

# **Workforce<sup>3</sup>One**

## **Transcript of Webinar**

### **WIOA Stakeholder Consultation: Consultation with Consumers, Advocacy Groups, and Direct Service Providers on Services for Individuals with Disabilities**

**Date: Tuesday, August 26, 2014**

*Transcript By  
Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C.*

GARY GONZALEZ: So with that, I'm going to transition over to today's PowerPoint. And I'm going to turn things over to Kim Vitelli. Kim, take it away.

KIM VITELLI: Thanks, Gary. Good afternoon, everyone. It's good to be here. My name is Kim Vitelli. I'm the division chief for the Division of National Programs, Tools and Technical Assistance in the Employment and Training Administration. ETA's efforts to ensure that all of our programs are not just physically accessible to individuals with disabilities but programmatically accessible and work for people with disabilities have been ongoing for some time, along with our partners, many of which are here today within the Department of Labor, Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services.

Our focus is on serving people with disabilities and all job seeker customers in an integrated workforce system where everyone has access to the supports and services they need to enter competitive, integrated employment. We can only accomplish this with partnership and communication with our -- with our partner agencies. We're really lucky to have committed and communicative partners at all of our sister agencies, of course, our office of disability employment policy here at the Department of Labor, as well as the Rehabilitation Services Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services.

I'm going to welcome today -- we're fortunate to have with us Janet LaBreck, the commissioner for the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the Department of Education's Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, also known as OSERS. Welcome, Janet.

JANET LABRECK: Thank you very much, Kim.

MS. VITELLI: We also have joining us today the assistant -- the Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Department of Labor's Office of Disability Employment Policy, Jennifer Sheehy. Welcome, Jennifer.

JENNIFER SHEEHY: Thank you, Kim. It's good for us to be here representing Department of Labor as well.

MS. VITELLI: Let me give you a picture of how our agenda will flow today. We're going to first go over the purpose and session flow of the webinar. We'll give you an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, as well as the provisions specifically related to consultation on services to individuals with disabilities. We'll spend the bulk of our time today on our discussion questions and we'll wrap up with pointing out technical assistance tools and resources. We'll also go over our stakeholder engagement webinar series schedule.

Let me point out that today's webinar is particularly aimed at consultation with consumers' advocacy groups and direct services providers to -- on services to individuals with disabilities. We also have a webinar on September 2<sup>nd</sup> on services to individuals with disabilities that's particularly focused on getting feedback from the workforce investment system. All of our webinars are open to the public. That includes all of the webinars -- not just the one today and the one on September 2<sup>nd</sup>, but all of them that I'll go over at the end of the webinar today -- the entire series.

So let's move into the purpose of today's webinar. This series of stakeholder consultation webinars has several purposes. We're aiming to gather input from state and local workforce leaders and practitioners, partners, customers and other stakeholders on key implementation topics. We'll be using this information to inform development of the regulations as well as to inform our technical assistance.

Please note that ETA is also planning to conduct a series of town halls this fall to gather input from the field, and that at any time you are always welcome to send comments and questions to an email address, [dol.wioa@dol.gov](mailto:dol.wioa@dol.gov). Our federal partners at Education and Health and Human Services are also collecting input. And we'll be working closely together on implementing the new legislation.

So today the Department of Labor is in a listening mode. Listening mode means that we're hearing from you. We're not necessarily answering questions today, but listening to you and your input. Today's session relies then heavily on your use of the chat feature. It's the fastest and most efficient way for us to hear from all of you. With over 500 registrants for today, we couldn't rely on the phone lines.

At the end of this session, though, we'll leave a dialogue box open for you to share any additional information or feedback you'd like to provide. You can be detailed in your comments. Don't feel that you're limited to a -- to a Twitter-like comment length. You'll be able to input your discussion questions to the chat feature that Gary will go over when we get to it. And all of your responses will be reviewed and analyzed as we develop our regulations and future guidance and technical assistance.

