



**NEW YORK CITY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT**  
**SERVING NEW YORK CITY YOUTH, FAMILIES, AND COMMUNITIES**

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**JEANNE B. MULLGRAV**  
Commissioner

July 15, 2005

Dear Community Member:

In advance of the release of a Request for Proposals (RFP) for federally-funded youth workforce development programs, the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) has developed a Concept Paper that presents the agency's approach to this important field. Programs funded under this RFP will meet or exceed the standards established by the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA). We invite your review and comment.

Over the past several months, DYCD has conducted focus groups and consulted with a range of providers, as well as advocates and experts, to elicit input on best practices in the field of youth workforce development. DYCD has attempted to capture much of that feedback in the WIA Concept Paper. Constructive feedback will continue to be an essential feature of this planning process as we develop and finalize the upcoming Youth Workforce Development RFP. I thank you for your careful consideration of the Concept Paper, and look forward to your reactions.

If you have comments, please send them, in writing, to the attention of:

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Please note that we are only able to consider written comments received no later than Monday, August 8, 2005 by 5:00 p.m.

The WIA Concept Paper will be posted on our website [www.nyc.gov/dycd](http://www.nyc.gov/dycd). I urge you to distribute this Concept Paper to all who are interested in youth workforce development services, and to share with us your best thoughts regarding this critically important solicitation.

Sincerely,

Jeanne B. Mullgrav

Enclosure

# The Department of Youth and Community Development Youth Workforce Development Programs

Concept Paper – July 15, 2005

## BACKGROUND

New York City's long-term economic health depends on having an educated and skilled workforce able to meet the demands of an ever-changing marketplace in a global economy. Youth entering the labor market today confront enormous challenges. For many, a middle class lifestyle cannot be achieved or maintained without a high school diploma or college degree. Even entry-level jobs with career advancement potential are often reserved for those who have not only completed high school, but who have also acquired post-secondary educational or vocational credentials. Moreover, young people increasingly face competition from adults for entry-level jobs. It is essential, therefore, to encourage and support young people to stay in school and obtain the skills that will make them attractive to employers.

Unfortunately, experts, policy makers, and practitioners agree that a significant number of New York City youth face uncertain futures because they are not adequately prepared to enter the workforce. The Community Service Society recently reported that over 160,000 youth between the ages of 16 and 24 are not in school, not working, and not looking for work.<sup>1</sup> Among youth still in school, many are over-aged, under-credited, and at risk of dropping out. According to the Department of Education, between 20,000 and 30,000 students drop out of school each year.<sup>2</sup> How can such disconnected or at-risk youth acquire the skills and experience demanded by employers?

## DYCD'S ROLE AND AN EMERGING CONSENSUS

In July 2003 the Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) assumed management of the New York City youth workforce development programs funded and regulated under the federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and intended to serve low-income youth who belong to an at-risk group.<sup>3</sup> Thereafter, in fall 2004, DYCD hosted the "Life Skills, Work Skills: Youth Development to Workforce Development" conference, at which advocates, providers, and public agencies considered issues relating to the significant number of disconnected and at-risk youth in New York City.

There is an emerging consensus that young people need educational attainment, successful work experiences, and an understanding of employment that includes not only occupations and individual employers, but industry sectors as well. To help youth achieve these goals, DYCD is preparing to release a request for proposals (RFP) for its WIA-funded programs through which it will select and fund programs for in-school and out-of-school youth that incorporate the following characteristics.

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<sup>1</sup> Mark Levitan, "Out of School, Out of Work... Out of Luck? New York City's Disconnected Youth," Community Service Society of New York, January 2005.

<sup>2</sup> The New York City Department of Education, Division of Assessment and Accountability, "The Class of 2004 Four-Year Longitudinal Report and 2003-2004 Event Dropout Rates," February 2005.

<sup>3</sup> The definition of "low income" is provided in WIA Section 101 (25). WIA at-risk individuals include anyone who is: a) basic skills deficient; b) a school dropout; c) a homeless, runaway or foster child; d) pregnant or parenting; e) an offender; or f) who requires additional assistance (including persons with disabilities) in order to complete an educational program or secure employment.

