



**TO:** Adult Career and Continuing Education Services (ACCES) Committee

**FROM:** Kevin G. Smith 

**SUBJECT:** Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan 2-Year Update

**DATE:** February 1, 2018

**AUTHORIZATION(S):** 

## SUMMARY

### Issue for Decision

Approval of the 2-year update of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Combined State Plan.

### Reason(s) for Consideration

Required by federal regulation.

### Proposed Handling

This item will come before the Board of Regents ACCES Committee at its February 2018 meeting.

### Procedural History

The WIOA (effective July 22, 2014) requires the State to submit a 4-year Combined State Plan (Plan) with a mandatory 2-year update. The Plan includes the State Education Department's Vocational Rehabilitation and Adult Education Programs.

### Background Information

New York State submitted its 4-year Plan in April 2016 with an effective date of July 1, 2016. The core programs included in the Plan are: Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor; Wagner-Peyser

Act employment services, administered by the U.S. Department of Labor; Adult Education and Literacy Act programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Education; and, Rehabilitation Act Title 1 Vocational Rehabilitation programs, administered by the U.S. Department of Education.

The Plan begins with a broad overview that articulates the strategies, goals, performance expectations, and activities that workforce development programs will engage in together to ensure a collaborative and accessible system that meets the employment needs of all New Yorkers. The Plan also contains separate components that detail the strategies and implementation activities of the individual programs and describes how those programs will meet their obligations under the law.

WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy through a nationwide system for workforce development. This is known as the American Job Center network. In New York, this is also called the Career Center System. The Career Center System encompasses all local one-stop centers (comprehensive, affiliate and specialized) as well as partner locations.

The active plan can be found at the following U.S. Department of Education website: [WIOA State Plan](https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/ny.pdf) (https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/ny.pdf). The update to this Plan reports on progress and identifies strengths and challenges.

The Plan update:

- Restructures the information in the combined summary section to more clearly demonstrate that program partners work together on activities.
- Adds successes and accomplishments that have occurred since the inception of the Plan in July 2016.
- Identifies challenges.

In New York State, since early in 2015, each State agency partner has committed staff to an Interagency Team. The Interagency Team, and its topic focused workgroups, have convened over 200 meetings. Additionally, the staff have participated together in trainings, and jointly presented to a variety of workforce system organizations. The Team has also developed material for the workforce system which includes the current Plan, templates for use by local workforce areas for development of the service delivery and infrastructure funding memorandums of understanding, and additional guidance documents.

There has been significant communication and coordination to ensure WIOA requirements are met in New York State. ACCES worked with a national consultant to provide facilitated discussions for local and State level partners to assist in the development of the required memorandums of understandings.

Strengths identified in the Plan update include:

- Improved service delivery to priority populations
  - The Partners specifically identified the need for a system of service to youth. Each program offers services to youth but by focusing on youth there will be increased coordination in serving that population.
  - Also, the partners agreed to bring a heightened focus to individuals with disabilities, individuals who are basic skill deficient (including individuals who are English language learners), recipients of public assistance, and other low-income individuals, and veterans.
- Topic focused workgroups charged to provide recommendations for responding to identified system needs
  - Workgroups have focused on accessibility, data sharing, business engagement, and training needs.
    - The accessibility workgroup, working with local partners and State agency level staff identified baseline needs for each center. Exploration is underway to identify options to streamline application and referral processes to make the system more user-friendly.
    - The data sharing workgroup reviewed expectations and options related to data integration. The group assisted with the development of data sharing agreements.
    - The business engagement workgroup reviewed the performance measures related to serving business and agreement was reached that New York State would be measured on the repeat and penetration measures. Baseline data for these measures is being gathered.
    - The training and assistance workgroup developed a training inventory and is exploring delivery methods
- Business engagement coordination
  - The Partners are developing service descriptions that address individual program needs as well as provide consistency across the programs for tracking performance in this area. WIOA only permits certain categories of service as performance so each program must align its services so that the service aligns to a permitted category or the service (though it may still be provided) is not counted as part of performance.
- Development of a plan to ensure ongoing training and education for workforce system staff, and participants
  - The plan identifies training available through any partner, training needs for the system, and mechanisms to share training or develop additional training to address any gaps.

### Challenges identified in the Plan update include:

- Development of Memorandums of Understanding
  - In NYS there are 33 comprehensive areas. Within each comprehensive area there are multiple partners on both the State level and local level. Each local area is required to have a memorandum of understanding that articulates how services will be delivered and how the infrastructure will be funded. Negotiation, compromise, and agreement is a challenge when engaging as many as 30 partners per area. New York separated the paperwork for service delivery and infrastructure funding into two documents, that when taken together, meet the WIOA requirements. This decision ensures that identification of services needed and how those services would be delivered received focus and agreement prior to full discussion of funding the infrastructure. It has been a complex process to develop these required memorandums of understanding. Significant progress has been made, but there are still some issues to be resolved before all the agreements are finalized.
- Data Integration
  - WIOA calls for integrated data. However, each system partner has data systems in place. Programs also collect and maintain data for purposes outside of WIOA requirements. At the federal level the requirements for joint reporting by state-level WIOA partners are being further reviewed to determine if there may be other mechanisms available for accessing the desired data. One example being explored is the possibility that the U.S. Department of Education and U.S. Department of Labor could make use of certain data elements directly from the Higher Education system. Currently, in NYS, WIOA program partners are planning to share data through a data warehouse, rather than move toward full data integration across partner programs.
- Staffing Capacity and Funding
  - There were many added and/or changed priorities and expectations within WIOA for the system and for each individual partner, but there was no additional funding to support these expectations. Efforts are ongoing to collaborate and partner within existing staff and funding resources.

### **Modifications in the 2018 Update**

Specifically, within the ACCES-VR component, the most significant change for the updated Plan is replacement of the comprehensive needs assessment data. In 2017 Cornell University conducted a new needs assessment and the results of that project have replaced the old information. As appropriate, other outdated data was replaced to reflect 2017 information.

For the Adult Education component, WIOA Title 2 funds will be competitively rebid, reflecting new instructional approaches such as integrated education and training and career exploration. For the first time, all applications will be reviewed by New York's 33 Local Workforce Development Boards for alignment with their dedicated plans that address access and service to out-of-school youth and adults who are basic skills

deficient in literacy or English Language or lack a High School Equivalency diploma. Every funded program will have a single point of contact for workforce referrals and establish career pathways.

### **Related Regent's Item**

[Workforce Innovation and Opportunity act Combined State Plan, October 2015](http://www.regents.nysed.gov/common/regents/files/meetings/Oct%202015/1015accessd1.pdf)

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### **Recommendation**

The Board of Regents approve the Combined State Plan 2-year update. Additionally, and with the support of the Board of Regents, ACCES will continue to identify opportunities to improve and expand collaboration with partners in the workforce development system.

### **Timetable for Implementation**

Upon approval the updated Combined State Plan will be submitted April 1, 2018 with an effective date of July 1, 2018.