

Workforce Development Summary

The federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 provides the framework for a national workforce preparation and employment system. This system is intended to be customer-focused, to help Americans access to the tools they need to manage their careers and to help companies find the skilled workers they need to compete and succeed in business.

The Act embodies seven key principles. They are:

1. **Streamlining services** through better integration at the street level in the One-Stop delivery system. Programs and providers will co-locate, coordinate and integrate activities and information, so that the system as a whole is coherent and accessible for individuals and businesses alike.
2. **Empowering individuals** in several ways. First eligible adults are given financial power to use Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) at qualified institutions. These ITAs supplement financial aid already available through other sources or, if no other financial aid is available, they may pay for all the costs of training. Second, individuals are empowered with greater levels of information and guidance, through a system of consumer reports providing key information on the performance outcomes of training and education providers. Third, individuals are empowered through the advice, guidance and support available through the One-Stop system and the activities of One-Stop partners.
3. **Universal access.** Any individual will have access to the One-Stop system and to core employment-related services. Information about job vacancies, career options, student financial aid, relevant employment trends and instruction on how to conduct a job search, write a resume or interview with an employer is available to any job seeker or anyone who wants to advance his or her career.
4. **Increased accountability.** The goal of the Act is to increase employment, retention and earnings of participants, and in doing so, improve the quality of the workforce to sustain economic growth, enhance productivity and competitiveness and reduce welfare dependency. Consistent with this goal, the Act identifies core indicators of performance that State and local entities managing the workforce investment system must meet—or suffer sanctions. Training providers and their programs also have to demonstrate successful performance to remain eligible to receive funds under the Act.
5. **Strong role for local workforce investment boards** and the private sector with local business-led boards acting as “boards of directors,” focusing on strategic planning, policy development and oversight of the local workforce investment system. Business and labor have an immediate and direct stake in the quality of the workforce investment system. Their active involvement is critical to the provision of essential data on what skills are in demand, what jobs are available, what career fields are expanding and the identification and development of programs that best meet local employer needs.
6. **State and local flexibility.** States and localities have increased flexibility, with significant authority reserved for the Governor and chief elected officials, to build on existing reforms in order to implement innovative and comprehensive workforce investment systems tailored to meet the particular needs of local and regional labor markets.
7. **Improved youth programs** linked more closely to local labor market needs and community your programs and services and with strong connections between academic and occupational learning.

At the local level, the administration of WIA funds for adults, dislocated workers and youth is the responsibility of Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIA). LWIAs are comprised of units of local government (Merced County Board of Supervisors) and a local Board (Merced County Workforce Investment Board, (WIB)).

The WIB is comprised of representatives from private sector businesses, organized labor, community based organizations, local government agencies and local education agencies. The WIB designates the One-Stop operators, provides policy guidance and oversee the job training activities within their area.

WIA services are provided through a One-Stop delivery system. One-Stop centers provide a full range of services, including employment, training and education services for job seekers and comprehensive employer services including resources for placing job orders and obtaining referrals, labor market data, information and referral on training resources and business assistance. The following provides a brief description of each program:

ADULTS (Age 18 or older) and DISLOCATED WORKERS

The adult and dislocated worker programs offer the following services to individuals who are 18 years of age or older.

- Core services (For all participants)
- Intensive services (For unemployed individuals unable to obtain jobs through core services or employed individuals needing additional services to reach self-sufficiency)
- Training services (Available for those unable to obtain employment through intensive services)

The dislocated worker program assists workers displaced by disasters, mass layoffs or plant closures to regain economic security. Core services are provided to return individuals to work as quickly as possible.

NOTE: See attached funds request checklist for additional information on core, intensive and training services.

YOUTH (Age 14 to 21)

The Youth program prepares youth for postsecondary education opportunities or employment. Programs will link academic and occupational learning. Services include:

- Tutoring
- Study skills training
- Instruction leading to completion of secondary school
- Alternative school services
- Mentoring by appropriate adults
- Paid and unpaid work experience
- Occupational skills training
- Leadership development
- Appropriate supportive services

Youth participants will also receive guidance to counseling and follow-up services.

NOTE: Youth funding requests are processed through the Youth Council.

For employers seeking employees, the Centers offer a variety of employer services to assist local companies with their recruiting, training and outplacement needs. Such services may include:

- Automated labor market information
- Assistance with downsizing and business closures
- Recruitment assistance
- On-the-job training reimbursement
- Specialized services such as seminars, workforce needs and assessments