



Montana Department of LABOR & INDUSTRY

Division: Workforce Services Division

Category: WIOA

Effective Date: 07/01/2021

Last Revised: 07/01/2025

Policy No.: 06-20

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) Policy

Background: The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) established six primary performance accountability indicators and performance reporting requirements to assess the effectiveness of states and local workforce development areas in achieving positive outcomes for individuals served by the workforce development system. This policy is specific to the Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) indicator which measures the progress of participants who are enrolled in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential, employment, or a secondary school diploma (or the equivalent).

Scope: This policy applies to all service providers required to report MSGs to Montana Department of Labor & Industry (MTDLI) as the administrative entity responsible for the operation of the WIOA Title 1B Core and Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy (AEFLA) programs. This policy is effective July 1, 2025.

Policy:

A. MSG Description

- A MSG is a measure of the documented progress made by a participant in a training or education program leading to a recognized postsecondary credential, employment, or a secondary diploma (or the equivalent).
- A MSG measures progress during education or training for each period of participation within a program year. It is different from other WIOA measures in the following important way: It is not an exit-based measure. Participants are included in the MSG performance measure if they were reported as enrolled in education or training during any point during the program year, regardless of completion status. Only participants who exited due to one of the following reasons will be excluded from the measure:
 - Incarceration in a correctional institution
 - Resident of an institution/facility providing 24-hour support (hospital, treatment center)
 - Medical treatment expected to last longer than 90 days and precludes employment or participation
 - Deceased
 - Called to active duty for at least 90 days
 - Placed out of state because of Foster Care system (youth only)
 - Ineligible

B. Participants

All participants in education or training programs, including Apprenticeship, Customized Training, or On-the-Job Training (OJT), that lead to recognized postsecondary credential, employment, or a secondary diploma (or the

39 equivalent) are included in the MSG performance indicator for the program year. This includes participants who
40 exit during the program year, in addition to those who continue to receive services.

- 41 • Participants will be included in the measure on the date their education or training program starts.
42 Since education or training programs are defined by each core program, the following participants are
43 included by core program:
 - 44 ○ Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker, National Dislocated Work Grants (DWG), and Trade
45 Adjustment Assistance (TAA) programs - all participants in education or training programs,
46 including work-based learning and training that leads to a secondary school or equivalency
47 attainment.
 - 48 ▪ WEX does not count towards the MSG indicator.
 - 49 ○ Title I Youth – All in-school youth are included in the measure. Out-of-school youth are included
50 if they are enrolled in one of the following education or training programs at any point during the
51 program year.
 - 52 ▪ Occupational skills training;
 - 53 ▪ Secondary education (or the equivalent);
 - 54 ▪ Postsecondary education;
 - 55 ▪ Title II-funded adult education concurrent with the Youth program;
 - 56 ▪ Youth Build program participation concurrent with the Youth program; or
 - 57 ▪ Job Corps program participation concurrent with the Youth program.
 - 58 ▪ As reflected in the Youth Program’s elements, on-the-job training (OJT) is considered a
59 type of Work Experience (WEX) for youth and is not considered training. Youth
60 participating in an OJT, or any type of WEX, will not be included in the MSG indicator.

61 C. Documentation of Progress

62 MSGs must be recorded as soon as possible. To be counted in the performance measure, MSGs can be
63 recorded at any point during a program year up to June 30th. Only one MSG earned by the participant is used to
64 calculate performance for the performance measure. MTDLI’s Workforce Services Division must ensure that
65 service provider staff record all MSGs achieved in a timely manner to reflect full accounting of gains reported to
66 the United States Department of Labor (USDOL), Congress, and other stakeholders.

