

WIOA Title 1-B – Dislocated Worker

Participant Survey 2026

Participant Survey: WIOA Dislocated Worker Programs

State statute directs the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) to survey workforce system participants to evaluate their experiences, outcomes, and satisfaction with workforce programs within Washington. By capturing the lived experiences of program participants, the Workforce Board can support data-informed decision-making, improve accountability, and help ensure that Washington's workforce system is equitable, effective, and responsive to both workers and the economy.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I-B Dislocated Worker program provides employment and training services; and establishes early intervention for workers and firms facing substantial layoffs. In general, dislocated workers are people who lost jobs due to plant closures, company downsizing, or some other significant change in market conditions. In most cases, participants must be unlikely to return to their occupation and must be eligible for (or have exhausted) unemployment compensation. The 12 regional Workforce Development Councils oversee WIOA activities in local areas.

The survey was administered via mail, telephone, and online among a randomly selected sample of WIOA Dislocated Worker participants who received job training. For WIOA Dislocated Worker participants the response rate was a solid 20.8%. See the [methodology report](#) for full details.

Recommendations

Survey responses highlight ways programs can better support WIOA Dislocated Worker participants.

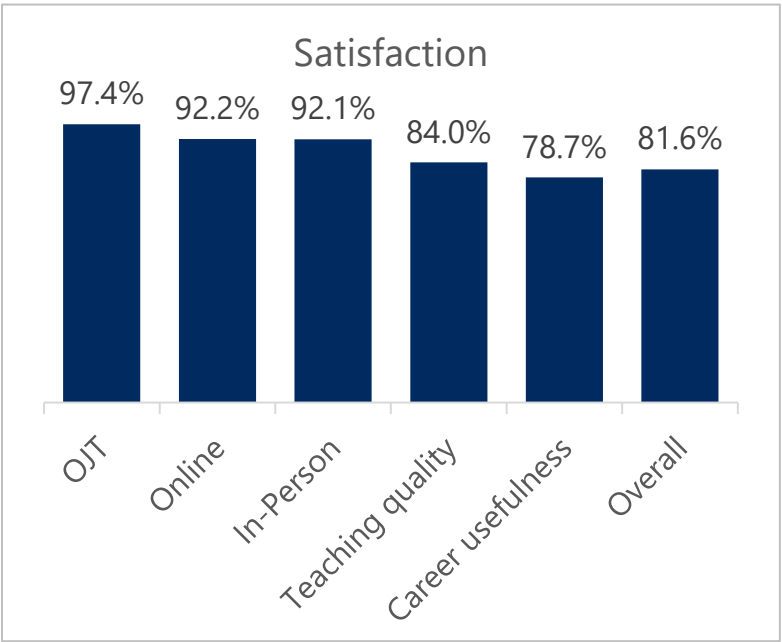
Increase financial and supportive-service assistance Financial assistance was the highest unmet need at 15%, followed by information about government assistance at 11%. Programs should strengthen partnerships with community organizations and benefits programs to help dislocated workers access financial resources, housing assistance, transportation, and other supports while they transition to new employment.

Increase services for participants with disabilities Disability services had one of the lowest rates of service receipt among participants who needed them (37%). Although 100% of those who received disability services reported that their needs were met, the relatively low rate of service suggests a potential access gap.

Survey findings

The top reasons participants enrolled in a WIOA Dislocated Worker program were for job search assistance (70%) and to improve skills for a new job (79%). Dislocated worker participants also wanted to earn a degree or certificate (42%).

