



Summary Report: Federal Partner Roundtable on Supporting
WIOA-Eligible Youth, May 22, 2019

U.S. Department of Labor
Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP)

American Institutes for Research
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Introduction

On May 22, 2019, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Interagency Working Group on Youth Programs (IWGYP) convened a roundtable of federal partners in Washington, DC. Participants discussed recommendations for building strong cross-sectoral collaborations to support the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) eligible youth.

The WIOA legislation is intended to develop, strengthen, and improve the U.S. workforce by connecting people to jobs and careers and helping employers find, hire, and retain employees with the appropriate skills. WIOA funds flow from DOL to state agencies and then down to the local level. WIOA requires at least 75% of the youth program funds to be allocated to out-of-school youth at the local level and not less than 20% to provide in-school and out-of-school youth with paid or unpaid work experience. However, because only a fraction of the billions of dollars in grants awarded annually are appropriated for youth, funds must be spent wisely and leveraged when possible. WIOA Formula Youth Program funds cover case management and offerings in fourteen program elements.

The overarching goals for the meeting were to:

1. Increase understanding of federal programs that serve opportunity youth,
2. Explore opportunities for collaboration across programs, and
3. Develop preliminary recommendations to strengthen partnerships across programs.

Defining Opportunity Youth

Opportunity Youth (previously referred to as Disconnected Youth) are young people ages 14-24 who are not enrolled in school and not members of the workforce. They may be homeless, in foster care, or involved in the justice system. Youth who are not connected to school or work are often facing barriers such as mental health challenges or living in poverty.

Reconnecting with youth, all of whom have great potential, is an opportunity to improve their educational and employment outcomes, reduce expenditures on social services, reduce incarceration costs, and contribute to their health and happiness as productive members of society.

This report is organized by the goals above and summarizes the **topics** discussed and **ideas** shared by federal partners, including:

1. Ways agencies are working with opportunity youth,
2. Immediate and potential areas for cross-sectoral collaboration to support youth served by WIOA,
3. How to more effectively leverage resources,
4. Steps needed at the federal level to establish and sustain high-quality integrated services for this priority population,
5. Needs or gaps in knowledge and practice, and

6. Recommendations for next steps to enhance cross-sectoral collaboration.

Group discussion on suggestions of opportunities and areas of improvement focused on the **14 program elements below as well as an “other” category** (see Appendix A for mapping of elements and input from participants).

Education/Postsecondary

1. **Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services** assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school.
2. **Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation** is an integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills.
3. **Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention** activities that lead to completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent.
4. **Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities** help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

Skills/Leadership

5. **Occupational Skills Training** is an organized program of study that provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field.
6. **Leadership Development Opportunities** encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors.
7. **Financial Literacy Education** provides youth with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability.
8. **Entrepreneurial Skills Training** provides the basics of starting and operating a small business and develops entrepreneurial skills.

Support/Services

9. **Supportive Services** enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities (such as, but not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, housing, health care, educational testing, and work-related tools).
10. **Adult Mentoring** is a formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor with structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement.
11. **Follow-up Services** are provided following program exit to help ensure youth succeed in employment or education.
12. **Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling** provides individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling.
13. **Services that Provide Labor Market Information** offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Work Experience

14. **Paid and Unpaid Work Experience** is a structured learning experience in a workplace and provides opportunities for career exploration and skill development.

The roundtable of federal partners included representation from the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Housing and Urban Development, Justice, Education, Labor, Agriculture, Defense, Treasury, Corporation for National and Community Services, Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, Federal Reserve Board, Federal Trade Commission, Legal Services Corporation, National Endowment for the Arts, Office of National Drug Control Policy, Social Security Administration, and the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness. A full list of participating federal partners and their associated offices is provided in this report's [Error! Reference source not found. B](#).

The large group discussion began by highlighting what each participant's agency or program was doing to support opportunity youth. It then focused on the importance of clearly understanding the current efforts, resources, and services available at the federal, regional, state, and local levels that would benefit this priority population; immediate opportunities for collaboration; and the steps needed to establish and sustain high-quality integrated programs and services.

