Assistive Technology and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

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Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

WIOA authorizes and brings together the following core federal programs under the workforce development system:

1. Employment and training services for adults, dislocated workers and youth
2. Wagner-Peyser employment services - One-Stop employment services delivery system
3. Adult education and literacy programs
4. Vocational Rehabilitation state grant programs that assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining employment
WIOA: Employment

❖ The purpose behind WIOA is to find more effective ways to help people return to the workforce who face barriers.
❖ An important piece if this legislation is to increase the number of people with disabilities working in our communities.
❖ In 2015, 34.9% of people with disabilities in the US ages 18-64 living in the community were employed compared to 76.0% for people without disabilities - a gap of 41.1 percentage points.
What is WIOA?

WIOA is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our workforce system and assist youth and adults with significant barriers to:

- Enter high-quality jobs and careers
- Assist employers to hire and retain skilled workers
- Match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.
WIOA Implementation and Legal Requirements

- Signed into law July 2014
- Some portions went into effect immediately
- Portions pertaining to school services became effective on July 22, 2016
- States are required to file state plans to identify need and action:
- Your State Plan under WIOA can be found on this website: [https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html)
WIOA changes

The WIOA transferred these three programs to the Administration of Community Living to increase opportunities for inclusion, social integration, employment, and independent living for people of all ages:

1. **The Independent Living Services programs.**
   - Maximize the leadership, empowerment, independence, and productivity of individuals with disabilities and to integrate these individuals into the mainstream of American society.

2. **The Assistive Technology Act programs.**
   - Exist to improve state’s abilities to access assistive technology for people with disabilities.

3. **The National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research (NIDILRR).**
   - NIDILRR’s mission is to expand society’s capacity to provide opportunities and accommodation for its citizens with disabilities. The Institute does this by funding research and promoting practices to improve the capabilities of people with disabilities.
Assistive Technology and WIOA

- Broadens research scope of the Rehabilitation Research and Training Centers to include assistive technology as a research priority and also prioritizes training rehabilitation professionals on assistive technology.

- Additionally, the law states that the centers should be run in collaboration with a university but also providers of assistive technology devices, and assistive technology services.
WIOA Sec. 412 and 414

✓ The State plan shall have the designated State unit, and the lead agency and implementing entity (if any), develop working relationships and enter into agreements for the coordination of their activities, including the referral of individuals with disabilities to programs and activities.

✓ Vocational rehabilitation services provided may also include the following:“(8) The establishment, development, or improvement of assistive technology demonstration, loan, reutilization, or financing programs in coordination with activities to promote access to assistive technology for individuals with disabilities and employers.

✓ The Administration for Community Living shall ensure that programs funded under this Act will address the needs of individuals with disabilities of all ages, whether the individuals will use the assistive technology to obtain or maintain employment, to obtain education, or for other reasons.
Assistive Technology Loan Libraries

- Universities, Agencies, Schools, and Independent Living Centers maintain loan libraries. Are you accessing them?
- Example: http://www.atlclibrary.org/
- Find your AT Contact: https://www.ataporg.org/programs
American Job Centers and WIOA

- Report on accessibility of our US Job Centers for people with disabilities:
  - Extent to which facilities are designed, constructed, or altered so that they are accessible and usable by people with disabilities.
  - Extent to which Center staff and partner agencies are able to communicate with people with disabilities as effectively as with others.
  - Extent to which people with disabilities have access to the full range of services available to all AJC customers regardless of disability.
American Job Centers and WIOA

- 63% were “partially” accessible presenting barriers to services for people with disabilities
- Physical and Communication accessibility were found in majority of sites but...
- Programmatic accessibility (only 37%) is the greatest barrier.
  - Read about the recommendations in the 2017 study
Centers for Independent Living: WIOA

- Find the CIL near you: https://www.acl.gov/programs/aging-and-disability-networks/centers-independent-living

- WIOA added a new 5th Core Service for CILs with 3 components of transition:
  - Facilitate the transition of individuals with significant disabilities from nursing homes and other institutions to home and community-based settings.
  - Provide assistance, services and supports to individuals with significant disabilities who self-identify as being at risk of entering institutions;
  - Facilitate the transition of youth with significant disabilities who are no longer receiving services under section 614(d) of IDEA.
  - Assist with transition services for youth prior to post-secondary life to prepare youth for a successful transition into adult life.
Pre-Employment Transition Services (PRE-ETS)

Title IV Section 422

“From the funds reserved under section 110(d), and any funds made available from State, local, or private funding sources each State shall ensure that the designated State unit in collaboration with the local educational agencies involved, shall provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services for all students with disabilities in need of such services who are eligible or potentially eligible for services under this title.”
WIOA and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

School District’s implementation of WIOA for students 14-21 is the Pre-Employment Transition Services or referred to as Pre-ETS.

