



Connecticut (CT) WIOA Matrix

Employment First State Leadership Mentor Program (EFSLMP)

In November 2015, Connecticut was one of four states selected to participate as a Core State in the 2016 Employment First State Leadership Mentoring Program (EFSLMP) offered through the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP).

Connecticut was chosen through an application process to become an EFSLMP Core State. Connecticut committed to a cross-system, cross-disability effort to promote Employment First, a national movement in both philosophy and policy stating that employment is the first priority and preferred outcome of individuals with disabilities. (Page 50)

Two workgroups were formed, comprised of leadership representing six state agencies including the Departments of Labor, Developmental Services, Rehabilitation Services, Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, and Social Services, as well as key stakeholders including the CT Council on Developmental Disabilities and the CT Business Leadership Network. These workgroups receive a combination of virtual and onsite mentoring, intensive technical assistance, and training from a national pool of subject matter experts under the program. One workgroup is focused on coordinating and streamlining business engagement and outreach strategies across government agencies and providers. A second workgroup required under the program called Vision Quest, is charged developing and implementing policy to support the state's Employment First systems change efforts. (Page 50)

Participate in cross agency trainings through the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE) to strengthen state agency partnerships. (Page 419)

Staff from the Bureau participates in meetings and training seminars organized by the Association of People Supporting Employment First (APSE). This organization links community providers, employers, state agency representatives and other resources together to exchange information on job placement strategies, funding sources and employer job leads. Bureau staff have presented at meetings of this organization on blindness related topics such as adaptive technology so that other providers in attendance would be aware of the options that exist for bringing about a successful job placement when accepting a referral from BESB for a client who is seeking a job placement with supported employment services. (Page 451)

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Customized Employment

(2) Employer services, such as:

- i. Customized screening and referral of qualified participants in training services to employers;
- ii. Customized employment-related services to employers, employer associations, or other such organization on a fee-for-service basis that are in addition to labor exchange services available to employers under the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service;
- iii. Activities to provide business services and strategies that meet the workforce investment needs of area employers, as determined by the Local WDB and consistent with the local plan (see § 678.435 of this chapter and WIOA sec. 134(d)(1)(A)(ix)); and (Page 183 & 333)

The challenging economy continues to impact on the scope and variety of job placement options available to clients, making customized employment particularly difficult to secure. The need for long-term funding support is an additional step that is necessary for supported employment placements at the onset. These two variables in combination make the timing challenging in filling job vacancies with a client who requires long-term supports. Dedicating two counselors to work specifically with the transition-age client population will facilitate discussions on supported employment options much earlier in the Planning and Placement Team process, starting as early as junior high school. This should allow for increased time to explore and secure long-term funding commitments and also to develop job opportunities for clients. (Page 501)

Supported Employment refers to competitive integrated employment, including customized employment, that is individualized and customized consistent with the strengths, abilities, interests, and informed choice of a client with a most significant disability, and that includes ongoing support services. Supported employment services may be considered for individuals for whom competitive integrated employment has not historically occurred, or for whom competitive integrated employment has been interrupted or intermittent, and where there is a need for extended services after the transition from support provided by the Bureau, (Page 502)

Braiding/Blending Resources

Limited capacity of many workforce service providers to deal effectively with the complexities of braiding funds (Page 53)

Connecticut's American Job Center (AJC) One-Stop system is the vehicle through which service delivery and targeting, leveraging and braiding of available resources is coordinated. Connecticut has a history and tradition of innovative collaboration among multiple partners and stakeholders to coordinate services and resources at the local level through its One-Stop system. (Page 84)

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Section 188/Section 188 Guide

Describe how the one-stop delivery system (including one-stop center operators and the one-stop delivery system partners), will comply with section 188 of WIOA (if applicable) and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) with regard to the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities. This also must include a description of compliance through providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities. Describe the State's one-stop center certification policy, particularly the accessibility criteria. (Page 119)

