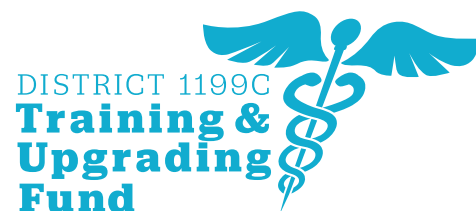




Introduction to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Informational Brief

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Introduction

This informational brief will introduce the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the primary components of WIOA that may benefit District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund Expanding Apprenticeship through Industry Intermediaries project partners. *WIOA is landmark legislation that is designed to strengthen and improve our nation's public workforce system and help get Americans, including youth and those with significant barriers to employment, into high-quality jobs and careers and help employers hire and retain skilled workers.*¹ The primary content presented in this brief are focused on state and local Workforce Development Boards (WDBs) and the American Job Centers (AJC).

Workforce Development Boards

WDBs are a component of the greater workforce development system, which typically includes federal, state, and local opportunities that develop, build, and implement workforce and economic development initiatives. *State and local WDBs serve as connectors between the U.S. Department of Labor and local AJCs that deliver services to workers and employers.*²

State Workforce Development Boards

Governors appoint representatives to state WDBs who are responsible for providing advice on policy and implementation of policy through the development of a four-year WIOA plan. The plans drive statewide workforce development, partnerships, and resources. In addition to planning for implementation, the state WDB is tasked with continuously improving the statewide workforce development system. The state WDB also promotes coordination and collaboration among the Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs) through prioritizing programs and resources.

While the composition of the boards includes a wide range of community leaders, LWDBs are required to have a majority representation of employers that conduct business in their designated area.

¹ Accessed at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/>

² Accessed at <https://www.careeronestop.org/Developers/Data/state-workforce-development-boards.aspx>

Local Workforce Development Boards

LWDBs are designated for cities, counties, regions, or even entire states. Board members are appointed at the local level by chief elected officials, which may include the mayor or county leaders depending on the designated area.

LWDBs are responsible for the development of local plans that address opportunities for both employers and job seekers, career pathways, industry and sector strategies, funding priorities, and general coordination and collaboration among workforce development partners in the region.

In addition, LWDBs oversee the regional AJCs. This oversight typically includes procuring service providers in the AJC, coordination of infrastructure costs, assessment of training providers using established criteria, and data collection and review.

Collaboration with Workforce Development Boards

District 1199C Training and Upgrading Fund partners have opportunities, like any workforce development partner, to collaborate with LWDBs. To get started, find your LWDB and identify the staff who make up the board in your region. Locations of LWDBs and regions can be found at the [Workforce Development Board Finder](#) (this website provides contact information for the relevant staff in a particular region, which is the person/people you may want to interact with as opposed to the board members themselves). While some regions are led by LWDB members, staff positions may take care of the day-to-day operations, relationships, and partnerships, among other roles and responsibilities.

It is helpful to conduct background research around how WIOA legislation guides some areas of the LWDB's activities for your particular geographic area. For example, LWDBs are responsible for setting policies around on-the-job (OJT) training opportunities in the region. These OJT opportunities may help employers with apprenticeship opportunities with wages as well as other supports. Learn about how WIOA guides OJT [here](#).

Additionally, potential employer supports include [Incumbent Worker Training](#) and [Customized Training](#). These opportunities are typically available to employers to upskill current workers through training and other supports.

As your relationship with your LWDB develops, you may want to request to be included in relevant industry partnerships (including healthcare or early childhood education, for example) or other ways to promote your training and apprenticeship opportunities. You can ask to present opportunities to collaborate with your program at an LWDB meeting or regional partner meeting. The LWDB can also connect you to the regional AJCs where other employer-directed or job seeker supports are available.

For additional information about state and local WDBs, a full description is presented by the National Association of Workforce Boards and available in a video summary at [Workforce Development Boards](#). This video shares information about the roles and primary responsibilities of workforce development boards.

Set up a time to meet with LWDB staff so that you can gain a deeper understanding of the local workforce development system, including how your program can benefit and what your program can offer.

American Job Centers

Often referred to as the one-stop career centers, the [AJC Network](#) is designed to offer full-range services for both job seekers and employers, at no cost, authorized under WIOA. AJCs are designed to be dual customers, with services and strategies available and customized for both job seekers and employers.

Job Seeker Services

The [Adult and Dislocated Worker](#) programs in the AJC serve individuals and help employers meet their workforce needs. They enable job seekers to obtain good positions by providing employment search assistance and training opportunities. Youth programs are also available and serve young adults ages 16–24 who face a variety of barriers to employment.

Among the services that the AJC can provide are [job search and placement activities](#). These may include resume development, cover letter development, and mock job interviews. In addition, AJC provides information about current job openings and their hiring requirements. Staff can provide job seekers with opportunities to meet with professional career counselors who can assist with job search and placement. AJCs also offer access to computers and workshops to address most job-related requirements.

Some programs for job seekers may have eligibility requirements; however, activities such as job search and placement assistance are widely available through multiple AJC programs and partners.

AJC staff can also provide referral services. AJC staff is prepared to assist job seekers with referrals to partner programs designed to address barriers to employment. These barriers may include transportation, childcare, food insecurity, healthcare, and others.

Employer Services

[Employer or business services](#) at the AJC are often coordinated through the Business Services Team (BST). The BST is responsible for the provision of services to employers as well as ensuring that the services align with local and state WIOA plans. While there are several models for the delivery of these services, the team generally has input and support from a wide range of AJC programs and partners.

Employer services are designed to assist employers with the recruitment and retention of qualified workers. This is typically accomplished through close collaboration with AJC job seeker services offered through programs and partners.

Some of the employer services available through BST include the following (the full list can be accessed [here](#)):³

- Job description development
- Analyzing employee turnover
- OJT
- Creating orientation sessions for new workers
- Developing performance evaluation and policies
- Explaining labor and employment laws

³ Accessed at <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-20/chapter-V/part-678/subpart-B/section-678.435>

The BST is one conduit to employers within the local workforce development system. Partner program staff can meet with BST staff to gain a more thorough understanding of how they work directly with employers and how these relationships can benefit all parties. Often, partner programs have trained individuals, and the workforce development system is looking to match employment opportunities with potential employees. While the BST is not generally a job-seeker-facing program, it does serve as the intermediary between job seekers and employers. Make an appointment to visit your local AJC and, together with AJC staff, explore opportunities that can be mutually beneficial for participants, your program, employers, and the rest of the workforce development system.

Collaboration with AJCs

The AJCs offer opportunities for both apprentices and partner programs. To locate the AJCs nearest you, visit this site: www.servicelocator.org. Partners and participants in training programs can benefit from the wealth of opportunities available to job seekers after they have completed training and are actively looking for employment. Regardless of their eligibility, participants can benefit from the opportunities and resources available at the AJC. Partner staff can invite AJC staff to present the opportunities available for job seekers. A class field trip, either in-person or virtually, to the local AJC can be built into the curriculum so that all participants get the same information at the same time.

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