



Professional Development Needs Among WIOA Youth Service Professionals

Professionals who directly serve youth ages 14 to 24 are responsible for providing high-quality services that bolster employment and education outcomes under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). These youth service professionals are called upon to provide a wide range of services to some of the country's most disadvantaged youth; yet, no national system of professional development (PD) supports building and strengthening their competencies. Research has demonstrated a positive relationship between professional development and self-reported competency among youth worker professionals (Evans, Sicafuse, Killian, Davidson, & Loesch-Griffin, 2010). Professional development is critical for front line staff across all core WIOA programs to ensure strong service delivery to program participants. Youth service professionals have access to training and other forms of professional development delivered by their organization, their state or local workforce agency, professional associations, and other entities.

In May and June 2017, the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) conducted a national survey on Frontline Professional Development Needs among Youth Service Providers. NCWD/Youth received 74 survey responses from youth service professionals in 20 states. Sixty-one percent of survey respondents identified as WIOA Title I service providers. One quarter of respondents indicated that their agencies had oversight and administrative responsibilities for services under WIOA. The remaining 14 percent of respondents identified as administrators or providers across all WIOA Titles, adult education providers, or other entities partnering with WIOA providers. NCWD/Youth was unable to locate email contacts for workforce development providers in all states and geographic areas, therefore the sample was not nationally representative. Email addresses were gathered from state agency websites and the survey was also shared through various national networks including the National Youth Employment Coalition and the Disability Employment Initiative grantees. As a result, the majority of respondents were located in both urban and rural areas of the northeast and southeast regions of the U.S. Only a few responses were received from professionals in the northwest, southwest, and midwest regions. These survey results spotlight what service providers and administrators view as important topics for professional development and the types of challenges that youth service professionals encounter while implementing youth-centered services under WIOA. The results also provide information

about what professional development some youth service professionals currently receive, including the frequency, topics covered, PD providers, and which formats are most common and regarded as most effective.

In addition to providing an overview of findings from the survey of Frontline Professional Development Needs among Youth Service Providers, this brief recommends strategies to enhance and expand professional development that administrators can use to support youth services professionals. The document also includes links to WIOA professional development resources currently available online.

Main Findings

- ◆ The majority of respondents indicated that PD is a critical component of effectively implementing youth-centered services under WIOA.
- ◆ Respondents identified a wide range of topics as important areas for PD. The top two needs are how to recruit and retain out-of-school youth and how to develop, place, and support youth in work experiences; both of these focuses are high priorities under WIOA.
- ◆ Professional development for serving Youth with disabilities (YWD), including youth with the most significant disabilities, was one of the top five needs identified by respondents.

- ◆ While the frequency of PD received by WIOA youth service professionals varies greatly, nearly half (46 percent) of respondents indicated that their PD only takes place two to three times per year. About a quarter of respondents said PD takes place once per year or less frequently, and 38 percent of respondents reported that it occurs four or more times per year.
- ◆ When asked to describe the types of PD that youth serving staff currently received, the respondents' most commonly mentioned WIOA regulations, including eligibility criteria, performance measures, and procedures. Some respondents stated that PD was provided through their local workforce board and district.
- ◆ The largest group of respondents identified an in-person group training or class as the most effective approach to PD. Respondents rated individual training/coaching delivered in person and training delivered through a combination of in-person and online learning as the next most effective approach to PD.
- ◆ Youth service professionals are most likely to participate in in-person group training or classes (86 percent), webinar trainings (66 percent), online group training or classes (58 percent), or training/classes that combine in-person and online learning (50 percent).
- ◆ Common barriers to attaining PD include cost and limited staff time to attend trainings.

Respondents See Need for Professional Development & Agree on Several Training Priorities

When asked whether frontline youth service professionals need PD to implement services under WIOA effectively, 85 percent of respondents said yes. The survey asked respondents to indicate which topics frontline youth service professionals would benefit from out of a list of 29 topics relevant to youth services under WIOA. They also had the option to write in other topics. Although respondents identified a wide range of topics as important, 50 percent or more selected these topics:

- ◆ Recruiting and retaining out-of-school youth (78 percent);
- ◆ Developing, placing, and supporting youth in work experiences (75 percent);
- ◆ Follow-up service strategies (61 percent);
- ◆ Serving youth with disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities (59 percent);
- ◆ Understanding new youth eligibility criteria under WIOA (58 percent);
- ◆ Career counseling/guidance and individualized planning (56 percent);
- ◆ Engaging and building partnerships with employers (55 percent);

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- ◆ Youth leadership and development (52 percent); and
- ◆ Vocational assessment tools and strategies (50 percent).