- (3) A standing committee to provide information and to assist with operational and other issues relating to the provision of services to individuals with disabilities, including issues relating to compliance with WIOA sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding providing programmatic and physical access to the services, programs, and activities of the one-stop delivery system, as well as appropriate training for staff on providing supports for or accommodations to, and finding employment opportunities for, individuals with disabilities. (Page 137)
 - (o) Develop a budget for the activities of the Local WDB, with approval of the chief elected official and consistent with the local plan and the duties of the Local WDB.
 - (p) Assess, on an annual basis, the physical and programmatic accessibility of all one-stop centers in the local area, in accordance with WIOA sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.). (Page 141)
 - (ii) How the Local WDB will facilitate access to services provided through the one-stop delivery system, including in remote areas, through the use of technology and other means;
 - (iii) How entities within the one-stop delivery system, including one-stop operators and the one-stop partners, will comply with WIOA sec. 188, if applicable, and applicable provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. 12101 et seq.) regarding the physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs and services, technology, and materials for individuals with disabilities, including providing staff training and support for addressing the needs of individuals with disabilities; and
 - (iv) The roles and resource contributions of the one-stop partners; (Page 145)
2. WIOA funds may not be used for employment in the construction, operation, or maintenance of any part of any facility that is used or will be used for sectarian instruction or as a place for religious worship with the exception of maintenance of facilities that are not primarily used for instruction or for worship and are operated by organizations providing services to WIOA participants. WIOA Sec. 188(a)(3); 20 CFR Part 683.255; 29 CFR Part 2, subpart D, and 29 CFR Part 37.6(f)(1) (Reference TEGL 1-05 dated July 6, 2005) (Page 150)
- O. Nondiscrimination and Equal Opportunity. 1. All eligible service and training providers receiving WIOA Title IB funds must comply fully with the nondiscrimination and equal opportunity provisions of WIOA Section 188 and Equal Opportunity and Nondiscrimination Regulations at 29 CFR Part 37. 2. (Page 151)

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4. Provider agreements will contain assurance language that it will comply with Equal Opportunity requirements of Section 188 of the Act, 29 CFR Part 37, and 1604, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and all other applicable equal opportunity laws and regulations. The assurance may be incorporated by reference. (Page 152)
5. Discriminatory discharge prohibited. No person, organization or agency may discharge, or in any other manner discriminate or retaliate against any person, or deny to any person a benefit to which that person is entitled under the provisions of the Act because such person has filed any complaint, instituted or caused to be instituted any proceeding under or related to the Act, has testified or is about to testify in any such proceeding or investigation, or has provided information or assisted in an investigation. WIOA Sec. 181, 188; 29 CFR Part 37; MCA 9-2-303(b) (Page 152)

DEI/Disability Resource Coordinators

Jobs Corps Job Corps is a national, federally funded educational and vocational training program administered by USDOL that helps low income youth (ages 16–24) gain workplace skills, train for high-demand occupations, and become independent and self-sufficient. With centers in Hartford and New Haven, more than 400 students enroll each year to earn a high school diploma or GED, learn a trade, obtain third party certifications and receive assistance finding a job. CTDOL has an assigned staff member who provides on-site support to the Hartford and New Haven Job Corp Centers. Transforming System Capacity Disability Employment Initiative In October 2013 Connecticut was one of eight states to receive a grant through the U.S. Department of Labor's Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). CTDOL's Office of Workforce Competitiveness (OWC) administers the three-year \$3,058,706 award from USDOL's Employment and Training Administration and Office of Disability Employment Policy. Broad objectives are to provide additional education, training and employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities, and to expand the workforce system's capacity to serve eligible beneficiaries in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program. The initiative features strong partnerships and collaboration among key agencies; service coordination through an Integrated Resource Team; integrated services and resources, including blended, braided and leveraged funding and resources; and, innovative asset development strategies. Services are offered in two of Connecticut's workforce regions. Two participating WDBs employ Disability Resource Coordinators to implement project activities and coordinate services. Integrated Resource Teams address individual needs and provide increased support for jobseekers with disabilities. Partners include CTDOL's Office for Veterans Workforce Development and the Departments of Rehabilitative Services, Labor, Education, Mental Health and Addiction Services, Social Services, Transportation, and various other public and private sector representatives. (Page 48)

DEI efforts focus on:

- Promoting inclusiveness of individuals with disabilities to enhance competitive advantage
- Organizing business-to-business forums to share strategies on recruiting, hiring and retaining people with disabilities (Page 48)

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- Re–imagine delivery of customer services to individual jobseekers and workers in the American Job Center One–Stop system. Develop and implement streamlined service flow with efficiently aligned and integrated processes implemented by coordinated service teams representing the full range of contributions from system partners and stakeholders, consistent with principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Service Design and Delivery Work Group. Build on lessons learned from implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Secure Jobs pilots as models for innovative and effective multi–partner service coordination. (Page 64)

