

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998

A Primer for People with Disabilities

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INTRODUCTION

What is the purpose of this primer?

On August 7, 1998, President Clinton signed into law the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA). The purpose of WIA is to create a national workforce preparation and employment system that meets the needs of job seekers and those seeking to advance their careers, as well as the employment needs of the nation's employers. The goal is to create an integrated workforce investment system that improves the quality of our workforce, sustains economic growth and productivity, and reduces dependency on welfare.

This primer describes the major components of the Workforce Investment Act and suggests ways to participate that ensure that individuals with disabilities have universal access to the new workforce system.

Who is this primer intended for?

This primer is intended primarily for people with disabilities—and the parents of children with disabilities—who are looking for a job, or want to advance their careers. The new law means that new services are now available to job seekers. This primer is intended to help people with disabilities make the most of the workforce system. It is also useful for teachers, advocates, and service providers who work with people with disabilities. Finally, this primer is intended for people who want to learn how they can participate in the development and implementation of this new system.

What will you gain from this primer?

After reading this primer, you will:

- ⌚ understand how the new workforce development system works;
- ⌚ know what services are available to people with disabilities looking for a job or job training;
- ⌚ understand how the new employment and training services affect the benefits and services currently available to people with disabilities;
- ⌚ know where to access providers of employment and training services; and
- ⌚ understand the range of actions that may be taken to enhance the effectiveness of the new workforce development system for persons with disabilities.

I. BACKGROUND

What is the Workforce Investment Act of 1998?

The overall purpose of the Workforce Investment Act is to consolidate and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs. Title I of WIA is enacted to meet the needs of both individual job seekers and employers by providing job seekers with access to employment and training opportunities and linking employers to a pool of qualified applicants. The main feature of Title I is the creation of "One-Stop"

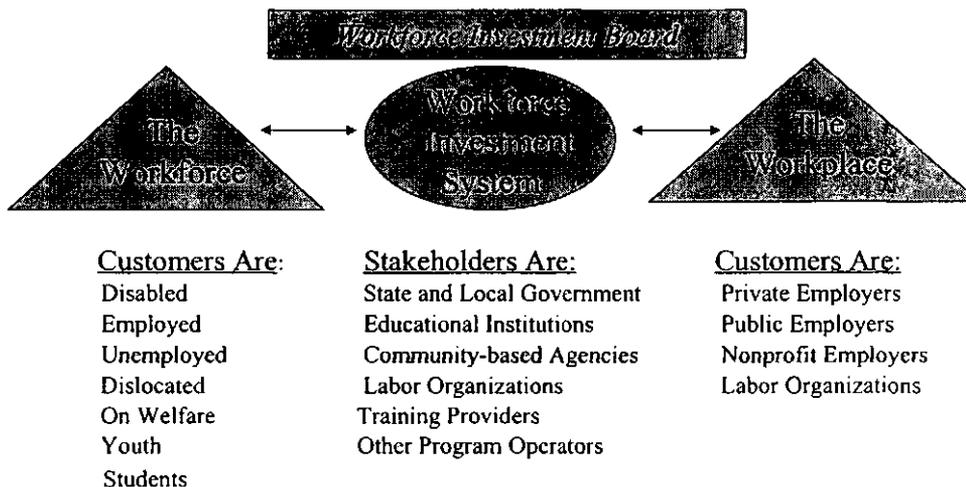
employment centers where job seekers can access a broad range of employment-related and training services in a single central location. Designated agencies that have traditionally provided services to different groups (welfare recipients, youth, people with disabilities, displaced homemakers) are required to integrate access to their services through the One-Stop Career Centers. Partners in the One-Stop system include state vocational rehabilitation and employment service agencies.

"[Title I of WIA] represents a national consensus on the need to restructure a multitude of workforce development programs into an integrated workforce investment system that can better respond to the employment needs of its customers—current workers, workers laid-off due to restructuring or downsizing, and new entrants to the labor force, as well as employers."

— U. S. Department of Labor, Planning Guidelines

The New Paradigm

A truly universal, world class system serving the current and future workforce and all workplace entities.



What are the core principles of Title I of WIA?

Under Title I of WIA, the workforce investment system provides the framework for delivery of workforce investment activities at the state and local levels to individuals who need those services. Congress and the U.S. Department of Labor have made it clear that persons with disabilities are among the people who are suppose to benefit from this restructuring. Under the new structure, programs included in the system must effectively serve individuals with disabilities, and the vocational rehabilitation program in the state must be an integral component of the workforce investment system.

