

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

What is WIOA?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) was enacted in July 2014, representing the first federal reform of the workforce development system in 15 years. WIOA replaces and modifies the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which started in 1998. The new act consolidates the job training programs previously offered under WIA into a single umbrella.

The majority of WIOA provisions became effective on July 1, 2015, with additional requirements set for 2016 and 2017. The goals of WIOA are to improve the quality of the workforce, increase economic self-sufficiency, reduce welfare dependency, meet employer skill requirements, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the nation.

WIOA improves the workforce development system in ways that reflect best practices here in Washington, and promises an improved and better-coordinated system that reaches customers more effectively than ever before.

Who is Served?

WIOA emphasizes a dual customer focus for the workforce development system: job-seekers and employers. A new tool for workforce development provided by WIOA is funding dedicated to providing customized and incumbent worker training to meet employer skill needs and better serve those who are currently employed. WIOA prioritizes services for unemployed adults, dislocated workers, low-income youth, limited English proficient individuals, those with low literacy skills, and individuals with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation to become self-sufficient.

State Workforce Board Tasked with More Responsibility

The Workforce Board has an enhanced role under WIOA and will help the Governor:

- Work with industry to ensure a trained workforce to fill in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Identify and scale best practices for WIOA service delivery.
- Establish the state's funding mechanism for One-Stop Career Centers (*WorkSource*).
- Develop and implement the State Plan.
- Create and update workforce program performance metrics and targets that apply across all core programs.
- Improve data-sharing and performance accountability reporting.
- Develop one-stop certification criteria.
- Develop technological improvement strategies for the one-stop system.

The WIOA Plan and High Skills, High Wages

The Workforce Board will coordinate the writing of the WIOA strategic plan this fall. The Board will be convening forums statewide through the end of 2015 to gather input on the plan from workforce development system stakeholders, job-seekers, employers, editorial boards, elected officials, and other interested parties.

The expectation is that the WIOA strategic plan will fulfil federal reporting requirements as well as serving as the state's strategic plan for workforce development, *High Skills, High Wages*.

We expect to **engage the Legislature** in the development of the WIOA strategic plan and *High Skills, High Wages* in assembly days and leading up to the 2016 Legislative Session. Customarily, the Legislature endorses the *High Skills, High Wages* plan by joint resolution. The Workforce Board hopes to work with the Legislature to **pass this resolution** in the 2016 Legislative Session.



WIOA Allows for Greater Reach, Higher Impact

The Act permits a state to reimagine its workforce development system to include a much broader range of programs and funding mechanisms, beyond the core programs.

With WIOA, states have the option to develop a Combined Plan (with shared goals, objectives and strategies) for WIOA's core programs and upwards of 11 other employment, training and social services programs.

Core Programs in WIOA

- 1. Employment and Training Programs under Title I**
 - **Disadvantaged Youth Services**
 - **Economically Disadvantaged Adult Services**
 - **Dislocated Worker Programs**
- 2. Basic Education for Adults under Title II**
- 3. Wagner-Peyser Employment Services under Title III**
- 4. Vocational Rehabilitation Services under Title IV**

Inclusive Process for WIOA Planning

Since late 2014, the Workforce Board has coordinated a comprehensive implementation planning process. This effort has focused on engaging workforce development system stakeholders including local workforce development councils, service providers, and state administrative agencies engaged in workforce development, including the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, Employment Security Department, Department of Commerce, and the Department of Social and Health Services—to name just a few of the participants.

This process has been led by a Steering Committee co-chaired by business and labor leaders, ensuring that policy recommendations serve the interests of job-seekers and employers.

WIOA and WorkSource

WIOA gives special attention to improving local One-Stop Career Development Center partnerships (called *WorkSource* centers in Washington) and the funding infrastructure that pays for these career centers. For the first time, the Act directs the state Workforce Board to establish One-Stop certification criteria to gauge the effectiveness, accessibility, and continuous improvement of WorkSource Centers.

WIOA also identifies 15 required WorkSource partners that must participate in and share the cost of these career centers, including Veterans Employment and Training, Unemployment Insurance Services, and Food Stamp Employment and Training.

Employer Engagement and Work Experience

WIOA emphasizes building stronger partnerships with employers; the Act encourages collaboration with key industry sectors and consortia of employers with similar skill needs.

For young people, WIOA places a new priority on work-based learning by requiring that at least 20 percent of local youth grant funds (for both in-school and out-of-school youth services) be used for paid and unpaid work experiences that have components of both academic and occupational education. Program investments may include summer and year-round employment opportunities, pre-apprenticeship programs, internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training. These new allowances will make programs more attractive to young people and more likely to enhance completion rates.

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

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