

North Carolina Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act Youth & Young Adult Framework

Background

In North Carolina there are a significant number of youth and young adults who are not engaged in education, training and employment. New strategies to reach and engage alienated and disengaged young people will be a **priority** of the 23 NC Workforce Development Boards.

The NC Workforce Development Boards implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), does supersede the Workforce Investment Act of the past 15 years. WIOA youth and young adult funding can only be expended on **eligible and enrolled** participants. With the enactment of WIOA, local workforce development boards must focus 75% or more of funding on out-of-school youth and young adults, and no more than 25% on in-school youth and young adults. The new law puts greater emphasis on serving out-of-school youth and young adults through training and services that are employer driven and linked to labor market demand.

WIOA defines Out-of-School youth and young adults as 16 to 24 year-olds who are not attending school and one or more of the following:

- School dropout;
- Within age of compulsory attendance but has not attended for at least the most recent complete school year calendar quarter;
- Holds a secondary school diploma or recognized equivalent and is low-income and is either basic skills deficient or an English language learner;
- Subject to the juvenile or adult justice system;
- Homeless, runaway,
- In foster care or aged out of the foster care system, eligible for assistance under Section 477, Social Security Act, or in out-of-home placement;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability;
- Low income person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.¹

WIOA defines In-School youth as 14- 21 year-olds who are low income and attending school and one or more of the following:

- Basic skills deficient;
- English language learner;

- An offender;
- Homeless,
- Runaway,



- In foster care or aged out of the foster care system;
- Pregnant or parenting;
- An individual with a disability;
- Person who requires additional assistance to enter or complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment

Framework Purpose

The purpose of the WIOA youth and young adult framework is to ensure that North Carolina’s Workforce Development Boards provide a baseline of services and a guideline for delivering those services in order to **prepare** youth and young adults for educational and employment opportunities. WIOA youth and young adult funding can only be expended on WIOA **eligible and enrolled** participants.

All youth and young adults have **essential needs** that must be met if they are to make a **successful** transition to life and the workforce. These **core** needs fall into **5 categories** (Illustration 1): mental health, physical health, civic and social involvement, intellectual health, and employability. ²

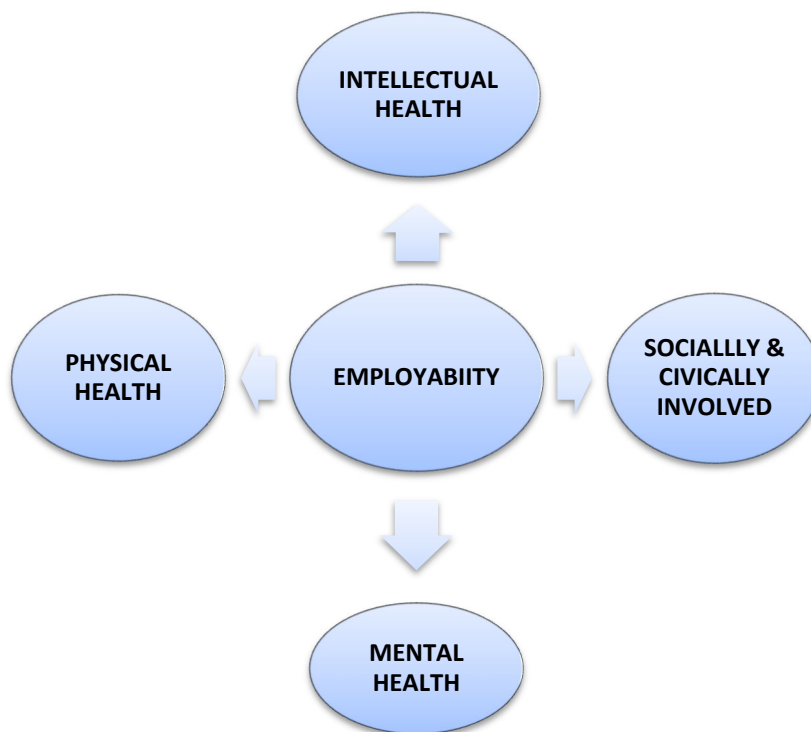


Illustration 1

In order for the Framework to be **successful**, the WDB is accountable and responsible for ensuring programs, policies, and services are in place to help youth and young adults move towards self-sufficiency in all five categories. The boards will utilize **support** from other **community** programs whose primary responsibility is meeting the needs of alienated and disengaged youth and young adults. These five core areas must also be considered when designing any program or framework for our target population.