WIA incorporates seven key principles that are to guide the restructuring:

- ⌚ All job seekers are to be given **universal access** to a core set of career decision-making and job search tools.
- ⌚ State and local stakeholders must be given **flexibility** to ensure that delivery systems are responsive to the needs of local employers and communities.
- ⌚ Services must be **streamlined** by coordinating multiple employment and training programs through the One-Stop Career Centers. To make all services available to all customers, the One-Stop system must be accessible to people with disabilities.
- ⌚ The system should **empower individuals** with the information and resources they need to manage their own careers through Individual Training Accounts and better information on the performance of service providers, as well as skills demanded by employers.
- ⌚ There must be **state and local accountability** for performance of the workforce system. Training providers and their programs also must demonstrate successful performance and customer satisfaction to remain eligible to receive funds.
- ⌚ Local Workforce Investment Boards and the private sector must be given a **stronger role**, by shifting the emphasis from the "nitty gritty" operational details to strategic planning and oversight of the One-Stop service delivery system.
- ⌚ **Youth activities** funded under the Act must strengthen linkages between academic and occupational learning and other youth development activities.

How is this new system different from the current system?

The Workforce Investment Act replaces the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which currently funds and sets requirements for employment and job training services. Under JTPA, eligibility for services is limited and customers are offered little choice selecting or evaluating job training service providers. In contrast, the new workforce system places no eligibility requirements for core services, and allows customers that qualify for job training to choose the training provider that best meets their needs. The Workforce Investment Act replaces JTPA on July 1, 2000. (See Table 1.1)

Table 1.1 The Job Training Partnership Act and the Workforce Investment Act

Program	Job Training Partnership Act	Workforce Investment Act
Target Population	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Economically disadvantaged adults age 22 and older 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ All adults age 18 and older eligible for core services (priority for intensive services must be given to recipients of public assistance and other low-income individuals in areas where funds are limited).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dislocated workers, including the long-term unemployed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Dislocated workers (excluding long-term unemployed, but including displaced homemakers).
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Youths age 16-21 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Low-income youths age 14-21 who meet at least one of six barriers to unemployment
Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ One-Stop delivery system not required. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ One-Stop access to job search and job training activities.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Most training provided through contracts with training providers. Little customer choice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Adult and dislocated workers are eligible for Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) allowing participants to select their own training programs from a group of qualified providers.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ No performance accountability, and no way for consumers to know how well training providers do their job. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Accountability requirements, so participants know how well providers do their job.
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Stand-alone employment services and readjustment training services. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Core, intensive, training, and supported employment and training services.

Does WIA apply to people with disabilities?

Yes. WIA applies to all job seekers, including people with disabilities. All services and information provided by One-Stop Career Centers and training providers must be accessible to all job seekers.

Must state and local agencies, One-Stops, and eligible providers of services implement WIA in accordance with existing civil rights statutes?

Yes. For people with disabilities, this means compliance with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (nondiscrimination by recipients of Federal assistance) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Equality of opportunity under these civil rights statutes entails determining eligibility on an individual, nondiscriminatory basis. This includes providing services in settings that allow people with disabilities to fully participate. Programs and services must be physically accessible; reasonable modifications to policies must be made, if appropriate; and auxiliary aids and services must be provided.

II. HOW THE NEW ONE-STOP SYSTEM WORKS

Under the new Workforce Investment Act, all adults over the age of 18 are eligible for certain services, including information about available jobs and job search assistance. In addition, many low-income youth ages 14-21 who face certain employment barriers are also eligible for services. These barriers are: deficiency in basic literacy skills; lack of a high school diploma; status as a homeless, runaway, or foster child; being pregnant or a parent; having a criminal record; or requiring additional assistance to complete an educational program or to secure and hold employment.

To simplify the delivery of services, WIA establishes a One-Stop delivery system, which is a single location where job seekers can access information on all employment and training services. For eligible adults requiring training, WIA authorizes the use of payment vouchers called Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) that allow participants to select training programs from a group of qualified providers. The Act also requires information about each training provider to be made available to all job seekers, so that those requiring training can choose the best provider to meet their needs. Information on each provider will include their location, the completion rate of those taking the training, the employment status and earnings of those who completed the training, and the satisfaction of participants.

