



New Law Helps Youth & Young Adults Get a Job: What WIOA Can Do for You

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) P.L. 113-128, 2014 mandates services for youth and young adults (ages 14-24) with disabilities, including those with psychiatric disabilities or mental health conditions, to help them prepare for and obtain jobs and pursue careers that offer competitive salaries and benefits.

What Is Important about this Law for Youth and Young Adults with Psychiatric Disabilities?

- » Students with disabilities can get new career and educational development services.
- » There is a focus on providing career and educational development services to youth and young adults who are not in school.
- » Focus on real jobs with real wages (sub-minimum wage is not allowed).



Who Can Access WIOA Youth Program Services?

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Out-of-School Youth

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In-School Youth

Youth and young adults between the ages of 14-24 with a psychiatric disability are eligible. A youth or young adult with a disability is defined by the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activity, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment.

Eligibility Criteria

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| Out-of-School Youth with a psychiatric disability must be | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Between the ages of 16-24 (may differ in your state) at enrollment. ✓ Not attending any school (as defined under your state's law). |
| In-School Youth with a psychiatric disability must be | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Between the ages of 14-21 (age may differ in your state) at enrollment. ✓ Attending school (such as high school, alternative school, college). ✓ "Low income", which is based on the young adult's own income; not the family's income. For example, living in a high poverty area or is eligible to receive a free or reduced price lunch. ✓ Youth with disabilities who have an Individualized Education Program (IEP) may be enrolled as an In-School Youth beyond the age of 21, if state law allows youth with disabilities to be served by the K-12 public school system after age 21. |

What Services Are Available?

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| For All Enrolled Youth | <p>There are 14 WIOA youth program elements that are available to all enrolled youth and young adults. There is overlap between some parts of the elements. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention. 2. Alternative secondary school and dropout recovery services. 3. Placement in paid and unpaid work experience. 4. Occupational skills training. 5. Integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills. 6. Leadership development opportunities. 7. Supportive services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, and housing, etc. 8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation. 9. Follow-up services provided after program exit to help ensure success in employment or education. 10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling provides individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling. 11. Financial literacy education. 12. Entrepreneurial skills training. 13. Services that provide employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations. 14. Post-secondary preparation and transition activities help youth and young adults prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training. |
| In-School Youth Only | <p>Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are only available to In-School Youth. These services are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Job exploration counseling, which may include helping students learn about the world of work, explore their interests and abilities, work with a job mentor, etc. 2. Work-based learning experiences, which may include in-school or after school opportunities, experiences outside of the traditional school setting, and/or internships. 3. Individualized student strategies to support a smooth transition from high school to postsecondary education settings and employment. 4. Workplace readiness training to develop social skills and independent living, which are the skills and behaviors employers expect employees to come to a job with. 5. Instruction in self-advocacy, which helps students to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate or assert his/her own interests and/or desires. |

A youth or young adult who is enrolled in the WIOA youth program may not be receive all program services; only those that they need. Once enrolled in the WIOA youth program youth or young adults may be able to continue receiving these youth services after reaching the maximum eligibility age.

Where Can Youth and Young Adults Get WIOA Services?

Out-of-School Youth

Out-of-School Youth should go to a local American Job Center (also known as One-Stop Centers) to apply for and to access WIOA youth services. Some American Job Centers offer more or different youth services than others, so it may require some research to find the best fit. Staff at the AJC will help youth and young adults apply for WIOA youth services.

Find a local American Job Center (AJC) here:
<https://tinyurl.com/americanjobcenters>



In-School Youth

State Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) agencies and local school districts work together to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services or “Pre-ETS” for students in high school or post-secondary education/training with disabilities who are enrolled in the WIOA youth program.

If your potentially eligible student has not been offered Pre-ETS by their school, contact their school or local Vocational Rehabilitation agency to find out what’s available and/or the process to get referred. The enrolled student can also visit a local American Job Center to access services.



What If a Youth or Young Adult Needs More Comprehensive Services?

Youth and young adults who are receiving WIOA youth services may also be eligible for their state’s vocational rehabilitation services. **Therefore, if a WIOA enrolled youth or young adult with a psychiatric disability needs more personalized services, they should apply for Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) services through their state’s VR agency.** This way, if approved, they can have access to their state’s VR services, which would include the specific services that they need to prepare for or find good employment. This is true for both In-School and Out-of-School youth.

Don’t let youth and young adults with psychiatric disabilities miss out on these valuable services to get the training and education they need to achieve their employment goals and get jobs that will help them have rewarding work lives.

Find a State Vocational Agency: <https://tinyurl.com/stateVRagencies>

Resources

- **Find local American Job Centers:** <https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/local-help.aspx>
- **Find your State Agency of Vocational Rehabilitation:** <http://www.askearn.org/state-vocational-rehabilitation-agencies/>
- **WIOA Youth Program Eligibility:** <https://youth.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/03/09/11/34/WIOA-Youth-Program-Eligibility>
- **WIOA Youth Program Fact Sheet:** https://www.doleta.gov/Youth_services/pdf/WIOA_Youth_OWI_Fact-Sheet_12_2016.pdf
- **Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) Resources for Youth:** <https://www.dol.gov/odep/categories/youth>
- **RSA: Transition of Students and Youth With Disabilities from School to Postsecondary Education and Employment:** <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/transition-of-students-and-youth-with-disabilities-from-school-to-postsecondary-education-and-employment.pdf>
- **WIOA: What it means for people with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities (I/DD):** <http://www.thearc.org/document.doc?id=5183>
- **Vocational Rehabilitation (VR): A Young Adult's Guide -** <http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1070&context=pib>
- **Appealing Features of Vocational Supports for Latino and non-Latino Transition Age Youth & Young Adult Consumers: Study Goals & Methods -** <http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1054&context=pib>
- **Teens on IEPs: Making my Transitions Services Work for Me -** <http://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1067&context=pib>
- **Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its Application to Youth and Young Adults with Serious Mental Health Conditions (SMHC) -** <https://escholarship.umassmed.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1105&context=pib>

Acknowledgements:

The Transitions ACR would like to send a very special thanks to our Family Advisory Board and Jennifer Stewart, Statewide Transition Director of the Massachusetts Rehabilitation Commission, without your questions, suggestions and edits, this tip sheet would not have been possible!

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Suggested Citation: Logan, D., Golden, L., & Family Advisory Board of the Transitions ACR. (2018). *Important Law Helps Youth & Young Adults Get a Job: What WIOA Can Do for You*. Worcester, MA: University of Massachusetts Medical School, Department of Psychiatry, Transitions to Adulthood Center for Research.



The contents of this tip sheet were developed under a grant with funding from the National Institute on Disability, Independent Living, and Rehabilitation Research, and from the Center for Mental Health Services of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, United States Department of Health and Human Services (ACL Grant# 90RT5031, The Learning and Working Transitions RRTC). NIDILRR is a Center within the Administration for Community Living (ACL), Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). The contents of this tip sheet do not necessarily represent the policy of NIDILRR, ACL, HHS, or SAMHSA and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.



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