

“North Carolina’s ability to attract and retain high growth industries and existing businesses increasingly depends on our capacity to supply a skilled labor force. The North Carolina Department of Commerce supports programs that upgrade the skills of our existing workers, prepare youth and other emerging workers to enter the labor force, and reconnect dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged persons to the workforce.”

– Jim Fain, Secretary
North Carolina Department of Commerce

Questions?

To learn more about Youth Services provided in your community under the Workforce Investment Act, visit www.ncdet.com or contact the North Carolina Division of Employment and Training.



NORTH CAROLINA
the state of minds

March 2007

A Quick Guide to

Youth Programs

In North Carolina



As Established By The Workforce
Investment Act of 1998

North Carolina
Department of Commerce
Division of Employment and Training

Youth Programs in North Carolina

Start Here

What is the Workforce Investment Act?

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 is the nation's principal workforce development legislation, providing funds to address the employment and training needs of adults, dislocated workers and youth. In North Carolina, programs are delivered through a network of twenty-four Local Areas with policy and oversight provided for each by a local Workforce Development Board (WDB). Representatives from the private sector business community comprise the majority of each board's membership. Members are appointed by local elected officials. Each Workforce Development Board has a Youth Council whose members have a special interest or expertise in youth policy and services.

What is the Youth Program?

The approach to youth services under the Workforce Investment Act presents an opportunity to better prepare young people by offering a comprehensive year-round package of services that increases their chances of success both in school and in the workplace. The program brings together local workforce training providers, schools, community organizations, businesses and others in an effort to better coordinate youth funds and services in the community, and to create a youth services network that is closely linked to the labor market.

The program blends traditional employment and training activities with youth development activities, such as maintaining positive relationships with responsible adults and peers, opportunities for community service and developing leadership skills. The program is designed to provide an appropriate range of services based on the needs of youth as they grow and mature. Assigned counselors ensure that services are provided in a coordinated and youth-friendly manner.



Who is eligible to receive services?

Eligible youth are low-income individuals between the ages of 14 and 21, inclusive, who have at least one of six specified barriers to employment -- deficient in basic literacy skills; school dropout; homeless, runaway or foster child; pregnant or parenting; offender; or is an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment.

The Act further focuses resources on specific needs by requiring that at least thirty percent of youth funds in each Local Area be spent on services to out-of-school youth as defined by the WIA.

The Youth Council may establish additional policies for eligibility and more specifically target WIA resources in the Local Area.

Youth program providers must ensure that eligible youth who do not meet the enrollment requirements of their program or who cannot be served by their program are referred for additional assessment and also to appropriate programs designed to meet their basic skills and training needs.

What specific services are offered?

The Local Area must make services available in its youth program based around ten required program elements, as listed below. The WIA youth program must closely coordinate with services already available in the community.

Local providers of WIA services must determine what program elements each youth needs through an assessment of the youth's skills and needs. An individualized service strategy is developed from assessment results, detailing the services needed as well as the sequence in which they should be provided. Youth may participate in multiple elements as indicated by assessment results, and all youth must receive follow-up services for a minimum period of twelve months.



Local Areas may integrate youth employment opportunities into service plans as a part of the youth's overall development process. These jobs are designed to combine work and learning experiences and, to the extent possible, are based on the youth's career interests as recorded in the individualized service strategy.