What is a One-Stop Career Center?

The One-Stop Career Center is the centrally located place where job seekers can access job training, education, and employment services. Although not all of the services may be provided under one roof, information about how and where to access them is available at one location. The One-Stop will provide employers with a single point of contact for information about job openings and the current and future skills that their workers will need.

Where are the One-Stop Career Centers located?

There will be at least one One-Stop Career Center in each workforce investment area. Your state's Governor will designate local workforce investment areas and oversee local workforce investment boards. The Governor will take into account factors such as population and labor market characteristics in designating areas throughout the state .

How are One-Stop Career Centers chosen?

A local planning body composed of private sector employers, government agency representatives, and local not-for-profit organization representatives called a Workforce Investment Board (WIB) selects the One-Stop Center Operator. The operators may be a public or private entity, or a consortium of such entities, including postsecondary educational institutions, private for-profit or non-profit entities, government agencies, one-stop partners, or other organizations.

What kinds of services are available at the One-Stop Centers?

Four types of services are offered at the One-Stop Centers:

- ① **Core services** include job search and placement assistance; information on job vacancies and skill requirements; initial skills and needs assessment; information about available services, and some after-placement follow-up services. These services are available to everyone.

- **Intensive services** include more comprehensive assessments, development of individual employment plans, group and individual counseling, case management, and short-term pre-vocational services. Only those who were not able to get a job after receiving core services are eligible for intensive services. In areas where funding is limited, priority for intensive services is given to low-income job seekers and recipients of public assistance.

- ① **Training Services** are available to eligible people who are receiving intensive services and are still not able to find jobs. These job seekers may receive services that are directly linked to job opportunities in their local area. This may include occupational skills training, on-the-job training, entrepreneurial training, skill upgrading, job readiness training, and adult education and literacy activities. Adult and dislocated worker training requires the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITAs), that allow a participant to choose among qualified providers.

- ① **Supportive Services**, such as assistance with transportation that enables a participant to remain in training, are also available to eligible participants. Contact your local One-Stop Center to find out what supportive services are available to you.

Who can use the One-Stop Career Center?

Anyone, including people with disabilities, in need of job search assistance or training can use the One-Stop Center. There are no eligibility requirements for core services

(One-Stop Centers can establish priorities for intensive and training services). One-Stop Career Centers should be the first place any job seeker goes to receive job search, career, and training assistance.

How do I choose a training provider?

Individuals who meet the eligibility requirements for training programs will receive an **Individual Training Account (ITA)**. The ITA enables a participant to choose among eligible providers. A list of eligible providers that includes the providers' performance information will be provided by the One-Stop Center, ensuring that participants have access to the information they need to make informed choices among education and training options.

Training providers must meet certain eligibility requirements to participate in the system. To be eligible, a provider must be certified under the Higher Education Act (HEA), the National Apprenticeship Act, or an alternative procedure established by the Governor. All providers must submit annual specified performance-based information related to outcomes of their clients (including completion rates and placement and earnings outcomes). To remain eligible, providers must meet or exceed minimum levels of performance established by the state and localities.

Contracts for service may be used instead of ITAs for on-the-job training, or when the local board determines there are an insufficient number of eligible providers, or when the local board determines there is a training program of demonstrated effectiveness offered in the area by a community-based organization

III. TEN FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT AND THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

1. When will the new services authorized under the Workforce Investment Act be available?

States have until July 1, 2000 to fully implement WIA and have One-Stop Career Centers open for business. Many states have already begun to implement WIA and establish One-Stop systems.

2. How is The Workforce Investment Act related to other programs that serve people with disabilities, such as Vocational Rehabilitation?

WIA will integrate programs such as Vocational Rehabilitation into the larger workforce system, allowing for more efficient, streamlined services and greater access to job training programs by individuals with disabilities. Application and information and assistance for Vocational Rehabilitation programs will be available at your local One-Stop Career Center.

3. Where do I go to access the new services?

You go to your local One-Stop Career Center. A One-Stop Career Center will be located in each local area. Over 800 One-Stop Centers are already operating across the country. To find the One-Stop Career Center in your local area, you can access a searchable directory of local One-Stop Centers throughout the country at www.ttrc.doleta.gov/common/directories. Residents of Georgia, Iowa, Missouri, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Utah, Washington, and Wisconsin can call 1-877-US-2JOBS toll free for information on their state's local One-Stop Centers and federal, state, and local job training and dislocated worker assistance programs. Residents who are hearing impaired can call 1-877-TTY-JOBS. These services will be extended to residents of other states in the future. Until then, call your state Department of Labor for more information.

