

FY2026 WORKFORCE RFP



SCOPE OF WORK

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law on July 22, 2014. WIOA helps job seekers and workers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and matches employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

WIOA formula funds allocated to local Workforce Boards for Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth programs are used to provide services through the Workforce delivery system. Local agencies may use grant funds to provide services to individuals who are 14 years of age or older and meet the local, state, and federal WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth eligibility definitions.

The purposes of WIOA described in the statute include:

- Increasing access to and opportunities for the employment, education, training, and support services that individuals need, particularly those with barriers to employment.
- Supporting the alignment of workforce investment, education, and economic development systems, in support of a comprehensive, accessible, and high-quality workforce development system.
- Improving the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education, and economic development efforts.
- Promoting improvement in the structure and delivery of services.
- Increasing the prosperity of workers and employers.
- Providing workforce development activities that increase employment, retention, and earnings of participants and that increase postsecondary credential attainment and as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, increase economic self-sufficiency, meet skill requirements of employers, and enhance productivity, and the competitiveness of our nation.

Programs

Workforce services for eligible adults are available through one of the six core programs authorized by Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The Adult program serves individuals and helps employers meet their workforce needs. It enables workers to obtain good jobs by providing them with job search assistance and training opportunities.

WIOA establishes a priority requirement with respect to funds allocated to a local area for adult employment and training activities. When using WIOA Adult funds to provide individualized career services and training services, must give priority to recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, and individuals who are basic skills deficient. Under WIOA, priority must be implemented regardless of the amount of funds available to provide services in the local area. In addition, veterans receive priority of service in all DOL-funded employment programs.

The Dislocated Worker program is designed to help workers get back to work as quickly as possible and overcome barriers to employment. When individuals become dislocated workers as a result of job loss, mass layoffs, global trade dynamics, or transitions in economic sectors, the Dislocated Worker program provides

services to assist them in re-entering the workforce. Services for dislocated workers are integrated and provided through a national network of American Job Centers (AJCs). The AJCs provide significant resources to states to implement workforce education, training, and employment programs and help displaced workers.

Successful bidders will demonstrate the ability to provide services that meet the core objectives of the WIOA program as noted below.

Youth Services

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program is designed to provide services to young people who face barriers to education and employment. Here's a breakdown of its key aspects:

- Purpose:
 - To help youth prepare for postsecondary education and employment opportunities.
 - To assist them in attaining educational and skills training credentials.
 - To support them in securing employment with career advancement potential.
- Target Population:
 - The program serves both in-school youth (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY) aged 14-24 who face barriers to employment.
 - A significant focus is placed on out-of-school youth.
- Key Services:
 - The program offers a comprehensive range of services, including:
 - Tutoring and alternative secondary school services.
 - Paid and unpaid work experiences (e.g., internships, job shadowing, on-the-job training).
 - Occupational skills training.
 - Career counseling.
 - Leadership development.
 - Financial literacy education.
 - Supportive services.
- Program Priorities:
 - A minimum percentage of funds must be used to serve out-of-school youth.
 - A portion of the funding must be allocated to work experience programs.

WIOA Youth programs aim to equip young individuals with the skills and support they need to succeed in the workforce and in their educational pursuits.

The WIOA Youth Services program aims to help young people achieve educational and career success. To accomplish these goals, a variety of programs and services are implemented. Here's a breakdown of the types of programs that effectively contribute to these objectives:

Key Program Types

WIOA youth service programs can focus on a variety of approaches. Examples include:

