



**DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE SERVICES
ISSUANCE PY 10-02**

Artee Williams, Director

July 8, 2010

TO: Local Workforce Investment Areas/Service Providers

SUBJECT: 2010 Summer Youth Employment Opportunities Program Work Readiness Tool

1. **Purpose:** To issue the Arkansas Work Readiness Tool and guidance to be used during the 2010 Summer Youth Employment Opportunities Program.
2. **General Information:** The Work Readiness portion of the Skill Attainment Rate will be the only performance measure used for youth who participate in 2010 Summer Youth Employment Opportunities funded by the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program or the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (Recovery Act or ARRA) of 2009.

Under the Recovery Act, local areas were given flexibility in designing their work readiness indicator. However, to enhance the effectiveness of the measure, a September 2009 Government Accounting Office (GAO) report recommended that the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) “provide additional guidance on how to measure work readiness of youth, with a goal of improving the comparability and rigor of the measure.”

Additionally, an ETA sponsored evaluation conducted by Mathematical Policy Research (MPR) concluded that guidance is necessary to better inform the states on the most appropriate “sources of data”, “types of skills”, and “timing and frequency” of youth assessments. In response, ETA has changed the definition of work readiness to be based on a worksite evaluation.

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 24-08, Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Act Performance Accountability Reporting for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, Round V Clarifications, provided additional information on the worksite evaluation and a sample work readiness tool. The state has modified the sample tool provided by the Department of Labor (DOL) for use by the local workforce investment areas (LWIAs).

A worksite evaluation measuring performance in the workplace is required to assess work readiness for the work readiness indicator. LWIAs must use the Arkansas Work Readiness Tool to determine if the participant exhibited competency in work readiness skills by the end of the work experience. This worksite evaluation must be conducted by the employer. The employer (i.e., worksite supervisor) who regularly observes performance at the worksite is in the best position to assess the quality of a young person’s work performance.

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The Arkansas Work Readiness Tool focuses on attaining a satisfactory level of workplace proficiency as opposed to a measurable increase or gain. The attainment of proficiency or competency in the foundational and worksite-specific skills necessary to be successful in the workplace will be determined by the employer and will be based on the attainment of work behaviors outlined in the Arkansas Work Readiness tool.

Local area program staff should assist employers in making the youth evaluation process as simple and seamless as possible. This should include providing clear instructions on its use through employer orientations and utilizing worksite monitoring visits to address any outstanding procedural questions or concerns by the employer.

Tips for implementing the work readiness tool are found on page two of the tool. The evaluation must be conducted at least once. However, it is recommended that employers conduct more than one evaluation. To meet work readiness skill attainment, employees must have an overall average score that is “proficient”. Page three of the Arkansas Work Readiness Tool, “Summer Employee Evaluation Grading Scale”, provides clearly defined grading criteria. By defining the criteria for the skills and behavior that a youth must demonstrate, LWIAs can decrease employer subjectivity and increase grading consistency. Not only must the employee have an average score that is proficient, but the supervisor must verify that performance on the job was satisfactory and that the employee was not fired from the work experience.

After the worksite supervisor has made a determination regarding the participant’s attainment of the Work Readiness Indicator, the employer must return the evaluation to the youth contact identified by the local area. The status of work readiness, attained or not attained, must be updated in Arkansas JobLink (AJL) by appropriate local area staff.

There has been no change to the reporting specification for this indicator. Work readiness information is recorded in AJL on the Enrollment Details screen by selecting the “Goals and Interests” line. The “Date Set” represents the date of the first review. The “Date Attained” represents the date of the first review or if more than one review is conducted the date of the final review. The set and attained dates for ARRA must be between May 1 – September 30, 2010, and for TANF May 1 – August 31, 2010. Select “Work Readiness Skills” for the goal type. Select the appropriate status to record whether the goal was attained or not attained. In the “Description” field, enter the “Total Score” from page 1 of the review.

3. **Action Required:** Distribute to all appropriate staff and ensure that work readiness assessments are conducted. LWIBs must adopt this issuance as their local work readiness policy for the 2010 TANF SYEP and for 2010 Summer Youth Employment Opportunities funded by the ARRA.
4. **Inquiries:** Contact Sandy Monaco at 501-682-3131 (sandy.monaco@arkansas.gov).
5. **Attachments:** Arkansas Work Readiness Tool
6. **Expiration Date:** Continuing.