4. Do One-Stop Career Centers serve people with disabilities?

Yes. One-Stop Career Centers serve anyone who needs help finding a job, and all job seekers are eligible for job search assistance. Additional services are available to eligible individuals with disabilities who need intensive services and job training.

5. Do I have to "declare" my disability to access services?

No. The same set of core services are available to all participants, regardless of disability. However, you may choose to discuss your disability with Center staff, in order for them to better serve your own particular employment and training needs.

6. I just want to look up job listings on the Internet. Can I do that at the One-Stop Career Center?

Yes. The Centers offer a broad range of services, many of which are on a self-serve basis. You can access the Internet and do a job search, explore career options or look up job statistics. You can use a computer to create a resume or type a cover letter. You can log on to America's Job Bank to locate employment opportunities nationwide and submit your resume. (For more information, see America's Job Bank, at www.ajb.dni.us) You can fax your resume and cover letter to prospective employers. You can review library materials or videos on various employment topics. You can perform these tasks on your own, or seek help from a staff member. You can spend five minutes at the Center, or five hours.

7. I need information about job training and help finding a job. Can I get both at the One-Stop Career Center?

Yes. You can go to the One-Stop Career Center to receive a preliminary assessment of your skill levels, aptitudes, abilities, and support service needs. You can obtain information on a full array of employment-related services, including information about local education and training service providers. Staff members can help you file claims for unemployment insurance and evaluate your eligibility for job training and education programs or student financial aid. At the

Center, you can obtain job search and placement assistance, and receive career counseling.

8. How do I get the skills training I need?

People who qualify for intensive job training services will be given an Individual Training Account. Participants will then use their ITA to choose job training programs from among those offered by a group of qualified providers. Payment for services will be arranged through the Individual Training Accounts. Only in exceptional cases may training be provided through a contract for services between the One-Stop Career Center and organizations providing the training. To find out if you qualify for job training services, contact your local One-Stop Career Center.

9. How will I know which service provider is the best for me?

Accountability of service providers is a key feature of the new workforce system. All service providers must meet minimum levels of performance and will be required to provide performance and cost information. At your One-Stop Career Center, you will be able to access information about each service provider, including how many trainees successfully completed their training program, how many entered into employment, how many are still employed six months after placement, and what they are earning six months after placement.

10. Where do I go for more information?

For more information on the Workforce Investment Act and the One-Stop system, continue to read this primer. It will explain how the new system works, how you can access services at your local One-Stop Career Center, and how you can get involved in making sure the workforce system is fully accessible to people with disabilities. This primer also includes a list of additional resources you can access to get more information. You can also contact your local Workforce Investment Board with any questions, comments, or complaints regarding your local One-Stop Career Center.

IV. THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

"One-Stop" is a national initiative to link employment, education, and training services to a network of resources in local areas across the country. It is designed to help job seekers get the training and employment assistance they need, and to allow employers to access qualified workers.

Who are the One-Stop partners?

The Workforce Investment Act identifies agencies that are required to participate in the One-Stop system. The designated partners include:

- ① State Vocational Rehabilitation;
- ① Labor Exchange Trade Act Veterans;
- ① Post-Secondary Vocational Education;
- ① Adult Education and Literacy Providers;

- ⌚ Welfare-to-Work Providers;
- ⌚ Older Workers Community Service Employment;
- ⌚ Workforce Programs under the Dept. of Housing and Urban Development, and;
- ⌚ Workforce Programs under the Community Services Block Grant Act.

May additional agencies be designated as One-Stop partners?

Yes. Title I of WIA provides that other entities such as agencies serving persons with mental retardation, developmental disabilities, and mental illness that carry out a human resource program may serve as additional partners in the One-Stop service system if the local WIB and the local chief elected official approve the entity's participation.

How are the employment and workforce development programs coordinated?

The partners of the One-Stop Center enter into contracts or memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with the local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). The MOUs include a description of the services each partner will provide, the costs of the services, and methods of referring individuals between the One-Stop operator and its partners for appropriate services and activities.

How is the Workforce Investment Act related to other programs serving individuals with disabilities, such as Vocational Rehabilitation?

