

**Workforce Development Division  
Workforce Program Policy  
Technical Assistance Bulletin 280, Change 2**

**Keyword:** Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

**Subject:** Determining High-Poverty Geographic Areas

**Date:** October 12, 2021

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This Technical Assistance (TA) Bulletin provides Local Workforce Development Boards (Boards) with information on determining and documenting high-poverty areas in support of low-income eligibility criteria for in-school and out-of-school youth.

**Background**

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Program includes a provision that allows in-school and out-of-school youth living in high-poverty areas to meet the low-income eligibility criterion automatically. Title 20 Code of Federal Regulations §681.260 defines a high-poverty area as a census tract, a set of contiguous census tracts, an American Indian Reservation, other tribal land as defined by the US Secretary of Labor in guidance, or a county that has a poverty rate of at least 25 percent, as set every five years using American Community Survey (ACS) five-year data.

**Determining Whether Youth Are Living in a High-Poverty Area**

On July 30, 2021, the US Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration issued Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) [No. 21-16](#), Change 1, titled “Third Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Youth Formula Program Guidance.” This TEGL provides a link to new instructions on the use of the US Census Bureau web application and is titled “[Directions for Determining High-Poverty Areas for the WIOA Youth Formula Program](#).”

The US Census Bureau publishes the ACS five-year estimates each December. The ACS data defines the estimated poverty rates and other demographic data. Poverty rates may be filtered by census tracts or geographical subunits, which may be filtered again by state, metropolitan statistical area, city, county, independent school district, and more refined census tracts. The ACS five-year “High-Poverty Areas in Texas by County” is located on the Texas Workforce Commission’s [Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act](#) web page.

Boards may determine whether counties, census tracts, or a combination of census tracts meet or exceed the 25 percent threshold designating a geographical area as a high-poverty area by using the [interactive tool](#) on the US Census Bureau’s website.

**Attachments**

Attachment 1: Revisions to TAB 280, Change 1, Shown in Track Changes

Send inquiries regarding this TA Bulletin to [wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.texas.gov](mailto:wfpolicy.clarifications@twc.texas.gov).