

**WIOAP 01-17**

**DATE:** July 26, 2017  
**TO:** All WIOA Subrecipients  
**FROM:** Laurel McMahan, Program Manager  
Administrative Services Division



**SUBJECT: WIOA Youth Program Incentive Policy and Options**

On July 13, 2017, the state Workforce Development Council approved the attached WIOA Youth Program Incentive Policy and Incentive Options for immediate implementation in the state's WIOA youth program.

USDOL has determined that incentives funded through WIOA must be connected to milestones achieved through a work-based (OJT, Internship, Work Experience), education or training activity that is reflected in the participant's individualized assessment and service strategy (ISS). Achievement of milestones can include improvements marked by testing, acquisition of a credential, or other successful program outcomes.

This new policy and incentive option aligns with the Workforce Development Council's directive to focus 100 percent of WIOA Youth funding on Out-of-School Youth, as well as WIOA's Youth program outcomes - remediation of basic skills, attainment of HS/GED, gaining industry-recognized skills and credentials that will lead to in-demand, self-sustaining employment.

**Limitations on Incentives:**

WIOA regulations allow provision of incentives to youth during enrollment in the WIOA Youth program or during the youth's 12-month follow-up time period after completion of the program. Achievements completed prior to WIOA enrollment do not qualify for incentives. WIOA youth program incentives are not intended for use as emergency assistance, but rather as a tool to encourage ongoing participation and attainment of specific program goals. WIOA Youth in need of emergency assistance must be connected to an appropriate service provider.

If you have any questions about this policy and options, please contact the WIOA Grants Management Team.

## **WIOA Youth Program Incentive Policy** **Revised/Approved July 13, 2017**

**Reference:** WIOA Sec. 129; 20 CFR §681.640; 2 CFR Part 200

**History:** WDC Transmittal #1, 10-26-2016

**Purpose:** Revise Youth Program Incentives to comply with WIOA.

WIOA allows for incentive payments to be made to youth participants, provided the incentives are:

- (a) Tied to the goals of the specific program;
- (b) Outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments;
- (c) Aligned with the local program's organizational policies; and
- (d) Issued in accordance with the requirements contained in 2 CFR part 200.

WIOA-funded youth incentives must be connected to recognition of achievement of milestones in the program tied to work experience, education or training provided it is made a part of the participant's individualized assessment and service strategy. The Workforce Development Council and its statewide Youth Committee have reviewed these requirements and established the following incentive policy and accompanying incentive options for implementation beginning PY17. It should be noted that WIOA funds may not be used for incentives for recruitment and eligibility documentation.

### **Idaho WIOA Youth Program Incentive Policy:**

- 1) Requirements for Youth:
  - a) Active in WIOA Youth program *or* follow up activity; b) In collaboration with a career planner, has developed an Individual Service Strategy (ISS) delineating training and employment goals
- 2) Incentive Documentation
  - a) Description of achievement to qualify for specified incentive award is documented in case file and *IdahoWorks* management information system as part of the Individual's Service Strategy (ISS);
  - b) Supporting documentation of attainment prior to issuance of incentive award (copy of credential/test scores/grades, employer evaluations, attendance record, etc.) retained in case file
- 3) Incentive Options:
  - a) *Credential Attainment* – Attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential or secondary school diploma during WIOA Youth program participation or during the 12-month follow-up period;
  - b) *Measurable Skill Gain* – Attainment of a WIOA Youth skill gain as defined by USDOL for program reporting:
    - i) Achievement of at least one educational functioning level, if receiving instruction below postsecondary education level;
    - ii) Attainment of secondary school diploma or equivalent;
    - iii) Secondary or postsecondary transcript for sufficient number of credit hours
      - (1) **Secondary:** transcript or report card for 1 semester, or
      - (2) **Postsecondary:** at least 12 hours per semester or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 hours over 2 completed consecutive semesters
    - iv) Satisfactory progress report toward established skill-based milestone from an employer or training provider;

- v) Passage of an exam required for an occupation or progress attaining technical/occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks.
  - c) *Employment and Retention* – Attainment of fulltime employment in the youth's selected occupation/industry as reflected in the ISS; 9-month retention with the same occupation/employer.
- 4) WIOA Youth program participants may only participate in one incentive option during a program year.
- 5) Incentives during follow-up may only assist with completion towards predetermined program goals.

