



Category/Subject: Competitive Selection of WIA Eligible Youth Providers
Colorado Policy Guidance Letter#: FIN-2000-01 (prior #00-25-Y1)
Replace: PGL 00-24-Y1
Date: October 16, 2000
Distribution: All Workforce Regions, Financial, Program and Admin Staff

I. REFERENCE(S):

Workforce Investment Act of 1998, §123; 20 CFR 664.405; 20 CFR 664.410; 20 CFR 664.610; Uniform Administrative Requirement for Grants and Cooperative Agreements to State and Local Governments at 20 CFR 97; Colorado Unified State Plan; Colorado’s Youth Policy Statement

II. PURPOSE:

To provide guidance on youth procurement, and establish a strategy to ensure compliance with federal requirements.

III. BACKGROUND:

Federal requirements. Section 123 of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) requires local boards to “identify eligible providers of youth activities by awarding grants or contracts *on a competitive basis*, based on the recommendations of the youth council and on the criteria contained in the State plan, to the providers to carry out the activities.” Local boards are also required to “...conduct oversight with respect to the providers, in the local area.”

20 CFR 664.405(a)(4) and 664.610 allows an exemption from the competitive procurement process for “design framework” services and summer employment opportunities if the grant recipient/fiscal agent is the service provider.

While the regulations do not specifically define “design framework” or “program design”, §664.405(a)(4) provides a few examples of design framework component: “such as services for intake, objective assessment and the development of individual service strategy.”

State requirements. The State Youth Council, under the auspices of the State Workforce Council, drafted “Colorado’s Youth Policy Statement for Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998”, which is attached to this Policy Guidance Letter. This policy statement was incorporated into the Colorado Unified State Plan and expands upon the federal requirements for program design by providing clarification, expectations, and concrete examples to be used in developing local youth programs. Local boards and youth councils are given the flexibility to add additional program elements to their mix of youth services, and every effort has been made to link WIA youth activities with other state initiatives, such as the Colorado Student Assessment Program (CSAP), School-to-Career, and the Colorado Workplace Competencies.

The youth policy statement outlines several expectations for the design and delivery of local youth programs that build upon federal requirements. Workforce centers are expected to provide “comprehensive access to the Internet and through the Internet have opportunities for youth to access career information and training and employment information.” Local boards are “encouraged to set up individual assessments for out-of-school youth in order to determine if they can participate in youth programs, adult programs, or both.” Local youth councils are directed to “develop a design framework that provides objective assessments of academic and occupational skill levels of participating youth, individual service strategies that reflect assessment and identify career goals, preparation for postsecondary educational opportunities, linkages between academic and occupational learning, and connections to employers and job markets.”

IV: POLICY/ACTION:

In general. Regions will adhere to state and federal requirements regarding the design of their youth programs and the competitive selection of eligible youth providers, and use the criteria in the state youth policy statement to identify eligible providers. Local regions “will use their own procurement procedures which reflect applicable state and local laws and regulations, provided that the procurements conform to applicable federal law and the standards identified in this section” (20 CFR 97.36(b)). In other words, regions may use the federal, state, or county procurement process; whichever is more restrictive, in their selection process.

Program Design Framework: The following activities will be included as part of each region’s design framework: Intake, eligibility, objective assessment, and development of individual service strategies.

Program Elements: Regions will use a competitive selection process for the ten program elements listed in WIA section 129(c)(2) to facilitate the development of new and innovative youth services. Local boards and youth councils will have the discretion to decide if the region will provide the summer youth employment element or contract it out.

Implementation. This Program Guidance Letter requires that a process to competitively select youth providers be implemented immediately. In addition each region will submit a written assurance to the Department that they have substantially implemented all WIA systems.

Each region will be monitored to ensure compliance with the competitive selection process requirement. Technical assistance is available upon request.

IV. IMPLEMENTATION DATE:

Upon receipt.

VI. INQUIRIES:

Please direct all inquiries to your Regional Liaison at Workforce Development Programs.

Elise Lowe-Vaughn, Director
Workforce Programs, Policy, and Strategic Initiatives

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Colorado Youth Policy Statement