Respondents also selected other PD topics (although not as frequently). The additional PD topics identified by them included:

- ◆ Occupational skills training for industry-recognized credentials (47 percent);
- ◆ Mentoring models and strategies (47 percent);
- ◆ Career exploration strategies (45 percent);
- ◆ Entrepreneurial skills training strategies (45 percent);
- ◆ Engaging families of youth participants (44 percent);
- ◆ Developing community-based work experiences and competitive integrated employment opportunities for youth with significant disabilities (44 percent);
- ◆ Integrated academic and career training/contextualized learning models and strategies (41 percent);
- ◆ Workplace readiness skills training strategies (39 percent);
- ◆ Financial literacy education strategies (39 percent);
- ◆ Partnering with postsecondary institutions (31 percent);
- ◆ Providing supportive services (30 percent);
- ◆ Comprehensive guidance and counseling strategies (e.g. substance abuse, referral to mental health counseling) (30 percent);
- ◆ Counseling on postsecondary education options (28 percent);
- ◆ Tutoring, study skills training, instruction and evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies (27 percent);
- ◆ Partnering with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families agencies (27 percent);
- ◆ Partnering with school districts and other education providers (25 percent);
- ◆ Partnering with Juvenile Justice agencies (25 percent);
- ◆ Partnering with Homeless and Runaway youth programs (25 percent);
- ◆ Partnering with reengagement centers/programs that reconnect dropouts (23 percent); and
- ◆ Partnering with Vocational Rehabilitation agencies (20 percent).

Given the greater priority within WIOA to serve out-of-school youth and engage youth in work experiences, it is not surprising that the highest number of respondents identified these PD issues as important. When asked to describe common challenges or competency gaps for frontline staff serving youth, respondents most frequently cited challenges with recruiting, engaging, and retaining youth. One respondent noted, "The most significant challenge is recruitment and retaining youth. They are an extreme-



ly difficult population to keep engaged.” Other respondents indicated that frontline staff may need PD on how to assist youth to “overcome the huge challenges they face – basic skills deficiency, unidentified learning disabilities, social/emotional and health barriers, lack of family support, poverty, criminal records, etc.” The complexity of challenges faced by youth, such as housing instability and mental health needs, requires sophisticated case coordination that extends beyond education and employment services. Keeping youth engaged in long-term skills development programs that prepare them for higher paying employment opportunities is significantly more challenging than helping them find immediate low-skilled jobs.

Some respondents also said that supporting meaningful work experiences for youth is a challenge. They emphasized that staff must be knowledgeable about building trusting relationships with employers and convinc-

ing them that hiring young job candidates is a good investment. The limited number of employers in rural areas poses an additional barrier to finding work experiences in some communities.

Serving Youth with Disabilities is a Common Challenge

Professional development on how to serve YWD, including youth with the most significant disabilities, was one of the top five needs identified. When asked about common challenges or competency gaps for frontline staff on serving YWD, respondents described a range of concerns. One respondent explained, “There is a definite lack of knowledge and understanding around how to best meet the needs of youth with disabilities.” Staff struggle with understanding what modified interventions and supports would be appropriate to address the disability or

barrier that a youth is encountering.” Many respondents indicated that staff lack a deep understanding of disability issues, providing accommodations, and employing new approaches to assessment, service planning, training activities, and job development. Several respondents said that lack of prior documentation of a youth’s disability, such as an Individualized Education Plan (IEP), poses challenges. Others mentioned that it is difficult to find employers who are willing to employ YWD and to ensure that employers understand how to train and accommodate those with disabilities. When YWD have obtained a certificate instead of high school diploma, this creates an additional barrier to getting hired.

Many respondents emphasized a lack of knowledge about which services were available for people with disabilities through Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and other agencies. Youth service professionals also have uncertainty about when and how to refer youth to VR. One respondent indicated that lack of training and familiarity with working with YWD leads staff to refer them to other agencies. Two respondents described how collaboration with VR is strengthening their staff capacity to work with YWD. One said, “At this time we work closely with VR to better understand what a youth with disabilities will require of us to ensure employment and retention.”

Some Providers Receive More Professional Development than Others

Although the frequency of professional development for youth service professionals varies greatly, nearly half (46 percent) of respondents indicated that PD occurs two to three times per year. About a quarter of respondents said PD takes place once per year or less frequently. One respondent explained, “The only professional development we have received specific to the WIOA program is the direction, guidance, and assistance provided through our local [workforce board and district]...nothing formal.” In contrast, 38 percent reported that PD occurs as frequently as four or more times per year. Another respondent said, “Frontline staff receive constant technical assistance from our state administrators.”

