

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act - July 22, 2014

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will help job seekers and workers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and match employers with skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. Congress passed WIOA, the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in more than 15 years, by a wide bipartisan majority. In doing so, Congress reaffirmed the role of the American Job Center (AJC) system, a cornerstone of the public workforce investment system, and brought together and enhanced several key employment, education, and training programs. In recent years over 20 million people annually turn to these programs to obtain good jobs and a pathway to the middle class. WIOA continues to advance services to these job seekers and employers.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WIOA REFORMS TO THE PUBLIC WORKFORCE SYSTEM

Aligns Federal Investments to Support Job Seekers and Employers:

At the State level, WIOA establishes unified strategic planning across “core” programs, which include Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs; Adult Education and Literacy programs; the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service; and Title I of the Rehabilitation Act programs.

Strengthens the Governing Bodies that Establish State, Regional and Local Workforce Investment Priorities:

WIOA streamlines membership of business-led, state and local workforce development boards. The Act emphasizes the role of boards in coordinating and aligning workforce programs and adds functions to develop strategies to meet worker and employer needs.

Helps Employers Find Workers with the Necessary Skills: WIOA emphasizes engaging employers across the workforce system to align training with needed skills and match employers with qualified workers. The Act adds flexibility at the local level to provide incumbent worker training and transitional jobs as allowable activities and promotes work-based training, for example by increasing on-the-job training reimbursement rates to 75 percent. The law also emphasizes training that leads to industry-recognized post-secondary credentials.

Aligns Goals and Increases Accountability and Information for Job Seekers and the Public: WIOA aligns the performance indicators for core programs, and adds new ones related to services to employers and postsecondary credential attainment. Performance goals must reflect economic conditions and participant characteristics. It makes available data on training providers’ performance outcomes and requires third party evaluations of programs.

WIOA PROGRAMS

WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA authorizes the Job Corps, YouthBuild, Indian and Native Americans, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs, in addition to the core programs.

EFFECTIVE DATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

President Barack Obama signed WIOA into law on July 22, 2014.

In general, the Act takes effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment, unless otherwise noted. The State Unified Plans and Common Performance Accountability provisions take effect July 1, 2016. The U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) will issue further guidance on the timeframes for implementation of these changes.

DOL will issue proposed regulations reflecting the changes in WIOA soon after enactment.



Fosters Regional Collaboration to Meet the Needs of Regional Economies: WIOA requires states to identify economic regions within their state, and local areas are to coordinate planning and service delivery on a regional basis.

Targets Workforce Services to Better Serve Job Seekers: WIOA promotes the use of career pathways and sector partnerships to increase employment in in-demand industries and occupations. To help local economies target the needs of job seekers, WIOA allows 100 percent funds transfer between the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs. WIOA adds basic skills deficient as a priority category for Adult services. WIOA also focuses Youth program services to out-of-school youth. The Act strengthens services for unemployment insurance claimants. It also merges WIA core and intensive services into a new category of career services, clarifying there is no required sequence of services. The Act allows Governors to reserve up to 15 percent of formula funds for activities such as innovative programs.

Improves Services to Individuals with Disabilities: WIOA increases individuals with disabilities' access to high-quality workforce services to prepare them for competitive integrated employment. It requires better employer engagement and promotes physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities. Youth with disabilities receive extensive pre-employment transition services to obtain and retain competitive integrated employment. It creates an Advisory Committee on strategies to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.

Supports Access to Services: To make services easier to access, the WIOA requires co-location of the Wagner-Peyser Employment Service in AJCs and adds the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program as a mandatory partner. WIOA establishes dedicated funding from AJC partner programs to support the costs of infrastructure and other shared costs that support access to services. It asks the Secretary of Labor to establish a common identifier for the workforce system to help workers and employers find available services. In addition, WIOA allows local areas to award pay for performance contracts so providers of services get paid for results. It also allows direct contracts to higher education institutions to provide training.

STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

DOL, in coordination with the U.S. Departments of Education (ED) and Health and Human Services (HHS), is working diligently to ensure that states and local areas, other grantees, and stakeholders are prepared for implementation of WIOA. DOL will provide technical assistance, tools, and resources to States and local areas through the WIOA Resource Page (www.doleta.gov/WIOA), Webinars, and virtual and in-person discussions.

DOL will actively engage stakeholders in the implementation of WIOA. Opportunities to provide input will be communicated through the WIOA Resource Page.

WIOA RESOURCE PAGE

Visit www.doleta.gov/WIOA to learn more and access relevant guidance and technical assistance tools and resources developed by the Employment and Training Administration (ETA). All relevant guidance will also be posted on the ETA Advisory Website (<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/>) Please email questions to DOL.WIOA@dol.gov or contact your ETA regional Office.