In October 2013, Connecticut was one of eight states to receive a grant under USDOL’s Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). Awarded to OWC, the three–year \$3,058,706 grant promotes strategic approaches to enhance employment services for individuals with disabilities served by the public workforce investment system. (All of page 120)

Other State Programs/Pilots that Support Competitive Integrated Employment

Transform System Capacity:

- Re–imagine delivery of customer services to individual jobseekers and workers in the American Job Center One–Stop system. Develop and implement streamlined service flow with efficiently aligned and integrated processes implemented by coordinated service teams representing the full range of contributions from system partners and stakeholders, consistent with principles and criteria developed by the WIOA Transition Service Design and Delivery Work Group. Build on lessons learned from implementation of the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) and Secure Jobs pilots as models for innovative and effective multi–partner service coordination. (Page 64)

Financial Literacy/Economic Advancement

Short-term pre-vocational services, including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct, to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;

g. Work Experience/Internships;

h. Adult Basic Education/Financial Literacy Services. (Page 209)

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, including drug and alcohol abuse counseling, as well as referrals to counseling, as appropriate to the needs of the individual youth;

11. Financial literacy education;

12. Entrepreneurial skills training;

13. Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area*, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and

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14. Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to post-secondary education and training. WIOA Regs. 20 CFR Part 681.460 (Page 211)

Along with the strategies mentioned above to address goals and ways to overcome barriers to equitable access to VR services, BRS also anticipates using innovation and expansion (I&E) funds in FFY 2017 to support the State Rehabilitation Council, the State Independent Living Council, and to continue Individualized Financial Capability Coaching, a project to increase financial literacy and capability for people with disabilities. Other proposals will be assessed upon submission and considered based on the alignment with the state's goals and priorities. (Page 422)

Measures of success will be based on a consumer's improved financial literacy and his/her ability to budget a household, create realistic goals, understand credit scores (and demonstrate actions to maintain or improve them), increase self-sufficiency, obtain employment/increase wages, and go off of SSDI and/or SSI benefits. The number of new checking, savings or equivalent accounts that are opened will also be counted. (Page 429)

Benefits

3. Regular payments from railroad retirement, strike benefits from union funds, worker's compensation, and training stipends;
4. Alimony;
5. Military family allotments or other regular support from an absent family member or someone not living in the household;
6. Pensions whether private, government employee (including Military retirement pay);
7. Regular insurance or annuity payments other than Supplemental Security Income disability (SSI) or veterans' disability;
8. College or university grants, fellowships, and assistantships;
9. Net gambling or lottery winnings;
10. Social Security Disability Insurance payments (SSDI)
 - Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) pays benefits to individuals that have worked in the past, paid Social Security taxes, and are currently unable to work for a year or more because of a disability. SSDI is considered income replacement and must be included in family income (All of page 204)
12. Tribal Government Payments (i.e., Per Capita Payments, Lease Payments, Individual Indian Money (IIM));

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13. Old age and survivors insurance benefits received under section 202 of the Social Security Act (42 USC 402).

- Old age and survivors insurance benefits include: Social Security Survivor Benefits – these are benefits paid to people up to age 18 who have had a parent die and the parent paid wages into the system; and
- Social Security Retirement Benefits – these are benefits that are paid to people who reached their social security age and have wages paid in the system. (Page 205)

School to Work Transition

DORS: Partner Alignment with Educational Institutions Both Vocational Rehabilitation Programs at DORS are actively involved in a variety of transition school-to-work initiatives, with extensive collaboration and coordination at the administrative and service delivery levels of the organization. Through a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Education, the roles and responsibilities of the VR programs and the public educational system are clearly defined, including financial responsibilities and coordination of services and staff training. Representatives from both VR programs serve on an interagency transition task force and appointed representatives from the Connecticut State Department of Education serves on the State Rehabilitation Council to BESB and to BRS. VR program information is presented at in-service training programs for public school teachers and guidance counselors on issues affecting students who have disabilities. (Page 90)

Prior to initiation of pre-employment transition efforts, BRS had liaison counselors assigned to each high school to work directly with students and collaborate with education administrators to sign a referral protocol yearly. With implementation of WIOA, 10 VR counselors have been assigned to work exclusively with students with disabilities. (Page 397)