- **Work-Based Learning Experiences:**
 - These are crucial for providing real-world experience. They include:
 - **Internships:** Offering structured work experiences related to career interests.
 - **Job shadowing:** Allowing youth to observe professionals in specific fields.
 - **On-the-job training:** Providing hands-on skills development in an actual work setting.
 - **Pre-apprenticeships:** Programs that prepare individuals to enter registered apprenticeships.
- **Educational Support Programs:**
 - These programs focus on academic achievement and attainment:
 - **Tutoring and study skills training:** Helping youth improve their academic performance.
 - **Alternative secondary school services:** Providing options for those who struggle in traditional school settings.
 - **GED and high school diploma assistance:** Supporting youth in obtaining essential educational credentials.
- **Career Development Programs:**
 - These programs guide youth in exploring career options and developing career readiness skills:
 - **Career counseling:** Offering personalized guidance on career paths and job search strategies.
 - **Occupational skills training:** Providing training in specific job skills that are in demand.
 - **Job readiness training:** Focusing on skills like resume writing, interviewing, and workplace etiquette.
- **Supportive Services:**
 - These services address barriers that may hinder youth participation:
 - **Financial literacy education:** Teaching youth how to manage their finances.
 - **Leadership development:** Building confidence and leadership skills.
 - **Support services like transportation and childcare:** Removing obstacles to program participation.

When implemented effectively, WIOA youth service programs help young people gain the education, skills, and experience they need to succeed in the workforce.

CSRA YOUTH SERVICE PROGRAM ELEMENTS

The successful bidder will operate training program(s) for Out-of-School Youth Programs to be delivered in any or all of the counties in Area 12's service area. Successful bidders will be responsible for all aspects of the programming including:

- trainee recruitment;
- intake and eligibility determination;
- case management and advisement;
- delivery of occupational skills training and/or brokering such training from entities approved to operate such training;
- job placement; and
- follow-up for a 12-month period following program exit.

Preference may be given to bidders that serve multiple counties or provide multiple program elements.

Proposed services must support skills development, the attainment of industry-recognized/industry relevant credentials and degrees and are to prioritize career pathways in high demand sectors. Bidders must demonstrate their ability to recruit and identify low-skilled job seekers and at-risk vulnerable populations and be capable of providing them with services necessary for entry into career pathways in high demand or high growth industry sectors/clusters in the region.

These training programs must be designed to meet participant needs by either directly providing the needed service and/or purchasing occupational skills training from eligible providers. All training providers must be on the State's eligible provider list (ETPL) or must apply to become an eligible provider through Region 12's Local Workforce Development Board.

A variety of services are available to youth in the WIOA program. The program differentiates youth into two categories, in-school youth and out-of-school youth. WIOA includes a major focus on providing youth with work experience opportunities.

WIOA focuses on five program elements:

- Financial literacy,
- entrepreneurial skills training,
- services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local areas,
- activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training; and education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

Youth services should:

- Build strong partnerships with education (K-12, post-secondary, technical colleges) and with other workforce organizations; and
- Strengthen worker readiness through education and attainment of work maturity and job skills.

The major components of the WIOA youth program offer guiding principles to ensure the needs of young people are met. Since the target population of WIOA Youth includes both in-school and out-of-school individuals, services provided will need to reflect the priorities of each of these unique populations.

In-school priorities will include comprehensive and integrated services that promote enhanced academic achievement; successful graduation; awareness of post-secondary and technical education; work readiness; and connections to the world of work. The focus will be on dropout prevention; preparation for post-secondary college or technical schools; and assistance with work related goals. These priority services should be delivered in a partnership with the school system in which the youth is enrolled.

Out-of-school priorities for younger youth (ages 14 – 18) include returning the youth to school for secondary education completion; awareness of post-secondary and technical education; work readiness; and connections to the world of work. For those who are 19 -21 years old, primary emphasis will be on completing their secondary-education and on building connections to advanced training and/or post-secondary education tied to the completion of a WIOA approved credential. For older out-of-school youth, a plan for financial self-sufficiency should be the backbone of the service strategy.