So let me give you an overview of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. President Barack Obama signed the act into law on July 22, after Congress passed the bill with wide bipartisan majority. The bill reaffirms the ongoing role of American job centers and promotes program coordination and alignment of programs at the federal, state, local, and regional levels. The programs established on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act build on proven practices, such as sector strategies, career pathways, regional economic approaches and work-based training.

Together, these complement and support the president's job-driven workforce vision. The programs in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act supersede the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 -- which we affectionately called WIA -- and retains and amends the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Wagner-Peyser Act and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The new act identifies core programs. These include adults, dislocated workers, and youth formula programs and Wagner-Peyser employment services administered by the Department of Labor, adult education and literacy programs and vocational rehabilitation programs administered by Department of Education. And the bill also authorizes Job Corps, YouthBuild, the Indian and Native American program, and migrant and seasonal farmworker programs, as well as evaluation and research activities conducted by DOL.

The workforce system is reformed in several ways under the act. It requires states to strategically align workforce development programs to support job seekers and employers. It promotes accountability and transparency of our programs and fosters regional collaboration to support regional economies. It streamlines and strengthens the role of workforce development boards and enhances services to job seekers and employers through the American Job Center system, including an increased focus in work-based training.

It provides access to high quality training and enhances workforce services for the unemployed and other job seekers. It improves services to individuals with disabilities, which we'll focus on more in-depth in a moment, and makes key investments in serving disconnected youth and other vulnerable populations, including Native Americans and migrant and seasonal farmworkers. Lastly, the act increases the performance and quality of the Job Corps program and reinforces the connections with between the workforce system and registered apprenticeships.

Let's take a moment to hear from you about your input. Later in this webinar, you're going to be providing us with your input on specific questions, but let's start with a general vision of what you see as the top three priorities for implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Please know that we'll be posting the compilation of this set of comments, as well as all the comments that you'll make today, on Workforce3One when we post the recording of this webinar, about two to three days from now.

Gary, do you have advice on how they should use the chat feature to answer this question: What are your top three priorities for implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act?

MR. GONZALEZ: Right. And participants, just mouse over, left-click in the text field at the bottom of your screen. Type in your responses to this question and then either hit enter on your keyboard or if you mouse over and left click the chat balloon icon, either one will submit your response.

MS. VITELLI: So we're going to give you a few minutes to think about and answer this question. Go ahead. (Pause.) We see a lot of comments on transition for services to youth with disabilities, flexibility, collaboration, inclusion. (Pause.) Terrific. Keep it coming. And don't be afraid to be detailed in your comments if you wish.

MR. GONZALEZ: And I do want to point out that if you can't keep up with the scroll, which I couldn't blame you because I can't really keep up with it, we are going to be making these chat logs available after we post a recording to Workforce3One in approximately two business days.

(Pause.)

MS. : We see a lot of comments on partnership, continued emphasis on accountability, flexibility – these are really great comments. Keep them coming; we're going to keep this open for another minute or two – this is really useful for us.

MR. GONZALEZ (?): And I want to point out that once we close this chat window, there will be another chat window that we come back to that you can, if you want, copy your response – if you haven't done so – if you haven't finished your thought, you can copy it and then paste it into the next chat window.

MS. SHEEHY: Hello again. This is Jennifer Sheehy, the deputy assistant secretary for the Office of Disability Employment Policy. I'm going to talk a little bit about the provisions related to disability. First of all, though, the Office of Disability Employment Policy is the federal agency that develops tests, does technical assistance on and disseminates effective practices and policies to increase the quality and number of job opportunities for people with disabilities. We work with other federal agencies, states, employers, Congress, the White House, and certainly, lots of nonprofit and advocacy groups that are related to assisting people with disabilities, find those meaningful careers of their choice. We're excited that the Workforce Investment Opportunity Act increases individuals with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities, the access to high-quality workforce services to prepare them for competitive integrated employment, leading to economic self-sufficiency.

The Act increases – the Act will help one-stop career centers to provide physical and programmatic accessibility to employment and training services for individuals with disabilities, and to implement the new Section 188 nondiscrimination requirements related to the functions of the local boards, local plan content, certification at least every three years of the one-stop career centers, to include an assessment of physical and programmatic accessibility in accordance with Section 188. And of course, the one-stop career centers are named in the legislation, but we're talking about the American job centers.