The large group discussion participants also expressed interest in how to share the identified resources and trainings across federal offices and agencies to ensure that everyone was informed and able to collaborate to leverage each other's efforts to support opportunity youth. This includes having a solid understanding of connections among the different federal departments and agencies.

The following summary describes in greater detail the main points addressed during the large group discussion on cross-sectoral collaboration.

Main Questions in Large Group Discussion:

- What are your current efforts to support WIOA eligible youth? Use scenarios of young people to surface what agencies have to offer. Participants will write specific services/resources (for youth, for adults who work with youth) on post it notes and put them up under the appropriate WIOA element placed around the room.
- What are some immediate opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration to support youth?
- How do we more effectively leverage resources?
- What steps are needed (at the federal level) to establish and sustain high-quality integrated services for the priority population?

Current Federal Efforts to Support Opportunity Youth

Federal partners discussed their offices' current efforts to support opportunity youth who are eligible for WIOA services. A few participants' offices held opportunity youth as a primary priority population in their work, while most participants' offices had primary priorities that overlapped with work with this priority population while focusing predominantly on youth in general.

Direct services to support opportunity youth — *associated office/agency in italics:*

- Connecting youth with assistance to expunge records — *Housing and Urban Development*
- Operating Project SOAR, which helps youth complete financial aid applications, and find summer and year-round employment — *Housing and Urban Development*
- Providing safe environments for youth to live, work, and play — *Housing and Urban Development*
- Providing programing to youth (18 months, in 40 locations, serving 12,000) who cease to consistently attend school — *Department of Defense*
- Administering the Vocational Rehabilitation program under the Rehabilitation Act [of 1973], as well as Title IV of WIOA — *Department of Education*
- Running YouthBuild, a discretionary program that connects approximately six thousand youth annually to training opportunities — *Department of Labor*
- Offering apprenticeships with whole focus on opportunity youth — *Department of Labor*
- Offering career pathway project with focus on opportunity youth — *HHS/Administration for Children and Families*
- Focusing on community colleges and adult education that largely covers the out-of-school group — *Department of Education*
- Accepting SSI applications for youth up to 45 days before their eligibility ends — *Social Security Administration*
- Using “Get My Future” at getmyfuture.org where youth go through an inventory of questions about jobs that may be relevant to them, including resources for homeless youth — *Department of Labor*

Other efforts to support youth in general that may indirectly benefit and support opportunity youth — *associated office/agency in italics:*

- Providing funding to civil legal aid for low income people — *Legal Services Corporation*
- Ensuring parents and guardians provide financial support to youth by helping them navigate the child support system — *HHS/Office of Child Support Enforcement*
- Providing formula grants and discretionary grants to states for spectrum of ages — *HHS/SAMHSA*
- Providing grants for programing such as screening for suicide risk and connecting youth to care — *HHS/SAMHSA*
- Contributing to building safe environments for youth to work and play — *HHS/Office of Adolescent Health*
- Providing pregnancy prevention resources and pregnancy assistance fund for teens and young adults — *HHS/Office of Adolescent Health*
- Providing grants to serve and support youth across the country and funding non-profits that provide support, opportunities, and skill-building — *National Endowment of the Arts*

- Building evidence on important topics — *HHS/Administration for Children and Families*
- Building staff capacity to support positive youth development by strengthening co-regulation (warm supporting relationships) — *HHS/Administration for Children and Families*
- Providing financial education in multiple formats including podcasts and instructor-led sessions, and try to get youth first credit union accounts — *Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation*
- Providing Junior Reserve Officer Training Corp (JROTC) — *Department of Defense*
- Funding organizations to investigate learning, engaging, and interest-development of youth — *National Science Foundation*
- Funding a range of work experiences, training, and support for youth who are parents and in low-income families — *HHS/Administration for Children and Families, TANF*
- Providing relevant financial resources for youth — *Federal Trade Commission*
- Funding foster care programs in states, territories, and tribal territories — *HHS/Children's Bureau*
- Prioritizing apprenticeships — *DOL/Office of Disability Employment Policy*
- Focusing on ending youth homelessness and creating employment opportunities — *U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness*
- Working with youth on cyber-safety and life skills — *Federal Trade Commission*

