



Date of Issue:

Office of Issue:

Reference: DCF

AWI Communiqué

DATE: April 12, 2010
TO: Regional Workforce Boards
FROM: Lois A. Scott, Program Manager, One-Stop and Program Support
SUBJECT: Using the *Learning Needs Screening Tool* in the Welfare Transition Program

PURPOSE:

To introduce the *Learning Needs Screening Tool* as an assessment tool that can be used to screen Welfare Transition (WT) program participants for hidden disabilities.

BACKGROUND:

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Office for Civil Rights, reviewed Florida's Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program for compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act. The review was designed to ensure Welfare Transition (WT) participants, including individuals with limitations and disabilities, are offered the opportunity to participate in meaningful activities. Upon completion of the review, HHS recommended that the Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) issue a communiqué to introduce the Learning Needs Screening Tool as an option for a hidden disabilities indicator.

The *Learning Needs Screening Tool* is designed to help WT program staff quickly identify those participants who may need additional assistance or specialized services to be successful. The *Learning Needs Screening Tool* was created by Payne & Associates through an intensive research project for the State of Washington, Division of Employment and Social Services. This tool was validated and has been suggested as a best practice by HHS.

The screening tool is not an assessment designed to determine if an individual has a hidden disability. The *Learning Needs Screening Tool* is designed to screen individuals to determine if they need further assessment by a qualified professional. It was created specifically for welfare programs, such as Florida's WT program. Program staff simply asks a series of questions and total the score based on entries on a score sheet. If the WT participant has a score that indicates s/he may need additional assistance, program staff should refer the program participant to a community provider or partner agency, identified by the RWB, for additional assessments. Regional Workforce Boards may adopt the *Learning Needs Screening Tool* as a

screening aid to determine if an individual should be referred to a qualified professional. RWBs are not required to use the *Learning Needs Screening Tool* as a screening aid; however, hidden disability screening is a requirement. The RWB may use another hidden disabilities screening tool as long as it has been validated and helps program staff realize when to refer appropriate program participants for additional assessment.

The Agency for Workforce Innovation (AWI) has provided links to the information program staff needs to use the Learning Needs Screening Tool. Included in this information is the HHS: Civil Rights Laws and Welfare Reform, the Learning Needs Screening Tool, Screening Tool Background and Development, and Details Associated with Using the Learning Needs Screening Tool.

REFERENCES:

[HHS: Civil Rights Laws and Welfare Reform](#)

[Learning Needs Screening Tool](#), Payne and Associates

[Learning Needs Screening Tool Background and Development](#), Payne and Associates

[Details Associated with Using the Learning Needs Screening Tool](#)

AUTHORITY:

United States Department of Health and Human Services

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

Title II and Title III of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990

Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act (PRWORA)

Deficit Reduction Act of 2006, subsequent Interim Final Rule of 2006 and Final Rule of 2008

Extract: Review Summary: State of Florida WT Work-Component Review, 2008

ACTION REQUIRED:

The RWBs should ensure that participants are engaged in accordance with the Civil Rights laws, including laws associated with serving participants with disabilities or limitations in an equitable and meaningful manner. Details associated with using the *Learning Needs Screening Tool* is included as a hyperlink.