



Workforce Investment Act

What is the Workforce Investment Act?

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is the federal law that passed in 1998, creating the nation's employment and job-training system. It provides federal funding to states to offer job training, education and employment services for unemployed and underemployed workers and youth. In Ohio, most of these services are delivered at a network of "OhioMeansJobs Centers." OhioMeansJobs Centers provide free job training and other employment services to people looking for work. They match individuals who are looking for a job with businesses looking to hire workers, and help laid-off workers learn new skills and find new jobs.

How are WIA funds administered?

The federal government allocates WIA funds annually based on a formula that takes into account each state's unemployment and poverty rates. The formula awards more money to states whose unemployment and poverty rates increased most in relation to other states. The Ohio Department of Job and Family Services administers Ohio's WIA funding, most of which is allocated to the OhioMeansJobs Centers, which the agency supervises. Locally, OhioMeansJobs Centers are managed by 20 workforce investment boards, which establish local policies. Ohio has 30 comprehensive, full-service OhioMeansJobs Centers and 59 satellite sites, with at least one site in every county. You can find the OhioMeansJobs Center closest to you at <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/wiamap.stm>.

What programs and services are available?

WIA programs are designed to increase the employment, employment retention and earnings of adults, dislocated workers (those who have lost jobs and are unlikely to return to their previous occupations) and young workers (ages 14 to 21). The programs do this by increasing individuals' work readiness, educational attainment and occupational skills, and by connecting them to jobs in industries with the greatest demand for workers. Three levels of service are available:

- Core services – Available to all individuals, core services include job search and placement assistance, as well as access to labor market information on such topics as prevailing wages and careers expected to be in the highest demand.
- Intensive services – Intensive services include more comprehensive skills assessments, development of individual employment plans, counseling and career planning.
- Training services – Training services include both occupational and basic skills training. Those who participate in WIA training programs are linked to job opportunities in their communities. Typically, participants use an Individual Training Account to select an appropriate training program from a qualified training provider, or they participate in on-the-job training supported by an employer.

Under certain circumstances, supportive services – such as transportation, child care, uniforms for employment or supplies for training – are provided so that individuals can participate in a program.

To learn more about WIA programs, go to <http://jfs.ohio.gov/owd/wia/>.