Immediate and Longer-Term Opportunities for Collaboration - *associated office/agency in italics:*

- Providing a legal checklist for caseworkers to identify issues that many people face, e.g. expungement of criminal record — *Legal Services Corporation*
- Sharing list of relevant resources — *HHS/Administration for Children and Families*
- Sharing case studies of youth, for example, students who are accepted into colleges but do not enroll in the fall — *Housing and Urban Development*
- Building on idea of MythBusters and promote information about career opportunities that exist [in the arts] and tap into exiting projects across the country that provide paid opportunities for students — *National Endowment for the Arts*
- Creating a list of all the grants that are available and make legal aid an eligible activity under the grants — *Legal Services Corporation* (Note: See Map My Community bullet below)
- Promoting the use of Map My Community on youth.gov, which lists all grants from USA Spending — *HHS/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation*
- Sharing information about programs being implemented on the ground; share video highlighting successful technical assistance resulting in youth opening accounts which contributes to meeting the goal of keeping youth self-reliant — *Federal Trade Commission*

- Sharing a list of the twenty-five states working with foster youth ages 18-21 to explore how to connect the states and help other states raise the age-out age to 21 — *HHS/Children's Bureau*
- Inviting partners to meet with project officers and principal investigators to hear about existing efforts and spark thinking for future work with under-resourced youth — *National Science Foundation*

How to Leverage Resources - *associated office/agency in italics:*

- Planning to hold a meeting to develop a research agenda — *HHS/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation*
- Funding a research project to look at evidence-based strategies and innovative models — *HHS/Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation*
- Working on state plans for Perkins Act (vocational and technical education); encouraging states to jointly write WIOA/Perkins plans — *Department of Education*
- Planning to host three convenings for rural community colleges to help them think about how to get federal aid — *Department of Education*
- Acting on mandate for full employment and focusing on youth who are not employed currently — *Federal Reserve*
- Connecting grantees from sister offices to programs, for example, connecting fatherhood programs with community services programs that provide employment training — *HHS/Administration for Children and Families*
- Hosting National Resource Center on Substance Abuse and Child Welfare and promoting family-based services that treat the family as the patient rather than the individual — *HHS/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*
- Increasing outreach to fathers as well as mothers to engage in services for opioid addiction — *HHS/Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration*
- Continuing fatherhood initiative as well as supporting any caring adult who cares for youth people — *Housing and Urban Development*
- Promoting the Federal Bonding Program which focuses on hard-to-employ populations and providing surety bonds to employers — *Department of Labor*

Existing resources on youth.gov

- **Map My Community** contains all grants from USA Spending searchable by zip code.
- **Collaboration Profiles** highlight successful collaborations and details information at initiating, implementing, and sustaining stages including lessons learned, challenges faced, and successful practices.

Existing resources on youth.workforcegps.org

- Connections to partnerships and different federal programs; important platform to encourage connections and decrease silos

Elements Needed to Establish and Sustain High-Quality Integrated Services

- Better baseline understanding of what everyone does; need to become more expert on partner programs
- More specific goal or goals beyond these broad conversations
- Youth-facing products
- Shared youth-appropriate language
- Common programmatic elements, common eligibility requirements, common language, and create a common application for all federal programs
- Data to better understand whom federal agencies are serving in order to better serve them
- More leadership engagement (for example, FLOTUS initiative)
- Graphic template to clarify facts and issues pertaining to opportunity youth and clear up misunderstandings about programs
- Discussions about prevention and ways to keep youth connected
- Virtual youth advisory committee

Strong Cross-Sectoral Partnerships: Preliminary Recommendations for Federal Partners and Grantees

Federal partners met in three smaller groups to discuss recommendations for how to build strong cross-sectoral partnerships to support opportunity youth and provide pathways to productive adulthood.

