



POLICY TO ESTABLISH THE DEFINITION OF YOUTH LIVING IN A HIGH-POVERTY AREA

I. INTRODUCTION

In order for youth to be eligible for participation in the Youth Program, they must meet the criteria for in-school or out-school youth. However, another eligibility criterion of same importance is their economic or income level, especially for the in-school youths. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, for its English acronym) is aimed at supporting the occupational success of the in and out -o-f school youth. Thus, it is indispensable to determine eligibility according to the youth's family income or the youth's own income, when applicable considering the residence zone.

II. LEGAL BASE

Section 129 (a) (2) – The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, for its English acronym)

Section 681.260 under the Regulation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, for its English acronym)

“Training and Employment Guidance Letter” (TEGL) 21-16 issued by the Training and Employment Program ascribed to the Federal Labor Department on March 2, 2017

III. DEFINITION - YOUTH LIVING IN A HIGH-POVERTY AREA

The WIOA, aside from the low-income criterion, has included additional language that provides the qualification of youths living in high-poverty areas. Section 681.260, from the Interpretive Regulations, establishes that a high-poverty area is a census tract, an Indian reservation, among other geographical areas and specific populations, including counties, that in the Puerto Rico particular case, refers to the municipalities with a **25%** or higher poverty rate. This rate is established by the *American Community Survey – 5 Year Data*, published by the United States Census Office.

IV. DETERMINATION OF A HIGH-POVERTY AREA

The official designated to complete the process to determine the youth eligibility, in the first place must determine if the applicant lives in a high-poverty area according to the Policy to Establish Eligibility for the Youth Program approved by the Local Board. In the case of a youth that does not qualify due to the income criterion, the official proceeds to determine if the applicant lives in a high-poverty area. In the case of Puerto Rico, a high-poverty area refers to the municipalities in which 25% or more of its population meets the poverty rate criterion. If the youth lives in a high poverty area is automatically considered a low-income youth.

Attachment II of the TEGL 21-16 establishes, step by step, the process by which the official can identify if the youth's residence is located in a high poverty area. This process implies conducting a search in <https://factfinder/census/gov/faces/nav/jsf/pages/index.xhtml>, the poverty rate per municipality, and making a determination according to the data provided by the *American Community Survey – 5 Year Data*. In the case that the municipality where the youth resides has a population with less than 25% of poverty rate, Attachment II of the TEGL 21-16 also provides the process by which this information can be verified using the specific residential address.

The designated official must have in mind that the income criterion is not the only criterion to be considered in the qualification process. The present policy is adopted exclusively to the effects of defining a high-poverty area and its impact in the eligibility determination process.

V. HIGH POVERTY AREAS

The poverty rates for the municipalities that compose of the Local Area are the following:

MUNICIPALITY	POVERTY LEVEL%
Humacao	44.9
Juncos	47.4
Las Piedras	49.2
Maunabo	55.9

MUNICIPALITY	POVERTY LEVEL%
Patillas	59.1
San Lorenzo	48.4
Yabucoa	52.3

VI. DATA UPDATE OBLIGATION

The Executive Director will be obligated to update the statistic data included in this policy, since the data correspond to the information now available in the *American Fact Finder* on the date it is approved.

VII. APPROVAL AND VALIDITY

This public policy will take effect immediately as of its approval. It will be the Executive Director's responsibility to inform the personnel within the five (5) days after its approval.

[Signed] _____
Rafael H. Aparicio Cesaní
Local Board President

November 15, 2017
Date