The intent of WIA is to link the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program as an integral component of the workforce investment system. To help establish this link, the two systems can establish common definitions, common reporting requirements on program outcomes, and require state and local cooperative agreements between VR agencies and other participating organizations in the system, including One-Stop Career Centers. These cooperative agreements will simplify service delivery and minimize duplication of services. By encouraging greater cooperation and integration within the workforce system, individuals with disabilities will have access to greater training opportunities and better job opportunities. They will be served by the entire workforce system, as well as through state VR programs. To determine how your state has incorporated Vocational Rehabilitation services into the One-Stop system, contact your local One-Stop Career Center.

Do people with disabilities have to use VR Services?

No. Not every person with a disability is eligible for VR services. Not every person with a disability needs VR assistance. People with disabilities, like any customer, may choose to use whatever One-Stop services they require. To ensure that people with disabilities are aware of the VR services available to them, WIA mandates that One-Stops provide information, referral, and support services to assist the customer in making informed choices regarding their rehabilitation and employment activities.

How will WIA affect public assistance programs for people with disabilities?

The implementation of WIA plays an important role in a state's overall efforts to find employment opportunities for its public assistance recipients. While WIA does not have the legal authority to fund and administer public assistance programs, WIA does require

those programs to sign an MOU with local WIBs and form an official partnership with the One-Stop Career Centers.

TANF

In areas where WIA funds are limited, One-Stop Centers will give recipients of public assistance priority for intensive employment and training services.

SSI/SSDI

The Workforce Investment Act amends the federal Rehabilitation Act to ease eligibility procedures for people with disabilities who are recipients of SSI or beneficiaries of SSDI payments. The Act establishes presumed eligibility for these individuals. Presumed eligibility will improve efficiency, reduce costs, and speed up the delivery of job services. While presumed eligibility does not establish an entitlement to VR services for SSI and SSDI beneficiaries, the provision recognizes that the Social Security Administration has already determined these individuals to be among the most severely disabled individuals who apply for VR services.

Medicaid/Medicare

WIA does not affect the eligibility requirements under Medicaid or Medicare.

V. IMPLEMENTATION OF WIA

What is the role of the states?

To participate in WIA programs, states are required to establish state Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). The state WIBs are charged with developing a five-year strategic plan (State Plan), advising the Governor on developing the workforce investment system and the employment statistics system, as well as assisting in monitoring the system. State WIBs must have a majority of business representatives and include representatives of education providers, labor organizations, community-based organizations (including those representing people with disabilities), economic development agencies, and each of the One- Stop partners. It may include other representatives determined appropriate by local elected officials

🕒 State Plan

The State Plan describes the workforce development activities the state will undertake, how the state will implement the key requirements of WIA, and how the state's special populations, including welfare recipients, veterans, and individuals with multiple barriers to employment (including individuals with disabilities), will be served. For people with disabilities, states are required to provide in their State Plan a description of the steps undertaken to assure coordination and avoid duplication between Rehabilitation Act programs and other workforce development activities. States are also required to specify how they will serve the employment and training needs of individuals with disabilities

🕒 **Unified Plan**

States also have the option to submit "unified" plans to ensure coordination of and avoid duplication between workforce development activities. WIA specifies fourteen programs that may be included in the unified plan, including programs authorized under WIA such as vocational rehabilitation.

What is the role of local government?

The Governor designates local workforce investment areas in which workforce activities are administered. The local boards, in partnership with local elected officials, are responsible for planning and overseeing the local program. In particular, the board is responsible for developing the local plan, designating local One-Stop operators, designating eligible providers of training services, negotiating local performance measures, and assisting in developing the statewide employment statistics system.

The local board is appointed by the local elected official and must have representatives from business, education providers, labor organizations, community-based organizations (including those that serve people with disabilities and veterans), economic development agencies and each of the One-Stop partners.

How do I know how well One-Stops and service providers are performing?

Performance at the state and local level will be measured in terms of employment outcomes (entry, retention, and earnings of participants, or attainment of recognized credentials/certifications) and customer satisfaction (through surveys). In addition, One-Stop customers will be able to request information regarding the performance and success of each service provider, to determine which program is best for them. This information must be accessible to the public.

States are required to submit an annual progress report that, at a minimum, also includes information on performance (as measured by employment indicators and customer satisfaction) with respect to serving people with disabilities.