The Vocational Rehabilitation Program at the Bureau of Education and Services for the Blind is actively involved in a variety of transition school-to-work initiatives, with extensive collaboration and coordination at the administrative and service delivery levels of the organization. (Page 447)

Through a cooperative agreement with the State Department of Education, the roles and responsibilities of the Vocational Rehabilitation Program and the public educational system are clearly defined. This includes financial responsibilities as well as coordination of services and staff training. To facilitate this coordination, the Transition School to Work Coordinator from BESB serves on an interagency transition task force and there is an appointed representative from the State Department of Education serving on the State Rehabilitation Council to BESB. (Page 449)

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Data Collection

Connecticut Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS) DORS has a contract with a software provider to maintain a case management system for the vocational rehabilitation programs. This system runs locally on servers housed within DORS and contains case information relevant to individual consumers and reportable data. The vendor has maintained an active relationship with the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) who governs data collection for public vocational rehabilitation programs. Modifications to the system are currently being planned to manage the upcoming changes in data collection required by WIOA. RSA data elements will be adjusted to be compatible with the WIOA–Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) document. (Page 97)

Measure: Documentation of Vocational Rehabilitation staff participation in statewide meeting regarding the development of a common–front end data collection system. (Page 480)

Small Business/Entrepreneurship

Among the services experiencing a decline in reported satisfaction, Low Vision Services saw the most sizable decrease (7.89, down .9 in mean rating). Transportation Services experienced a notable decline (7.25, down .46 in mean rating), as did Skills Training Services (8.67, down .42). Rehabilitation and Adaptive Equipment Services registered a modest decline (8.60, down .20 in mean rating). Overall satisfaction with BESB services decreased to 7.96, down .48 in mean rating. Ratings on the extent to which services met clients' IPE also saw a decline of .42 in mean rating, coming in at 7.89. Satisfaction with the extent to which services met client expectations dropped to 7.46, down .33 in mean rating. Finally, satisfaction with the extent to which services met the needs of clients decreased to 8.16, down .19 in mean rating. (Page 442)

The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the services that consumers received from the Vocational Rehabilitation Program at BESB. In 2014, nine out of ten clients (90%) reported that they would recommend BESB Vocational Rehabilitation Services to a friend. Similar to both 2012 and 2013 survey findings, Rehabilitation and Adaptive Equipment and Low Vision were the two most widely used BESB services. Personal Care Attendant remained the least used service. Four services experienced an increase in mean satisfaction rating, while four saw a decline in rating. Reader Services had the largest mean increase (8.67, up 1.67 in mean rating). Personal Care Attendant Services climbed to its highest rating in five years (9.0, up 1.0 in mean rating). Higher Education Services set its second–best rating in the history of the survey (8.7, up .9 in mean rating). This figure is only second to the all–time high of 8.86 set in 2003. Small Business (497)

Career Pathways

The Connecticut Employment and Training Commission (CETC – the State Workforce Board), the State agencies responsible for administration of the core WIOA programs encompassed by this Unified State Plan (Connecticut Department of Labor (CTDOL), Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), and Department of Rehabilitation Services (DORS)), the Connecticut Department of Social Services (CTDSS) and the five Workforce Development Boards – propose and will support a set of broadly–conceived strategies intended to achieve the

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vision and goals outlined above. These strategies will serve as a framework for Connecticut's implementation efforts, with corresponding detailed State and local implementing actions to be developed.

- (1) Describe the strategies the State will implement, including industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations and career pathways, as required by WIOA section 101(d)(3)(B), (D). "Career pathway" is defined at WIOA section 3(7). "In-demand industry sector or occupation" is defined at WIOA section 3(23). (Page 61)

With representatives of secondary and postsecondary education programs, lead efforts to develop and implement career pathways within the local area by aligning the employment, training, education, and supportive services that are needed by adults and youth, particularly individuals with barriers to employment. (Page 139)

Employment Networks

As required by DEI, two local WDBs – Northwest Regional Workforce Investment Board and Capital Workforce Partners (North Central area) – became active Employment Networks (ENs) in the Social Security Administration's Ticket to Work Program, thereby expanding the Connecticut workforce system's capacity to serve eligible beneficiaries. DEI also requires the State's participation in an evaluation process to measure the project's impact on outcomes for jobseekers with disabilities. (Page 120)

* All enclosed information is cited directly from final state plan as of February 23, 2017

Find your local state plans here: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa/state-plans/index.html>