

**COMMONWEALTH OF KENTUCKY**  
**DEPARTMENT OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT**

**GUIDANCE NAME:** TABE Testing Youth and Adults to Determine Basic Skills Deficiency

**GUIDANCE NUMBER:** 25-006

**DATE OF ISSUE:** 10/03/2025

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** 10/03/2025

**APPLIES TO/INTEREST OF:** Kentucky Career Center (KCC) Staff, Local Workforce Development Area (LWDA) Staff, Test for Adult Basic Education Administrators

**POINT OF CONTACT:** [Compliance.Unit@ky.gov](mailto:Compliance.Unit@ky.gov)

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**PURPOSE:**

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title 1 Youth and Adult participants may need to be determined to be basic skills deficient. This Guidance addresses the assessment process using the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) and the use of TABE to determine basic skills deficiency.

**HISTORY:**

There are no previous versions of this guidance.

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**GUIDANCE:**

Participants in Title 1 Youth and Adult programs may be determined to be basic skills deficient by assessing reading, writing, or computer skills using the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) forms 13 & 14<sup>1</sup>. TABE assesses students in reading, mathematics, and language and is

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<sup>1</sup> TABE 11 & 12 may be administered in place of TABE 13 & 14. However, results of a TABE 11 & 12 will require verification from Data Recognition Corporation (DRC) to determine basic skills deficiency.

approved for use in the National Reporting System (NRS) (<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-13426>). Before administering any tests, TABE administrators should be certified through the DRC Test Administrator Certification Process by completing Certification Part 1 and Part 2 here: <https://tabetest.com/tabe-certification-process/>

#### TABE LOCATOR TEST:

TABE test administrators should use a TABE Locator test for guidance on the appropriate initial assessment. While the Locator is an important tool, information from a Locator should be viewed as a formative assessment of the student's functioning level, not as a summative or predictive assessment. See locator cut scores in Attachment 1: Locator Cut Scores.

The failure to use the Locator can result in a TABE score that reflects an error as out of measurable range. The TABE Score Indicators Table (Attachment 2) provides additional guidance on moving students to a different level of TABE based on their score indicators.

#### YOUTH:

Youth basic skills deficiency as eligibility for WIOA services as required in 20 CFR 681.290 is defined as, "As used in [§ 681.210\(c\)\(3\)](#), a youth is "basic skills deficient" if he or she: (1) Have English reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or (2) Are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society." Per 20 CFR 681.290(c), in alignment with TABE Grade-Based Scale Score Guidance ([https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE\\_Grade-Based\\_Scale\\_Score\\_Guidance.pdf](https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_Grade-Based_Scale_Score_Guidance.pdf)), youth must score at or below 549 in reading, 556 in mathematics, and 559 in language to be determined as basic skills deficient and qualify for services. These scores fall in the range of NRS Educational Functional Level (EFL) 4.

#### ADULT:

Adult participants are basic skills deficient if they are unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or society. TABE forms 13 & 14 are recommended for literacy, Adult Basic Education (ABE), and Adult Secondary Education (ASE) testing in the adult population, including inmates, parents, and employees to measure reading, math, and/or language skills.

#### MEASURABLE SKILLS GAIN:

Students may be assessed on TABE forms 13 & 14. Students must score below NRS Level 6 (<https://nrsweb.org/sites/default/files/NRS-TA-Guide-April-2025-508.pdf>, page 81) to be eligible for a Measurable Skill Gain (MSG) through post-testing. A student with a valid NRS Level 6 can achieve an MSG through entering post-secondary education, proof of a post-secondary transcript, documented progress towards goals, or a documented passage of an occupational exam.

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**REFERENCES:**

20 CFR 681.290

Per 20 CFR 681.290(c)

<https://www.federalregister.gov/d/2024-13426>

[https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE\\_Grade-Based\\_Scale\\_Score\\_Guidance.pdf](https://tabetest.com/PDFs/TABE_Grade-Based_Scale_Score_Guidance.pdf)

<https://nrsweb.org/sites/default/files/NRS-TA-Guide-April-2025-.pdf>, page 81

<https://tabetest.com/tabe-certification-process/>

## ATTACHMENT 1: LOCATOR CUT SCORES

Table 1- Locator Cut Scores

<b>TABE Level</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Reading</b>	<b>Language</b>
<b>E</b>	0 – 7	0 – 6	0 – 7
<b>M</b>	8 – 10	7 – 10	8 – 12
<b>D</b>	11 – 14	11 – 13	13 – 14
<b>A</b>	15 +	14+	15+

## ATTACHMENT 2: TABE SCORE INDICATORS TABLE

The following table provides guidance on moving students to a different level of TABE based on their score indicators.

SCORE REPORT SYMBOL	MEANING OF THE SYMBOL	EFFECT ON THE STUDENT'S SCORE	RECOMMENDED CHANGE
Out of Range (O/R) in place of the NRS level and N/A in place of the scale score	The student scored more than one NRS level below the target level.	The student does not receive a scale score or NRS level.	The student should take a lower level of TABE.
Single asterisk (*) after the NRS level	The Student performed at the top of the scale/NRS Level	The student has no additional opportunity to show growth on that level of TABE.	The student would need to be assigned the next level of TABE on a future test to measure NRS growth.
Double asterisk (**) after the NRS level (TABE CLAS-E only)	The student achieved the NRS Exit Score.	The student has reached NRS Level 6.	The student has no more room for growth and is ready to exit the program.