

# A-9: 14 WIOA Youth Elements/Services (Updated 2026)

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The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) requires that all fourteen (14) program elements be made available to eligible youth participants, based on individual needs and goals. All services must be documented in the New York State One-Stop Operating System (OSOS) and aligned with each participant's Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

Provision of these elements does not require that all services be funded directly through WIOA. Providers are expected to leverage community partnerships and referrals to ensure access to the full range of services.

All services must be outcome-driven, aligned with ISS goals, and contribute to WIOA performance indicators. Services must also align with current U.S. Department of Labor guidance, including TEGL 21-16, TEGL 09-22, and TEGL 03-23, ensuring they are appropriate, necessary, and tied to participant outcomes.

## **14 WIOA Elements/Services (Based on WIOA Final Regulations effective 8-15-16) (681.460)**

- 1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction and Evidence based requirement for Drop-out Prevention and Recovery Strategies** - that lead to completion of the requirements for a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent (including a recognized certificate of attendance or similar document for individuals with disabilities, i.e. CDOS credential or Basic Skills credentials for individuals with disabilities) or for a recognized post-secondary credential; (For school youth only)
- 2. Alternative Secondary School Services (USDOL deleted references to the term "Alternative School" in WIOA and it is not required at this time to be defined in state plan.) or Drop-out Recovery Services, as appropriate**  
Definition - NYS alternative education provides options for students who are at risk of dropping out of school to remain engage in an alternative learning environment that focuses on their particular skills, abilities and learning styles. Alternative education programs have for decades provided additional pathway for students to complete their secondary education and transition to a post- secondary or career option. (a)These are specialized, structured curriculum offered inside or outside of the public school system which may provide work/study and/or GED instruction for students with behavior problems, physical/mental disabilities, who are at-risk of dropping out, who are institutionalized or adjudicated youth and/or youth who are in the legal custody of the Department of Youth Services (DFY) and are residing in an institution. <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/ssac/AltEd/>

### 3. **Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences (681.600)**

(a) Work experiences are a planned, structured learning experience that take place in a workplace for a limited period of time. Work experience may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate. A work experience may take place in the private for-profit sector, the non-profit sector, or the public sector. Labor standards apply in any work experience where an employee/employer relationship, as defined by the Fair Labor Standards Act or applicable State law, exists. Consistent with § 680.840, funds provided for work experiences may not be used to directly or indirectly aid in the filling of a job opening that is vacant because the former occupant is on strike, or is being locked out in the course of a labor dispute, or the filling of which is otherwise an issue in a labor dispute involving a work stoppage. Work experiences provide the youth participant with opportunities for career exploration and skill development.

(b) Work experiences must include academic and occupational education (i.e. Career Zone). The educational component **may occur concurrently or sequentially** with the work experience. Further academic and occupational education may occur inside or outside the work site.

(c) Types of work experience options include the following categories:

- (a) Summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the school year;
  - (b) Pre-apprenticeship programs; A pre-apprenticeship is a program or set of strategies designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in a registered apprenticeship program and has a documented partnership with at least one, if not more, registered apprenticeship program
  - (c) Internships and job shadowing; and
  - (d) On-the-job training (OJT) opportunities;
- (d) Navigators are required to develop a work experience/internship opportunity for out-of-school youth related to each youth's career pathway. Work experiences may be paid or unpaid. Navigators will be allotted approximately 1000-1,500 working hours pending funding (per FTE) to distribute amongst youth who are employment ready.

### 4. **Occupational Skills Training**

(a) The Department defines occupational skills training as an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupational fields at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels. Local areas must give **priority consideration** for training programs that lead to recognized post-secondary credentials that align **with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area**, if the programs meet WIOA's quality criteria (standards). Such training must:

- (1) be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal (i.e. Career Zone) specified in the Individual Service Strategy (ISS);

- (2) be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal; and
  - (3) result in attainment of a recognized post-secondary credential.
- (b) The chosen occupational skills training must meet the quality standards in WIOA sec. 123.

In order to enhance individual participant choice in their education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers, WIOA allows ITAs for out-of-school youth, ages 16 to 24 using WIOA youth funds when appropriate.

