

What is WIOA?



The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) places a significant emphasis on the provision of services to youth with disabilities. It emphasizes the need for youth with disabilities to have more opportunities *to practice and improve their workplace skills*, to *consider their career interests* and to *get real world work experience*.

It also requires vocational rehabilitation (VR) agencies to make **pre-employment transition services** (Pre-ETS) available to **all students with disabilities**. These services will assist students in making the transition from secondary school to postsecondary education or training and employment.

Pre-ETS services are all about providing exposure and experiences in career and employment opportunities. It includes 5 parts:

1. **Job Exploration Counseling** *may be provided in a classroom or community setting* and include information regarding in-demand industry sectors and occupations, as well as non-traditional employment, labor market composition, administration of vocational interest inventories, and identification of career pathways of interest to the students. Job exploration counseling provided on an individual basis might be provided in school or the community and include discussion of the student's vocational interest inventory results, in-demand occupations, career pathways, and local labor market information that applies to those particular interests.
2. **Work-Based Learning Experiences** which *may include in-school or after-school opportunities*, or experience outside the traditional school setting (including internships), that is provided in an integrated environment in the community to the maximum extent possible. Work-based learning experiences in a group setting may include coordinating a school-based program of job training and informational interviews to research employers, work-site tours to learn about necessary job skills, job shadowing, or mentoring opportunities in the community. Work-based learning experiences on an individual basis could include work experiences to explore the student's area of interest through paid and

unpaid internships, apprenticeships (not including pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships), short-term employment, fellowships, or on-the-job trainings located in the community. These services are those that would be most beneficial to an individual in the early stages of employment exploration during the transition process from school to post-school activities, including employment.

3. **Counseling on Opportunities for Enrollment in Post-Secondary Education** in a group setting may include information on course offerings, career options, the types of academic and occupational training needed to succeed in the workplace, and post-secondary opportunities associated with career fields or pathways. This information may also be provided on an individual basis and may include advising students and parents or representatives on academic curricula, college application and admissions processes, completing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and resources that may be used to support individual student success in education and training, which could include disability support
4. **Workplace Readiness Training** may include programming to develop social skills and independent living, such as communication and interpersonal skills; financial literacy; orientation and mobility skills; job-seeking skills; and understanding employer expectations for punctuality and performance, along with other “soft” skills necessary for employment. These services may include instruction, as well as opportunities to acquire and apply knowledge. *They may be provided in a generalized manner in a classroom setting or be tailored to an individual’s needs* in a training program provided in an educational or community setting.
5. **Instruction in Self-Advocacy** *in a group setting may include generalized classroom lessons* in which students learn about their rights, responsibilities, and how to request accommodations or services and supports needed during the transition from secondary to postsecondary education and employment. During these lessons, students may share their thoughts, concerns, and needs, in order to prepare them for peer mentoring opportunities with individuals working in their area(s) of interest. Further individualized opportunities may be arranged for students to conduct informational interviews or mentor with educational staff such as principals, nurses, teachers, or office staff; or they may mentor with individuals employed by or volunteering for employers, boards, associations, or organizations in integrated community settings. Students may also participate in youth leadership activities offered in educational or community settings.

