

Major Transformation Coming to Workforce Services in Iowa and Across the Country: The Federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) of 2014

ABOUT WIOA

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) will transform workforce services as we know them today. Formerly known as WIA (Workforce Investment Act), WIOA is the largest single source of federal funding for workforce services. Signed into law on July 22, 2014, many of the Act's provisions are yet to be clarified, and, thus, their full impact remains unknown. The federal Department of Labor expects to have rules drafted by Spring 2015 with implementation to begin in July 2015. While state plans will be submitted in January of 2016, states should expect at least a year from July 2015 in order to transition from the current structure under WIA to the requirements set out in WIOA.

While WIA seeks to connect individuals to jobs, the WIOA focuses on connecting individuals to *careers*. The new legislation puts in place supports that prepare job seekers, dislocated workers, and youth in order to match them with jobs and/or training that will lead to better employment in the future. While this may seem like a long-term outlook, there are many implications in the short-term for workforce, education, and business. Thus, it is critical that the state fully understand the key changes under the new federal law and plan accordingly.

KEY CHANGES IN WIOA

- **Institutionalizes a single set of outcome metrics at the federal level**
 - Provides for comparisons across programs and systems at all levels of service and across regions and states
 - Expands data tracking requirements among all partners
 - Expands requirements for data sharing among stakeholders and requires such data be accessible to everyone
 - Creates challenges for the capacity of current data systems
- **Intensifies focus on industry sector partnerships**
 - With a greater focus on career pathways, industry sector partnerships will be more important than ever
 - Industry sector partnerships will have significant input on workforce strategies



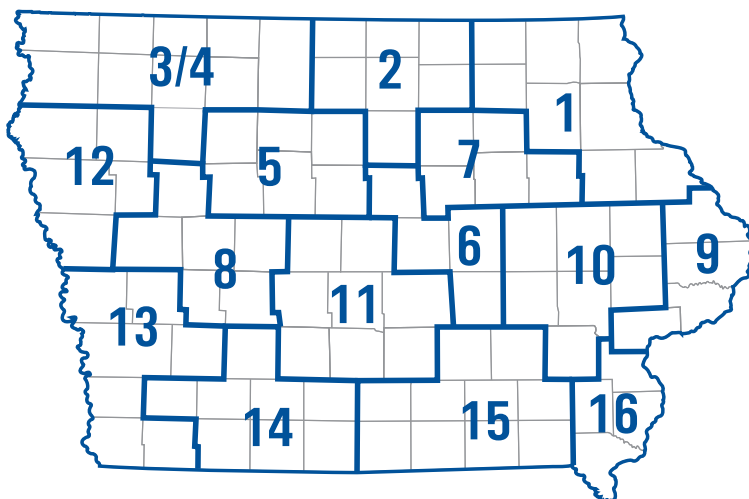
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- **Changes the composition of local boards but maintains a regional system that ensures local decision-making to meet local needs quickly and efficiently**
 - Boards will have greater responsibility to be engaged in the decision-making within their region
 - More extensive employer engagement will be required
 - WIA sequence of services is eliminated; services must be available whenever needed, requiring greater accessibility within regions
- **Three-quarters of WIOA youth funding must be targeted to out-of-school youth**
 - Focuses more resources on harder-to-reach youth disengaged from the education system
 - Implementation of this provision depends significantly on the definition of “out-of-school” youth

IN ANTICIPATION OF WIOA IMPLEMENTATION, THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS ARE RECOMMENDED IN IOWA:

1. Ensure timely and cost effective services and training through maintenance of the current regional workforce infrastructure.
2. Continue to fund Pathways for Academic Career Employment (PACE), Gap Tuition Assistance, and Adult Basic Education (ABE).
3. Require individuals receiving Unemployment Insurance to complete a standard skills assessment in-person or online to increase timeliness of re-employment.
4. Adopt a graduated eligibility structure for child care assistance so individuals with children are not financially discouraged from taking employment for which they are the most qualified.
5. Maintain state investment in workforce and community college partnerships that ensure access to high-quality, low-cost training that meet local workforce and industry needs.
6. Encourage further expansion of Adult Basic Education (ABE) and workforce partnerships.

Workforce Development Regions



ABOUT AIWP

The Association of Iowa Workforce Partners (AIWP) is a statewide organization of regional Workforce Investment Act partners that provide specialized workforce services to Iowans, including hard-to-place, at-risk, low-income adults, low-income youth, and dislocated and unemployed individuals. The mission of AIWP is to advance the quality and availability of workforce services in Iowa through education, advocacy, and professional development. AIWP members efficiently serve both jobseekers and employers through a regional system, matching Iowans with training and skills to meet the unique needs of local employers.