School to Career – Programs should help young people make the connection between education and a successful career and encourage them to remain in school and graduate, or, if they have dropped out of school, to obtain a general education diploma (GED). All youth should be encouraged to pursue post-secondary education or training. Making the connection between education and employment requires understanding the needs of employers. Employer input must inform the design and vocational training content of programs. Employers should also be enlisted to expose youth to employment opportunities through activities such as job shadowing and internships. By thus involving the employers, programs will create an iterative learning environment in which academic and employment skills are interwoven.

Targeted Employment Opportunities – Programs should identify and engage employment sectors that offer strong opportunities, namely, high-growth sectors with a variety of entry-level positions and the potential for career progression. Based on economic forecasting and labor market analysis, DYCD is targeting the health, retail, construction, and hospitality sectors, although it also recognizes that employment niches in local communities may offer similarly strong opportunities.

Youth Development – Program designs should reflect recognized youth development principles that emphasize the cognitive, social, and behavioral competencies that help youth succeed as adults. Effective programs adopt an asset-based approach, in which services are personalized and focus on developing the individual strengths and interests of each youth. In keeping with these principles, programs must also promote positive relationships among adult staff and youth participants, and provide the support and follow-up services needed to address the range of individual challenges participants confront.

Comprehensive Services – DYCD has observed that the most successful current programs provide comprehensive services supported by resources in addition to contract funds. Therefore, DYCD is asking proposers to provide additional cash contributions to enhance available WIA funds.

Building on these common features, unique aspects of workforce development programs for in-school youth and out-of-school youth are outlined in the sections below.

## **IN-SCHOOL YOUTH (ISY) PROGRAMS**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of ISY programs, which operate year-round, is to ensure that participants are on track to attain a high school diploma, aware of career and higher education opportunities, and prepared to enter the workforce. ISY school-year activities should promote educational skill attainment, work-readiness, and developmental competencies. Contextualized learning approaches should connect basic skills achievement with employment and post-secondary educational goals, and each youth should be guided to meet personal objectives. Summer activities must include employment opportunities that build on school-year experiences. As stated above, ISY providers will be expected to demonstrate linkages with employers in one or more of the four target sectors or in sectors that are otherwise appropriate for the youth participants.

### **Program Areas**

Educational Services – Activities should support and enhance basic math, reading, writing, and oral English skills, and encourage regular school attendance. While sharing the same objectives as school-day activities, these services should augment rather than replicate school-day instruction and utilize different learning strategies.

The use of contextual materials that address the requirements of specific jobs or industries will be expected. Activities may include tutoring and homework assistance, reading clubs, and computer-assisted and project-based learning.

Life Skills and Leadership Development – Activities should motivate participants, engage their talents and interests, and build self-esteem and confidence. Community service, physical recreation, creative arts, and cultural activities may be used to promote teamwork, leadership, decision-making, citizenship, financial literacy, good parenting, and other social competencies. Innovative instructional methods, such as portfolio development, peer mentoring, and peer tutoring will be encouraged.

Career and Higher Education Awareness/Workplace Experience – Activities should expose participants to opportunities in the workplace and in post-secondary education and provide participants with relevant workplace experiences.

School-year activities should complement educational services and life skills/leadership development activities. Work-related experiences, such as paid or unpaid internship placements, job shadowing and mentoring, should be provided. The message that post-secondary education is a practical, attainable goal should be conveyed through college application and financial aid workshops, college tours, and speakers. Similar strategies may focus on vocational training opportunities.

Summer activities should include paid employment opportunities for all participants.<sup>4</sup> Summer job placements should correspond to each participant's interests and school-year activities (for example, placements may build on academic-year internships). For youth who will graduate from high school as they complete the ISY program, placements should afford the opportunity to continue employment following graduation.