The unified state plan must include all the core programs, including the vocational rehabilitation, or VR program, and adult education. Among the requirements for the unified state plan is to describe how the one-stop delivery system will comply with Section 188 nondiscrimination requirements regarding physical and programmatic accessibility of facilities, programs, services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities. Youth with disabilities will receive extensive pre-employment transition services so they can successfully obtain competitive integrated employment, and we were very happy to see those provisions emphasized in the act.

The act supports disconnected youth, of which we all know youth with disabilities comprise a high percent, by requiring local areas to increase percentage of youth formula funds used to serve out-of-school youth to 75 percent versus 30 percent under the Workforce Investment Act, requiring local areas to spend at least 20 percent of youth formula funds on work experience activities and providing additional allowable activities, including financial literacy education and entrepreneurial training.

(Day ?) vocational rehabilitation agencies will set aside at least 15 percent of funding to provide transition services to youth with disabilities. Local workforce development boards may designate a standing committee to provide information and assist with operational and other issues related to compliance with nondiscrimination and other accessibility requirements and provide input regarding appropriate training for staff on these issues.

Finally, at least here, today, we'll discuss that the act establishes the committee to advise the secretary of labor on strategies to increase competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities. This membership will include the Office of Disability Employment Policy, Wage and Hour Division and ETA, and we will be putting out a federal register notice explaining how you can nominate public members for this committee in a week or two.

Now, we're going to – I'm going to turn it over back to Kim Vitelli, and we'll look at some other questions we'd love your input on.

MS. VITELLI: Thanks, Jennifer. Let's move into the next set of discussion questions. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act collapses intensive services and core services into the single category of career services. Are there any potential challenges or benefit with the new combined career services? Do you think that this change will have an impact on how services are provided, and does the change present any considerations for the department in developing guidance? Your thoughts on these questions are welcome.

While you're thinking about all three of those questions, let's make this a little bit easier by having you type in your responses to each of those individually. So we're thinking about all the questions – give us – in particular, you can write out your responses to whether there are any potential challenges or benefits with combining intensive services and core services into this single category of career services.

Thanks for your comments so far; we're going to leave this open for one more minute. We're getting some questions as well as comments, which is great; it's useful for us to know what kinds of questions are out there. We won't be answering questions today, but the questions that you're posing are useful to us as we develop our technical assistance and guidance. So comments and questions are welcome.

MR. GONZALEZ: And we're going to transition into the next question very shortly. If you haven't completed your thought or if you're still typing it in, I suggest copying what you've typed in so far so that you can then paste it into the next chat window, which will be appearing in a few seconds. And I'm going to turn it back over to Kim.

Kim.

MS. VITELLI: Keeping in the same theme of this single category of career services, please tell us your thoughts on whether this change will have an impact on how services are provided. As we collapse intensive and core services into the single category of career services, will this have an impact on how services are provided?

(Pause.)

Thanks for all your comments so far. We're seeing general support in thinking that this will streamline, as well as some helpful comments on what we can do to make sure that the combination of services does result in better services for people. We're going to leave this comment open – comment box open for another minute. Thanks for your comments so far.

Again, don't be afraid – give us full comments – you don't need to shorthand it. We're open to hearing everything you've got to say.

(Pause.)

MR. GONZALEZ: And we're going to transition to the next question very shortly so, again, just a heads up. This chat window will be going away, this comment window will be going away, so if you haven't completed your thought – you're still typing in – I would suggest copying what you've typed in so far so that you can then paste it into the next chat window so you don't lose what you've already typed in.

So, I think we're going to go ahead and transition now. I'm going to turn it back over to Kim.

MS. VITELLI: Thank again for your comments so far. Our last question – not of the webinar, but just on this theme of career services – is, does the change from intensive and core services into the single category of career services – does this change present any considerations for the department in developing guidance?

(Pause.)

