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Where are we headed?

- What does WIOA require?
- How can the broad use of WIOA benefit youth and young adults with disabilities?
- Understanding key relationships.
- What are the policy opportunities for growth and collaboration?



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

Title I – Workforce Development

Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation



WIOA Title I

- The Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Grant Program provides formula funding to states to support employment training and related services to unemployed and underemployed individuals.
- Provides opportunities to meet the career and employment needs of out-of-school and in-school youth and young adults (Y&YA) ages 14 to 24 who have one or more barriers to employment through comprehensive youth services.

WIOA Title I – Population

Y&YA who are...

- Experiencing homelessness.
- In the foster care system, or those who have aged out.
- In an out-of-home placement.
- Low-income, and require additional support to initiate or complete an educational program or secure and maintain employment
- Economic need.
- Basic skills deficient, and others.
- Those with disabilities.

WIOA Title I – Who is served?

- Eighty-five percent of youth under Title I are eligible for services based on income.
- Y&YAD is a sample of this group, representing 19.5 percent of those served under Title I.

WIOA Title IV – Vocational Rehabilitation (VR)

- Emphasis on students: 15% of Vocational Rehabilitation funding must be expended on Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) for Students.
- VR Eligibility:
 - Individuals must have a physical or mental impairment that results in a substantial impediment to employment and who require and can benefit from VR services to achieve employment and maximize career goals.
 - Pre-ETS: Only for Students.

Moving from Systems to Practice

Activity



The Partnership Map: Who Is in Your Workforce Ecosystem?

- Think about your local workforce system. Who are the Title I workforce partners you currently interact with?
- Where are your strongest workforce relationships?
- Where do VR clients fall through the cracks?
- Which workforce partners don't understand VR services yet?

Collaboration in Action

Frey's Collaboration Continuum



From Networking to *Integrated Systems*

Assessing Relationships

Level	Description	Key Characteristics	Example in VR & Workforce Partnerships
Networking	Organizations exchange information for mutual benefit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Informal communication• Minimal time commitment• No shared decision-making	VR staff occasionally share information about services with American Job Center staff.
Cooperation	Organizations assist each other to achieve their own goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some coordination of activities• Short-term interactions• Limited resource sharing	Workforce staff refer individuals with disabilities to VR and VR refers clients to workforce training programs.
Coordination	Organizations intentionally align activities to reduce duplication and improve services.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Defined roles• Formal communication channels• Some shared planning	VR counselors attend workforce partner meetings and coordinate service plans with Title I programs.

Assessing Relationships (2)

Level	Description	Key Characteristics	Example in VR & Workforce Partnerships
Coalition	Share ideas; share resources; prioritized communication; you have a voice in some decision making	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared ideas on planning • Aligned strategies • Individual accountability 	VR and workforce design their programs to ensure youth can participate in both.
Collaboration	Organizations share resources, responsibility, and decision-making to achieve shared goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared planning • Joint strategies • Shared accountability 	VR and workforce partners jointly design OJT programs or integrated employment initiatives.
Integration	Systems are fully aligned with shared structures, funding, and service delivery.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shared infrastructure • Joint funding • Unified service model 	Workforce and VR systems operate integrated teams serving customers with shared case management and outcomes.

Scenario

Malik is 17 years old and recently exited the foster care system after several placements over the past few years. Because of frequent moves and instability, Malik fell behind in school and eventually stopped attending school at age 16. He has not re-enrolled and currently does not have a high school diploma or GED. Malik has a documented learning disability and ADHD, which make reading and focusing in structured classroom environments difficult. While he is capable and motivated at times, he often struggles with organization, completing tasks, and managing frustration. Last year, Malik was involved in a minor justice offense related to shoplifting and spent several weeks in a juvenile detention program. Since then, he has had probation requirements, which sometimes conflict with potential work schedules. Now living temporarily with a relative, Malik wants to find a job so he can earn money and become more independent. However, several challenges make employment difficult.

