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**Type:** Program Policy

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**Status:** Final

**Supersedes:** PacMtn Policy #3.2.1

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## **Purpose**

This policy provides guidance on providing youth program candidates and participants with proper assessment of skills and abilities. Appropriate assessments can assist youth in clarifying service needs, identify career goals, and equip staff to establish an effective Individual Service Strategy.

It outlines the requirements and guidelines to be followed when using the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) to determine Basic Skills Deficiency (BSD) for program enrollment in WIOA Title I programs.

This policy defines the allowable assessments, reporting requirements, training for test administrators, and accommodation requirements for assessing customers with disabilities.

It also clarifies which documents can be retained in a participant file.

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## **Policy**

PacMtn requires all contractors of youth programs to develop and implement a standardized system for administering and interpreting objective assessments to inform the development of individualized Individual Service Strategies (ISS) for participants, in compliance with WIOA Sec. 129(c)(1)(A), TEGL 21-16, and WSS Policy 1019-12 (Effective 7/9/2025).

## **Assessment Standards**

PacMtn has approved the Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment Systems (CASAS) as the only standardized tool to determine Basic Skills Deficiency (BSD) for program enrollment purposes. CASAS must be used to assess BSD for the following:

i. WIOA Out-of-School Youth (OSY):

- Participants who have a high school diploma or equivalent, are low income, and are basic skills deficient or classified as English Language Learners (ELLs).

ii. WIOA In-School Youth (ISY):

- Participants who are basic skills deficient, regardless of other eligibility factors.

iii. WIOA Adult Program (Priority of Service Categories 1 & 2):

- Category 1: Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who are low income, recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.
- Category 2: Individuals (non-covered persons) who are low income, recipients of public assistance, or basic skills deficient.

## Compliance & Documentation

- All assessment results must be documented in the Management Information System (MIS) and incorporated into the participant's case file and ISS.
- Assessment tools and results must be interpreted in a culturally responsive and equitable manner.
- Youth contractors must ensure that assessments are conducted prior to enrollment and updated as needed during follow-up services, without extending participation.

This policy ensures alignment with WIOA Title I-B regulations, state assessment policy, and federal guidance, supporting accurate eligibility determination and effective service planning.

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## Policy Guidelines

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PacMtn requires all contractors of youth programs to develop and implement a system for providing and interpreting objective assessment results to build strong, individualized Individual Service Strategy (ISS) plans for participants.

In alignment with the State Policy, PacMtn has approved the CASAS tests as the only standard tools to determine Basic Skills Deficiency (BSD) used for program enrollment of:

- i. WIOA Out-of-School-Youth (OSY) who have a high school diploma or its equivalent, are low income and Basic Skills Deficient or an English Language Learner
- ii. WIOA In-School Youth (ISY) who are Basic Skills Deficient
- iii. WIOA Adult Priority of Service categories 1 & 2 (*priority must be implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area*):
  1. Covered persons (veterans and eligible spouses) who are low income, recipients of public assistance, *or* basic skills deficient
  2. Individuals (non-covered persons) who are low-income, recipients of public assistance, *or* basic skills deficient

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## Policy Guidelines

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Youth program staff will utilize PacMtn approved assessments to clarify participant need, career goals, and skill gaps that can be addressed with program services through the WIOA 14 Required Elements.

Approved assessments are in accordance with the current legislative regulations for youth assessment and eligibility.

CASAS is a test to measure basic academic skills, but it does not measure vocational skills, nor does it measure advanced technical skills. Other tests are appropriate for such purposes, and this policy does not limit the appropriate use of other such assessments for those purposes.

### **Assessments Permitted**

- i. The following CASAS assessments may be used in Washington effective July 1, 2019. The National Reporting System (NRS) determines tests suitable for use and the period for which that use is approved.
  1. CASAS Reading Goals (replaces Life and Work Reading (forms 81-188)
  2. Life and Work Listening (forms 981-986)
  3. CASAS Math Goals (replaces Life Skills Math (forms 31-38)
  4. CASAS Appraisal (form 900)
  
- ii. These assessments meet the NRS requirements and:
  1. Are appropriate for measuring literacy and language development of adult students/job seekers,
  2. Have standardized administration and scoring procedures,
  3. Have alternate, equivalent forms for pre- and post-testing, and
  4. Have evidence linking them to the NRS Educational Functioning Levels.

Using the CASAS testing system, PacMtn contractors will also establish BSD prior to program enrollment. Contractors will complete the process for all applicable staff to be certified to administer the CASAS testing system. Contractors will provide during applicable program monitoring, verification of staff certifications completed.

Completing assessments to determine eligibility is not considered a service in youth programs and is an allowable activity prior to program enrollment. CASAS test results are valid as proof of eligibility for six months from the test date. CASAS tests administered by certified testing sites not related to WIOA can be accepted as documentation, given the test is still valid, was administered appropriately and is on the correct forms.

### **Appraisal Test**

The CASAS Appraisal Form is not a federally approved form to determine basic skills deficiency.

- i. The appraisal test must be given first (prior to the pre-test) to determine the appropriate level and form of the pre-test to be used.
- ii. The CASAS appraisal test cannot be used in lieu of the CASAS pre-test to determine BSD.

- iii. Note: If using the Locator (e-test), the appraisal and pre-test are combined into one computer-adaptive test.

### **Pre-test**

- i. Pre-tests determine BSD and Educational Functioning Level (EFL). ii. The proper pre-test form is indicated by the appraisal test results.
- iii. Basic Skills Deficient is denoted by a CASAS score of 238 or below in reading and 235 or below in math.

All test forms and assessment tools must comply with federal guidelines and standards and must be approved through PacMtn Youth Services staff. Staff must not upload into the case management system or retain in hard files any CASAS document(s) that contain test questions or other sensitive testing information. (See the CASAS test security policy at <https://www.casas.org>)

*Any discrepancies arising between PacMtn policy and or procedures with federal and state provisions due to current or future revisions will default to the current minimum federal and state regulations and guidance available. PacMtn policy and or procedures may set forth stricter requirements than provided by federal and state guidance, but in no case will PacMtn policy and or procedures not meet minimum federal and state policy.*

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### **Definitions**

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### **References**

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014

WIOA Final Rule; 20 CFR Parts 676,677, and 678; Federal Register, Vol. 81, No. 161, August 19, 2016

WIOA Final Rule; 20 CFR Parts 603, 651, 652, et al; Federal Register, Vol. 81, No. 161, August 19, 2016

WorkSource System Policy 1019 (Rev12) – Eligibility Policy and Handbook

WorkSource System Policy 1011 (Rev6) - CASAS for Basic Skills Assessment

WIOA Title I Policy 5602 (Rev5) – Supportive Services & NRPs

WIOA Title I Policy 5620 (Rev1) – Follow-Up Services

Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 23-14 and 08-15

PacMtn Procedure #3.2.1-P, Youth Assessment

Compliance with the state’s eligibility policy will be based on the version of the handbook in effect at the time of the action or activity that may be at issue.

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