ARKANSAS WORK READINESS TOOL

EMPLOYER NAME:	EMPLOYEE EVALUATION
Participant Name:	Worksite:
Participant Job Title:	Worksite Supervisor/Reviewer:
Date of Employment:	Review Date:

FOUNDATION SKILL	PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS	Performance Improvement Plan Needed (1)	Needs Development (2)	Proficient (3)	Exemplary (4)
See page 3 for more detailed grading descriptions					
ATTENDANCE	Understanding work expectations for attendance and adhering to them. Notifying supervisor in advance in case of absence.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PUNCTUALITY	Understanding work expectations for punctuality. Arriving on time for work, taking and returning from breaks on time, and calling supervisor prior to being late.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKPLACE APPEARANCE	Dressing appropriately for position and duties. Practicing personal hygiene appropriate for position and duties.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TAKING INITIATIVE	Participating fully in task or project from initiation to completion. Initiating interaction with supervisor for next task upon completion of previous one.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
QUALITY OF WORK	Giving best effort, evaluating own work, and utilizing feedback to improve work performance. Striving to meet quality standards.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
COMMUNICATION SKILLS	Speaking clearly and communicating effectively – verbally and non-verbally. Listening attentively. Using language appropriate for work environment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
RESPONSE TO SUPERVISION	Accepting direction, feedback, and constructive criticism with positive attitude and using information to improve work performance.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TEAMWORK	Relating positively with co-workers. Working productively with individuals and teams. Respecting diversity in race, gender, and culture.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
PROBLEM-SOLVING/ CRITICAL-THINKING	Exercising sound reasoning and analytical thinking. Using knowledge and information from job to solve workplace problems.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
WORKPLACE CULTURE POLICY AND SAFETY	Demonstrating understanding of workplace culture and policy. Complying with health and safety rules. Exhibiting integrity and honesty.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
SPECIFIC WORKPLACE AND CAREER SKILL	PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)
LIST SKILL HERE <i>(see sample skills on page 2)</i>	<i>Insert performance expectations here. Grading scale for skill can be added by using adaptable "general key" at end of page 3.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LIST SKILL HERE		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LIST SKILL HERE		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LIST SKILL HERE		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
LIST SKILL HERE		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Employers may add as many or few additional skills as they see fit based on the position.</i>	TOTAL SCORE _____ <i>(add 4-box total; average score = total/# of skills)</i>	# checked X 1 Total: _____	# checked X 2 Total: _____	# checked X 3 Total: _____	# checked X 4 Total: _____

<p style="text-align: center;">To meet work readiness skill attainment:</p> <p>(1)* employee must have an overall average score that is "proficient" (3.0) or employee must meet "proficient" standard in 80% of the total categories listed.</p> <p>(2) supervisor MUST verify that performance on job was satisfactory.</p> <p>(3) employee must not have been fired from this work experience.</p> <p><small>*Examples: If there are 10 skill categories, participant must have a minimum score of 30 (3 x 10) out of a possible 40 or be proficient in at least 8 of the 10 categories. If an employer chose 15 skills to measure, participants would need minimum score of 45 (3 X15) out of a possible 60 or be proficient in at least 12 of the 15 categories.</small></p>	<p>Employee had satisfactory work performance and has met minimum total score:</p> <p>Employer Signature: _____</p> <p>Employee Signature _____</p> <p>Date: _____ (see page 2 for comments)</p>
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Employer Review Comments/Goals:

Employer's Initials

TIPS FOR IMPLEMENTING WORK READINESS TOOL

- **FLEXIBILITY:** This work readiness tool is modifiable to best meet employer's needs. Ten foundation skills have already been listed. Employers may measure all or most of these skills and are also encouraged to add any additional workplace and career skills.
- **SAMPLE SKILLS:** Listed below are examples of potential additional skills.

Occupation/Technical Skills	Academic Skills	Leadership Skills	Business Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Occupation-specific skills -- Industry-sector skills -- Industry-wide skills -- Understanding all aspects of an industry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Written communication -- Reading and reviewing -- Mathematics and data analysis -- STEM: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics -- Basic computer skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Leadership -- Creative thinking/innovation -- Project management -- Teaching and instructing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- Customer service skills -- Telephone skills -- Planning and organizing -- Scheduling & coordinating -- Using computer applications

- **PREPARATION:** Employers should review tool with the youth on or prior to the first day of the work experience. Depending on the number of youth at a worksite and the employer's discretion, this can be done as part of an employer-led group orientation or individually with each young worker. At the conclusion, each youth should have a clear understanding of their job description and expectations, what work readiness skills they will be measured on, and how often they will be measured.
- **FREQUENCY:** It is recommended that employers conduct more than one evaluation. However, only one evaluation is required. Benefits of administering periodic assessments include the ability for employers to: offer youth constructive feedback; formally recognize positive work performances; address small issues before they become larger ones; and formally communicate youth performance with local program staff to ensure added support. An additional benefit is that local areas may be able to document the work readiness progress if a participant who has already proven to be proficient in work readiness leaves the program prior to its end.
- **FIRST EVALUATION:** The first evaluation can also be used as a helpful diagnostic and developmental tool that is maximized when delivered within the first two or three weeks. For participants experiencing challenges and have received a "1" in any category, a performance improvement plan should outline a set of goals in the comment section. In the past, some employers have had youth first assess their own performance and use any gaps in assessments to promote positive communication.
- **GRADING SCALE:** A grading scale of foundation skills has been listed on page 3 for employer convenience. To add any additional skills, employers can copy the language in the "general key" and modify as they see fit.
- **SUPPORT:** Local area program staff are available to make the evaluation process as simple and seamless as possible. Through employer orientations, worksite monitoring, and on-going communication, summer youth program staff are available to address any outstanding questions or concerns by the employer. They may also be available to assist with job descriptions, and provide additional supportive work readiness training to participants.