Serving Overlapping Populations

- Which agencies should be involved in supporting Malik?
- What would a “warm handoff” between systems look like?
- Which services should happen first to stabilize Malik’s situation?
- Where might the system currently break down for someone like Malik?

Where do your partnerships fall?

Partner	Current Level	Desired Level
Workforce Board	Coordination	Collaboration
Foster Care Agency	Networking	Coordination
Reentry Programs	Cooperation	Collaboration

WIOA

Policy Considerations & Promising Practices



Policy Considerations (1)

- 1** Leveraging other federal initiatives across state workforce agencies to drive innovation at the local level.
- 2** Enhancing collaboration among the state and local workforce, education, and community organizations to prioritize Y&YAD.

Policy Considerations (2)

- 3** Building specific blended service approaches with VR agencies to enhance access to services for Y&YAD.
- 4** Supporting approaches in YouthBuild to create opportunities for Y&YAD.

Leveraging other Federal Initiatives

- Opportunities exist in **pilot and demonstration projects** funded by the U.S. Department of Labor - ODEP, the Social Security Administration, and the Rehabilitation Services Administration.
- Identifying the following models that build the connections of Title I workforce:
 - Integrated Resource Teams.
 - Career Pathways.
 - Mentoring.

Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) – Pilots for Title I Youth – Other States

Employment Transition Model Demonstration Grants:

Support youth and young adults with disabilities to access WIOA Title I services in combination with other available WIOA services and community supports.

- Kansas Department of Commerce
- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development
- New York Department of Labor
- Connecticut Department of Labor

Enhancing Collaboration

- Exploring opportunities to work with community partners such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, juvenile justice, foster care, and homeless shelters.
- Out-of-school youth historically present a challenge for the workforce system.
- Look to Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP):
 - Initiated by the Annie E. Casey Foundation.
 - Y&YAD ages 14 to 25 who are in foster care or involved in the criminal justice system or who are homeless.
 - 10 local partnerships in Alaska, Arizona, California, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska and New York.

Building Specific Blended Approaches

- A proactive approach to blending methods is critical in states where the VR partner operates under an Order of Selection.
- Maryland Division of VR and the Community College of Baltimore County serve Y&YAD with cognitive, developmental, and mental health disabilities by providing academic, pre-vocational, social, and independent living skills.

Job Corps

- 175 DOL-funded YouthBuild programs operate in 41 states, serving approximately 6,000 youth annually. This indicates a growing focus on Y&YAD.
- Heart of Oregon Corps has expanded access to YouthBuild and other programs, such as Camp LEAD, a week-long outdoor paid work experience, to provide a wide range of opportunities for Y&YAD to develop their skills.

Additional Best Practices (1)

- Frequent, consistent engagement and communication with students and families
- Engaging directly in schools
- Delivering summer and weekend programming
- Contracting with more qualified youth/student providers to fill gaps/serve specific populations
- Developing engaging activities (hands-on & outdoor activities)
- Exposing students to varying people and experiences (including role models)

Additional Best Practices (2)

- Intentionally grouping students
- Letting students direct their services
- Providing/connecting to wraparound supports
- Developing close relationships with schools
- Coordinating and aligning with other entities (e.g., schools, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act [WIOA] partners, juvenile justice)
- Teaming around students

Technical Assistance

Both VRTAC and CAPE-Youth provides VR and workforce development professionals with **no-cost technical assistance (TA)**:

- 1. Universal:** Implementing the Guideposts for Success.
 - Ongoing activities and deliverables, such as publications, webinars, and emerging research.
- 2. Targeted:** Policy development and best practices.
 - Research requests, virtual meetings, and in-person state visits to support goals.
- 3. Intensive:** Partnership and collaboration.
 - Specific requests for professional development to review, devise, and/or develop internal structures and evaluate ongoing needs.



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