

U.S. Department of Labor Releases New Literacy and Numeracy Training and Employment Guidance for State and Local WIA Youth Program Providers

Earlier this month, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) of the U.S. Department of Labor, released a Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) to state and local *Workforce Investment Act (WIA)* Youth Program staff and service providers, to build on previous guidance and clarify the policy on increasing literacy and numeracy gains of out-of-school, basic-skills-deficient youths. The new guidance is not intended to change or replace any previous guidance related to the literacy and numeracy gains measure. OVAE assisted the ETA in developing key components of this TEGL. The guidance, therefore, should be of particular relevance to stakeholders of adult education programs that provide literacy and numeracy education to youths. It provides strategies workforce systems can use to: improve program design, service delivery, staff development, and basic skills assessment; implement performance-based contracts; cultivate strong partnerships with providers to facilitate joint responsibility for skills gains; and clarify reporting requirements and associated processes.

The *Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA)*, Title II of the WIA, is the major source of federal support for adult basic skills programs that provide instruction below the postsecondary level. Partnerships between adult education and WIA youth programs can maximize resources to achieve both educational- and employment-related outcomes. When partnering with adult education providers, WIA youth programs are advised to consult with the appropriate [state adult education office](#) about its policies and practices. Through effective basic skills assessment, support, and joint planning, programs can increase the likelihood that youths remain engaged and experience success in all program areas, including building literacy and numeracy skills.

For more in-depth information, please access the full [TEGL](#), which includes examples of and links to programs, practices, and strategies developed by WIA youth programs and other organizations that may be useful to adult education providers.

Correction

The March 8, 2012 edition of *OVAE Connection* ran the article, *Minnesota Announces FastTRAC Adult Career Pathway Model*. That article incorrectly stated that the FastTRAC adult career pathway model had already received legislative approval from Minnesota. In fact, legislative approval for the FastTRAC program is still pending there.

April Is Financial Literacy Month

Since 2003, the United States has designated the month of April as National Financial Literacy Month to stress the importance of financial literacy and to teach Americans salutary financial habits. A number of governmental and financial initiatives support this effort.

The Obama Administration is again challenging students, teachers, and parents to emphasize the importance of financial literacy. Through April 13, high school-aged students can test their knowledge about personal finance through the [National Financial Capability Challenge](#). Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Neal S. Wolin recently noted, “challenge is an exciting way to educate students on basic finance and encourage them to make smart money management part of their everyday behavior.”

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan added, “So many of the challenges we face today, both individually and as a nation, are because we have not taught these basic lessons about managing finances and making smart investments. The Challenge is an excellent tool for educators to help them teach these key skills so every student is receiving a well-rounded education and is prepared to make sound financial decisions, even from a young age.”

The U.S. Department of the Treasury and the U.S. Department of Education have developed an [Educator Toolkit](#) to help prepare students for the test of knowledge of financial issues. From saving for college to managing personal expenses, the challenge can help students to learn about several topics that collectively constitute a basic understanding of personal finance.

The Office of Vocational and Adult Education, working with the Office of the Secretary of Education, developed the Financial Education for College Access and Success Program in 2010. It supports state-led efforts to develop, implement, and evaluate the effectiveness of personal finance instructional materials and corresponding teacher training. Its fundamental purpose is to provide high school students with the knowledge and skills to make sound financial aid and other personal finance decisions, particularly in relation to obtaining access to, persisting in, and completing postsecondary education.

One four-year grant was awarded to the Tennessee Department of Education, which has arranged for Middle Tennessee State University to implement this project. The grantee will develop curriculum components on college admissions, applying for financial aid and scholarships, decision-making, and the college application process. These materials will reflect the Financial Literacy and Education Commission’s five core competencies: earning, spending, saving and investing, borrowing, and protecting against risk. All materials produced through this program will be developed as open education resources. Additional materials on basic financial education may be found at www.mymoney.gov.