

WIOA Local 4-Year Plan Public Comments & Responses

Public Comment period from December 12, 2018 to January 12, 2019

1. **SUBMITTED QUESTION:** "It looks like WIOA stands for Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act, yes? If so, it looks like it concentrates on workforce development for youth and young adults, yes? I've found some WIOA references on different websites, like Community Action, but is there a go-to place for that cohort? A clearinghouse of resources in one place?"

RESPONSE: WIOA is the federal act that governs federal (and, on a pass-through basis, a lot of the state) resources for adult as well as youth employment services and training. Most of what people associate with the public unemployment /employment system gets funded through WIOA. The Franklin Hampshire workforce region receives (mostly by allocation) between 3 and 4 million each year of these federal funds (most coming through the state), which are then used to keep the doors of the public employment service office open for our region. These days, the system is serving about 3700 people a year across FH, with a full-service center in Greenfield (open to all FH residents), and satellite hours in Orange and at the Forbes Library in Northampton.

This 4-Year Plan and Service Description is required periodically by the state to account for what we are doing with these strictly-monitored federal/state funds.

If you want to know more about the federal Act, the best website would be <https://www.doleta.gov/WIOA/Overview.cfm>

2. **SUBMITTED COMMENT:** "With reference to p.3, Social and Human Services, Bachelor's and advanced degrees are not always necessary for advancement outside of clinical settings. Experience in the field is very important, which points to the need for paid internships and apprenticeships, ideally longer than one semester. Also, additional outside training, or a coordinated regional training effort might allow for more advancement to supervisory roles."

RESPONSE: Excellent point – we will incorporate that.

"With reference to P. 4, Diversity in Franklin/Hampshire County:

- There is more diversity within younger demographics than the 87.2% white statistic suggests. Suggest breaking out by age for more precise assessment.
- The demographics have been shifting toward more diversity which suggests there is a significant opportunity to employ more people here if we can be more welcoming and receptive. Workers who are people of color report a high degree of race based discrimination and bias and

managers used to a nearly all-white workforce don't have the cultural competency to embrace more diverse candidates.

- Employers are missing out on quality, qualified applicants as a result of the perception of candidates of color that local businesses are not equitable and inclusive. They may hesitate to apply for positions where the company has a bad reputation or history with diverse employees or may leave jobs where they feel that bias is persistent or not handled well by management.
- Workforce Board could support employers with modeling how to address this in majority white organizations.
 - Resources for employers should include model policies and procedures to address bias in recruitment, hiring, and promotion.
 - Support in managing changing demographics (race and age/generational differences).
 - Cultural competency and anti-bias training for employers and employees."

RESPONSE: Excellent points – some of this language has been incorporated.

"With reference to P. 7, Manufacturing

- Lots of openings with good wages, but rotating shifts and long hours make them very limiting. Lack of training opportunities may be less of a problem than employer willingness to make shifts, schedules and transportation more accessible to reduce turnover and attract a wider pool of applicants."

RESPONSE: IBID

"With reference to P. 8, Strategies for increasing job seeker education:

- There is a lot of training offered in the region, but also need strategies to increase the % of people moving from training into long term employment.
- Also need to work with employers to address changing needs of the available workforce, i.e. change in demographics, transportation, etc."

RESPONSE: Noted.

"With reference to P. 20, Career Center goals:

In addition to providing basic computer skills – a huge need in the area—soft skills training for adult workers would also be beneficial.

RESPONSE: Noted.

"With reference to P. 26, WIOA Youth

- CAYP is currently serving youth ages 17-24 (WIOA youth general eligibility is 14-24, but we are targeting older youth at this time).

RESPONSE: Noted.