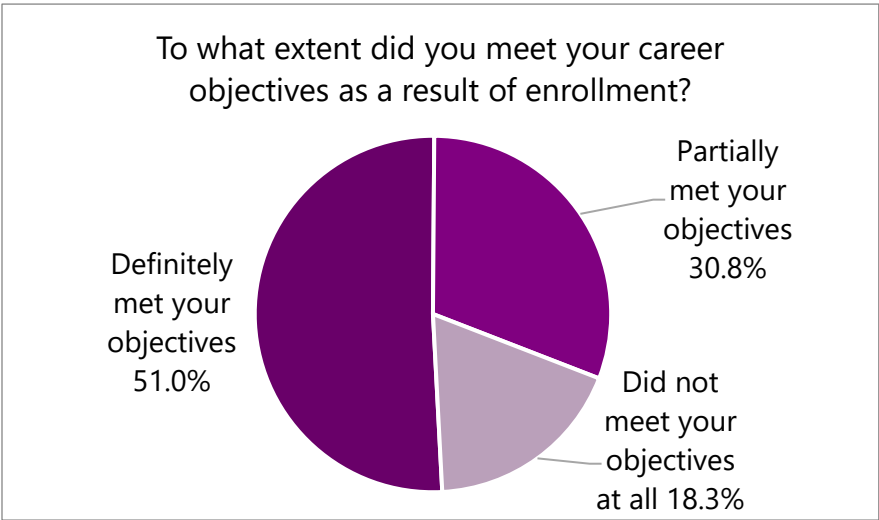
Satisfaction



WIOA Dislocated Worker participants reported high levels of satisfaction across nearly every aspect of their program. They were most satisfied with the on-the-job training (97% were somewhat or very satisfied). Participants also rated the quality of online and in-person instruction highly (92%). They were less satisfied with the program overall (82%), which may be caused by low satisfaction with teaching quality (84%) or career usefulness (79%).

Career objectives

Participants were asked, "To what extent did you meet your career objectives as a result of enrollment?" Fifty-one percent of respondents said that they definitely met their objectives, 31% partially met their objectives, and 18% did not meet their objectives at all.



Fifty-three percent of respondents said their participation in the program led them to consider job opportunities that they weren't prepared for or wouldn't have considered before.

Services needed, received, and unmet needs¹

	Services Needed			Total Unmet Need ¹
	Of entire population	Of those who needed services	Of those who received services	Of entire population
		Received Services	Needs Met	
Career or job counseling	52.7%	83.5%	88.7%	11.6%
Assistance with resume writing	58.2%	91.2%	96.1%	6.3%
Learning how to search for a job	43.0%	82.9%	95.1%	9.0%
Job interviewing techniques	52.7%	86.5%	98.1%	7.3%
Information on job openings	63.5%	92.1%	90.8%	10.0%
Appropriate work attire and work-related tools	27.6%	75.0%	92.9%	7.8%
Childcare assistance	6.8%	61.5%	100.0%	2.4%
Transportation assistance	15.5%	74.2%	89.7%	4.9%
Housing assistance	11.2%	54.5%	81.3%	5.8%
Financial assistance	40.4%	71.4%	88.9%	14.7%
Information about government assistance	34.3%	72.5%	92.4%	10.5%
Disability services	9.5%	36.8%	100.0%	6.0%

Services needed

The services that were needed the most by WIOA Dislocated Worker participants were:

- Information on job openings – 64%
- Assistance with resume writing – 58%
- Job interviewing techniques – 53%
- Career or job counseling – 53%

¹ To determine unmet need participants were asked if they needed a service, if they received that service, and if that service met their needs. Unmet need is calculated as those who needed the service and did not receive it added to those who did receive the service, and it did not meet their needs; and is represented as a portion of the entire population.

Services received

Most WIOA Dislocated Worker participants who needed services received them. However, some services, such as disability services, had a much lower percentage respondents receiving services, under 40%.

Services met needs

Most people who needed services and were provided with those services responded that their needs were met. This ranged from a high of 100% who needed and received childcare and disability services to 81% of those who needed and received housing assistance.

Unmet needs

The top unmet needs² for respondents were:

- Financial assistance - 15%
- Career or job counseling - 12%
- Information about government assistance – 11%

On-the-job training

Twenty-one percent of WIOA Dislocated Worker participants' programs included training on the job, such as an internship, work-based learning, or clinical experience.

Skills

Participants were asked about the training they received in their program. Although not a large percentage, WIOA Dislocated Worker participants most often received training in:

- Communication skills - 36% received training
 - 90% said the training improved their communication skills some or a lot.
- Teamwork skills - 30% received training
 - 94% said the training improved their teamwork skills some or a lot.
- Workplace diversity- 30% received training
 - 84% said the training improved their diversity skills some or a lot.

² To determine unmet need participants were asked if they needed a service, if they received that service, and if that service met their needs. Unmet need is calculated as those who needed the service and did not receive it added to those who did receive the service, and it did not meet their needs; and is represented as a portion of the entire population.

Improving skills

Fifty percent of respondents would like to further improve their skills. Among those who wanted to improve their skills, the skills respondents most want to improve are leadership or management (62%), decision making (51%), and communication (53%).