Thanks for your comments so far. We're seeing a lot of comments about the importance of clear definitions, about collaboration in the development of the guidance and the regulations and the importance of technical assistance.

(Pause.)

We're going to give you one more minute on this particular question before we move on to the next one.

(Pause.)

MR. GONZALEZ: And we're going to be transitioning to the next question that we have. So again -- heads up – if you're still typing in, if you haven't finished your thought, copy what you've typed in so that when we get rid of this or move from this chat window to the next chat window, you don't lose what you've typed in thus far.

Switching things over to Jennifer. Jennifer?

MS. SHEEHY: Thanks, Gary.

As we discussed, the act strengthens provisions, such as meeting the non-discrimination requirements of section 188 and the applicable provisions of the ADA. That requires AJCs to provide physical and accessible or programmatic accessibility to individuals with disabilities.

Our first question related to this topic is, what are the key challenges providing accessibility of programs, services, technology and materials for individuals with disabilities? In other words, what are the barriers now? And perhaps you have thoughts of how to address those challenges.

(Pause.)

Thank you for all of your comments. We're seeing a lot of comments related to funding, some to transportation challenges, keeping up with technology. Again, as much detail as you can provide, as possible, is really helpful to us.

(Pause.)

This is great. Please keep your comments coming. We're seeing themes related to rural accessibility, certainly to training, not only of what accessibility means but on equipment specifically.

(Pause.)

OK. We're going to wrap this question up very soon, so please finish your comments. And don't worry, you can always provide a comment after this chat box closes in the next chat box that comes up.

(Pause.)

OK. So the second question related to this topic – and goes to the point that's been brought up about training – the importance of training – what role does staff training – to achieve these requirements, and what are the challenges to building such capacity?

So think about the training aspect, what's really needed. And the specific responses are the most helpful. Thank you.

(Pause.)

MS. VITELLI: Thank you very much for your comments. We're seeing comments related to continuing education, not just one-time training, cultural competency being important and certainly the importance of partnering with organizations in the local areas, some of the service providers, the nonprofits to help provide that training.

(Pause.)

MS. VITELLI: OK. We have about one minute left for this question, and a couple of the other themes that are coming up are the importance of engaging with business in – with the accessibility training – and certainly looking at leveraging funds to provide the training.

(Pause.)



MS. VITELLI: Thanks for your comments so far. We're going to move now into the next discussion question.

A major trend in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act is the integration of services, aligning services across multiple service delivery systems and partners through a unified plan and performance outcomes in all core programs, including Title 1 of the Rehabilitation Act, which is vocational rehabilitation. What suggestions do you have that would help the public workforce system integrate these programs effectively?

As always, as detailed a response as you want to give us is welcome and helpful.

(Pause.)

Thanks for your feedback so far. We're seeing feedback related to funding, shared services, shared intake, some comments about ticket to work – this is all helpful.

(Pause.)

We also see comments on shared data systems and common performance definitions.

(Pause.)

We're going to leave this comment box open for one more minute.

(Pause.)

We're going to switch questions now – move on to the next question about considering the integration of services. What challenges do you foresee, and what suggestions do you have for addressing those challenges?

We're going to leave this open for one more minute; we're seeing helpful comments about cooperation and communication, having everyone at the table – the importance of staff capacity.

Thank you for your comments on this question. Our next topic is related to the quality – high-quality work force services that the Act increases access to for individuals with disabilities. What do you think are the biggest challenges to providing integrated and accessible services in new as well as existing programs and activities that lead to competitive integrated employment advancement along career pathways and to economic self-sufficiency? We will be looking at comments on that question now. And just a reminder – we won't be responding to comments today, or questions, but these will be very helpful as we develop our technical assistance and guidance going forward.

OK, we're going to wrap this question up in about a minute. We're seeing a lot of things related to engaging with the employers and businesses, looking at community colleges to help support the job training and trying to coordinate the – to provide services in rural areas.

So, given some of the things that were just highlighted when discussing the barriers, the next question is, do you have successful examples for your own service delivery system or other programs – for example, TANF, that can be adapted to improve the services for individuals with disabilities through the public Workforce system?