67 Documentation requirements vary by type of MSG, and type of education or training program. Staff should
68 identify which type(s) of MSG they will record upon participant enrollment into a training program. MSG-related
69 documentation requirements are as follows:

- 70 • EFL Gain - Documentation of achievement of at least one educational functioning level of a participant
71 who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level.
 - 72 ○ Definition
 - 73 ▪ Initial educational functional level, as measured by a pre-test, compared to educational
74 functioning level, as measured by a post-test (must be a test suitable for use in the
75 National Reporting System for Adult Education).
 - 76 ▪ Participants who exit a program below the postsecondary level and enroll in
77 postsecondary education or training during the program year, an EFL gain may be
78 reported. A program below the postsecondary level applies to participants enrolled in
79 basic education.
 - 80 ○ Documentation
 - 81 ▪ Copy of enrollment record
 - 82 ▪ School records
 - 83 ▪ Transcript or report card
 - 84 ▪ Test Results
 - 85 ▪ Documentation date should match MSG attainment date
- 86 • Attainment of a Secondary School Diploma or its Equivalent - Documentation of attainment of a
87 secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent.
 - 88 ○ Definition

- Certification of passing scores on all parts of a state-recognized high school equivalency test.
 - Obtaining a diploma or state-recognized equivalent (high-school or adult secondary school).
- Documentation
 - Transcript
 - Report Card
 - Diploma
 - Documentation date should match MSG attainment date
- Secondary Transcript/Report Card or Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card Documentation of secondary or postsecondary report card or transcript for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards.
 - Definition
 - Secondary education - Transcript or report card for one semester showing achievement of the state unit's policies for academic standards.
 - Post-secondary education - at least 12 credit hours per semester (or the equivalent) or, for part-time students, a total of at least 12 credit hours over the course of two completed semesters (or equivalent) during a 12-month period showing achievement of the state unit's academic standards.
 - Documentation
 - Transcript
 - Report Card
 - Documentation date should match MSG attainment date
- Training Milestone - Satisfactory or better progress report, towards established milestones from an employer or training provider who is providing training.
 - Definition
 - Documentation varies but must identify appropriate methodologies based upon the nature of the service being provided, in advance.
 - Progress reports must document substantive skill development, such as milestone for mastery of job skills.
 - Completion of an OJT, one year of an Apprenticeship program, or similar milestones.
 - Increased pay resulting from newly acquired skills or increased performance.
 - Work-based training
 - For Adult and Dislocated Workers, a WEX is not included in work-based training; therefore, it is not included in the MSG performance indicator.
 - For Youth - OJT or WEX is considered a type of work experience and not work-based training; therefore, not included in the MSG performance indicator.
 - Documentation
 - Milestone: Documentation of a skill gained through OJT or Registered Apprenticeship, etc.
 - Milestone: Evaluation or report from employer or training provider documenting skill gain.
 - Milestone: Progress report from an employer documenting skill gain.
 - Documentation date should match MSG attainment date.
- Skill Progression - Successful passage of an exam that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.
 - Definition
 - Knowledge-based exams.
 - Passage of a component exam in Registered Apprenticeship program.
 - Employer required knowledge-based exam.
 - Industry or occupational competency assessment.
 - Completion tests necessary for obtaining a credential.
 - Passage of a test in an academic course by participants enrolled in a traditional secondary or postsecondary education program is not considered a gain for this MSG type.

- Documentation
 - Skills Progression: Results of knowledge-based exam or certification of completion.
 - Skills Progression: Documentation demonstration progress in attaining technical or occupation skills through an exam or benchmark attainment.
 - Skills Progression: Documentation from a training provider or employer.
 - Skills Progression: Copy of a credential that is required for a particular occupation and only is earned after the passage of an exam.
 - Documentation date should match MSG attainment date.

Performance Assessment:

Performance for Measurable Skill Gains is assessed quarterly and annually using results from WIOA Performance Reporting Layout, also known as the PIRL. The following policies discuss performance reporting requirements, performance negotiations, and additional performance measures:

- [Performance Measures and Reporting Policy](#)
- [Data Validation Policy and the Data Validation Attachment – Federal Required Source Documentation](#).

Monitoring and Technical Assistance:

- A formal monitoring will be conducted by the entity designated by the SWIB.
- Technical assistance will be provided by the Title I and Title II Program Managers.

References:

[TEGL 11-19 Change 2 - Guidance for Validating Jointly Required Performance Data Submitted Under WIOA](#)
[TEGL 10-16, Change 3 - Performance Accountability Guidance](#)
[TEGL 7-18 - Guidance for Validating Jointly Required Performance Data Submitted Under WIOA](#)
[TEGL 23-19, Change 2 - Guidance for Validating Required Performance Data Submitted by Grant Recipients](#)
[34 CFR 463.155 \(v\) WIOA Primary Indicators of Performance](#)