### **Required Program Elements**

Recruitment and Enrollment – ISY providers must actively recruit eligible youth for program participation. As part of enrollment, providers must assess each participant to determine academic, work-readiness, and personal skills. Based on this assessment and participant input, providers should develop an individualized service strategy for each participant that identifies both short-term and long-term goals.

Program Retention – ISY activities must engage youth and motivate them to remain in the program until successful completion. Providers may offer modest monetary incentives, including weekly stipends, transportation allowances, or achievement awards. Non-monetary incentives, such as tickets to special events, merchandise, or gift certificates from local merchants, may also be provided.

School and Employer Linkages – ISY providers must enter into written agreements with schools to demonstrate the support of a school principal and access to participants' teachers, student data, and school programs and facilities. Additional linkages may further enhance educational services, for example, providers may link with community colleges or other educational or cultural institutions such as museums and libraries.

As described above, providers should also establish linkages with employers or employer associations that can provide meaningful exposure to the workplace. These linkages should be to one of the four target employment sectors, or other sectors with appropriate opportunities for youth.

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<sup>4</sup> Summer employment, for a minimum of 7 weeks and 204 hours of work, must be offered to each participant. Placement of ISY youth in DYCD's Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) would meet this requirement. However, ISY participants may opt to continue educational services as an alternative to summer employment.

Support Services – Comprehensive supports are essential to ensure that youth achieve ISY program goals. Through a case management approach, guidance and counseling services should be made available to all participants based on individual needs and assessment. Support services may include assistance with health, housing, child care, and legal needs, either directly or through referrals to other organizations. Other support services may include assistance with transportation, proper work attire and work tools, substance abuse counseling, and support groups. Peer support groups and mentoring relationships that offer individualized support for participants are also encouraged. All referrals to services, whether provided on-site or by an outside agency, must be tracked by the provider.

Follow-Up Services – Programs must provide participants with at least 12 months of follow-up support after program exit. This follow-up support will identify and address problems with educational or employment placements and help participants maintain the outcomes they have achieved. Approximately 10 percent of annual contract amounts may be dedicated to such follow-up services, which should consist of at least quarterly contact with participants, their families, and teachers.

### **Program Parameters**

Funding and Contract and Program Duration – The allocation of funds for WIA programs depends upon WIA reauthorization and federal budget deliberations. Nevertheless, DYCD expects to let multi-year contracts beginning July 1, 2006. The programs will operate year-round, with each participant receiving up to 24 months of direct services and 12 months of follow-up. The majority of participants will be enrolled in the first 2 months of the school year.

Target Population – The target population is low-income youth between the ages of 14 and 18 who are attending school **and** who fall into one of the at-risk groups defined by WIA (see footnote 3, above).

Program Sites – Programs may be located in schools or other facilities; however, programs that are not located in schools must demonstrate strong linkages to schools, as described above (see page 3).

Contractor Qualifications – For-profit and not-for-profit organizations are eligible for contract award.

Staff Qualifications – Either the program director or the educational coordinator must have a master's degree in education **or** a teaching certificate and experience in reading or math instruction.

Per Participant Cost Ranges and Required Match – The recommended per-participant cost ranges from \$2,325 to \$3,325. Higher per-participant rates will be considered based on the proposer's justification. Proposers will be required to offer a cash match equal to 15 percent of the amount requested from DYCD. This match may include state or federal funds, but may not include other City funds. Proposals that offer a cash match in excess of 15 percent are encouraged.

### **Performance Measures and Contract Payment Tied to Performance**

Payment Structure – It is anticipated that the payment structure of the ISY contracts will be based on a combination of 70 percent line-item reimbursement and 30 percent performance outcome measures.

It is also anticipated that performance-based payments will be tied to each participant's attainment of the following four milestones. The percentage of participants that must achieve each milestone will be detailed in the RFP.

- Advancement by at least one grade level in reading or math;
- Remaining in school until graduation;

- Attainment of a high school diploma in the third quarter after exit; and
- Engagement in employment or post-secondary education in the first quarter after exit.