Prior employment

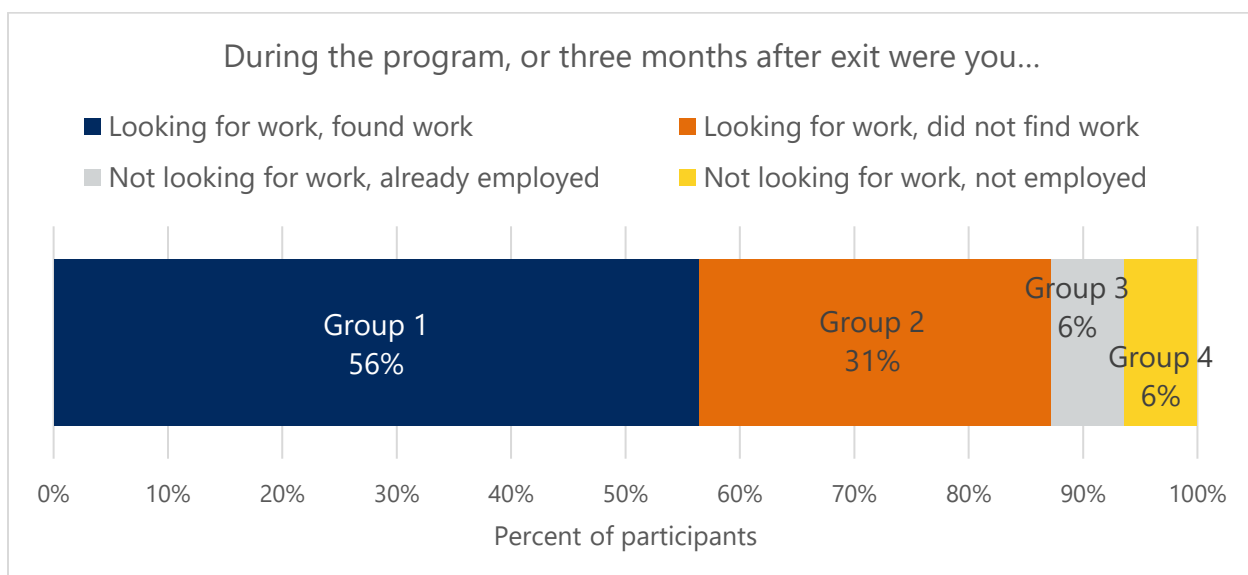
Thirty-three percent of WIOA Dislocated Worker respondents did any work in the three months prior to enrolling in their WIOA Dislocated Worker program. Of those who were employed in the three months prior to enrolling in their WIOA Dislocated Worker program, 21% reported that the training program was very related to that job, 19% said it was somewhat related, 12% said it was a little related, and 48% said it was not related at all.

Of those who did any work in the three months prior to enrolling in a program:

- 91% of participants said it was their primary source of income
- 79% said they were provided with a healthcare plan
- 5% said it was with a temporary employment agency
- 15% were members of a union

Employment post-training

WIOA Dislocated Worker respondents were asked a series of questions to determine their post-training employment. These questions allowed participants to be grouped into four categories based on their job search activities during the program or within three months after exiting.



Participants fell into four employment groups based on whether they looked for work during their program or within three months after exiting.

- **56% looked for and found work (Group 1)**
 - 43% said their job was extremely related to their program
 - 36% said their training or work experience was essential to getting hired
 - 89% were somewhat or very satisfied with their job responsibilities
 - Satisfaction was lower for salary (79%), advancement opportunities (70%), and overall satisfaction with the job (70%)
- **31% looked for work, but did not find work (Group 2)**
 - The most common barriers to employment:
 - 47% said there were few jobs available in their geographic area
 - 55% responded that there were few jobs available in their line of work
- **6% were already employed and not looking for work. (Group 3)**
- **6% were not looking for work and not employed. (Group 4)**

Conclusion

Overall, the survey findings show that the WIOA Dislocated Worker program is meeting many participants' needs. Participants reported high satisfaction with instruction and on-the-job training, and more than half were able to find employment after participating in the program. However, some participants continued to face challenges, particularly with finding jobs in their field or geographic area and in their line of work.

A notable finding is that 55% of participants enrolled in the program specifically to receive on-the-job training, highlighting the importance of practical workplace experience for dislocated workers. At the same time, only 21% of participants' programs included OJT, while those who did receive it reported very high satisfaction (97%). Expanding on-the-job training opportunities could help close this gap by giving more participants hands-on experience, stronger workplace skills, and a direct connection to potential employers.

The findings also suggest opportunities to further strengthen the program by improving career counseling, increasing access to financial and supportive services, and expanding training opportunities. Focusing on leadership, communication, and decision-making skills, while continuing to provide practical work experiences, may help participants feel better prepared for employment and long-term career success.