

## Youth Governance: Strengthening and Maintaining Youth Committees to Improve Services for Youth

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.*

WIOA title I youth requires that at least 75 percent of available state-wide funds and 75 percent of funds available to local areas be spent on workforce investment services for out-of-school youth. This is an increase from 30 percent under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). In addition, WIOA raises the eligibility range for out-of-school youth from 16-21 to 16-24. This redirected funding gives states and local communities dedicated resources to implement effective employment, education, and youth development strategies for the most vulnerable young people in highly distressed communities. Similarly, raising the eligibility age could help states and local areas better target their programming for this population of youth who are transitioning into adulthood. There is no one system that serves out-of-school youth, and out-of-school youth are more likely to touch multiple systems. Consequently, specific developmental needs often go unmet, especially among youth served through the adult workforce system.

Unlike WIA, WIOA does not require local workforce boards to maintain youth councils. However, WIOA does allow local boards to establish standing youth committees, as well as continue any existing youth councils established under the previous law. These strategic planning entities are critical to directly link youth stakeholders and experts to decision making about funding and resource allocation, service implementation, performance measures, and reporting—ensuring out-of-school youth and low-income, in-school youth are adequately served across systems according to WIOA’s intent.

### State and Local Plan

WIOA requires substantial changes to the local youth system, including a dramatic shift in service to out-of-school youth, a greatly expanded age range, and an increase in the number of program elements. Such dramatic changes will require strategic planning and coordination to achieve legislative intent. Thus, in addition to the list of roles proposed for standing youth committees in [§681.120](#), we recommend that state plans require local boards and/or local standing youth committees to identify their strategies for:

- **Facilitating co-enrollment of participants across core programs**, which is particularly important for youth and young adults (ages 18-24) who can be served through title I, title II, and title IV.
- **Implementing specific provisions related to career pathways**—such as the requirement that local areas use youth funds to conduct an objective assessment “for the purpose of identifying appropriate services and career pathways for participants”—as well comprehensive career pathway programs for youth and young adults across core programs.
- **Adapting and aligning procurement processes and requests for proposals across the core programs** to encourage longer-term, more intensive services for out-of-school youth.
- **Making connections with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) partners at One-Stops**

to align policies and programs for young adults under 25, who may receive a different set of services if they are not served through title I youth programs. This is critically important; while a large percentage of TANF recipients are under 25 and would benefit from out-of-school youth programs, federal requirements and outcomes vary between the two. Consequently, serving TANF recipients in a WIOA program will require specific “policy and programmatic alignment” by the state and local workforce boards.

## Policies & Guidance

**States should establish policies requiring local workforce development boards to create standing youth committees.** The responsibilities of the standing youth committee should build off the [U.S. Department of Labor's proposed regulations](#) as well as this memo's recommendations (above). The standing youth committee should be comprised of members of the local workforce board; representatives from across the WIOA core programs; stakeholders from other youth-serving systems, such as the juvenile/criminal justice system, child welfare and human services agencies, and K-12 and postsecondary education institutions; and leaders from business and industry. States should also emphasize that local workforce boards choosing not to establish a youth council or standing committee will still be responsible for the activities listed in the regulations. This includes documenting activities and providing opportunities for stakeholder input.

## Budget Choices

**States should provide funding and technical assistance to local workforce development boards on how to leverage WIOA resources and build a comprehensive youth system that effectively serves out-of-school youth and other low-income vulnerable youth.** At the local level, a comprehensive youth employment system strategically leverages public, private, and foundation resources and funding streams, as well as draws on the strength of public systems and community providers, to create supported pathways that offer education, skills, supportive services, and access to good jobs and successful careers. Out-of-school youth, in particular, need a comprehensive, properly scaled youth employment service delivery system that coordinates *all* of a community's sectors, systems, and resources. To accomplish this, states should promote a peer-to-peer approach where experienced and high-functioning local boards provide guidance to those that are less advanced. It is also important for states to provide targeted funding to support this infrastructure, which includes meeting and facilitation responsibilities, technology and data systems development, and case management and referral functions. Building on decades of experience [working with communities](#), CLASP has identified common elements of a successful youth employment services delivery system:

- a. **A strong convening entity** to amass stakeholders, shape a community vision, maximize resource sharing, and hold systems accountable. The standing youth committee could effectively serve in this role.
- b. **An effective administrative agent** to work in partnership with the education system, other youth systems, and community providers to ensure the convening entity's vision is effectively implemented.
- c. **A well-trained case management arm** to engage youth in the areas of education, employment, basic skills, and wrap-around supports.
- d. **Strong partnerships across systems** that serve youth, such as education, juvenile justice, and child welfare systems, to share resources and provide additional support to very vulnerable youth.
- e. **A sustainable system of workforce services and opportunities**, which provide high-quality work experiences and career exposure (including subsidized jobs, summer youth employment, on-the-job training, and pre-apprenticeships) that allow for exploration and onramps into various occupations and career options.

Without a youth council or standing committee, interventions will be fragmented and ineffective, squandering WIOA's opportunities for unified planning and cross-systems alignment that support education and training

### WIOA Opportunities for Action

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pathways, as well as comprehensive services, for youth. Given this, it is critically important to appoint a strategic entity to administer title I youth activities, make policy and programmatic connections across WIOA core programs and other youth-serving systems, and compile multiple public and private resources to effectively support youth's transitions across systems and into the labor market.

**Related CLASP resources:** [Comments on proposed regulations](#); [Communities Collaborating to Reconnect Youth \(CCRY Network\)](#); [Building a Comprehensive Youth Employment Delivery System](#); [Expanding Opportunities for Low-Income and Out-of-School Youth Webinar](#).

**Questions?** Contact [Kisha Bird](#), director of youth policy at [kbird@clasp.org](mailto:kbird@clasp.org).

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