WIA Measures – DYCD may adjust the performance outcome measures to reflect any changes required by WIA regulations. Currently, for ISY participants aged 14 to 18, these regulations require reporting on three measures: diploma/GED attainment rate, retention rate, and skills attainment rate change. (See Attachment A.) It is anticipated that these measures will remain in place for the first year of the contracts, starting July 1, 2006.

Contingent upon WIA reauthorization, the U.S. Department of Labor expects to replace the current WIA measures with three new “Common Measures,” two of which apply to in-school youth: placement in employment or education and attainment of a degree or certificate. (See Attachment A.) DYCD will require that contractors monitor participant performance according to the current performance measures and will base contract payments on those current measures. Contractors will also be required to collect performance data according to the new common measures, but initially DYCD will not base contract payments on them.

## **OSY PROGRAMS**

### **Purpose**

The purpose of OSY workforce development programs is to provide out-of-school youth with the skills necessary to build a successful career.<sup>5</sup> DYCD encourages a holistic approach that sets high expectations and integrates both educational and employment services to promote employability and encourage career exploration. Research has shown that there is a direct relationship between educational attainment and earnings, where average annual earnings grow from \$18,900 for high school dropouts to \$25,900 for high school graduates and to \$45,400 for college graduates.<sup>6</sup> Therefore, DYCD is seeking OSY programs that reflect the importance of education in developing a successful career over the long term.

Academics and skills-building should be offered along with paid and unpaid work experiences, allowing youth to make the connection between basic skills achievement and career growth. Recognizing the “stop and start” nature of initial employment experiences, job placements and work-related experiences should be used as an opportunity for experiential learning. As participants gain experience, their goals for skills attainment and education credentials may shift. Flexible, individualized services should improve program retention and outcome achievement. Providers will be expected to work with participants to develop individual career plans that reflect long-term goals, including post-secondary education.

Providers will be required to demonstrate strong employer linkages to ensure that services and training directly reflect the needs of employers and lead to job opportunities for youth. While DYCD encourages relations with employers in one of the four target employment sectors identified above, linkages with employers in other sectors or niches that offer entry-level opportunities and career pathways for out-of-school youth will also be considered.

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<sup>5</sup> The term out-of-school youth means: a) an eligible youth who is a school dropout; or b) an eligible youth who has received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed.

<sup>6</sup> Jennifer Cheeseman Day and Eric B. Newburger, “The Big Payoff: Educational Attainment and Synthetic Estimates of Work-Life Earnings,” U.S. Census Bureau, July 2002.

## **Program Areas**

There are two main OSY program areas: educational services and employment services. Under the integrated services model, these two components should be complementary, and participants should be able to actively engage in the full range of services. DYCD recognizes that while some providers may implement both components equally well, others may focus on only one. DYCD encourages partnerships among providers who can offer complementary education and employment services. Proposers who intend to partner with other entities should submit either a subcontract proposal or a detailed plan to demonstrate how staff and resources from two or more organizations will be coordinated.

Educational Services – Activities should enhance participants’ basic educational skills in literacy and math, help participants achieve a high school diploma or GED, and encourage participants to pursue post-secondary education. Since most youth seek out OSY programs in search of a job, educational opportunities must be intertwined with employment services and flexible enough to enable youth to participate while working, for example through evening classes. The educational component would consist of tutoring, study skills training, and alternative learning methods, such as project-based and computer-assisted learning.

To the extent possible, employer partnerships should inform educational offerings, to ensure employer priorities are being met. In addition, woven throughout the program should be the message that college is an achievable goal. This message should be underscored by program offerings, which could include college application and financial aid workshops, college tours, and speakers.

Employment Services – Activities should provide job-readiness and employment training, opportunities for practical experience and experiential learning such as internships or job shadowing, and career development. To the extent possible, participants’ experience in the workplace should help them understand the connection between further education and long-term career advancement. Providers should have linkages to employers and provide technical or occupational training in the areas that are relevant to those employers. In addition, the technical or occupational skills attained must conform to standards developed or endorsed by employers, and must result in the attainment of a recognized degree or certificate.