Identify and Share Relevant Resources. Federal partners should identify and share their resources related to opportunity youth. For example, FTC has many free materials on cyber-bullying and online safety. During the meeting partners agreed to send resources to ASPE.

Take the Show on the Road. Federal partners should take the show on the road to help local communities collaborate by finding out what they offer, what they have, and what they need.

Use Technology. Federal partners should use technology to meet youth where they are, for example, on social media. This may include creating an app to connect youth to resources in a visually appealing, youth-friendly way. Could partner with local universities to develop and create for free.

Engage Youth. Federal partners and their grantees should engage youth as peer mentors to assist peers and younger youth. Federal partners should connect to programs that have peer-to-peer components perhaps through organizations such as Boys and Girls Clubs and Big Brothers Big Sisters.

Develop a Cross-Sector Webinar Series. Federal partners should collaborate to develop a webinar series to share information with the field at the state and local level (where they often do not talk to each other) on cross-sectoral work on topics such as waivers for child support, how to inform people about approved waivers, and how to increase flexibility.

Create Opportunities to Support Programs Funded by the School System. Federal partners should follow up on the interest widely expressed to have mental health services in schools. This may include discussing which federal agencies and programs other than Medicaid could potentially play a role in bringing mental health and substance abuse services to schools. This relates to concerns about school shootings, high rates of depression in adolescents going untreated, and suicide as a leading cause of death for adolescents. In addition, kids who receive services in schools are more likely to follow through and remain in treatment.

Collocate Services/Programs in Schools. Federal partners should market in schools to reach students before they disengage. This includes connecting to students in community colleges where many drop out and do not follow-through.

Conduct Outreach to National Federations and Associations. Federal partners should conduct outreach to organizations such as the National Retail Federation and National Restaurant Association since those businesses have opportunities for youth with limited skills. Some YouthBuild grantees have a new apprenticeship program. Other opportunities exist in the construction and healthcare fields.

Conduct Outreach in Targeted Locations. Federal partners should conduct outreach to opportunity youth in targeted locations such as laundromats, barbershops, and libraries.

Connect Grantees to Community Businesses. Federal partners should facilitate connecting grantees such as YouthBuild grantees and American Job Centers to local businesses such as banks. Banks could serve low to moderate income communities. Together they could provide financial education and credit. Banks are required under anti-redlining legislation to invest in communities. Community Development Financial Institutions (CDFI) under the Department of Treasury serve areas where big banks are not investing.

Conclusion

In summary, participants recognized the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of opportunity youth, by coordinating and collaborating across sectors at the federal, regional, state, tribal, and local levels. To accomplish these cross-sectoral partnerships, participants developed recommendations focused on determining the best methods for addressing how to use existing resources and technical assistance vehicles as well as how to go beyond these tools to refine and expand services to meet the challenges at the local and community levels that limit grantees ability to find youth and connect them to relevant resources, support, and programming.

Participants discussed needing access to resources from federal offices and agencies at several points throughout the meeting. In order to effectively leverage resources, participants noted they needed more information to understand who does what and what it encompasses. The overarching theme for cross-sectoral collaboration focused on how to more effectively share information at the federal, regional, and local levels. Participants recommended establishing a full understanding of the breadth and accessibility of available *federal* opportunities for this priority population and where the touch points opportunity youth have with systems to best provide this population with appropriate support and resources. For the *regional* and *local* levels, participants recommended developing connections across offices and agencies.

Additional Questions to Consider

How can federal agencies reach opportunity youth appropriately and adequately?

How can federal partners also serve the youth's family?

Is there research on where young people who are not in school hang out? What are the access points?

Where are opportunity youth?

- TANF programs
- Adult education programs
- Community colleges
- Court systems (*40% of closed cases are family law related*)

What about undocumented individuals?