Fact Sheet: Youth Program

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), signed into law on July 22, 2014, is the first legislative reform of the public workforce system in 15 years. The law supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act, and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

WIOA presents an extraordinary opportunity to improve job and career options for our nation's workers and jobseekers through an integrated, job-driven public workforce system that links diverse talent to businesses. It supports the development of strong, vibrant regional economies where businesses thrive and people want to live and work.

WIOA retains the nationwide system of one-stop centers, which directly provide an array of employment services and connect customers to work-related training and education. WIOA furthers a high quality one-stop center system by continuing to align investments in workforce, education, and economic development. The new law places greater emphasis on one-stops achieving results for jobseekers, workers, and businesses. WIOA reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for one stops to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to get good jobs and stay employed, and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WIOA REFORMS FOR THE YOUTH PROGRAM

WIOA outlines a broader youth vision that supports an integrated service delivery system and gives a framework through which states and local areas can leverage other Federal, State, Local, and philanthropic resources to support in-school and out-of-school youth. WIOA affirms the Department's commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance, continued support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations, and culminating with a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in post-secondary education. WIOA authorizes the following changes:

Key Provisions

- WIOA requires a minimum of 75 percent of State and Local youth funding to be used for out-of-school youth.
- Youth Councils no longer required; however, Local Boards are

WIOA PROGRAMS

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- WIOA Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs) administered by Department of Labor (DOL);
- Adult Education and Literacy Act programs administered by the Department of Education (DoED);
- Wagner-Peyser Act employment services administered by DOL; and
- Rehabilitation Act Title I programs administered by DoED.

WIOA also authorizes the Job Corps program, the YouthBuild program, Native American programs, and Migrant and Seasonal Farmworker programs, as well as evaluation and multistate projects.

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encouraged to designate a standing Youth Committee, including an existing Youth Council, to contribute a critical youth voice and perspective.

Changes to Youth Eligibility

- Out-of-school youth must be aged 16-24, not attending any school, and meet one or more additional conditions, which could include:
 - School dropout; within age of compulsory attendance but has not attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter; holds a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent and is low-income and is basic skills deficient or an English language learner; subject to the juvenile or adult justice system; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system, eligible for assistance under Section 477, Social Security Act, or in out-of-home placement; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; low income person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment
- In-school youth must be aged 14-21, attending school, low income, and meet one or more additional conditions, which could include:
 - Basic skills deficient; English language learner; an offender; homeless, runaway, in foster care or aged out of the foster care system; pregnant or parenting; an individual with a disability; person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment
- Five new Youth Program elements
 - (1) Financial Literacy; (2) Entrepreneurial skills training; (3) Services that provide labor market and employment information in the local area; (4) Activities that help youth transition to postsecondary education and training; (5) Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster

Emphasis on Work-Experience

- At least 20 percent of local Youth formula funds must be used for work experiences, such as summer and year-round employment, pre-apprenticeship, on-the-job training, or internships and job shadowing

EFFECTIVE DATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

In general, WIOA takes effect on July 1, 2015; however, the planning requirements common indicators of performance take effect on July 1, 2016 and other exceptions specifically noted in the law.

DOL is working in coordination with the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services to support the public workforce system to implement WIOA. The DOL WIOA Resource Page (www.doleta.gov/WIOA) will include updated guidance and resources, as well as communicate opportunities to provide input. The WIOA Collection Page (wioa.workforce3one.org) provides links to technical assistance tools and information to support implementation. Questions regarding WIOA can be emailed to DOL.WIOA@dol.gov.



Fact Sheet: One-Stop Career Centers

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HIGHLIGHTS OF WIOA REFORMS FOR ONE-STOP CENTERS

WIOA retains the nationwide system of one-stop centers, which directly provide an array of employment services and connect customers to work-related training and education. WIOA furthers a high quality one-stop center system by continuing to align investments in workforce, education, and economic development to regional in-demand jobs. The new law places greater emphasis on one-stops achieving results for jobseekers, workers, and businesses. WIOA reinforces the partnerships and strategies necessary for one-stops to provide job seekers and workers with the high-quality career services, education and training, and supportive services they need to get good jobs and stay employed, and to help businesses find skilled workers and access other supports, including education and training for their current workforce.

