WIOA Title 1-B - Youth

Participant Survey 2026

Washington Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board

Participant Survey: WIOA Youth 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) Youth Program prepares youth for academic and employment success. To receive services, youth must be 14 through 24 years old, low income, and meet other criteria such as needing assistance to complete an educational program or secure and hold employment. The Employment Security Department administers the program at the state level. The 12 regional Workforce Development Councils oversee WIOA activities in local areas. Local youth councils assist with the program.

The survey was administered via mail, telephone, and online among a randomly selected sample of WIOA Youth participants who received job training. For WIOA Youth participants the response rate was 13.3%. See the methodology report for full details.

Recommendations

Survey responses highlight a significant way programs can better support WIOA Youth participants.

Expand on-the-job training opportunities

The WIOA Youth program could expand access to on-the-job training (OJT) and other work-based learning opportunities. Survey findings indicate that 69% of participants enrolled to gain workplace experience and 55% sought on-the-job training, demonstrating strong interest in hands-on employment opportunities. Expanding OJT placements could help youth gain practical experience, strengthen job-ready skills, and improve their competitiveness in the labor market.

Survey findings

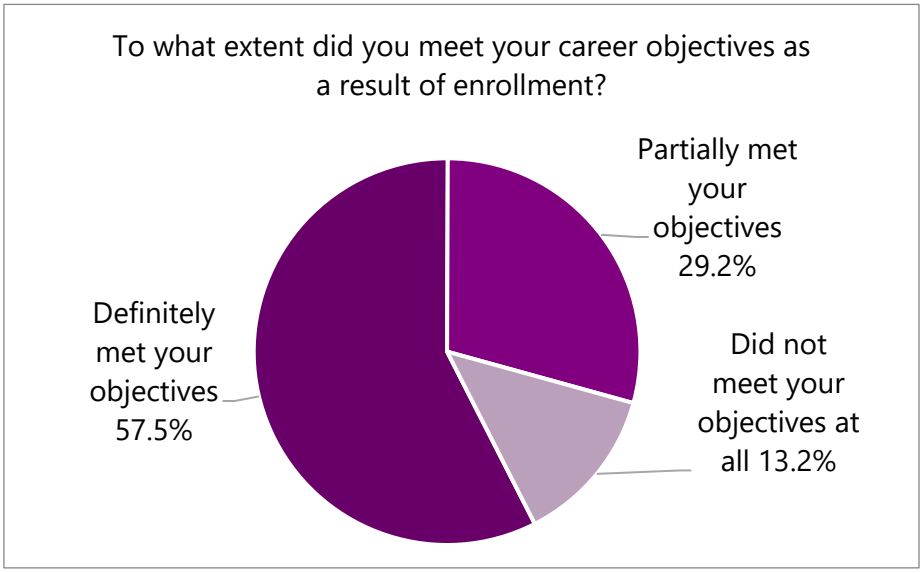
The top reasons participants enrolled in a WIOA Youth program were for job search assistance (77%) and to improve skills for a new job (77%). Participants also wanted to gain workplace experience (69%) and receive on-the-job training (55%).

Satisfaction

WIOA Youth participants reported high levels of satisfaction across nearly every aspect of their program. They were most satisfied with the in-person instruction of the program (95% were somewhat or very satisfied) and the on-the-job training (OJT - 94%). Respondents also rated the quality of online instruction highly (89%) and were satisfied with the program overall (90%). Students were marginally less satisfied with the usefulness of the training program to their career (84%), the equipment used (84%) and the quality of the teaching (82%).

Career objectives

Participants were asked, "To what extent did you meet your career objectives as a result of enrollment?" Fifty-eight percent of respondents said that they definitely met their objectives, 29% partially met their objectives, and 13 percent did not meet their objectives at all.



Seventy-four 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 needs[1]

	Services Needed			Total Unmet Need[1]
	Of entire population	Of those who needed services: Received Services	Of those who received services: Needs Met	Of entire population
Career or job counseling	38.9%	80.5%	92.2%	8.3%
Assistance with resume writing	57.3%	88.9%	96.9%	7.3%
Learning how to search for a job	53.7%	84.5%	94.9%	11.1%
Job interviewing techniques	51.9%	89.0%	96.5%	7.5%
Information on job openings	64.9%	93.0%	94.8%	6.3%
Appropriate work attire and work-related tools	50.0%	94.3%	93.3%	4.5%
Childcare assistance	4.6%	60.0%	100.0%	1.8%
Transportation assistance	27.7%	74.2%	100.0%	7.1%
Housing assistance	10.3%	45.5%	100.0%	5.6%
Financial assistance	35.5%	74.4%	90.6%	10.0%
Information about government assistance	21.5%	61.9%	85.7%	9.3%
Disability services	6.7%	42.9%	100.0%	3.8%

Services needed

The services that were needed the most by WIOA Youth participants s were:

- Information on job openings – 65% reported needing information on job openings
- Assistance with resume writing – 57%
- Learning how to search for a job- 54%

Services needed least were:

- Disability services – 7% reported needing disability services
- Childcare assistance – 5%
- Housing assistance – 10%

[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 Youth respondents who needed services received them. However, some services, such as childcare assistance and disability services, had much lower percentages of participants receiving services, under 50%.

