



## **FIELD MEMO:**

### **The Role of Local Workforce Development Boards Under WIOA**

#### **I. BACKGROUND ON WIOA.**

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) is the first piece of federal legislation to address the workforce development system in nearly two decades. WIOA supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA).

It is common knowledge that Congress has become more polarized over the years. It is not often that our federal legislators common ground. But they did on WIOA, as shown in the following chart.

**Chart I. WIOA Vote Breakdown.**

<b>Passed House: 415-6</b>			<b>Passed Senate: 95-3</b>		
<b>Grassley:</b>	<b>Harkin:</b>	<b>King:</b>	<b>Loeb sack:</b>	<b>Latham:</b>	<b>Braley:</b>
Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea	Yea

#### **2. PURPOSES OF WIOA.**

Congress passed WIOA for the following purposes:

- 1) To increase, for individuals in the United States, particularly those individuals with barriers to employment, access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services they need to succeed in the labor market.
- 2) To support the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system in the United States.
- 3) To improve the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts to provide America's workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with family-sustaining wages and to provide America's employers with the skilled workers the employers need to succeed in a global economy.

- 4) To promote improvement in the structure of and delivery of services through the United States workforce development system to better address the employment and skill needs of workers, jobseekers, and employers.
- 5) To increase the prosperity of workers and employers in the United States, the economic growth of communities, regions, and States, and the global competitiveness of the United States.
- 6) To provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce development systems, that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase attainment of recognized postsecondary credentials by participants, and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet the skill requirements of employers, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation.

### 3. CORE PROGRAMS UNDER WIOA.

The following chart shows the core programs under WIOA and the State of Iowa administrative agency that is charged with administering them. The state agencies that administer core programs are known as “Core Partners.”

**Chart 2. State Core Programs and Partners**

WIOA TITLE	PROGRAM	PARTNER
Title I	Youth	Iowa Workforce Development
Title I	Adult	Iowa Workforce Development
Title I	Dislocated Worker	Iowa Workforce Development
Title II	Adult Education and Literacy	Iowa Department of Education
Title III	Wagner-Peyser	Iowa Workforce Development
Title IV	Vocational Rehabilitation	Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
Title IV	Vocational Rehabilitation	Iowa Department for the Blind

Iowa is one of several states that has a separate Vocational Rehabilitation program for individuals with sight limitations. This means Iowa has two core partners administering Vocational Rehabilitation programs: Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Iowa Department for the Blind.

WIOA Title I and Title II programs are carried out by local service providers. The Iowa Department of Education procures Title II service providers at the local level. The Local Board procures Title I services providers.

Iowa Workforce Development administers the Wagner-Peyser program.

Under WIOA, the state-level Core Partners in Iowa are:

- Iowa Workforce Development
- Iowa Vocational Rehabilitation Services
- Iowa Department for the Blind
- Iowa Department of Education, Adult Education and Literacy

#### **4. GOALS OF IOWA'S UNIFIED STATE PLAN.**

The Core Partners collaborated on a four-year Unified State Plan. They agreed upon a series of goals for the state's workforce development system. The 2016 Iowa Unified State Plan sets forth the following goals.

**Chart 3. Iowa's Unified State Plan Goals.**

<b>Goal 1:</b>
Iowa's employers will have access to advanced, skilled, diverse and Future Ready workers.
<b>Goal 2:</b>
All Iowans will be provided access to a continuum of high quality education, training, and career opportunities.
<b>Goal 3:</b>
Iowa's workforce delivery system will align all programs and services in an accessible, seamless and integrated manner.

Under WIOA, each Local Board is charged with helping to meet these goals.

#### **5. THEMES OF IOWA'S UNIFIED STATE PLAN.**

The Core Partners developed the following four themes for Iowa's Unified State Plan.

##### **5.1. Accessibility.**

The State of Iowa is committed to providing programs and services in a readily accessible format and delivery method. Accessibility encompasses a variety of ideas, actions, and high-level collaboration. A range of barriers exists for a diversity of populations. System-level barriers such as exclusionary hiring practices and a lack of employer supports, to geographic hindrances and other

location-based obstacles are inherent within the workforce delivery system. For instance, individuals living in Iowa's many rural communities experience higher levels of isolation, have limited access to available and affordable transportation, are not offered the same educational and training opportunities, and often lack personal and professional support networks and essential services. Adding to the mix is the job seeker's ability to gain skills due to a real or environmentally imposed restriction.