- Legal aid is prohibited from serving undocumented people.
- For WIOA, one must be eligible to work.

How can federal partners connect to rural youth who do not always have access to broadband?

- Some youth still want print materials.

Appendix A

14 WIOA Program Elements Mapped with Participant Input

Education/Postsecondary

Alternative Secondary School and Dropout Recovery Services assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education or who have dropped out of school

- HUD STEM
 - 1/2
- DOD: National Guard Youth Challenge Program
 - GED or Credit Recovery
 - 6 month residence
- Youth Build can provide individualized academic instruction that is project – or problem – based, to assist youth who don't engage well in traditional schooling to get a HSD or HSED
- Alt Ed

Education Offered Concurrently with Workforce Preparation is an integrated education and training model combining workforce preparation, basic academic skills, and occupational skills

- DOL Youth Build participants spend about half of their time working toward a secondary diploma/equivalency and about half on training in demand fields
- Online classes at community college or state university
- James could look over FTC, our “job scams” resources to learn about avoiding scams while job hunting

Tutoring, Study Skills Training, Instruction, and Dropout Prevention activities that lead to completion of a high school diploma or recognized equivalent

- HUD, Postsecondary Education, ¾
- Numerous studies document the role of the Arts in dropout prevention (National Endowment for the Arts)
- Re-enroll in high school through program as youth experiences hardships
- HHS/OAH/Pregnancy assistance Fund program provides supports to young parents that can include dropout prevention
- Tutoring, study skills training evidence-based dropout prevention and recovery strategies
- Alternative secondary school services
- Education concurrent with workplace training
- CDC school-based programs improve health, which lead to improved academic outcomes

Postsecondary Preparation and Transition Activities help youth prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training

- HHS OAH Pregnancy Assistance Fund Program has services for young fathers (and young mothers)
- Ability to benefit skip right to BA at university with testing, then pell eligible
- Sasha could possibly work with Adult Education to get her GED. If she has a disability, she may be eligible for UR services. She may also work with the DOL (Title I or III)
- Sasha can check out the FTC's “student loans” publication to learn how to get loans + avoid loan-related scams
- Should qualify for services from the foster care agency (connect with apprenticeship programs for truck driving to help him find a permanent home)
- Credit for prior learning at any college or university
- Adult basic education program for high school equivalent (GED or other)

Skills/Leadership

Occupational Skills Training is an organized program of study that provides specific skills and leads to proficiency in an occupational field

- Supported employment program for James
- DOD: Enlistment in National Guard or Reserve Occupational skills training, free tuition

- NSF Grantees of the CyberCorps Scholarship for service (NSF 19-521)
 - Mainly directed at colleges to enroll undergraduates in their cybersecurity program, with full ride or major tuition support
- Leverage WIDA training \$ at local community college
- James should be referred to VR program for services designed to gain competitive integrated employment
- DOL Youth Build grantees are able to propose training in in-demand industries, including STEM fields and childcare
- Youth Build programs can provide transportation/CDL training for James

Leadership Development Opportunities encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors

- DOL Youth Build grantees provide participants with civic engagement, community service work, and opportunities to participate in youth councils, etc.
- DOD: Enlistment in the National Guard and Reserve
 - Leadership Development Activities
- Building an evidence-base for leadership development. Great resources on self-regulation. OPRE.
- CDC, school-based programs that provide service-learning opportunities
- Resources for all adults who work in these roles with youth to strengthen their capacity to support positive youth development. We need a full count press for everyone to feel like “it is my job”

Financial Literacy Education provides youth with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability

- Consult consumer.gov to find materials to learn about budgeting, managing money, avoiding job scams, + getting student loans
- James can learn more about foster youth identity theft, check his credit + visit IdentityTheft.gov to get a recovery plan, if he’s a victim
- Provide financial education to help James pull, and understand his credit report (FDIC)
- DOD: Enlistment in the National Guard or Reserve. Support financial literacy education plus free tuition
- Sasha could attend a FTC program on “life after high school” put on by her local library using FTC resources/train – the trainer assistance
- Federal Reserve Bank, Dallas. Financial literacy tools – “building wealth”
- Youth Build programs provide fun literacy training/assistance, including assistance to open accounts, use of direct deposit, and even savings match or incentives
- Provide financial education on topics such as budgeting, credit, how to select a bank account, etc.