When asked to describe what professional development the youth-serving staff have already received, the most commonly mentioned topics focused on WIOA regulations, including eligibility criteria, performance measures, and procedures (21 responses). Only one respondent specifically mentioned recruitment of out-of-school youth as a topic that has been covered in staff training. Five mentioned disability-related topics. Three respondents each mentioned financial literacy, case management, and youth development. Two participants each mentioned career pathways and juvenile justice issues.

Although training on WIOA’s requirements is critical, the survey responses indicate a



lack of training in other priority areas, such as strategies for effectively engaging out-of-school youth.

In-person Training Is Considered the Most Effective Format

In their descriptions of WIOA-related PD currently received by frontline staff, respondents frequently mentioned conferences, other in-person trainings, and webinars. When asked what formats of PD youth service professionals are most likely to participate in, 86 percent of respondents selected in-person group training or classes, and 66 percent of respondents selected webinar training. A majority of respondents (58 percent) selected online group training or classes, and half of respondents selected training/classes that combine in-person and online learning. Other PD formats identified as less common included individual in-person training/coach-

ing (28 percent), self-paced online training or class (45 percent), and job-embedded training focused on team learning and job performance (33 percent).

When asked which PD format they considered most effective, the largest group of respondents selected in-person group training or classes. This was followed by individual training/coaching delivered in-person and training delivered through a hybrid of in-person and online learning. Respondents shared the following perspectives on training formats and limitations:

- ◆ “I have new case managers and would love to have any type of training offered. I think they learn better in person, but if all we can do is online that is better than no training at all.”
- ◆ “Seat-of-the-pants training is not as beneficial, but sometimes [it] is the only option. Therefore, online

options in a range of pertinent topics would probably be the best way to integrate training within the current constraints of the program, allowing professional development that best fits the needs of the staff in a time that works with their schedule.”

- ◆ “We do not have much professional development options for our staff as it pertains to WIOA youth programs and outcomes, which is why we’ve done it in house.”

Some respondents discussed the importance of peer networking and opportunities to share best practices and examples with other service providers. One respondent stressed the importance of providing ongoing PD that is relevant and engaging for the staff and focused on the high-need population for which they provide services.

Cost & Time Pose Barriers to Professional Development

Several participants shared their perspectives on barriers to sufficient PD for YSPs providing services under WIOA. The cost of PD opportunities (e.g., fees and travel expenses) is a common challenge. Another frequent barrier is staff time. One respondent noted, “Trainings are expensive and [are] often not accessible, so we don’t have the financial resources or the programmatic resources to dedicate to sending staff to trainings that end up being a significant commitment. Additionally, when staff turnover happens, the amount of skill and competency building that is required as part of the orientation

process is difficult to achieve when staff are needed to ‘hit the ground running’ with taking over case management responsibilities.”

Implications

The Frontline Professional Development Staff survey findings demonstrate that opportunities for professional development of WIOA youth service staff vary and that staff would benefit from expanded professional development opportunities. Survey results indicate that youth service professional staff are interested in content that will enable them to sufficiently address the most pressing challenges of their work. The survey identified the following professional development priorities:

- ◆ Recruiting and retaining out-of-school youth;
- ◆ Developing, placing, and supporting youth in work experiences;
- ◆ Providing follow-up services;
- ◆ Effectively serving youth with disabilities, including youth with the most significant disabilities;
- ◆ Delivering career counseling/guidance and individualized planning;
- ◆ Engaging and building partnerships with employers; and
- ◆ Supporting youth leadership and development.

These priorities demonstrate professional development needs to address all points of program contact with out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities. Professional de-

velopment must address a full continuum of youth recruitment and entry to the program, participation in services, and placement and retention in work. A greater focus on expanding investments in PD can ensure that the workforce development system can meet targeted performance outcomes. Youth who receive services under WIOA depend on knowledgeable, high-skilled frontline staff to successfully engage and prepare them to attain competitive, integrated employment.

Assessment of Capacity & Planning for Professional Development

In designing organizational and individual professional development plans, staff at state and local workforce development boards and program administrators should assess the extent to which youth service professionals have core competencies and skills relevant to the field. The Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities (KSA) Assessment for Youth Service Professionals (<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/knowledge-skills-and-abilities-assessment-for-youth-service-professionals>) provides an inventory to enable individuals and programs to examine competencies relevant to core youth program elements.