(Pause.)

For those of you looking at the clock, you'll notice that we're going a little bit past our scheduled end time of 3:00. For those of you able to stay on, we are going to keep this webinar going for another couple of minutes and go through about three more questions. If you're able to stay with us, that's great. If not, you'll continue to have the chance to submit comments to [dol.wioa@dol.gov](mailto:dol.wioa@dol.gov).

So our next discussion question is: One ongoing challenge has been that individuals with disabilities, especially non-visible disabilities, opt not to self-identify when using general service delivery systems such as the public workforce system. As programs start to use more common intake systems, what kinds of regulations or strategies or incentives should be provided for job seekers to self-disclose a disability? (Pause.)

We're getting a range of comments here, including that we don't need to encourage self-disclosure and that we can streamline or improve intake processes on a -- for paperwork and for how people interact with each other. (Pause.) (Inaudible) -- about how to establish an MIS that allows for secure self-disclosure as well as IT system security. (Pause.) We'll do about a half-minute more on this. This is really helpful input. Keep it coming. (Pause.) Getting input on the importance of discretionary disclosure and confidentiality and the importance of universal design strategy. (Pause.)

Thanks for your thoughts on this. We're going to move on. Should there be requirements placed on participating programs and the American Job Centers to create a welcoming environment for job seekers with disabilities, and what would those requirements look like? What should those approaches be? (Pause.)

Thanks for your input on this.

Our last question today is a simple one. Is there anything else you want to share with us today?

Your comments so far have been very helpful. I want to encourage you to continue to comment. The details are good. And those of you who wanted to know what others were saying but couldn't keep up with how quickly the screen was changing, as I have had difficulty as the volume – with the volume of questions, you'll be able to see all of the questions and comments that your colleagues shared when we post the webinar within two or so business days with the webinar recording.

Anything else you would like to share with us today, I'm going to leave this open for two minutes.

OK. I'm going to leave this chat window open as we wrap up this webinar. And actually, we're going to continue to leave this chat window open for another hour or so, even after this webinar concludes. So let me just point out to you a few technical assistance tools and resources.

So of these are on the Department of Labor's web page. In coordination with Education and Health and Human Services, the Department of Labor has to ensure that states and local areas, other grantees and stakeholders are all prepared for the implementation of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. So we really encourage you all to visit our resource page for the latest implementation information and to continue to share your feedback and thoughts on implementation.

On the Department of Labor's page is [www.doleta.gov/wioa](http://www.doleta.gov/wioa). That web page includes some key dates, including the time frame for regulations and a lot of other information, including information about the webinars that have taken place and that are going to take place and training and employment notices that have already been issued and some frequently asked questions.

We also continue to welcome feedback through the Department of Labor's dedicated email page, [dol.wioa@dol.gov](mailto:dol.wioa@dol.gov).

Our partners have also created resources pages, particularly the Department of Education. And you can see those on this screen for the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education and for the Rehab Services Administration page.

So stakeholder input is critical to the success of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. We encourage you to attend all of the sessions that interest you. And we encourage you to share your promising practices with us as well. If your organization has policies, processes, models, service delivery strategies that can serve as peer model as we implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, we encourage you to share those however you're comfortable with an ETA regional office or at our email address, which, again, is [dol.wioa@dol.gov](mailto:dol.wioa@dol.gov).

We have another webinar in addition – you're welcome and encouraged to attend any of the webinars that are listed on the stakeholder engagement page here. The session on September 2<sup>nd</sup> on services to individuals with disabilities is of particular relevance to the workforce system. But these are all open, so consumers, stakeholder organizations, advocacy organizations, services providers continue to be welcome at the September 2<sup>nd</sup> webinar as well as all of the webinars listed here.

Thank you so much for joining us today. Your input is very important to us as we develop regulations and guidance to implement the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. I want to thank again our colleagues from the Department of Education and the Department of Health and Human Services who have been on the phone with us as well as the Department – the Office of Disability Employment Policy here in the Department of Labor. Thank you all for joining us.

(END)