Entrepreneurial Skills Training provides the basics of starting and operating a small business and develops entrepreneurial skills

- Money Smart for young people grades 9-12 (Topics 21:22) on MS for small business

Support/Services

Supportive Services enable an individual to participate in WIOA activities (such as, but not limited to, assistance with transportation, child care, housing, health care, educational testing, and work-related tools)

- HUD Strong Families Initiative
- Supportive services, HHS/OAH, Pregnancy Assistance Fund grant program includes supports (parenting training, relationship counseling, etc.) for girlfriend and for him, plus can provide referrals for health and mental health services
- Does the father have a will? Two issues could arise if he were to pass away
 - Guardianship of the minor children. Generally, the state would decide custody of the children
 - The farm-dying without a will means the state may get a...
- Pregnancy Assistance Fun (PAF) may provide health/social services to James’ girlfriend
- HHS/HRSA, community health centers can provide health services for him and his girlfriend on a sliding scale
- Youth Build provides stipends/wages while attending the program to assist financially

- Percentage of the value of the property, many legal services providers draw up wills + guardianship agents

Adult Mentoring is a formal relationship between a youth and an adult mentor with structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement

- Building co-regulation capacity of adults to support positive youth development (working on this)
- Grantees of NSF, ITESI or AISL programs – maybe also ECR-Prog for research on mentoring
- CDC, school-based programs that bring community-based mentoring into schools

Follow-up Services are provided following program exit to help ensure youth succeed in employment or education

- Youth Build participants receive 1 year of follow-up service, including assistance from a job developer/placement specialist

Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling provides individualized counseling to participants, including drug/alcohol and mental health counseling

- Mother getting to services – state opioid grants, National Center for Substance Abuse + child welfare
- Building co-regulation capacity of adults (including family members/parents) for youth in foster care
- SAMHSA, services for James. Now is the Time Transition, Age Youth Grant Program. CMHI (SOC) grants
- Project AWARE, ReCAST
- DOD: Enlistment in the National Guard or Reserves, support comprehensive guidance and counseling
- Youth Build programs support a trauma – informed our approach to case management & provide personal & education/career guidance services

Services that Provide Labor Market Information offer employment and labor market information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations

- Data on the percentage of the arts in GDP (hard to read)
- Data in careers in the arts/labor market information (National Endowment? For the Arts)

Work Experience

Paid and Unpaid Work Experience is a structured learning experience in a workplace and provides opportunities for career exploration and skill development

- Arts-based paid internships programs and paid apprenticeships programs
- Work experience year-round and during the summer months, occupational skills training, leadership development activities
- Check out NSF grantees of Advancing Informal STEM Learning (AISL) program at informal-science.org
 - Paid/unpaid experience, mentoring
- Check out NSF grantees of the Innovative Technology Experience for students + teachers (ITEST) program at stellar.edc.org
- Apprenticeship via AAI/SAE grantee or youth apprenticeship intermediary contracts
- Youth Build programs require real-world work experiences in every industry in which training is provided
- HUD – summer & youth employment
- Research Assistantships for high school students (bio directorate at NSF) DCL #18-088

Other

- Data on the attribute % of the arts and how it relates to workforce
- Identify federal and state arts agency funded STEAM program that have a paid workforce development component
- Set realistic child support order, get in touch with workforce partners to enroll in workforce training and internships
- ASPE – policy research on what works for when + what to achieve stability + economic self-sufficiency to guide future. Federal investments + policy coordination

Appendix B

Federal Roundtable on Supporting Opportunity Youth May 22, 2019 | 10:00–2:00 PM ET Participant List

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