

Occupational Skills Training

WIOA YOUTH PROGRAM ELEMENT

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Youth program includes 14 program elements, which are required to be made available in each local area. The program elements outline a vision for supporting youth and young adults through an integrated service delivery system. This brief includes related information in the Act, the regulations, and guidance for this program element.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Section 129 (c)(2)(D): occupational skill training, which shall include priority consideration for training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that are aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area involved, if the local board determines that the programs meet the quality criteria described in section 123.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Relevant Regulations

§ 681.540 What is 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 to training programs that lead to recognized postsecondary credentials that align with in-demand industry sectors or occupations in the local area. Such training must:
 - (1) Be outcome-oriented and focused on an occupational goal specified in the individual service strategy;
 - (2) Be of sufficient duration to impart the skills needed to meet the occupational goal; and
 - (3) Lead to the attainment of a recognized postsecondary credential.
- (b) The chosen occupational skills training must meet the quality standards in WIOA sec. 123.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Relevant Guidance

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 21-16 | U.S. Department of Labor



Program Element 4: Occupational skills training

Occupational Skills Training included the language in [20 CFR § 681.540](#) of the Final Rule and additionally stated:

As discussed in [20 CFR § 681.550](#) “in order to enhance individual participant choice in education and training plans and provide flexibility to service providers, the Department allows WIOA Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for OSY, ages 16 to 24, using WIOA youth funds, when appropriate.” ITAs allow participants the opportunity to choose the training provider that best meets their needs. To receive funds from an ITA, the training provider must be on the Eligible Training Provider List as outlined in [§ 680.400](#) and [§ 680.410](#).

ISY cannot use youth program-funded ITAs. However, ISY between the ages of 18 and 21 may co-enroll in the WIOA Adult program if the young adult’s individual needs, knowledge, skills, and interests align with the WIOA adult program and may receive training services through an ITA funded by the adult program.

Resources

For additional resources on the program element, please visit: [WorkforceGPS - Occupational Skills Training](#).

