



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Implementation Study: Title I and Title III Core Programs

SUMMARY

In 2016, the Chief Evaluation Office partnered with the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) to fund contractors Mathematica and Social Policy Research Associates to conduct the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Implementation Study: Title I and Title III Core Programs*. The study aims to evaluate and examine how states are implementing changes to the core workforce programs authorized under Title I (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth) and Title III (Employment Services) of [WIOA](#), as well as the role of WIOA in stakeholder integration among programs authorized under Titles II (Adult Education and Literacy) and IV (Vocational Rehabilitation). To understand the key requirements under the law and how they were implemented, the researchers reviewed related regulations, guidance, and technical assistance and analyzed program data on youth and adult participants.

This Department of Labor-funded study is a requirement of WIOA and a result of the annual process to determine the Department's research priorities. It contributes to the growing labor evidence base to inform [employment and training](#) programs and policies and addresses Department strategic goals and priorities.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- **Youth Services:** Respondents from the states and local areas visited reported they successfully met or were on track to meet the requirement to spend 75 percent of program funds on out-of-school youth. Overall, however, the program data showed a decrease in the number of participants served and in the length of time most youth participants spent in the program.
- **Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Employer Services:** State and local program respondents reported that WIOA's changes to the Adult and Dislocated worker programs, built upon priorities in prior law, resulted in mostly incremental changes to service delivery and partnerships. State workforce board and program administrators reported that the emphasis on career pathways in WIOA aligned well with their efforts to collaborate with other partners, and several local respondents reported that they designed new and improved processes for referral, intake, and staffing. Respondents in two-thirds of the local areas visited reported that they had developed cross-program business services teams.
- **New Requirements for American Job Center Systems:** Of the 28 local areas interviewed, 21 had competitively procured one-stop operators as a result of the new requirement. Cost sharing, required under WIOA and codified through





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Memoranda of Understanding and Infrastructure Agreements, were reported to increase the number of partners making financial contributions to AJCs among the study sites, while also creating new challenges for cultivating new partners.

- **Governance and Planning:** State board respondents reported that WIOA requirements resulted in both more strategic planning and more “administrative” tasks for workforce boards, and varying changes in the size of the boards. Respondents also reported increased connections to education partners at the state and local level. Local board staff reported that the emphasis on career pathways at the state level encouraged local boards, and their staff, to strengthen the connections with the K-12 and higher education.
- **Performance Accountability, Eligible Training Providers, and Evaluation Requirements:** At the time of the site visits, respondents at both the state and local levels reported challenges and concerns related to WIOA’s primary performance indicators, though ETA provided extensive guidance and multiple technical assistance subsequent to those visits. Respondents from ten states indicated that it had been difficult to obtain performance data from Eligible Training Providers. Respondents in four states cited challenges in meeting WIOA’s evaluation requirements, including lack of staff time, limited resources, and a lack of understanding of how to conduct high-quality evaluations.

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PARTNER AGENCY: Employment and Training Administration

SPONSOR: Chief Evaluation Office

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