



What is WIOA?

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act passed in July of 2014 with broad bipartisan support. It's the first federal reform of the workforce system in 15 years. WIOA replaces and modifies the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which started in 1998.

The majority of WIOA provisions become effective on July 1, 2015, with additional requirements set for July 1, 2016. The goal of WIOA is 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.

In Washington, workforce professionals welcome this new act. It improves the national workforce development system in ways that reflect what's already being done here and promises an improved and expanded system that reaches customers more effectively than ever before.

A common plan and common performance measures

The core WIOA programs (see box above) will, for the first time, share a common plan and a common set of performance measures focused on workforce outcomes for the benefit of workers, jobseekers, and employers. WIOA provides a framework to align these multiple funding streams and others towards a single vision.

Common plan – The new 2016-2020 plan will outline the vision, goals and strategies that will govern how funds are mobilized. The plan will include an analysis of the current workforce, descriptions of the state's delivery system, perspectives on state economic conditions and an analysis of employer needs. The WIOA plan guidelines are modeled to some degree after the guidelines that frame *High Skills, High Wages*, Washington's strategic plan for workforce development. Both the WIOA plan and *High Skills, High Wages* are due at about the same time, in the spring of 2016. This will make it possible for Washington to contribute a single state plan meeting both state and federal expectations.

Common measures – Measures include short-term and long-term employment rates, earnings, credential completion, skill gains, and effectiveness in serving employers. This aligns with Washington's core measures, which provide performance accountability for our state's system by applying key measures across a wide range of workforce programs.

Which core programs are included in WIOA?

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

Who is Served?

Like its predecessor WIA, the new act has a dual customer focus: job-seekers and employers. New with WIOA is the ability to provide customized and incumbent worker training to meet employer skill needs and better serve those who are currently employed and would benefit from additional job skills and training. But like WIA, WIOA prioritizes services for unemployed adults, dislocated workers, low-income youth, limited English proficient individuals, those with low literacy skills, as well as individuals with disabilities seeking vocational rehabilitation to become self-sufficient.

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 federal employment and training and social services programs.

WIOA and WorkSource

WIOA gives special attention to improving local One-Stop Career Development Center partnerships (called *WorkSource* in Washington) and the funding infrastructure that pays for these career centers. For the first time the Act directs the state Workforce Development 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.

State Workforce Board tasked with more responsibility

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

- Develop and implement the State Plan.
- Develop and update workforce program performance measures.
- Develop and implement state-adjusted performance levels for core programs.
- Improve data-sharing and performance accountability reporting.
- Identify local workforce development areas.
- Work with industry to fill in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
- Identify and spread best practices for WIOA service delivery.
- Establish the state's funding mechanism for one-stop career centers (*WorkSource*).
- Develop one-stop certification criteria.
- Develop technological improvement strategies for the one-stop system.