### **Idaho WIOA Youth Incentive Options**

- A. A progressive, job retention incentive for youth who have successfully completed WIOA Youth program activities and attained full-time employment in the individual's selected career/industry as planned in the WIOA ISS. Verification of employment and retention by the career planner are required for reimbursement.
  - a. \$100 for obtaining employment.
  - b. \$200 for retaining the same position/employer for 9 months.
- B. A \$150 skill attainment incentive that allows a youth in a work-based activity (OJT, Internship or Work Experience) who can demonstrably show a measureable skill gain verified by the employer/worksites, based upon a positive employer evaluation which enumerates the skill obtained. The evaluations are incorporated as part of the overall process to show the participant's progress, either at the mid-point of the work-based activity or at the end of the activity, based upon the participant's goal as established in each activity's Memorandum of Agreement with the worksite/employer.
- C. \$100 incentive for each GED section (a total of four) passed during participation in the WIOA Youth Program or during the 12-month follow-up period. Career planners will be allowed the flexibility to provide the GED incentive individually as each test is passed, or cumulatively once the GED is obtained.
- D. \$250 incentive for each area - literacy and numeracy - in which a basic skills deficient participant demonstrates an increase of one or more educational functioning levels based on pre- and post-test scores, utilizing any of the assessments recognized by the National Reporting System for Adult Education programs, including the TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education), Wonderlic, Casas, etc. The same assessment instrument must be used for pre- and post-tests.
- E. \$400 incentive for successful passage of an exam required for employment in a particular occupation, or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams which lead to a credential. These may include items such as a welding test or passage of the NNAAP (National Nurse Aide Assessment Program). Exams for general skills, such as a typing test, do not qualify for the incentive.

F. \$400 incentive for obtaining a recognized postsecondary credential, OR a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent. The post-secondary credential must reflect attainment of measurable technical or industry/occupational skills necessary to obtain employment or advance within an industry/occupation based on standards developed or endorsed by employers or industry associations. Certificates must recognize skills specific to the industry/occupation rather than general skills related to safety, hygiene, etc., which excludes credentials such as CPR, OSHA Health and Safety, flagging certification and other similar certifications. Listed below are examples of credentials eligible for this incentive:

- a. Secondary School diploma or recognized equivalent
- b. Associate's degree
- c. Bachelor's degree
- d. Occupational licensure
- e. Occupational certificate, including Registered Apprenticeship and Career and Technical Education educational certificates
- f. Occupational certification
- g. Other recognized certificates of industry/occupational skills completion sufficient to qualify for entry-level or advancement in employment.

Below is a list of the types of organizations and institutions that award recognized postsecondary credentials. Please note that not all credentials awarded by these entities meet the definition of recognized postsecondary credential.

- A State educational agency or a State agency responsible for administering vocational and technical education within a State;
- An institution of higher education, which includes community colleges, proprietary schools, and all other institutions of higher education that are eligible to participate in Federal student financial aid programs;
- An institution of higher education that is formally controlled, or has been formally sanctioned or chartered, by the governing body of an Indian tribe or tribes.
- A professional, industry, or employer organization or product manufacturer or developer (e.g., recognized Microsoft Information Technology certificates, such as Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP), Certified Novell Engineer, etc.) using a valid and reliable assessment of an individual's knowledge, skills and abilities;
- USDOL Federal Office of Apprenticeship;
- A public regulatory agency, which awards a credential upon an individual's fulfillment of educational, work experience or skill requirements that are legally necessary for an individual to use an occupational or professional title or to practice an occupation or profession (e.g., Federal Aviation Administration aviation mechanic's license, or a State-licensed asbestos inspector);
- A program that has been approved by the Department of Veterans Affairs to offer education benefits to veterans and other eligible persons.
- Job Corps, which issues certificates for completing career training programs that are based on industry skills standards and certification requirements.