

GRWDB Youth Requires Additional Assistance Policy

Purpose: A Youth Requires Additional Assistance Policy, required under Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I programs, was approved at the Oct. 6, 2022, board meeting of the Greater Raritan Workforce Development Board (GRWDB). This policy was updated to add a limit on the percentage of total youth program participants deemed eligible under this category and approved by the full board on April 9, 2026.

Background: Out-of-school youth who participate in WIOA Title I program youth-funded activities in the Greater Raritan Local Area must meet one or more of the barriers as described in WIOA Section 129 (a)(1)(B) and (C). According to WIOA Section 129 (a)(1)(B)(VIII) one of the barriers for an out-of-school youth is “an individual who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.”

Local workforce board may assess additional barriers for youth in their Local Area based on demographics and unique local conditions. A locally defined barrier must describe a population of youth who may benefit from WIOA Title I youth activities but would otherwise be excluded based on eligibility.

Policy: Per WIOA, Local Areas may define and establish documentation requirements to provide additional assistance to youth. Additional assistance for youth served in the Greater Raritan Local Area will be defined as youth ages 16-24, who meet one or more of the following:

- a) Has been unemployed for the last six months
- b) Has a record of not being able to hold employment due to being fired, or quitting jobs in the last three months and lacks work readiness skills
- c) Is a court-involved youth or is at risk of court involvement
- d) Has a history of drug and/or alcohol dependency (in treatment or completed treatment)
- e) Has one or more parents currently incarcerated
- f) Is involved in a gang activity, defined as a group of three or more individuals who engage in a criminal activity and identify themselves with a common name/sign
- g) Emancipated minor, as recognized by the court system
- h) Has a language or cultural barrier and may need English/workforce skills
- i) Has a diagnosed learning disability and has/had an IEP (Individual Education Plan) while in school
- j) Has a history of mental illness – any psychiatric disorder defined by the DSM V
- k) Has/is a victim of harassment, victimization and/or bullying
- l) Has a loss of access to education due to a natural disaster
- m) Is a veteran

As described in WIOA 20 CFR 681.250(c), WIOA allows a low-income exception where five (5) percent of WIOA youth may be participants who ordinarily would be required to be low-income for eligibility purposes and meet all other eligibility criteria for WIOA youth except the low-income criteria. The service provider must calculate the 5 percent based on the percent of newly enrolled youth in Greater Raritan's WIOA youth program in a given program year who would ordinarily be required to meet the low-income criteria. It is not based on all youth since many of the OSY categories do not require low-income status. Because not all OSY are required to be low-income, the five percent low-income exception under WIOA is calculated based on the five percent of youth enrolled in a given program year who would ordinarily be required to meet the low-income criteria

WIOA Section 129(a)(3)(B) states that in each local area, not more than five (5) percent of the In School Youth (ISY) enrolled in a given program year may be eligible based on the barrier for ISY who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment. The Greater Raritan youth service providers must ensure that in a given program year, no more than five (5) percent of ISY enrolled are eligible based only on the "additional assistance" criterion. The 5% Limitation ensures that ISY enrollments are limited to those with significant barriers.

Opportunities to enroll youth based on the 5% exception and limitation are extremely limited and require an accurate count of enrollments required to be low-income, or ISY who "require additional assistance" in a given program year. Career Service providers should not expect utilization of the 5% exception without documentation gathered in the in-take process and prior approval from the GRWDB.

Documentation requirements will include case notes and related supporting materials in the participant's IEP or ISS (Individual Service Strategy), outlining the Additional Assistance category and explanation of the individual's situation. This also will be documented in the individual's file in AOSOS.

Additional barriers to self-sufficient employment may be added as they are identified.