

WIOA Title II Adult Education & Family Literacy

STATE PLAN LOCAL PLAN POLICIES & GUIDANCE BUDGET CHOICES

CLASP's [Opportunities for Action](#) is a series of short memos with recommendations for state and local areas to fully realize the options in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to help low-income and lower-skilled youth and adults achieve economic success.

State Plan

WIOA requires the state workforce board to include “lead State officials with primary responsibility for the core programs” [101(b)(1)(C)(IV)(iii)(I)(aa)] and local workforce boards to “include a representative of eligible providers administering adult education and literacy activities under title II” [107(b)(2)(C)(i)]. This will ensure state and local workforce boards have title II representation. Additionally, local boards will be required to review local title II applications. Consequently, state title II leadership will need to develop a review process for local workforce boards to determine whether local provider applications align with the local WIOA plan.

CLASP recommends that WIOA State Plans address the complications of matching many adult education providers to one local workforce board area. State Plans should: 1) identify how a single person will be selected to represent the group of adult education providers on the local board, as well as defining that individual’s role in representing regional adult education and literacy efforts; and 2) require a blanket Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) so that each local workforce board has a common relationship with every adult education provider in their region.

For example, in Illinois, a [Workforce Investment Act policy](#) required title II programs that served any portion of a local workforce board’s geographic area to collaborate in identifying a single person to recommend to the local workforce board. Under WIOA, State title II agencies should establish a protocol by which local title II providers agree to meet annually to identify a single person to represent all adult education consortia serving a local workforce board’s geographic region. The state agency should provide these representatives with technical assistance on how to effectively represent providers’ multitude of services, identify opportunities for collaboration, create strategies for achieving shared WIOA performance measures across titles, and understand opportunities for linking state data systems, as well as other important issues.

Local Plan

Implementation of Integrated Education and Training (IET) is a powerful call to action for WIOA title II. IET is a three-part service approach that provides: 1) adult education and literacy activities concurrently and contextually with 2) workforce preparation activities and 3) workforce training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster for the purpose of educational and career advancement. The three components must be balanced proportionally, occur simultaneously, use occupationally relevant instructional materials, and have a single set of learning objectives that identifies content in the three components.

For example, Title II instructors and career & technical education (CTE) faculty could work together to design integrated coursework that respects the content standards of adult education and the technical skill standards of CTE. These collaborations would necessitate co-meeting and planning time, along with robust professional learning communities like those in Washington State’s IBEST initiative, which developed these [collaborative planning](#)

[resources](#). Title II leaders should be meeting with their CTE counterparts and planning the use of leadership resources to build a foundation for the work ahead. Local leaders should also develop IET models with apprenticeship and other postsecondary education options beyond higher education.

Policies & Guidance

Proposed [WIOA regulations](#) encourage co-enrollment. This is reinforced in the proposed annual statewide performance [report](#) template, which requires reporting on the number of participants enrolled in more than one core program. Co-enrollment allows partners to leverage resources while providing a more comprehensive service delivery strategy that meets the needs of customers with multiple barriers to employment.

Additionally, a customer-focused approach to coordinating services decreases the likelihood of subsequent re-entry into the public workforce system in cases where needed services were not provided or possible barriers were not addressed. Many disconnected youth ages 16 to 24 meet eligibility requirements for both WIOA title I youth activities and WIOA title II adult education. Co-enrollment between these two programs can be very beneficial to disconnected youth; it allows them to obtain work experience and occupational skills training through title I funding and literacy skills training through title II funding. State program leaders need to develop explicit guidance for local providers in the areas of referral, assessment, performance accountability, and reporting of co-enrolled participants.

Shared Assessment

Under WIOA, the core programs have shared performance measures. Proposed regulations also encourage core programs to use shared assessment tools. At a minimum, state leadership of title I youth and title II should identify the same standardized assessments from the common list of measures to be used for the WIOA measurable skill gain academic assessment. Beyond the use of the National Reporting System, all WIOA partners should identify other demonstrated performance measures to use in documenting skill gains. One tool to consider is the recently released [Education and Skills Online \(ESO\)](#) assessment. ESO is an adaptive online assessment that includes literacy, numeracy, and problem solving in a technology-rich environment (PSTRE). It can be used to document progress (pre- and post-testing) and to gauge both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, making [the test](#) appropriate for employability skill gain measurements.

The technology problem solving test is especially important for adults. A recent [OECD report](#) establishes that adults with technology skills, as measured by PSTRE, have higher labor force participation rates and higher earnings than those without them. The Education and Skills Online assessment is tied to the Program for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) data set, which continues to grow and will soon double the number of Americans tested, specifically including people who are unemployed, incarcerated individuals, and people in target age groups, such as 16 to 34 year-olds and 66 to 75 year-olds.

While the need for title II services is currently measured by reference to the population of high school completers in each state, the workforce development field must also take the PIAAC results into account, as a recent [analysis](#) of the data for millennials convincingly demonstrated that educational attainment on its own—just completing high school—is not a guarantee of foundational skills. The useful [Skills to Pay the Bills](#) infographic starkly presents this point, noting that “more than half of those with the low levels of skills have at least a high school diploma and many have higher degrees.”

Related CLASP resources: [Comments on proposed regulations](#).

Questions? Contact [Judy Mortrude](#), director of CLASP’s Alliance for Quality Career Pathways.

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