VI. HOW INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES CAN GET INVOLVED

The Workforce Investment Act makes significant changes to the way states administer their employment and training programs. Currently, state and local government are still in the process of deciding exactly how they will implement the new workforce system mandated under WIA. Now is your opportunity to participate and ensure that the system that emerges is responsive to the needs of people with disabilities. You can get involved in one of two ways:

As an individual. The new workforce investment system is your system. Make it work for you by taking action as an individual.

As part of a coalition. You can form a coalition on your own, or become part of an existing coalition that represents the interests of people with disabilities. Your

goal is to ensure that people with disabilities have universal access to an integrated and seamless service delivery system that embraces consumer choice and accountability for results. Possible coalition partners include individuals with disabilities and organizations representing people with disabilities, representatives from state agencies providing workforce development services to people with disabilities (e.g., vocational rehabilitation, MR/DD, and Mental Health), state councils (e.g., the State Rehabilitation Council, the Statewide Independent Living Council, the Development Disabilities Council), and community rehabilitation providers.

The provisions of WIA allow for a broad range of public participation. Depending on the status of the implementation of WIA in your state, there are a number of opportunities to get involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation so that the disability perspective is taken into consideration at the initial stages.

STATE PLAN

- Prior to submitting their State Plan to the U. S. Department of Labor, states are required to provide the public with an opportunity to comment.

• What You Can Do

1. Participate in the process of developing aspects of the state plan that describe how your state will meet the needs of customers with disabilities. A copy of the State Plan can be obtained from your state's Department of Labor or other designated workforce agency. Contact your local elected official or your state WIA contacts to discuss how the state plan will serve people with disabilities. For the name of the WIA contact in your state, please see <http://www.usworkforce.org/state.htm>.

2. Participate in efforts to develop specific policies and procedures designed to ensure nondiscrimination and equal opportunity in the administration of WIA. Contact your local elected official to discuss issues of universal access to the new workforce investment system for people with disabilities, and how your state intends to ensure that all workforce information is available to people with disabilities (at the One-Stop, on websites, etc.).

STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARDS

- The lead state agencies responsible for the designated One-Stop partners, including vocational rehabilitation, are required to be on the WIB. Persons with disabilities and community-based providers of services to people with disabilities may also be on state and local WIBs.

• What You Can Do

3. Write or call your Governor and urge him or her to appoint to the State WIB the vocational rehabilitation director and directors of other state agencies serving people with disabilities (e.g., MR/DD, MH agencies). Also encourage your Governor and state WIB to include community-based organizations with specific expertise on addressing the needs of persons with disabilities.

4. Individuals with disabilities may also serve on the state WIB. Consider volunteering to serve on the Board.

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

- 🕒 Local workforce investment boards, in partnership with local elected officials, will plan and oversee the local system.

•What You Can Do

5. In addition to the appointment of the vocational rehabilitation director to a local WIB (in his or her capacity as a required partner), contact your local elected official and suggest specific names for appointment to the local WIB of individuals representing public agencies serving people with disabilities (e.g., MR/DD and MH agencies), community-based organizations and other groups that serve or represent persons with disabilities. MR/DD and Mental Health agency heads may be appointed either in their capacity as a discretionary "partner" or as an entity representing individuals with multiple barriers or other special populations.

6. Contact your local WIB and provide suggestions on how to organize the service system to most effectively serve customers with disabilities.

YOUTH COUNCILS

- 🕒 Youth Councils will be established as a subgroup of the local board to develop parts of the local plan relating to youth, recommend providers of youth services, and coordinate local youth programs and initiatives.

•What You Can Do

7. Propose specific names of persons with special expertise or experience on working with youth with disabilities who should be appointed to the Youth Council. Youths with disabilities may also serve on youth councils.

LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT PLAN

- 🕒 Local workforce investment boards, in partnership with local elected officials, are responsible for planning and overseeing the local program. The board is

responsible for developing the local plan to be submitted to the Governor for approval.

•What You Can Do

8. Review the local plan to determine how it addresses serving customers with disabilities and ensuring full and equal access to all services and information. Write or call your local elected official with your concerns and suggestions. Consider writing an op-ed for your local paper to raise awareness on issues of accessibility and services for people with disabilities. Contact your local elected official or local WIB to obtain a copy of the local plan.