The Youth Services program begins at the initial registration and continues through the post-exit follow-up. Bidders must provide, at a minimum, the following basic services:

- **Outreach and Recruitment**: Includes, but is not limited to, identifying potentially eligible youth, working with parents or guardians to secure necessary documentation, and communicating with schools and community organizations to facilitate outreach and recruitment.
- **Orientation**: Included in the orientation, youth must receive information on all available services through the bidder, as well as information on other youth service providers and WorkSource services. This process would also include an introduction to the responsibilities of the youth and the System's expectations with regards to drug and alcohol abuse, governing policies, behavior and attendance.
- **Eligibility Determination and Registration**: This includes the maintenance of adequate documentation to ensure the credibility of the eligibility determination, which shall at a minimum consist of documents used to determine and verify eligibility. Registration is the process of collecting information to support a determination of eligibility. Equal opportunity data must be collected during the registration process.
- **Objective Assessment**: For each youth participant, an objective assessment must be provided it meets the requirements of WIOA section 129(c)(1)(A) and that incorporates a review of the youth's skill levels including basic skills, occupational skills, prior work experience, employability, interests, aptitudes (including interests and aptitudes for nontraditional jobs), supportive service needs, and developmental needs.
- **Individual Service Strategy (ISS), or its equivalent**: For each youth participant, an individual service strategy must be developed that meets the requirements of WIOA section 129(c)(1)(B) and includes the identification of an age-appropriate career goal, taking into consideration the youth's assessment results and preparation for post-secondary educational opportunities. The ISS information is to provide linkages between academic and occupational learning, provide preparation for employment, and provide effective connections to intermediary organizations that provide strong links to the job market and employers.
- **Case Management**: Through individual connection with participants, Case Managers will serve as the youths' advocate within the education, training, and employment arenas.
- **System Building**: Working together as a system, case managers will be goal oriented and customer driven by motivating participants and coordinating services. WIOA Case manager will bring community resources together to leverage funds and develop opportunities for youth.

- Health and Safety: All participants will be provided with information and instruction, as a curriculum or part of a curriculum focusing on health and safety. In addition, orientations will be provided to all work-related site supervisors regarding worker health and safety issues.
- Referral Services: In addition to the information shared at the orientation level, participants should receive referral information regarding the full array of applicable and appropriate services. To best meet the needs of youth, organizations are strongly encouraged to network and partner with other youth serving agencies.
- Supportive Services: Intended to enable an individual to participate in program activities and to secure and retain employment, examples include assistance with local transportation costs; childcare and dependent care costs; housing and food; and relocation and out-of-area job search expenses.
- Retention Services (Follow-Up Services): Post-exit services that may include continued case management; employment retention services; supportive services; counseling; and training, are allowable under WIOA. These services are intended to assist customers in maintaining and succeeding in their jobs, as well as progressing in wage levels to achieve self-sufficiency.
- Performance: performance benchmarks set forth by the state and federal government. Both state and common measure performance measures must be met or exceeded by the service provider.

WIOA Youth Eligibility:

To be eligible for enrollment, applicants must meet state and federal eligibility requirements including:

- 14 – 21 years of age,
- Low income,
- A US citizen or eligible non-citizen,
- Registered for Selective Service (males age 18 and older), and A resident of the 9-County Region 11 Area.

And at least one of the following:

- Deficient in basic literacy skills,
- A school dropout,
- Homeless, a runaway, or a foster child,
- Pregnant or parenting,
- An offender, or
- In need of additional assistance to complete education or to secure and retain employment.

Not less than 95% of all enrollees must be economically disadvantaged. For those non-economically disadvantaged enrollees, priority must be given to the following:

- Dropouts
- Those who are basic skills deficient Those who are below grade level Pregnant or parenting youth Individuals with disabilities Homeless or runaway youth Offenders
- Those with other barriers defined by the Board.

Eligible Services

Participant services and training are to be delivered by eligible providers consistent with WIOA Section 129. To ensure compliance with WIOA and the delivery of superior service, Responders will make the following available to youth participants:

- Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate.
- Adult mentoring for the period of participation, plus a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months.
- Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies.
- Alternative secondary school services, as appropriate.
- Summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning.
- Paid and unpaid work experience, including internships and job shadowing, as appropriate.
- Occupational skill training, as appropriate.
- Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer- centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive service behaviors during non- school hours, as appropriate.
- Supportive services as defined in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act and approved by the local workforce development board; and
- Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, including updated personal data information for the customer satisfaction survey.

Youth programs should ensure that participants gain educational and work-related skills to enter college or become successfully employed.