The **fundamentals** of the WIOA Youth program are Intake, Objective Assessment, Individual Service Strategy (ISS)/Individual Employment Plan (IEP) and Information and Referrals. Based on individual needs identified through the Objective Assessment and the ISS/IEP, youth and young adults are served through a comprehensive array of workforce development services that fall within 14 required program elements of WIOA (see Appendix A). By implementing the 14 elements within the necessary **strategies and tools** provided in this framework and considering the five **essential** needs for youth and young adults, each local area workforce board will be able to ensure that:

- ✓ **Align** youth and young adult's education with **jobs** in high demand industries
- ✓ **Improve** youth and young adult's employability **skills** for success in the workplace
- ✓ **Focus** career processes, services and programs for youth and young adults
- ✓ **Address** through **partnerships** and referrals ,holistic needs of youth and young adults mental health, physical health, civic and social involvement, intellectual health, and employability
- ✓ **Leverage** resources and opportunities through **strengthened** NCWorks **partnerships** which may include, but not limited to NCWorks Career Centers, Vocational Rehabilitation (VR), Department of Social Services (DSS), Adult Basic Education (ABE), Community Colleges, Universities, and community organizations.

This new framework **equips** Workforce Development Boards with a standard working system through which to provide workforce development services for youth and young adults. It provides the necessary **strategies and tools** to assist youth and young adults in identifying their interests and **skills**, as well as being prepared to **succeed** in post-secondary education and in a **competitive** workforce.



Framework

North Carolina's framework includes five **components** for WIOA youth and young adult programming that should be used to interconnect the 14 WIOA youth elements, to ensure participants are prepared for employability success. (*WIOA youth and young adult funding can only be expended on **eligible and enrolled** participants.*)

1. Education

Educational opportunities are readily available to youth and young adults to help them achieve long-term goals, as well as access resources, tools and services. Occupational skills training, high school equivalency, classes, and tutoring are focused on preparing youth and young adult for high demand occupations.



2. Career Pathways

Career pathways versus “jobs” are the focus for youth and young adult employment and training. A clear path from education into the workforce is provided through career pathways that include integrated services, diverse training, career readiness, partnerships and other unique features.

3. Career Experience

Career opportunities, entrepreneurship, and work-based learning must be available to each youth and young adult in the program. Local businesses are engaged to provide internships, job shadowing, and on-the-job training.

4. Leadership Development

Leadership development must be a strong aspect of the local Workforce Development Boards youth and young adult program design. Opportunities for youth and young adults to participate in community service, peer-centered activities, classroom development, mentoring, and soft skills training are available.

5. Wrap Around Services

Each workforce board’s local area will work with state and local organizations to ensure that wrap around services are available in order to meet the needs of their youth and young adults in different ways. Partnerships must include: VR, DSS, Adult Basic Education and juvenile justice.

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles are the **foundation** of the WDB’s youth and young adult service delivery system. They define what is truly important for its **success**, and serve as a template for **building and growing** our system. Essential to the **foundation** of the framework is to establish **resources and training** for staff that administer **career development** for youth and young adults.

The following represents guiding principles for NC youth and young adult programs:

- **Accountability**

Local Workforce Development Boards will set and track local accountability measures that align with USDOL-WIOA performance indicators and the NCWorks Commission on Workforce Development performance accountability measures. The WDB’s will monitor and provide technical assistance to ensure that these measures are met or exceeded. This will result in high quality services being provided to meet the needs of youth and young adults. Data related to performance accountability and all other aspects of WIOA youth program operations are captured in the NCWorks.gov online system.

- **Staff Development**

Ongoing professional development for workforce system staff is critical to stay relevant and to better serve youth and young adults. All staff performance is supported by specific



organizational and management practices that ensure that the best people are retained and adequately trained and supported on the job.

- **Case Management**

The WDB's ensure that extensive one on one interaction between staff and participants is a part of service delivery. Case management will require long term commitments to effectively create positive outcomes for youth and young adults. This activity must connect youth and young adults to the right resources and services to improve education and training outcomes, and to establish pathways to employment.

- **Local Area Assessment**

Local workforce boards should have a clear understanding of their target youth population. Prior to program design of the board's youth and young adult program, the local board should research and have a clear picture of the following:

- ✓ Labor market data (high growth, high demand industries/sectors)
- ✓ Youth and young adult demographics
- ✓ Available resources (funding, services, tools...etc.)
- ✓ Local youth and young adult issues (gangs, high poverty, English language proficiency, etc.)
- ✓ Other youth and young adult programs

Commitment to Success

The Local Workforce Development Boards of North Carolina are committed to sharing and utilizing this youth and young adult framework to **create and grow** a sound, inclusive system that can produce a **successful emerging workforce**. This will be done by a **commitment** to:

- **Coordinate** efforts and **work** collaboratively with other agencies to best serve our youth and young adults
- **Provide** consistency in working with youth and young adults to connect them to education and/or employment
- **Work** with youth and young adults to identify their strengths and assets
- **Assess and tailor** services and outcomes for youth and young adults based on their individual needs, strengths and barriers

A Youth Leads team has been established to take the lead in continuous improvement by identifying issues and developing solutions that affect successful youth and young adult outcomes.



North Carolina Workforce Development Boards are committed to ensuring the success of the WIOA youth and young adult program, therefore all WDB's must follow this framework when developing their program design.