## **Required Program Elements**

Recruitment and Enrollment – Providers will actively recruit eligible youth for program participation. As part of enrollment, providers will assess each participant to determine academic, work-readiness, and personal skills. Based on this assessment, providers will develop an individualized service strategy for each participant that identifies both short-term and long-term goals.

Program Retention – Activities should engage youth and motivate them to remain in the program until successful completion. Additionally, the contractor may offer modest monetary incentives, including weekly stipends, transportation allowances, or achievement awards, which would be budgeted into the program. Non-monetary incentives, such as tickets to special events, merchandise, or gift certificates from local merchants, may also be provided.

Employer and Education Linkages – Providers will be expected to demonstrate strong employer linkages through either a letter of support or a written agreement specifying the contributions the employer is willing to make to the program. Employers should be involved in several aspects of OSY programs. For example, employers may provide input into both educational and skills training curricula, participate in program activities such as mentoring, job shadowing, and mock interviews, and provide participants with access to the workplace through internships or job placements. In turn, the provider will commit to

extensive follow-up services, including regular communication with employers who have hired program participants.

Providers are also encouraged to establish linkages with post-secondary educational institutions, such as community colleges, to augment their educational services.

Support Services – The integrated services model for OSY requires strong case management and comprehensive guidance and counseling. Support services should address areas such as health, housing, child care, and legal services. These services may be provided directly or through referrals to other organizations; however, support services are best delivered on-site whenever possible. Other support services may include assistance with transportation, proper work attire and work tools, substance abuse counseling, and support groups. Mentoring relationships should also offer individualized support for youth participants. All referrals to services, whether provided on-site or by an outside agency, must be tracked by the provider.

Follow-Up Services – Programs must provide participants with at least 12 months of follow-up support after program exit. Follow-up services should be rich enough to provide ongoing support in educational and employment placements. Providers will serve as a resource to identify and address issues that arise for participants, employers, and educators in those placement settings. In addition, providers will be expected to assist with promotions and additional job placements as needed, help youth realize their educational goals, and counsel youth in long-term education and career planning. Providers will be required to report on the follow-up services that participants receive and their results.

### **Program Parameters**

Funding and Contract and Program Duration – The allocation of funds for WIA programs depends upon WIA reauthorization and federal budget deliberations. Nevertheless, DYCD expects to let multi-year contracts beginning July 1, 2006. The programs will operate year-round, with each participant receiving up to 12 months of direct services and 12 months of follow-up. Services should be offered during the daytime, as well as in the evenings and on weekends, to accommodate participants' employment and/or internship placements.

Target Population – The target population for OSY programs is low-income youth between the ages of 16 and 21 who are not attending school **and** who fall into one of the at-risk groups defined by WIA (see footnote 3, above).

Contractor Qualifications – For-profit and not-for-profit organizations are eligible for contract award.

Staff Qualifications – Each provider must retain, employ, or subcontract for at least the following:

- A staff member with a four-year degree and educational credentials;
- A job developer with a four-year degree and substantial experience; and
- A staff member who is either a certified social worker or holds a master's degree in social work.

Per Participant Cost Ranges and Required Match – The recommended per-participant cost ranges from \$5,000 to \$9,000. Higher per-participant rates will be considered based on the proposer's justification. Proposers will be required to offer a cash match equal to 15 percent of the funding requested from DYCD. This match may include state or federal funds, but may not include other City funds. Proposals that offer a cash match in excess of 15 percent are encouraged.

## **Performance Measures and Contract Payment Tied to Performance**

Payment Structure – It is anticipated that the payment structure of the OSY contracts will be based on a combination of 85 percent line-item reimbursement and 15 percent performance outcome measures.

It is also anticipated that performance-based payments will be tied to each participant's attainment of the following three milestones, each of which is worth 5 percent of the total performance-based payments.

- Placement in employment or the military or enrolled in post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after exit;
- Remaining in placement through the end of the third quarter after exit; and
- Advancement by one educational functioning level in either reading or math.