Definitions:

- **Students** with disabilities - attending school or an Educational Program - ages 14-21
- **Youth** with disabilities – not in school/educational program – ages 14-24
Focus on Youth

- The outcome of Pre-ETS emphasizes “Competitive Integrated Employment” for students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities. These outcomes will be the expected norm vs. transitioning into segregated settings (Community Rehabilitation Programs or “sheltered workshops”)

- WIOA reinforces the ongoing interagency collaboration between Vocational Rehabilitation and the schools to serve youth in transition

- WIOA supports Employer Engagement with VR agencies and schools

- New focus for Workforce Investment programs to work with out-of-school youth
WIOA Law

WIOA requires Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to reserve not less than **15 percent** of the Federal VR allotment to provide, or arrange for the provision of, pre-employment transition services for students with disabilities transitioning from school to postsecondary education programs and employment in competitive integrated settings, and that these services be coordinated with local educational agencies (LEA).
Congressional Intent Youth in Transition

- VR has an enhanced role to serve youth earlier in high school;
- Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) must be provided by schools in collaboration with VR for youth in school.
- Assistive/rehabilitation technology and auxiliary aids and services provided through Pre-ETS in Wis.: [https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dvr/pdf/dvr_18333_p.pdf](https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dwd/publications/dvr/pdf/dvr_18333_p.pdf)
Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS)

5 Required Activities

1) **Job exploration** counseling

2) **Work-based learning** experiences

3) Counseling on opportunities for transition or post-secondary educational or higher education programs

4) **Workplace readiness** training to develop Social Skills and Independent Living (home and community)

5) Instruction in **self-advocacy**, which may include peer mentoring
What are these Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) that VR and LEA’s need to collaborate?

Direct Services/Required Activities
(as outlined in 34 CFR 361.48(a)(2))
WINTAC’s Breakdown on Pre-ETS

▪ Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center

▪ WINTAC is the technical assistance center for the Department of Education in Washington DC to disseminate information about WIOA

▪ Working together with State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies and their partners to effectively implement the requirements of WIOA

▪ Great resources about WIOA and Pre-ETS on this website http://www.wintac.org/
Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) 5 Required Activities:

1) **Job exploration** counseling
2) **Work-based learning** experiences
3) Counseling on opportunities for transition or post-secondary educational or higher education programs
4) **Workplace readiness** training to develop Social Skills and Independent Living (home and community)
5) Instruction in **self-advocacy**, which may include peer mentoring
Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) 9 Authorized Activities:

Authorized Activities (as outlined in 34 CFR 361.48(a)(3)) *that may be provided only after a state has determined that funds remain after provision of the required and coordination activities.*

1. Implement effective strategies that increase independent living and inclusion in their communities and competitive integrated workplaces;

2. Develop and improve strategies for individuals with intellectual and significant disabilities to live independently, participate in postsecondary education experiences, and obtain and retain competitive integrated employment;

3. Provide training to vocational rehabilitation counselors, school transition staff, and others supporting students with disabilities;

4. Disseminate information on innovative, effective, and efficient approaches to implement pre-employment transition services;
Pre-employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) 9 Authorized Activities:

5. Coordinate activities with transition services provided by local educational agencies under IDEA;

6. Apply evidence-based findings to improve policy, procedure, practice, and the preparation of personnel;

7. Develop model transition demonstration projects;

8. Establish or support multistate or regional partnerships that involve States, local educational agencies, designated State units, developmental disability agencies, private businesses, or others; and

9. Disseminate information and strategies to improve the transition to postsecondary activities of those who are traditionally unserved.
1. Job exploration counseling

- Vocational Interest Inventory
- Current Labor Market
- In-Demand Industries
- Guest Speakers
- Resumes and applications
- Job training programs

- Career Fair
- Career Awareness
- Career Qualifications
- Matching Skills with Jobs
- Community Mapping
2) Work-based learning experiences

❖ Assessment of Work Relevant Skills
❖ Using a Checklist
❖ Task Analysis
❖ Systematic Instruction
❖ Independence at Work
❖ Fading Support
❖ Informational Interviews

❖ Apprenticeships
❖ Internships
❖ Job Shadowing
❖ Work Experiences
❖ Career Mentorship
❖ Connecting with Employers
❖ Tours
3) Counseling on opportunities for transition or post-secondary educational or higher education programs

- Transition Planning
- Learning Style Assessment
- Career Pathways
- Post-Secondary Options
- Accommodations
- Peer Tutoring
- ADA
- Personal care needs

- Navigate Community Services
- Creating a Summary of Performance (SOP)
- Assistive Technology Profile
- College Tours
- Applications
- Financial Aid
4) Workplace readiness training to develop Social Skills and Independent Living