This KSA Assessment enables professionals and programs to examine competencies organized by ten areas: 1) knowledge of the field, 2) communication with youth, 3) assessment and individualized planning, 4) relationship to family and community, 5) workforce preparation, 6) career exploration,

7) relationships with employers and between employers and employees, 8) access to resources, 9) program design and delivery, and 10) administrative skills. The assessment identifies areas of strength, areas for improvement, and next steps for planning. The KSA self-assessment is a useful tool for conducting needs assessments to inform staff capacity building and professional development plans. Although in-person training formats may be most effective, a combination of online and in-person training options may be needed to reduce barriers to participation.

Recommendations for Enhancing Professional Development for Youth Service Providers

Implications from the survey suggest that enhancing delivery of professional development requires creative, flexible implementation that is closely tied to community and business partnerships and that makes use of innovative approaches. Below are recommendations for implementing professional development, structuring opportunities for partnership, and enhancing professional developments for WIOA program administrators and frontline services professionals to consider.

Implementing Professional Development

Professional development should focus on the core content that staff need to know regarding the workforce system and effective youth services. Staff benefit from knowledge of local workforce systems, including understanding regulations and eligibility criteria and youth service requirements. Additionally, program administrators and staff will need to assess their professional capacities for delivery of all 14 WIOA programs' youth elements from Section 129C(2):

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention
2. Alternative secondary school services or dropout recovery services
3. Paid and unpaid work experience
4. Occupational skills training
5. Education offered concurrently with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation
6. Leadership development opportunities
7. Supportive services
8. Adult mentoring
9. Follow-up service
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling
11. Financial literacy education
12. Entrepreneurial skills training
13. Services that provide labor market information
14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

Special consideration should be given to design professional development opportunities to address those elements that are challenging for service delivery. Additionally, as implications above suggest, professional development must be operationalized to ensure that staff can meet the needs of a youth at every stage of the program from initial contact and recruitment through follow-up strategies, work experience, and connections to other supports and services.

Professional development options should be flexible to meet the needs of youth service professionals. Professional development activities need to be aligned to immediate service needs and long-term program quality goals by providing both formal and informal opportunities to grow professionally. Professional development activities should enable staff to successfully implement job coaching, job development, recruitment, and other types of workforce development activities. These activities should also deepen understanding of Vocational Rehabilitation and the general workforce development system. Additionally, informal peer networking at events such as the state's workforce development association conference, provides opportunities for staff to discuss youth practices. State and local associations often provide year-round professional development opportunities for their members as well as annual conferences.



Structuring Opportunities for Partnership

Strengthen cross-agency partnerships to build staff knowledge of out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities. Administrators and staff need to create opportunities to share information between systems, enabling staff to work across silos so that knowledge gained through professional development can be utilized at the operational level. For example, encouraging interaction between American Job Center staff and Vocational Rehabilitation entities builds joint capacity to serve the needs of youth with disabilities. Programs can utilize Memorandum of Understanding and strategic planning to clarify agency roles and responsibilities and create policies that ensure youth are engaged and connected to community programs and services at critical junctures.

Align workforce services and activities with a youth's individualized planning process. Alignment of intake assessment, service planning, and follow-up among partnering WIOA agencies helps cross-fertilize youth service staff knowledge of serving out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities. There should be strong links between professional development and workforce development activities, including the Individualized Plan for Employment and Individual Service Strategy planning.

Enhancing Professional Development

Braid together professional development funds. All WIOA titles allocate funds for professional development. These funds should be braided. Pooling together funds from different sources can create a more comprehensive professional development system. Simple strategies, such as discussing

programs in Workforce Development Board meetings and One Stop operator meetings, can help build internal capacity.

Train staff to approach case management in a holistic manner. Those who deliver professional development need to train youth service professionals to approach case management in a more dynamic manner. Case management needs to make connections to an individualized planning process designed to achieve outcomes.

Use online technology and evidence-based practices. Utilizing webinar-based training may be one effective way of providing ongoing support for staff development. Several online resources are noted in the resource section below. Those delivering training should incorporate guidance on how to implement evidence-based practices that are correlated with increased outcomes.

Resources

Meeting the professional development needs of youth service professionals working across youth and other WIOA programs will require an understanding of career counseling/guidance and individualized planning along with developing, placing, and supporting youth in work experiences and providing follow-up services. Below are professional development resources including online resources and training portals that support communities of practice. Resources are also provided for serving out-of-school youth and youth with disabilities as well as engaging with employers in partnership.