SUMMER EMPLOYEE EVALUATION GRADING SCALE

ATTENDANCE

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Excessive absences consistently impact work performance. Additional training is needed.	Below 90% attendance, but participant seeks out opportunities to make up missed work.	Maintains 90% attendance and notifies supervisor ahead of time prior to absence.	100% attendance or missed one day with valid reason that did not occur during first two weeks.

PUNCTUALITY

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Excessive lateness consistently impacts work performance. Additional training is needed.	Inconsistent in arriving to work, returning from breaks on time, and calling supervisor prior to lateness.	Arrives to work & returns from breaks on time with rare exception. If late, calls supervisor ahead of time.	Perfect or near perfect in arriving for work and returning from breaks on time. Model for other workers.

WORKPLACE APPEARANCE

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not yet demonstrated appropriate appearance and/or personal hygiene for position and duties.	Inconsistent in demonstrating appropriate appearance and/or personal hygiene for workplace.	Dresses appropriately and practices hygiene for position and duties with rare exception.	Consistent display of professional appearance and hygiene serves as a model for other workers.

TAKING INITIATIVE

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Reluctant to begin tasks without significant staff intervention. Needs frequent reminders. Additional training may be needed.	Inconsistently begins or remains on task. Needs occasional prompting. Often satisfied with bare minimum performance.	Begins and remains on task until completion with rare exception. Can work independently. Initiates interaction for next task.	Consistently begins/remains on task until completion, and initiates interaction for next task. Can work independently, and leads others.

QUALITY OF WORK

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not yet given best effort. Rarely evaluates work and utilizes feedback. Completes work inconsistently. Additional training may be needed.	Uneven work quality. Sometimes evaluates own work and utilizes feedback, but inconsistent in meeting quality standards.	Quality of work meets expectations. Evaluates own work, and utilizes employer feedback to improve performance.	Quality of work often exceeds expectations. Consistently gives best effort. Evaluates own work and utilizes employer feedback.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Seldom speaks clearly or listens attentively. Repeatedly uses inappropriate language for the workplace. May need additional training and support.	Inconsistent in communicating in manner and language appropriate for workplace. Inconsistent in effort to speak clearly or listen attentively.	Demonstrates positive oral and non-verbal communication with rare exception. Listens attentively and uses language appropriate for workplace.	Consistently demonstrates positive oral/non-verbal communication skills. Speaks clearly and listens attentively. Can effectively present to a group if needed.

RESPONSE TO SUPERVISION

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Reluctant to accept feedback and constructive criticism from supervisor. Responds with poor verbal or non-verbal communication. Additional training may be necessary.	Inconsistent in accepting direction, feedback, and constructive criticism from supervisor. Shows potential for improvement.	Accepts direction and constructive criticism with positive attitude with rare exception. Uses feedback to improve work performance.	Consistently accepts direction and constructive criticism with positive attitude. Uses feedback to improve work performance, and provides new and useful ideas to employer.

TEAMWORK

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not yet demonstrated appropriate group behaviors. Improvement needed in treating others with respect. Rarely contributes to group efforts. Additional training may be necessary.	Inconsistent in promoting positive group behaviors amongst coworkers, and in contributing to group efforts. Shows potential for improvement.	Works well with co-workers, is respectful, and contributes to group efforts with rare exception. Respects diversity within the workplace.	Consistently facilitates positive group dynamics. Demonstrates leadership that plays a significant role in success of group efforts. Promotes larger group unity.

PROBLEM-SOLVING/CRITICAL THINKING

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Makes little or no effort to use knowledge learned from the job to solve workplace problems.	Inconsistent in using sound reasoning to solve work problems. Shows potential for improvement.	Uses sound reasoning, and job knowledge to solve workplace problems. Shows initiative in improving skills.	Consistently applies sound reasoning to solve work problems. Identifies potential problems before they can occur.

WORKPLACE CULTURE, POLICY AND SAFETY

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Has not demonstrated understanding of workplace policies/ethics. Has not completed applicable training on workplace .	Inconsistent in demonstrating understanding of workplace culture, policies, and safety rules.	Demonstrates understanding of workplace policies. Completed safety training if applicable, and adheres to rules. Exhibits honesty and integrity.	Shows clear understanding of work policies and safety rules. Exhibits honesty and integrity. Has completed applicable safety trainings and has led coworkers.

GENERAL KEY

Perf. Improvement Plan Needed	Needs Development	Proficient	Exemplary
Is not yet demonstrating the skills required for the position and needs to have a formal plan for improving skills. May need additional training.	Inconsistent in demonstrating and developing skills for the position, but development is needed.	Demonstrates the skills required for the position with rare exception, and shows initiative in improving skills.	Consistently demonstrates skills required for the position. Often exceeds expectations and has emerged as leader that improves overall team.

This general key is adaptable for employers to copy, paste in boxes on page 1, and modify accordingly for job-specific skills.