

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT
OVERVIEW of TITLE II: ADULT EDUCATION AND LITERACY
July 22, 2014

THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

On July 22, 2014, President Barack Obama signed into law the WIOA, which revises and reauthorizes the *Workforce Investment Act of 1998* (WIA) after more than a decade. The new law, which was a bipartisan, bicameral effort to support innovative strategies to keep pace with changing economic conditions, seeks to improve coordination between the primary federal programs that support employment services, workforce development, adult education and vocational rehabilitation activities.

The new law encourages alignment between the four core programs within the law. The core programs consist of: (1) the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs administered by the Department of Labor (DOL) under Title I; (2) the Adult Education and Literacy program administered by the Department of Education (ED) under Title II; (3) the Wagner-Peyser Act employment services program administered by DOL under Title III; and (4) the programs under Title I of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act administered by ED under Title IV.

The following highlights significant changes related to the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) of Title II, which provides foundation skills and English literacy instruction to nearly 1.8 million individuals each year.

HIGHLIGHTS OF WIOA REFORMS FOR ADULT EDUCATION

Increases coordination of core programs through submission of a Unified State Plan or Combined State Plan: *The WIOA requires States to prepare a single plan for the core programs that includes the strategic vision and goals of the State and the operational elements that support the four-year strategy.*

- The plan includes AEFLA-specific elements, including how the State intends to: align content standards for adult education with state-adopted academic standards; fund local activities using the considerations for grants and contracts, programs for corrections education, English literacy and civics education, and integrated education and training; use funds to carry out State leadership activities; and assess the quality of adult education providers.
- States may also submit a Combined State Plan that would include other Federal programs, such as the Perkins Career and Technical Education programs.
- States will be required to submit unified plans under the new law by March 2016.

Establishes Common Performance Measures across Core Programs: *The WIOA includes six primary indicators of performance that will be negotiated with each State by the Secretaries of Education and Labor as part of the State plan.*

- Performance measures include percentage of program participants in unsubsidized employment during the second and fourth quarter after exit; median earnings; percentage

of participants who obtain a postsecondary credential or diploma during participation or within one year after exit; participants achieving measurable skill gains; and effectiveness in serving employers.

- States will negotiate new performance indicators as part of the Unified State Plan in March 2016.

Strengthens alignment between adult education, postsecondary education, and employers:

WIOA recognizes that the core purpose of adult education is to prepare individuals with the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in postsecondary education and the workforce.

- The Act expands the purpose of adult education to emphasize that activities should increase an individual's ability to transition to postsecondary education and obtain employment.
- Promotes the integration of adult education with occupational education and training, as well as development of career pathways systems; authorizes the use of funds for "integrated education and training" and "workforce preparation activities"; and clarifies that integrated English literacy and civics education programs may provide workforce training.
- Encourages activities provided in collaboration with employers.

Supports educational and career advancement for incarcerated individuals: *WIOA encourages a range of education and job training activities to promote successful reentry and reduce recidivism.*

- The WIOA increases the percentage of funding for States to use for correctional education to not more than 20 percent under the new Act.
- Funds may be used for integrated education and training, career pathways, concurrent enrollment, peer tutoring, and transition to re-entry initiatives and other services with the goal of reducing recidivism.

Encourages establishment of a high-quality local adult education delivery system: *The WIOA amends the considerations States are to use in awarding grants and contracts to local program providers.*

- There are 13 considerations States are required to use in providing funding to local programs; these include an increased emphasis on alignment of activities with regional needs identified in local plans under Title I; serving individuals with disabilities; instructional activities based on rigorous research; effective use of technology; activities that promote integrated education and training; and coordination with education, training, employers, and social service providers to promote career pathways.

Supports professional development opportunities and innovative models to enhance adult education programs: *The WIOA adds four new required leadership activities to be supported with State leadership funds.*

- WIOA encourages activities to support alignment among core programs to implement the State plan strategy, including the development of career pathways; establishment of high quality professional development programs to improve instruction; technical assistance based on rigorous research; and evaluation and dissemination of information about promising practices within the state.
- States may also use funds for several allowable activities related to instructional technology, models for integrated education and training and career pathways, and support to eligible providers in achieving performance goals, among other activities.

Promotes activities to improve the quality of adult education programs: *The WIOA is committed to ensuring that resources support activities that better prepare adult students for postsecondary and career success.*

- The WIOA reserves 2 percent of AEFLA funds (not to exceed \$15 million) to carry out national leadership activities.
- The Act requires the Secretary to support four mandatory technical assistance activities, including support for implementing the new common performance measures; conducting rigorous research and evaluations; and carrying out an independent evaluation of adult education and literacy activities every four years.

Codifies the integrated English Literacy and Civics education (IEL/CE) program: *The WIOA reinforces support for IEL/CE programs through codification and enhanced services for individuals to effectively participate in education, work, and civic opportunities.*

- The WIOA codifies the authority to carry out the Integrated English Literacy and Civics Education (IEL/CE) program, in which 12 percent of AEFLA funds (after reserving funds for national leadership activities) will be reserved to carry out the IEL/CE program. The allocation formula remains the same.
- Programs should be designed to: (1) prepare adults who are English language learners for, and place them in, unsubsidized employment in in-demand industries and occupations that lead to economic self-sufficiency; and (2) integrate with the local workforce development system and its functions to carry out the program.

EFFECTIVE DATES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

The Act takes effect on July 1, 2015, the first full program year after enactment, unless otherwise noted. ED, in coordination with DOL, will issue further guidance on the timeframes for implementation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

ED, in coordination with DOL and the Department of Health and Human Services, will be working together to ensure that states, local areas, and stakeholders are prepared for implementation of WIOA. ED's Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education (OCTAE) will provide technical assistance, tools, and resources through the Division of Adult Education and Literacy's WIOA Reauthorization page: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/wioa-reauthorization.html>, as well as provide related links to our Federal partners' websites for additional information. Proposed regulations related to the transition and implementation will be issued soon after enactment. OCTAE will continue to engage stakeholders and communicate guidance throughout the WIOA implementation period.

For questions related to WIOA implementation, please email: AskAEFLA@ed.gov.

For additional information related to other WIOA titles:

- The DOL Employment and Training Administration has established a WIOA Resource Page (www.doleta.gov/WIOA) to serve as the on-line repository for DOL's WIOA implementation materials. Questions regarding WIOA implementation may be submitted to DOL.WIOA@dol.gov.
- Information related to Rehabilitation Act programs amended under Title IV of WIOA is available through the Rehabilitation Services Administration's site at: <http://www.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-reauthorization.html>.