Professional Development Resources

Workforce System Strategies—This online learning destination provides a central tool for workforce professionals and their partners who strive to improve outcomes for job seekers and employers through informed decisions. It contains a comprehensive database of resources on career pathways, post-secondary education, job search assistance, registered apprenticeships, case management, employer engagement, partnerships, system building, and more.

<https://strategies.workforcegps.org/sitecore/content/sites/strategies/home>

Disability and Employment Community of Practice—This is an online learning destination for public workforce system staff and partners, jobseekers, community-based organizations, grantees, and the business sector, who provide services and programs to people with disabilities and/or other barriers to employment.

<https://disability.workforcegps.org/>

American Job Center Access 30-Second Training Series—This web-based PowerPoint series of 30-second training sessions addresses Job Center Access. The training was developed for Disability Resource Coordinators and other workforce professionals to share with Job Center staff and partners.

https://www.workforcegps.org/resources/2015/04/23/14/06/American_Job_Center_Access_30_Second_Training_Series

American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF)—AYPF provides research-based information and resources, first-hand learning experiences, convenings, and peer-to-peer networking exchanges focused on education, youth, and workforce policies to improve the lives and outcomes of traditionally underserved youth. Youth service professionals can participate in free national webinars.

<http://www.aypf.org/programareas>

Learning to Achieve Online Classes—This set of seven self-paced online courses address a range of topics relevant to adult education and related service providers working with adults with learning disabilities. Most sessions are one hour in length.

<https://lincs.ed.gov/learning-portal#ld>

LINCS Online Disabilities in Adult Education Community of Practice—This group is a community of practice for adult education practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and others to discuss the needs and concerns related to serving learners with disabilities in adult education. Group members share information, research, expertise, and resources. The Group is open to all and requires registration to post comments.

<https://community.lincs.ed.gov/group/disabilities-adult-education>

WIOA and Out-of-School Youth

Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational and Career Development

Challenges—This guide serves as a resource for multiple audiences to find information on selecting career-related assessments, determining when to refer youth for additional assessment, and additional issues such as accommodations, legal issues, and ethical considerations.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/career-planning-begins-with-assessment>

Making the Right Turn: A Guide About Improving Transition Outcomes for Youth Involved in the Juvenile Corrections System—This guide provides professionals with well-researched and documented facts, offers evidence-based research, highlights promising practices, and provides the Guideposts for Success for Youth Involved in the Juvenile Corrections System.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/making-the-right-turn-a-guide-about-improving-transition-outcomes-for-youth-involved-in-the-juvenile-corrections-system>

Negotiating the Curves Toward Employment: A Guide About Youth Involved in the Foster Care System—This guide examines the Guideposts for Success in the context of meeting the needs of youth in foster care with and without disabilities. It includes facts and statistics about youth involved in the foster care system; identifies promising practices; and provides resources and tools to assist cross-system collaborative efforts.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/negotiating-the-curves-toward-employment>

Youth with Disabilities

Eight Actions You Can Consider to Support Youth and Adults with Disabilities in WIOA Implementation—This document by ODEP’s LEAD Center describes eight actions for states to consider when supporting youth and adults with disabilities, before, during and after WIOA implementation, along with a timetable of key implementation dates attached as a separate document.

<http://www.leadcenter.org/blog/eight-actions-you-can-consider-support-youth-and-adults-disabilities-wioa-implementation>

Tapping Everyone’s Talent – Accessibility, Accommodations and Disability Program Navigators—This webpage provides information and examples of how Integrated Resource Teams (IRT) can support Disability Resource Coordinators in working with job seekers with disabilities.

https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2015/12/07/19/41/Tapping_Everyones_Talent_Accessibility_Accommodation_and_DPNs

The 411 on Disability Disclosure: A Workbook for Families, Educators, Youth Service Professionals, and Adult Allies Who Care About Youth with Disabilities—This resource provides guidance to professionals and other adults on how to assist youth with disabilities to determine whether, what, and how much of sensitive information related to a disability to reveal in order to obtain

the needed accommodations. It is also a resource for teaching young people about disability rights and other essential information for developing self-advocacy skills.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/the-411-on-disability-disclosure-a-workbook-for-families-educators-youth-service-professionals-and-adult-allies-who-care-about-youth-with-disabilities>

Pre-employment Transition Services for Students—Pre-employment transition services are provided to students with disabilities who are: (1) eligible for VR services; or (2) potentially eligible for VR services (i.e. all students with disabilities, including those who have not applied or been determined eligible for VR services). Students are a subset of the youth population.

