual has English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or

(B) that the individual is 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.

The Office of Workforce Development (OWD) further defines (B) as an individual who:

- Scores at or below the 8th grade level on a standardized test
- Has a cumulative GPA of less than 2.0
- Has an overall grade of less than 65 (on a 100-point scale) in reading or math
- Scores Bronze or lower on the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)
- Has a primary language barrier
- Other documentation from the school approved by OWD prior to enrollment

Determining basic skills deficiency during intake assists in qualifying customers for eligibility, allows for quality referrals, and can determine program effectiveness.

The West Central Region has adopted a screening tool to help identify if an individual is basic skills deficient. The Basic Skills Screening Tool is required for all WIOA youth applicants. The Basic Skills Screening Tool on page 3 of this policy will help assess the youth for the required basic skills section of the OA and help determine if additional testing is needed to determine “basic skills deficient”. The Basic Skills Screening Tool must not be used to determine a youth’s educational needs.

Determination of WIOA Youth eligibility based on the BSD barrier:

If using BSD for WIOA Youth eligibility, the following may be used for BSD determination:

Criteria	Documentation
Scores at or below the 8 th grade level on a standardized test	Test Results confirming grade level
Cumulative GPA of less than 2.0	Current school transcripts

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Overall grade of less than 65 (on a 100-point scale) in reading or math	Current transcripts or report card
Bronze or lower on National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC)	Copy of scores
Primary language barrier	Documentation from AEL program, letter from school, or case note clearly supporting determination
Other documentation from school approved by OWD prior to enrollment	

Determination of Basic Skills for the Objective Assessment (OA):

WIOA requires that every youth completes an objective assessment to evaluate the basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs of the participant. The objective assessment must identify the career pathway for the youth participant and is used to develop a corresponding Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

The requirement to review basic skills as part of the objective assessment process is not the same as conducting a basic skills assessment for eligibility determination for the basic skills deficient barrier or as conducting a basic skills assessment for determination of an educational functioning level gain within the measurable skill gains indicator. If using the basic skills deficient component of WIOA Youth eligibility in WIOA (3)(5)(A), programs must use a generally accepted standardized test which DOL defines as an approved test from the list of tests the Secretary of Education determines to be suitable for use in the National Reporting System for Adult Education.¹

A youth who is unable to complete the screening tool without assistance or answers “No” to one (1) or more questions must automatically be assessed as basic skills deficient using at least one of the approved assessments identified in the previous section.

A youth who can complete the screening tool without assistance and answers “Yes” to all the questions has satisfied the basic skills requirement of the OA. However, for youth entering training services additional assessments may be used to determine the appropriateness of the training program.

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Determination of BSD for Adult Priority of Service:

The Basic Skills Screening Tool will help identify if an individual is basic skills deficient for the purposes of priority of service and referrals for Adults or Dislocated Workers. The screening tool should be given prior to conducting any assessment test. The tool is for identification of priority of service and for referral purposes.

Anyone unable to complete the screening tool without assistance or answers “No” to one (1) or more questions must automatically receive a referral for adult basic education services. Any WIOA Adult participant should receive priority of service as having a basic skills deficiency.

An exception to the above is if an Adult participant reports:

- They possess an Associate’s Degree or higher.
- Documentation of entrance exams required by a post-secondary education provider, with scores showing that participant does not require remedial courses.

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Basic Skills Screening Tool

Name: _____

Date of Birth: _____

- 1) Do you have a high school diploma, General Education Development (GED) certificate or High School Equivalency Diploma (HSED)? ☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Currently in high school (does not include GED or HSED programs)
- 2) Can you follow basic written instructions and diagrams with no help or just a little help? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 3) Can you fill out basic medical forms and job applications? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 4) Without the aid of a calculator, can you add, subtract, multiply and divide with whole numbers up to 3 digits? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 5) Can you do basic tasks on a computer? ☐ Yes ☐ No
- 6) Do you speak and read English well enough to get and keep a job? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____

For Internal Use Only:

Was the individual able to complete the screening tool without help? ☐ Yes ☐ No

For the Adult Program Only:

If any question is answered, "No" or the form could not be completed independently, the individual should receive priority.

Does the individual receive priority?

☐ Yes ☐ No

For the Youth Program Only:

If any question is answered, "No" or the form could not be completed independently, the individual may have a BSD eligibility barrier.

Does the individual have a BSD eligibility barrier?

☐ Yes ☐ No

Name of Case Manager: _____

Case Manager

Signature: _____ Date Signed: _____