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, housing, and transportation assistance to 86% of those who needed and received disability services.

Unmet needs

The top unmet needs[2] for respondents were:

- Learning how to search for a job - 11%
- Financial assistance - 10%

On-the-job training

Fifty-five percent of WIOA Youth 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. WIOA Youth participants most often received training in:

- Teamwork skills – 46% received training
    - 92% said the training improved their teamwork skills some or a lot.
- Work habits – 44% received training
    - 86% said the training improved their work habits some or a lot.
- Communication skills – 42% received training
    - 92% said the training improved their communication 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

Forty-six percent of participants would like to further improve their skills. Among those who wanted to improve their skills, the skills participants most want to improve are:

- Leadership or management - 76%
- Operation of machinery or equipment other than computers - 71%
- Communication - 69%
- Using computers – 62%
- Decision making – 61%

Prior employment

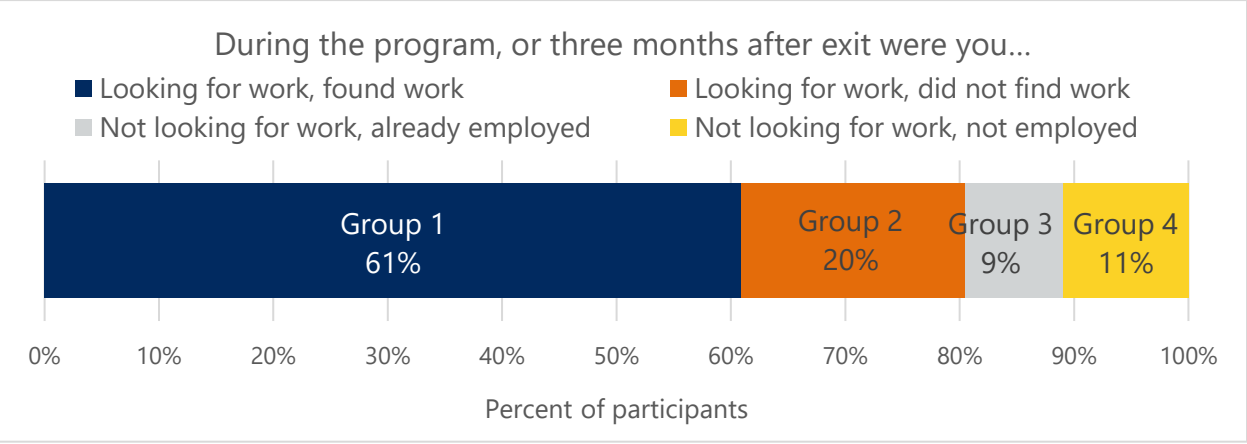
Thirty-six percent of WIOA Youth were still attending high school in the three months prior to enrolling in the program. Thirty-nine percent of WIOA Youth respondents did any work in the three months prior to enrolling in their WIOA Youth program. Of those who were employed in the three months prior to enrolling in their WIOA Youth program, 8% reported that the training program was very related to that job, 23% said it was somewhat related, 21% said it was a little related, and 49% said it was not related at all.

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

- 85% of participants said it was their primary source of income
- 27% said it was with a temporary employment agency

Employment post-training

WIOA Youth participants 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.

- **61% looked for and found work (Group 1)**
    - Relatedness to job:
        - 35% said their job was extremely related to their program
        - 25% said it was moderately related
        - 15% said it was slightly related
        - 25% said it was not at all related
    - 88% were somewhat or very satisfied with their job responsibilities
        - Satisfaction was lower for salary (69%), advancement opportunities (58%), and overall satisfaction with the job (58%)
    - 40% said the skills learned in their program were extremely useful for the job.
- **20% looked for work, but did not find work (Group 2)**
    - The most common barriers to employment:
        - 67% said there were few jobs available in their geographic area
        - 64% responded that there were few jobs available in their line of work
- **9% were already employed and not looking for work (Group 3)**
- **11% were not looking for work and not employed (Group 4)**
    - 69% were still enrolled in school or a training program.

Conclusion

Overall, the survey findings indicate that WIOA Youth participants are highly satisfied with their program experiences and value the skills, training, and employment support they receive. High satisfaction with in-person instruction, on-the-job training, and online instruction demonstrates that the program provides valuable services that help youth prepare for the workforce. At the same time, the findings identify opportunities to further strengthen outcomes, particularly in job-search skills, financial support, career development, and access to work-based learning.

Moving forward, continued investment in on-the-job training, individualized career services, and supportive services can help address remaining barriers and better prepare youth for sustainable employment. Expanding these opportunities will allow the program to build on its existing strengths while helping more participants achieve their career goals and develop the skills needed for long-term success.