<http://www.wintac.org/topic-areas/pre-employment-transition-services>

Information on Specific Disabilities—This webpage links to 11 fact sheets that contain brief profiles of specific disabilities. Note: Individuals with challenges in cognitive function now are referred to as individuals with intellectual disabilities NOT with mental retardation.

http://www.onestops.info/subcategory.php?subcat_id=403

Charting the Course: Supporting the Career Development of Youth with Learning Disabilities—This Guide helps youth service professionals better understand issues related to learning disabilities so that they can assist youth with learning disabilities to develop individual strategies for workplace success.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/charting-the-course-supporting-the-career-development-of-youth-with-learning-disabilities>

Tunnels and Cliffs: A Guide for Workforce Development Practitioners and Policymakers Serving Youth with Mental Health Needs—This guide provides information for workforce development practitioners, administrators, and policymakers to enhance their understanding of youth with mental health needs (MHN) and the supports necessary to help them transition into the workforce successfully.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/tunnels-and-cliffs-a-guide-for-workforce-development-professionals-and-policymakers-serving-youth-with-mental-health-needs>

Association for Professionals in Supported Employment—APSE supports Employment First to facilitate the full inclusion of people with disabilities in the workplace and community. APSE has gathered together materials and resources that are designed to help youth, parents and youth practitioners reach their professional development goals

in a variety of ways. APSE provides trainings through conferences, webinars, professional briefs, and the CESP program. The CESP™ program is the first in the nation to create national guidelines to validate and support the training currently provided in the field of Supported Employment.

<http://apse.org/certified-employment-support-professional>

PEAT Resources to support AJCs on the ICT provisions in WIOA—Under WIOA, American Job Centers (AJCs) must be physically and programmatically accessible to people with disabilities. More specifically, information and communication technology (ICT) designed, procured, maintained, and used by AJCs must comply with the non-discrimination and equal opportunity provisions of Section 188 of WIOA and its implementing regulations. Resources include a detailed guide, a condensed fact sheet, a checklist, and a ready-to-share presentation slide deck.

<http://www.peatworks.org/wioa>

Engaging and Building Partnerships with Employers

Strategies for Youth Workforce Programs to become Employer Friendly Intermediaries—This brief focuses on how youth-serving organizations can become more effective as intermediary linkages between youth and employers. The brief offers basic employer-friendly strategies that will assist intermediaries and their representatives in making productive connections with employer cus-

tomers that can result in successful work experiences for youth.

<http://www.ncwd-youth.info/publications/strategies-for-youth-workforce-programs-to-become-employer-friendly-intermediaries>

A Resource for Engaging Employers—This resource guide aims to help education and training professionals develop and sustain partnerships with employers by presenting a ladder of employer engagement.

<https://www.jff.org/resources/resource-guide-engaging-employers>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN)—JAN is the leading source of free, expert, and confidential guidance on workplace accommodations and disability employment issues. Working toward practical solutions that benefit both employer and employee, JAN helps people with disabilities enhance their employability and shows employers how to

capitalize on the value and talent that people with disabilities add to the workplace.

<https://askjan.org/index.html>

Postsecondary Institutions and Students with Disabilities—This webpage explains the legal obligations that postsecondary institutions have toward students with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, and the Fair Housing Act.

<http://www.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/knownyourrights504adafactsheet.pdf>

Reference

Evans, W. P., Sicafuse, L. L., Killian, E. S., Davidson, L. A., & Loesch-Griffin, D. (2010). Youth worker professional development participation, preferences, and agency support. *Child & Youth Services, 31*(1-2), 35-52.

The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) is composed of partners with expertise in disability, education, employment, and workforce development issues. NCWD/Youth is housed at the Institute for Educational Leadership in Washington, DC. NCWD/Youth is charged with assisting state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into their service strategies. The brief was written by Mindy Larson. To obtain this publication in an alternate format, please contact us at 877-871-0744 toll free or email contact@ncwd-youth.info. All NCWD/Youth publications are posted on the NCWD/Youth website at www.ncwd-youth.info. NCDW/Youth is funded by a grant/contract/cooperative agreement from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL), Office of Disability Employment Policy (Number #OD-23804-12-75-4-11). The opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Labor. Nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply the endorsement by the USDOL. Individuals may produce any part of this document. Please credit the source and support of federal funds.

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