5. **Education Offered Concurrently with and in the same context as Workforce Preparation (681.4360):** - This program element reflects the integrated education and training model and requires **integrated education and training to occur concurrently** (at the same time) and **contextually** with workforce preparation activities and workforce training. This program element describes **how workforce preparations activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training are to be taught within the same time frame** and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway. (WIOA sec. 129(c)(2)(E))
6. **Leadership Development** - including community service and peer centered activities encouraging responsibility and focusing on other positive social and civic behaviors opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination and other positive social behaviors such as:
- (a) Exposure to post-secondary educational possibilities;
  - (b) Community and service learning projects;
  - (c) Peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
  - (d) Organizational and team work training, including team leadership training;
  - (e) Training in decision-making, including determining priorities and problem solving;
  - (f) Citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training;
  - (g) Civic engagement activities which promote the quality of life in a community; and
  - (h) Other leadership activities that place youth in a leadership role such as serving on youth leadership committees, such as a Standing Youth Committee. (WIOA sec. 129(c)(2)(F))

Positive social and civic behaviors are outcomes of leadership opportunities, which are incorporated by local programs as part of their menu of services. Positive social and civic behaviors focus on areas that may include the following:

- (a) Positive attitudinal development;
- (b) Self-esteem building;
- (c) Openness to work with individuals from diverse backgrounds;
- (d) Maintaining healthy lifestyles, including being alcohol- and drug-free;
- (e) Maintaining positive social relationships with responsible adults and peers, and contributing to the well-being of one's community, including voting;

- (f) Maintaining a commitment to learning and academic success;
- (g) Avoiding delinquency;
- (h) Positive job attitudes and work skills;

7. **Supportive Services (681.570)** items added below (j. - l.) to youth supportive services to keep in line with adult services. Supportive services enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities by minimizing barriers.

These services include, but are not limited to the following:

- (a) Linkages to community services;
- (b) Assistance with transportation (bus pass or gas card);
- (c) Assistance with child care and dependent care;
- (d) Assistance with housing;
- (e) Needs-related payments;
- (f) Assistance with educational testing;
- (g) Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities;
- (h) Legal aid services\*
- (i) Referrals to health care;
- (j) Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eye glasses and protective eye gear.
- (k) Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in post-secondary education classes; and
- (l) Payments and fees for employment and training related applications, tests and certifications\*

Allows incentive payments to youth participants for recognition and achievement directly tied to training activities and work experiences. The local program must have written policies and procedures in place governing the awarding of incentives and must ensure that such incentive payments are:

- (a) Tied to the goals of the specific program;
- (b) Outlined in writing before the commencement of the program that may provide incentive payments;
- (c) Align with the local program's organizational policies; and
- (d) Accord with the requirements contained in 2 CFR 200.

8. **Adult Mentoring (681.490)** - for a duration of at least 12 months, that may occur both during and after program participation;

- (a) Adult mentoring for youth must:
  - (1) Last at least 12 months, be documented, and may take place both during the program and following exit from the program;
  - (2) Be a formal relationship between a youth participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee;

(3) Include a mentor who is an adult, who may be the assigned youth case manager; and

- USDOL acknowledges that in some areas mentoring is particularly challenging and has changed 681.490 to allow case managers to serve as adult mentors. It strongly prefers that case managers are not serving as mentors to participants in your program however recognizes may be a challenge in rural areas, in areas where mentors sparse or having difficult time procuring that service.

(4) While group mentoring activities and mentoring through electronic means are allowable as part of the mentoring activities, at a minimum, the local youth program must match the youth with an individual mentor with whom the youth interacts on a face-to-face basis.

(b) Mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company.

9. **Follow-up Services (681.580)**

Follow up services must be provided to all participants for a minimum of 12 months unless the participant declines to receive follow up services or the participant cannot be located or contacted for follow up services.

(a) Follow-up services are critical services provided following a youth's exit from the program to help ensure the youth is successful in employment and/or post-secondary education and training. Follow-up services may include regular contact with a youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that arise.

(b) Follow-up services for youth also may include the following program elements:

- (1) Supportive services;
- (2) (2) Adult mentoring;
- (3) (3) Financial literacy education;
- (4) 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
- (5) Activities that help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

(c) All youth participants must be offered an opportunity to receive follow-up services that align with their individual service strategies. Furthermore, follow-up services must be provided to all participants for a minimum of 12 months unless the **participant declines to receive follow-up** services or the participant cannot be located or contacted. Follow-up services may be provided beyond 12 months at the State or Local WDB's discretion. The types of services provided and the duration of services must be determined based on the needs of the individual and therefore, the type and intensity of follow-up services may differ for each participant. Follow-up services must

include more than only a contact attempted or made for securing documentation in order to report a performance outcome.

10. **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling (681.510)** - provides individualized counseling to participants. This includes drug and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to partner programs, as appropriate. (WIOA sec. 129(c)(1)(C)(J)) When referring participants to necessary counseling that cannot be provided by the local youth program or its service providers, the local youth program must coordinate with the organization it refers to in order to ensure continuity of service. Career and academic counseling were removed from this element.

11. **Financial Literacy Education (681.460)** – Two main changes: address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities and changing the language from “must” to “may” regarding addressing the variety of Financial Literacy sub-elements (topics). In other words, not every youth in your program is going to need every topic that falls under Financial Literacy. It is all about what an individual may need, they may not need all the topics. Financial Literacy can be individualized by youth.