REFERENCES

Employment and Training Administration, United States Department of Labor – The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, Fact Sheet: Youth Program. n.d. Retrieved from https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/Docs/WIOA_YouthProgram_FactSheet.pdf

Wonacott, Michael. n.d. The WIA Youth System Focused Features, Youth Development System Builder. Retrieved from <https://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/WorkforceProf/Youth/Docs/WIAYouthSystem.pdf>

Appendix A

Definitions of WIOA Youth Service Elements (14)

1. **Tutoring / Study Skills Training** includes instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies that lead to completion of HS diploma or equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for youth with disabilities) or preparation for post-secondary credentials.
2. **Alternative Secondary School Services** includes referral to formal alternative education programs or formal dropout recovery services, as appropriate.
3. **Work Experiences (WE)** are planned, structured, learning experiences that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. They may be paid or unpaid and may occur in for-profit, non-profit or public sectors. As with all workplace relationships labor standards and laws apply. WEs provide youth with an opportunity to explore careers and develop skills. WEs must include a combination of academic and occupational education components. WEs include the following types of experiences:
 - Summer Youth Employment - administrators of SYE programs must be competitively selected by the board via award of a contract or grant (employers used for SYE do not need to be competitively selected).
 - Pre-Apprenticeship is a program, or set of strategies, designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program; a documented partnership with at least one or more registered apprenticeship programs must be in place. Providers offering occupational education for pre-apprenticeship must be on the Eligible Training Provider List.
 - Internships & Job Shadowing are activities that provide the youth with an opportunity to explore an occupation or work environment and may include activities that allow them to gain employment and occupational skill competencies.
 - On-the-Job Training is training provided by an employer to a paid participant who is engaged in productive work from which she/he gains the knowledge and skills essential to the full performance of the job and for which the employer is provided a reimbursement of up to 50% of the participant wage and for which the employer makes a commitment to hire the individual.
4. **Occupational Skills Training** is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required of certain occupational fields at the entry, intermediate and advanced skill levels. Priority must be given for training that leads to recognized post-secondary credentials that are in in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area.
5. **Education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster** refers to the integrated education and training model in which required education and training occur concurrently and contextually with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. Such a program element must describe how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills are to be taught within the same time frame and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.

6. **Leadership Development** are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination and other positive social behaviors, such as:
 - exposure to post-secondary educational possibilities,
 - community and service-learning projects,
 - peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring or peer tutoring,
 - organizational and team work training, including team leadership training,
 - training in decision-making, including prioritization and problem solving,
 - citizenship training, including life skills such as parenting and work behavior training,
 - civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community, and
 - activities that place the youth in a leadership role such as serving on a youth leadership committee or a Standing Youth Committee.
7. **Supportive Services** for youth are those that are designed to enable them to participate in WIOA activities and may include: linkage to community services; referrals to health care; and cost assistance with: transportation, childcare, housing, uniforms, work attire, work-related tools, protective gear, educational testing, and reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities.
8. **Adult Mentoring** is a formal, in-person, relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee. The activity must last for a period of at least 12 months and must be with an adult mentor other than the assigned youth case manager. Adult mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company who acts as a mentor.
9. **Follow-up Services** are critical services that must be provided for at least a 12 month period following the youth's exit from the program and are designed to help ensure that the youth is successful in employment or postsecondary education/training. Follow-up services may include: leadership activities, regular contact with the youth's employer to help address work-related issues, assistance with career pathway development or in securing a better paying job, assistance with further education or training and participation in work-related peer support groups, adult 2 mentoring or other services determined appropriate based on the needs of the participant. Follow-up must include more than only an attempted contact and must be documented in order to receive a performance outcome.
10. **Comprehensive Guidance & Counseling** is individualized to the participant, may include career and academic counseling, drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling and referral to partner programs for which the youth counselor has coordinated the youth referral with the partner agency on behalf of the individual youth.
11. **Financial Literacy** is education or activities that: assist youth to initiate checking and savings accounts at banks and to make informed financial decisions; supports youth learning how to manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit and credit cards; teaches the significance of credit reports and credit scores and rights regarding credit and financial information; teaches how to assure accuracy of a credit report and how to correct



inaccuracies, and how to maintain or improve good credit; supports a participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products and services; informs participants about identity theft, their rights in regard to it and ways they can protect themselves from it; and supports the financial literacy needs of non-English speakers through use of multilingual financial literacy and education materials.

12. **Entrepreneurial Skills Training** is training that provides the basics of starting and operating a small business, this training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as: taking initiative, creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities, developing budgets and forecasting resource needs, understanding various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option, and how to communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas. Approaches to teaching youth these skills may include: educational programs that introduce youth to the basics of starting and running a business; enterprise development supports and services that incubate and help the youth develop their own business through access to small loans or grants, or that provide individualized assistance in development of viable business ideas; and may include experiential programs in which youth get experience in the day-to-day operation of a business and more.
13. **Provision of Labor Market & Career Awareness Information** are services that impart information to the youth about jobs that are in demand in the local labor market and that may include career awareness and exploration activities and career counseling.
14. **Activities to prepare youth to transition to post-secondary education include information about and preparation for college entrance** including information about applying to colleges, financial aid, entrance testing, student life, pre-requisite courses and more.