Improved Access to Comprehensive Services

- Each local area must have one comprehensive one-stop center that provides access to physical services of the core programs and other required partners.
- In addition to the core programs, for individuals with multiple needs to access the services, the following partner programs are required to provide access through the one-stops: Career and Technical Education (Perkins), Community Services Block Grant, Indian and Native American Programs, HUD Employment and Training Programs, Job Corps, Local Veterans' Employment Representatives and Disabled Veterans' Outreach Program, National Farmworker Jobs Program, Senior Community Service Employment Program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Trade Adjustment Assistance Programs, Unemployment Compensation Programs, and YouthBuild. TANF is now a required partner, unless the Governor takes special action to make TANF an optional one-stop partner.
- WIOA eliminates stand-alone Wagner-Peyser Employment Service offices. These services will now be provided alongside partner programs within one-stop centers.

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- A local area also may have additional affiliate one-stop centers with any subset of partners, or specialized centers.
- Local boards have the flexibility to include additional partners in one-stop centers. The law specifically identifies the following federally funded partners: Employment and training programs administered by the Social Security Administration, including the Ticket to Work and the Self-Sufficiency Program; employment and training programs carried out by the Small Business Administration; Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) employment and training programs; Client Assistance Programs; and programs authorized under the National and Community Service Act of 1990.
- WIOA allows other partners to be part of the one-stop delivery system, including local employers and community-based, faith-based, and/or non-profit organizations, as well as employment, education, and training programs provided by public libraries or in the private sector.

Enhanced and Streamlined Operations:

- Local areas are encouraged to integrate the intake, case management, reporting, and fiscal and management accountability systems of one-stop partners.
- All partners are required to share in the funding of services and infrastructure costs of the one-stop delivery system.
- One-stop operators will be selected through a competitive process.
- Local boards are responsible for improving access to and the effectiveness of one stop and program services.
- Local boards continue to be required to negotiate and regularly review a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with every one-stop partner to describe operations, services provided and coordinated, funding, and referrals. MOUs will be reviewed every three years.
- Local boards will certify one-stops every three years, using criteria written by the state Workforce Development Board that covers effectiveness, programmatic and physical accessibility, and continuous improvement. Local Workforce Development Boards may also establish additional certification criteria.

Better Public Recognition

- WIOA calls for the Department of Labor to establish a common identifier, also known as a “brand”, for the one-stop system to help job seekers and employers readily access services. The common identifier will be established through the final rule, with guidance and implementation assistance provided by ETA.

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Fact Sheet: Governance and Leadership

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HIGHLIGHTS OF THE WIOA REFORMS FOR GOVERNANCE

WIOA seeks to improve the effectiveness of and streamline the governing structures of the public workforce investment system, empower elected officials and workforce boards, establish structures for working regionally aligned with regional economies, and engage the key stakeholders needed to lead the system to achieve the goals of WIOA.

WIOA empowers State and Local elected officials and private sector-led workforce boards with the responsibility of developing a strategic, integrated plan that supports economic growth and labor force needs intended to grow the capacity and performance of the workforce system. WIOA authorizes the following changes:

- Streamlines membership requirements for State and Local workforce boards while maintaining a majority of business representation
- Requires certification and continuous improvement of one-stop centers by the Chief Elected Officials and the workforce boards

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- Adds Vocational Rehabilitation, Adult Education, and Registered Apprenticeship as required board members and increases the voice of labor on the board
- Identifies 13 functions for Local workforce boards. Among them are:
 - Analyses of regional conditions;
 - Leading efforts to engage employers;
 - Leading efforts to develop and implement career pathways;
 - Identifying and promoting proven and promising practices;
 - Establishing standing committees to more effectively accomplish the work of the local boards;
 - Better utilizing technology to facilitate connections among the intake and case management information systems of one-stop partners, to access services provided through the one-stop system (including remote areas), to meet the needs of individuals with barriers to employment, and to leverage resources and capacity;
 - Promoting consumer choice of participants among providers;
 - Enhancing coordination with education providers; and
 - Assessing the physical and programmatic accessibility of one-stop centers annually in accordance with applicable nondiscrimination provisions under Title I of the WIOA and the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Identifies 12 functions for State workforce boards. Among them are:
 - Review of statewide policies and programs and development of recommendations on actions state should take to align core and other programs in a manner that supports a comprehensive system, including the review and provision of comments on state plans for activities and non-core programs of one-stop partners.
 - Development of guidance for the implementation and continuous improvement of the workforce development system (addressing alignment, career pathways, sector partnerships, coordination between states and local areas, identification of regions, technical assistance, case management information systems)
 - Identification and dissemination of best practices
 - Development and review of statewide policies affecting the coordinated provision of services through the one-stops
 - Development of strategies for technological improvements
 - Development of statewide workforce and labor market information systems

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