Financial Literacy Education includes activities which:

- (a) Support the ability of participants to create budgets (i.e. Career Zone), initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions;
- (b) Support participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards;
- (c) Teach participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores; what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information; how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies; and how to improve or maintain good credit;
- (d) Support a participant’s ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;
- (e) Educate participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identity theft, and how to resolve cases of identity theft and, in other ways, understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data;
- (f) Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials;
- (g) Support activities that address the particular financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to **benefits planning** and **work incentives counseling**;
- (h) Provide financial education that is age-appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as by access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings; and

- (i) Implement other approaches to help participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability by using high-quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels, including, where possible, timely and customized information, guidance, tools, and instruction.

**12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training (681.460)-** Entrepreneurial skills training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business.

- (a) Such training must develop the skills associated with entrepreneurship (i.e. Career Zone-Financial Literacy and Customer Service). Some examples of entrepreneurial skill development include, but are not limited to, the ability to:
  - (1) Take initiative;
  - (2) Creatively seek out and identify business opportunities;
  - (3) Develop budgets and forecast resource needs;
  - (4) Understand various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and
  - (5) Communicate effectively and market oneself and one's ideas.
- (b) Approaches to teaching youth entrepreneurial skills include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (1) Entrepreneurship education that provides an introduction to the values and basics of starting and running a business. Entrepreneurship education programs often guide youth through the development of a business plan and may also include simulations of business start-up and operation.
- (2) Enterprise development which provides supports and services that incubate and help youth develop their own businesses. Enterprise development programs go beyond entrepreneurship education by helping youth access small loans or grants that are needed to begin business operation and by providing more individualized attention to the development of viable business ideas.
- (3) Experiential programs that provide youth with experience in the day-to-day operation of a business. These programs may involve the development of a youth-run business that young people participating in the program work in and manage. Or, they may facilitate placement in apprentice or internship positions with adult entrepreneurs in the community.

**13. Labor Market and Employment Information Services, In-Demand Industry Sectors, Career: Awareness, Counseling, and Exploration (681.460)-** Services (career awareness, career counseling, career exploration) 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. This element has been misunderstood. This is not just providing labor market information and calling it a day. The real focus is about providing information about careers and about labor

markets data in the context of career awareness, in the context of career exploration, and in the context of providing career counseling to an individual about what direction they want to go in. The Labor Market Area is an economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence.

**14. Activities that Help Youth Prepare for Transition to Postsecondary Education and Training (681.460)**

(Per NYSED) Although 8<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, and 10<sup>th</sup> grades are early in your school career, they are important times to begin thinking about and planning for those things you will be looking forward to after graduation. You may want to continue your education or enter an apprenticeship program. Both of these options require career exploration and research. Most schools offer classes on career education. Make sure you are included.

Once you have narrowed your career choices, it is important to find out the required training and education for your choice(s). If further education is required, you need to find schools that offer a major or certification program in your career choice area. Your school counselor, librarian, teachers, and/or transition coordinator can help you with this research. There may be special requirements for specific programs.

Examples of activities that naturally fall under this category include:

- (1) Assessment and Career Exploration
- (2) Career Counseling
- (3) Shadowing & Informational Interviewing
- (4) Requirements and Pre-Requisites for college
- (5) Application Process
- (6) Financial Aid Counseling and Process and understanding process

Of the 14 WIOA elements, the RochesterWorks Career Center staff will provide technical assistance with; Labor Market and Employment Information Services, Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling, and Supportive Services:

- Linkages to community services
- Assistance with transportation (bus pass or gas card)
- Assistance with educational testing
- Reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities

**Required Elements**

1. Tutoring, Study Skills Training, and Dropout Prevention
2. Alternative Secondary School or Dropout Recovery Services
3. Paid and Unpaid Work Experiences (minimum 20% expenditure required)

4. Occupational Skills Training aligned with in-demand industries
5. Education Concurrent with Workforce Preparation
6. Leadership Development Opportunities
7. Supportive Services (aligned with RochesterWorks policies)
8. Adult Mentoring (minimum 12 months)
9. Follow-Up Services (minimum 12 months)
10. Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling
11. Financial Literacy Education
12. Entrepreneurial Skills Training
13. Labor Market and Employment Information Services
14. Postsecondary Transition Activities

### **System Expectations**

Providers must:

- Expose each participant to multiple elements based on ISS
- Document all services in OSOS using proper case notes (SENSE model)
- Align services with measurable skill gains and credential attainment
- Utilize partnerships and MOUs to ensure access to all elements
- Integrate career pathways and employment outcomes into service delivery

RochesterWorks will provide technical assistance, coordination, and system-wide support to ensure consistent delivery of all elements.