WIA Measures – DYCD may adjust the performance outcome measures to reflect any changes required by WIA regulations. Currently, for participants aged 16 to 18, these regulations require reporting on three measures: diploma/GED attainment rate, retention rate, and skills attainment rate change. For participants aged 19 to 21, current WIA regulations require reporting on four measures: entered employment rate, employment retention rate, earnings change/replacement, and credential attainment. (See Attachment A.) It is anticipated that these measures will remain in place for the first year of the contracts, starting July 1, 2006.

Contingent upon WIA reauthorization, the U.S. Department of Labor expects to replace the current WIA measures with three new "Common Measures" that will apply to all OSY youth aged 16 to 21: placement in employment or education, attainment of a degree or certificate, and literacy and numeracy gains. (See Attachment A.) DYCD will require that contractors monitor participant performance according to the current performance measures and will base contract payments on those current measures. Contractors will also be required to collect performance data according to the new common measures, but initially DYCD will not base contract payments on them.

## **CONCLUSION**

This paper outlines DYCD's initial conception of the ISY and OSY workforce development programs to be selected through the forthcoming DYCD Youth Workforce Development RFP. DYCD invites public comment on this document.

Please provide written comments to DYCD at the following address no later than August 8, 2005.

Kara Hamilton  
DYCD  
156 William Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor  
New York, New York 10038

Submissions may also be emailed to: [wiacp@dycd.nyc.gov](mailto:wiacp@dycd.nyc.gov).

**Attachment A**  
**WIA Performance Measures**

*Current Measures for older OSY, aged 19-21 years:*

1. **Entered Employment Rate** – For the older OSY youth who were not employed at registration, the number who are employed in the first quarter after exit. (Participants who are enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training after exit are excluded from this measure.)
2. **Employment Retention Rate** – For older OSY youth who are employed in the first quarter after exit, the number who are employed in the third quarter after exit. (Participants who are enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training after exit are excluded from this measure.)
3. **Earnings Change/Replacement** – For older OSY youth who are employed in the first quarter after exit, earnings in the second and third quarters after exit, minus earnings in the second and third quarters prior to registration. (Participants who are enrolled in post-secondary education or advanced training after exit are excluded from this measure.)
4. **Credential Attainment** – For all older OSY youth, the number who are either employed, in post-secondary education or in advanced training in the first quarter after exit, and who receive a credential by the end of the third quarter after exit.

*Current Measures for younger ISY, aged 14-18 years:*

5. **Diploma/GED Attainment Rate** – For younger ISY youth who register without a diploma or GED, the number who attain a diploma or GED by the end of the first quarter after exit. (Participants who are in secondary school at exit are excluded from this measure.)
6. **Retention Rate** – For all younger ISY youth, the number of youth who are engaged in one of the following five retention activities in the third quarter after exit: post-secondary education, advanced training, employment, military service, and qualified apprenticeships. (Participants who are in secondary school at exit are excluded from this measure.)
7. **Skill Attainment Rate Change** – For all younger ISY youth, the number of skills goals attained by the number of skills goals set. Three types of skill goals apply: basic skills, work readiness skills, and occupational skills.

*Pending Common Measures, applicable to both older and younger youth:*

1. **Placement in Employment or Education** – *Of those who are not in post-secondary education, employment, or the military at the date of participation:*  
The number of participants who are in employment or the military or enrolled in post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first quarter after the exit quarter divided by the number of youth participants who exit during the quarter. (Participants who are in secondary school at exit are included in this measure.)
2. **Attainment of a Degree or Certificate** – *Of those enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program):*  
The number of participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the third quarter after exit divided by the number of youth participants who exited. (Participants who are in secondary school at exit are included in this measure.)
3. **Literacy and Numeracy Gains** – *Of those out-of-school youth who are basic skills deficient (at or below the eighth grade level in math or English):*  
The number of participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels (in any area), divided by the number of participants who have completed a year in the program plus the number of participants who exit before completing a year in the

program. (Participants who are not basic skills deficient are excluded from this measure. Participants who are in secondary school are excluded from this measure.)