9. Offer suggestions and participate in a process of developing specific guidelines for inclusion in the local plan and compliance manuals and instruments regarding implementation of Section 504 and the American with Disabilities Act (ADA) by One-Stop operators and service providers.

10. Suggest the inclusion of specific training of staff regarding the needs of clients with disabilities and implementation consistent with section 504 and the ADA.

11. Consider whether agencies serving people with disabilities (e.g., MR/DD and Mental Health agencies) that are not mandatory partners should, in fact, serve as partners in the One-Stop system. Contact your local elected official and the local WIB urging them to approve additional partners.

THE ONE-STOP SYSTEM

- 🕒 One-Stop Career Centers, and the services they offer, should be fully accessible to people with disabilities.

•What You Can Do

12. Visit your local One-Stop. Note whether the facility is physically accessible for you. A sample Facilities Checklist can be obtained from the U.S.DOL, at www.wdsc.org/disability/htmldocs/efc.html. Try to access some of the core services offered to see if they are accessible to people with disabilities. Try to access information about job vacancies, career options, relevant employment trends, and instruction on how to conduct a job search or write a resume to determine how accessible this information is and how well the staff assists you. Speak with One-Stop staff and gauge how responsive they are to your needs. If you feel there are areas where service needs improvement, discuss with the staff how their system can be made better. Contact your local WIB with your findings, as well.

13. Contact your local One-Stop and offer suggestions on how to ensure that their services are made available to persons with disabilities.

14. Encourage other people with disabilities to visit their local One-Stop and get involved with improving the workforce system.

PERFORMANCE ACCOUNTABILITY

🕒 Currently, WIA, vocational rehabilitation, and TANF (Temporary Aid to Needy Families, or welfare) are each funded separately and each has different ways of measuring performance. With the implementation of the new workforce system, there is an opportunity to develop a common method to measure performance. In addition, the new system could measure the performance of job seekers with disabilities separate from other job seekers. This would allow people to determine how well all job seekers, including people with disabilities, are faring, and how well they are being served by WIA, TANF, and VR.

•What You Can Do

15. Contact your local elected official, local WIB, and state WIB to encourage them to develop and adopt a comprehensive performance accountability system that provides specific information regarding people with disabilities.

VI. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The Rehabilitation Research and Training Center (RRTC) on Disability and Employment Policy is a collaboration among the John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development at Rutgers University, Community Options, Inc., the Center for the Study and Advancement of Disability Policy at the George Washington University School of Public Health and Health Services, and the Law Health Policy and Disability Center at the University of Iowa. The mission of the RRTC is to expand, improve, and modify disability and generic policy that positively affects the employment status of Americans with disabilities, and increases their independence and self-sufficiency. The RRTC is designed to serve as an information and technical assistance resource to government leaders and decision-makers at a State and Federal level, individuals with disabilities, parents and family members and other interested parties. Reference materials are available through the RRTC, which can be reached at (202) 721-0120 or visit their website at <http://www.comop.org/rrtc>

John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development was founded in 1997 at Rutgers, the State University of New Jersey to address the needs of the nation's workforce development system. The Center's mission is to increase the efficiency of the labor market by identifying and creating strategies to empower America's workforce to seize the job opportunities emerging in the global economy. The Center's researchers, scholars, and practitioners combine their talents to develop solutions to put people to work, ensure that workers remain competitive, and provide employers with qualified and productive

workers. The Center's work strives to build an efficient labor market that matches workers' skills and knowledge with the evolving demands of employers. For more information contact Duke Storen at (732) 932-4100 ext. 425, or visit the website at <http://heldrich.rutgers.edu>

U. S. Workforce is a collaboration between public and private sector groups and individuals to provide access to workforce information and resources and to apply that information toward innovative and effective partnerships and programs. They maintain a website on current and emerging questions about the Workforce Investment Act, including a "Plain English" version of the Act, at <http://usworkforce.org>

U.S. Department of Labor Disability Initiative consists of a number of efforts to assist people with disabilities find and maintain jobs, access job training and coordinate VR and other services. For more information, please see the Department of Labor Disability Initiative at <http://www.doleta.gov/access/>

U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration's website details grants awarded to states for the development and implementation of One-Stop centers and systems, the services offered by "local learning labs" and highlights progress on a state-by-state basis. For more information, please refer to "America's One-Stop Career Center System," the Employment and Training Administration's One-Stop website, at <http://www.ttrc.doleta.gov/onestop/>