NEWDB Memo 03-2020 Provision of Basic Skills Assessments

**Date:** April 3, 2020

**To:** Odle Management Group

**From:** NEWDB

**Subject:** Provision of Basic Skills Assessments

# Purpose:

This memo provides clarification on how to conduct Basic Skills assessments, as a required element of the Objective Assessment.

# Current Policy:

## NEWDB’s Assessment-ISS policy, section V identifies the following:

1. **Objective Assessment**

An objective assessment is pre-enrollment activity required to be provided to each Title I youth per section 129 (c)(1)(A) of WIOA. The assessment must include a review of the youth’s academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of the individual, which includes a review of basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes, supportive service needs, and developmental needs. The assessment must also consider the youth’s strengths, motivations, assets, and unique personality rather than just focusing on areas that need improvement. The purpose of the objective assessment is to identifying appropriate services and career pathways that are supported by the assessment and appropriate for the individual youth participant and all information must be incorporated into the youth’s individual service strategy (ISS).

NEWDB utilizes basic skills assessment instruments that are valid and appropriate for the target population, providing reasonable accommodation in the assessment process, if necessary, for individuals with disabilities. Any formalized testing used must be appropriate, fair, cost effective, well-matched to the test administrator’s qualifications, and be easy to administer and interpret results. Skills related gains may be determined through less formal alternative assessment techniques such as observation, interviews, and evaluations. Previous basic skills assessments that have been conducted within the past six months may be used if available. This may include assessments completed by a secondary school, Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Basic and Literacy Education, or other education or training providers.

Note: For purposes of the basic skills assessment portion of the objective assessment, programs are not required to use assessments approved for use in the Department of Education’s National Reporting System (NRS), nor are they required to determine an individual’s grade level equivalent or educational functional level (EFL), although use of these tools is permitted.

1. Assessments utilized by the Service Provider must reflect all elements included in this policy. A sample of assessments utilized may include, but are not limited to the following:

* Career Exploration through the O\*Net Interest Profiler via [www.mynextmove.org](http://www.mynextmove.org) or through OK Career Guide at [www.okcareerguide.org](http://www.okcareerguide.org) . The OK Career Guide assessments are especially helpful for participants who are unsure of their career interests, or who have career interests that do not lead to a self-sufficient wage.
* Participant Budget Form
* Supportive Service Needs Checklist
* Interview

# Clarification of Identified Policy reference:

If it is identified that a participant is not basic skills deficient as determined through items such as:

* The participant having a High School Diploma,
* The participant self-attesting to not being basic skills deficient, and
* The participant identifies through interview and their ISS they are not basic skills deficient;

then it is not necessary to conduct an NRS Approved assessment as part of their initial Objective Assessment. In this case, Case Managers would need to ensure that it is clearly documented in the program notes the method used for determining the participant was not basic skills deficient at enrollment. A sample program note might look like:

* Assessments: Participant completed Career Exploration through OK Career Guide, a personal budget, and a supportive service needs inventory. Participant identified that they were not basic skills deficient through their interview and self-attestation; this is further confirmed by their having a High School Diploma. Participant also requested no assistance with basic reading or math skills while developing their ISS.

Case Managers still need to conduct preliminary NRS Approved assessments for Youth participants who indicate directly, or through other observations that they may be basic skills deficient; such as for clients:

* who do not have a HS Diploma at enrollment,
* who identify in their self-attestations to needing assistance with reading or math,
* or who appear to struggle with completing reading or math portions of assessments
* (**Note:** this list is not all-inclusive).

For clients whom preliminary TABE assessments are required, their EFL Pre-Assessment would need to be completed within 10-business days of their enrollment, as identified in the Assessment-ISS policy.

In summary, a NRS Approved Assessment (such as TABE) is not required for all youth enrollments; and the need for such an assessment is dependent on a participants expressed or observed need.

No individual in the United States may, on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, [disability,](https://www.law.cornell.edu/definitions/index.php?width=840&amp;height=800&amp;iframe=true&amp;def_id=5814e48524e23b3549a88bcae9486b1d&amp;term_occur=1&amp;term_src=Title%3A29%3ASubtitle%3AA%3APart%3A38%3ASubpart%3AA%3A38.5) or political affiliation or belief, or, for beneficiaries, applicants, and participants only, on the basis of citizenship or participation in any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity, be excluded from participation in, denied the benefits of, subjected to discrimination under, or denied employment in the administration of or in connection with any WIOA Title I-financially assisted program or activity