Recognizing the variety of barriers and restrictions imposed upon job seekers and workers, the State of Iowa is committed, regardless of language skills, age, location, ability, legal history, ethnicity, gender, religion, sexuality, or socio-economic background may gain access. Access may require reasonable accommodations, natural and programmatic supports, intensive services, and creative methods to address the actual or perceived impediment toward meaningful access. Any individual who is seeking services from the workforce system will receive the appropriate, reasonable, and needed accommodation or support. All goals, strategies and actions inherently infuse options for accommodations and accessibility such that all Iowan's may be provided the necessary supports to be successful in achieving their employment goal. The plan goals, strategies and activities presume and require all core partners to provide the necessary services, support, modification or accommodation for ALL Iowan's to be successful. All entities responsible for Iowa's workforce services delivery system will work together to support and encourage a fully accessible and accommodated workforce system that works for ALL Iowans.

## **5.2. Integration.**

Delivering workforce services that are better aligned to meet the needs of ALL system beneficiaries is the overarching aim of Iowa's integration strategies. A fully integrated and well-aligned system is one that prepares Iowa's employers with the skills, knowledge, and abilities necessary to grow a Future Ready workforce and empowers job-seekers and workers with skills, experiences, and opportunities needed to obtain and maintain self-sustaining employment. With improved accessibility and alignment of systems, ALL Iowans will be able to participate in the education and training opportunities that support the development of the knowledge, skills and abilities necessary for rewarding careers.

Activities to support integrated education and training strategies will align with the NGA Talent Pipeline/Future Ready Initiative recommendations as well as with concepts within the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Taskforce report. A youth-focused work group will be convened by the Core Partners and key stakeholders. Individuals and small businesses will be given guidance on business enterprises, asset development, and benefits planning throughout the start-up, operations and maintenance phases of entrepreneurial pursuits.

## **5.3. Sector Partnerships.**

The State of Iowa will support the development of statewide and/or regionally based, employer-driven sector initiatives. Sector strategies address the needs of employers through a focus on the workforce needs of specific employer sectors over a specific time period. While working to address the needs of employers, the needs of workers will also be met through the creation of formal career paths to self-sustaining jobs, reduction of barriers to employment, and sustained or increased jobs. Sector partnerships bolster regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic, and

workforce delivery systems. Systemic change that achieves ongoing benefits for employers and job-seekers, a broad diversity of stakeholders must be engaged through formal, organized sector partnerships.

#### **5.4. Career Pathways.**

Career Pathways are components of sector strategies. Career Pathways support workers' transitions from training and education into the workforce and into an eventual self-sustaining career. Career Pathways work to increase education, training and learning opportunities for the current and future workforce. Career Pathways help job-seekers develop personal, technical, and employability skills which prepare job-seekers for in-demand and lasting jobs. Colleges, primary and secondary schools, economic development agencies, workforce services providers, employers, labor groups and social service providers all play a vital role in the successful development of Career Pathways approaches. A baseline survey of sector partnerships and career pathways has been completed that will form the foundation for developing career pathways moving forward.

### **6. THE VISION FOR LOCAL BOARDS UNDER WIOA.**

Under WIOA, the vision for the Local Board is to serve as a strategic leader and convener of local workforce development system stakeholders.

The Local Board partners with employers and the workforce development system to develop policies and investments that support public workforce system strategies that support:

- Regional economies;
- The development of effective approaches including local and regional sector partnerships and career pathways; and
- High quality, customer centered service delivery and service delivery approaches.

### **7. THE PURPOSE OF LOCAL BOARDS UNDER WIOA.**

The purpose of the Local Board is to:

- Provide strategic and operational oversight in collaboration with the required and additional partners and workforce stakeholders to help develop a comprehensive and high-quality workforce development system in the region;
- Assist in the achievement of the State's strategic and operational vision and goals as outlined in the Unified State Plan or Combined State Plan; and
- Maximize and continue to improve the quality of services, customer satisfaction, effectiveness of the services provided.