- Employability Skills
- Independent Living Skills
- Job Seeking Skills
- Civic Responsibility
- Critical Thinking
- Financial Literacy
- Soft Skills
- Home and Community Safety
- Interpersonal Skills
- Sexual/Reproductive Health
- Orientation/Mobility Assessment
- Social Security Benefits
5) Instruction in self-advocacy, peer mentoring

- What Is a Disability?
- Self-Determination
- What Is an IEP?
- Understanding My Disability
- Writing Goals
- Peer Mentoring
- Behavioral Supports
- Student Led IEP
- Knowing My Rights
- Monitoring My Progress
- Problem Solving
- Making Decisions
- Learning Styles Inventory
VR funding under Pre-ETS can support Assistive Technology for employment outcomes

Job Centers support of AT through mandated accessibility


Independent Living Centers mandated to serve youth transitioning into the adult world needing AT supports

- [https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/cils/](https://mn.gov/deed/job-seekers/disabilities/partners/cils/)
#2 Work Based Learning Experiences

- AT and adaptive aids to provide more independence at the workplace

Cue Time Card

Personal Talker
# 3 Counseling on opportunities for transition or post-secondary educational or higher education programs

- AT support for training programs, certificates, apprenticeships, associate and bachelor degrees
- Develop AT profile of needed modifications and accommodations for education, training, and employment
Assistive Technology and Pre-ETS

❖ #4 Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living
  ✓ Identify and learn how to use assistive technology in the workplace
  ✓ Develop individual transportation plans and learn necessary mobility skills
WIOA Requirements - 511

• Schools cannot contract with providers for the purpose of purchasing transition services that include training in subminimum wage employment. (14c certification)
  - Sub-minimum wage providers include: sheltered workshops, enclaves, traveling work crews, summer programs in a 14 c business, private businesses that pay sub-minimum wage.
  - Schools can contract with 14c providers for the purpose of purchasing transition services that are community based and paid at least minimum wage or above.
WIOA Strengthens Collaboration with DVR

- Youth 14-24 can no longer go directly into employment paying a sub-minimum wage typically in a facility based prevocational setting (sheltered workshop) or enclave/work crew
- WIOA requires working with DVR first to place the youth in a Competitive Integrated Employment setting
- Example: Wisconsin DVR states, “Only after a variety of trial temporary work opportunities, over a sufficient period of time result in clear and convincing evidence that the individual is not capable of benefiting from vocational rehabilitation services, can the decision be made to close the case due to the severity of the individual's disability. No one assessment strategy alone can result in clear and convincing evidence.”
Section 511- After placement in subminimum wage Prevocational Program

- If a youth chooses subminimum wage employment (14C certificate holder business) after they have completed all the required steps and did not succeed in reaching their competitive integrated employment goal, they will be provided a review every 6 months for the first year of their employment in this setting, and annually thereafter for the duration of their employment in a subminimum wage setting.

- All workers receiving subminimum wages will receive career counseling and information about competitive integrated work opportunities and support services.

- 14 C holder must provide and retain documentation of these reviews (VR or Department of Labor could request)
Examples of Students on the Job

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K9elYoOEhgc&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tK8ScMBbwno&feature=youtu.be

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ep5BjxXHPs

“Creating a Path to Employment” guide:

The Path to Employment is different for each student/youth. Schools and VR, working together with students and families, can facilitate successful employment outcomes.
Other Transition Programs

- **Project SEARCH**
  - For students in intellectual/cognitive disabilities
  - Final year of high school, students are in a classroom within the business
  - Full immersion in the business completing 3-4 rotations/internships within the company to learn job skills in a real world setting and gain confidence
  - [www.projectsearch.us](http://www.projectsearch.us)

- **PROMISE Demonstration Social Security Grant**
  - 5 year grant with 8 states for students 14-16 years old on Supplemental Security Income (SSI) to develop skills toward Competitive Integrated Employment. Check out each state’s outcomes!
  - [https://promisewi.com/](https://promisewi.com/)

- **Let’s Get To Work** – national grant to support school districts in Wisconsin to improve community employment outcomes for students. Part of Partnerships in Employment (PIE) national project.
  - [http://www.letsgettoworkwi.org/](http://www.letsgettoworkwi.org/)
  - [http://partnershipsinemployment.com/](http://partnershipsinemployment.com/)
WIOA Resources

Technical Resource Center:
▶ http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services

Mobile Apps resources on Wintac Website

Department of Education:

Department of Education:
▶ https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/publications/wioa-changes-to-rehab-act.pdf

Department of Labor – Youth Services under WIOA:
▶ https://www.doleta.gov/youth_services/

List of WIOA state contacts:
▶ https://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/statecon.cfm
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