## **8. LOCAL BOARD DUTIES UNDER WIOA.**

- 1) Develop and coordinate the implementation of a four-year comprehensive local workforce development plan that identifies needs, goals, strategies, and policies for the local workforce development area. A local workforce development plan shall be updated every two years and revised as necessary. A local workforce development board shall coordinate the convening of local workforce development system stakeholders to assist in the development of the local workforce development plan.
- 2) Develop and coordinate the alignment of the local area's workforce development programs, services, and activities in an integrated and streamlined workforce development system that is data driven and responsive to the needs of workers, job seekers, and employers.
- 3) Develop and coordinate policies that increase access to workforce services for all Iowans, in particular for individuals with a barrier to employment as defined in the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Pub. L. No. 113-128, section 3(24).
- 4) Develop and coordinate the creation of reports as required by the State Workforce Development Board.
- 5) Develop a budget for the local workforce development board's activities in the local workforce development area, consistent with the four-year comprehensive local workforce development plan, any modifications to the local workforce development plan, and the local workforce development board's duties under this section.
- 6) Convene workforce development system stakeholders to identify expertise and resources to leverage support for workforce development programs, services, and activities in the local area.
- 7) Coordinate engagement among employers, employee organizations, and economic development entities in the local workforce development area. The local workforce development board shall lead efforts to promote engagement among a diverse range of employers and with other entities in the region to do all of the following:
  - a. Promote business representation on the local workforce development board, particularly for representatives with optimal policymaking or hiring authority of employers whose employment opportunities reflect existing and emerging employment opportunities in the region.
  - b. Develop effective linkages with employers in the region to support employer utilization of the local workforce development system and to support local workforce investment activities.
  - c. Ensure that workforce investment activities meet the needs of employers and support economic growth in the region by enhancing communication, coordination, and collaboration among employers, employee organizations, economic development entities, and service providers.

- d. Develop and implement proven or promising strategies for meeting the employment and skill needs of workers and employers, such as participating in the establishment of industry and sector partnerships that provide the skilled workforce needed by employers in the region and that expand employment and career advancement opportunities for workforce development system participants in in-demand industry sectors or occupations.
- 8) Coordinate the performance of workforce research and regional labor market analysis.
- 9) Participate in the development of strategies for using technology to maximize the accessibility and effectiveness of the local workforce development system.
- 10) Participate in the oversight of workforce development programs and activities in the local workforce development area.
- 11) Award grants or contracts as required by and consistent with applicable state and federal law. To the extent permitted by applicable state and federal law, the local workforce development board shall consider awarding grants or contracts to nonprofit organizations.
- 12) Designate a fiscal agent.
- 13) Participate in the development of performance accountability measures for the local workforce development area.
- 14) Participate in the identification and promotion of proven and promising practices for meeting the needs of workers, job seekers, and employers.
- 15) Coordinate activities with education and training providers in the local workforce development area.
- 16) Participate in the identification of eligible providers of training and career services within the local workforce development area.
- 17) Make recommendations to the state workforce development board regarding workforce development programs, services, and activities.
- 18) Participate in the implementation of state workforce development initiatives.

## **9. LOCAL BOARD STANDING COMMITTEES.**

A Local Board may create standing committees to gather information and/or perform its duties. A Local Board standing committee must have a Local Board member serve as the chairperson of the standing committee. A Local Board may appoint non-members to a standing committee, if those individuals have the experience and expertise that will help the standing committee perform its duties. WIOA recommends each Local Board establish the following standing committees.

### **9.1. Operations Standing Committee.**

- 1) This is a standing committee to provide information and assist with operational and other issues relating to the one-stop delivery system, which may include as members representatives of the one-stop partners.
- 2) The Operations Standing Committee is not limited to the Core Partners. It can, and should, include representatives of required system partners under the Region's Memorandum of Understanding in addition to the Core Partners.
- 3) The Core Partners will be issuing guidance to the Local Boards regarding the establishment of Operations Standing Committees.

### **9.2. Youth Standing Committee.**

- 1) This is a standing committee to provide information and to assist with planning, operational, and other issues relating to the provision of services to youth, which shall include community-based organizations with a demonstrated record of success in serving eligible youth.
- 2) The Core Partners have previously issued guidance on the transition from a WIA Youth Council in the Region to a WIOA Youth Standing Committee.
- 3) The State Board has created an interim Youth Standing Committee that will establish recommendations for permanent membership and work with Local Board Standing Committees on policies, procedures, and proven and promising practices.

### **9.3. Disability Access Standing Committee.**

- 1) This is a standing committee to provide information and to assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with state and federal antidiscrimination laws regarding providing programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the one-stop delivery system, as well as appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities.
- 2) The State Board has established a Disability Access Standing Committee that will issuing guidance to Local Boards regarding their Disability Access Standing Committee membership structure and that will work with Local Board Standing Committees on policies, procedures, and proven and promising practices.

## **10. QUESTIONS.**

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