



Introduction to the State Workforce Investment Plan

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 requires the governor of each state to submit an Integrated WIA – Wagner-Peyser Act State Plan to the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) that outlines a strategic vision and operational plan for its workforce investment system. New York’s Workforce Development System under WIA and Wagner-Peyser is comprised of business-led Local Workforce Investment Boards that oversee 96 Career Centers located in 33 Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) across the State. The system delivers robust business and employment services, including a job bank that provides businesses access to a talent inventory of over 700,000 individuals.

States must have their State Plans approved by USDOL in order to receive WIA and Wagner-Peyser federal funds (totaling about \$200 million in New York State). The New York State Plan is organized into three key sections as required by USDOL which will be outlined below.

Section I: State Workforce Strategic Plan

Section I of the plan provides the elements required for the *State Workforce Strategic Plan*. The elements in this section represent the high-level vision, goals, economic and workforce analysis, strategies, and outcomes that the Governor and strategic partners collaboratively identify for the state’s future. The elements in this section are intended to serve as a vehicle for the Governor, State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB), and other partners to identify broad goals and strategies for the state.

A. Governor’s Vision:

- 1. The Governor’s vision for workforce development is based on a set of core strategies and principles. Key strategies include:**
 - a. Merge workforce development and economic development functions of government to create systems that align the needs of high-growth employers with job seeking residents according to regional business demand.
 - b. Recognize the essential role of education and literacy as the foundation for a strong, versatile workforce.
 - c. Emphasize the critical role of youth employment in building the workforce of tomorrow.
 - d. Make on-the-job training partnerships a priority.

2. In his 2013 State of the State address, Governor Cuomo called for reimagining the State's Workforce Development System to meet the needs of 21st Century employers and jobseekers based on the following principles:

- a. Performance:** The State will demand accountability at every level of the workforce system from state agencies to local Workforce Investment Boards to training providers. Performance will be based first and foremost on whether participants successfully complete training programs that meet the needs of employers and get jobs or advance in a career.
- b. Alignment:** The State will target its resources to helping employers fill current jobs and to prepare for the careers of the future. This requires making decisions based on real partnerships with employers and Regional Economic Development Councils and based on data about current and projected job growth and the skills required to fill them.
- c. Customer Service:** The State will break down bureaucracy in order to help employers find the qualified workforce they need and to help jobseekers and workers build their skills.

3. Key statewide initiatives are being implemented that align with these principles:

- a. NY Performs:** A statewide performance management system is being implemented under the name, NY Performs. The most important information about an agency, including certain background facts, key performance indicators and main strategic initiatives will be presented to the public on a public performance website, while more detailed operational information will be available to internal users to help manage State operations.
- b. Regional Economic Development Councils:** Each of the ten REDCs developed a five-year strategic plan. Local WIBs worked collaboratively to develop annual regional workforce development plans to complement the REDCs plans. This process helps to highlight the inter-relationship between workforce development and economic development efforts in each region and showcases the powerful contributions that LWIBs make to regional economies.
- c. SAGE Commission:** Governor Cuomo established the Spending and Government Efficiency Commission (SAGE Commission) to identify inefficiencies in State government and propose solutions. The Commission recommended the following in regard to workforce development:
 - i. Revitalize the SWIB to serve as the coordinating body for developing a statewide workforce development strategy.

- ii. Increase the role for economic development in workforce development efforts.
 - iii. Align the activities of local WIBs with the statewide Regional Councils.
 - iv. Establish a system-wide reporting and standardized performance metrics within a proposed Performance Management system.
- d. Next Generation Job Linkage Program:** Community colleges will partner with REDCs and local employers in order to prepare students for high-demand careers. Community college programs will have Advisory Committees that are made up primarily of employers, are aligned with the Regional Councils, and that actually help to shape the curriculum, recruitment, placement and evaluation of vocational and training programs. In order to qualify for State funding, community college workforce and vocational programs will be required to be offered in partnership with employers and be focused on high-demand jobs. In addition, funding incentives will be distributed based on the performance of student success in the economy.
- e. SUNY 2020/CUNY 2020:** This program establishes a capital challenge grant program for community colleges. This mission of the program is to make SUNY and CUNY leading catalysts for job growth throughout the state, strengthen the academic programs of the University Centers and demonstrate that New York is open for business. The funding is integrated with the Governor's REDCs and administered by Empire State Development (ESD).
- f. Start-Up NY:** Every SUNY campus can establish tax-free zones for businesses on campus or within one mile of campus. Start-Up NY allows participating companies to avoid business, sales and property taxes for 10 years. To participate, businesses must be aligned with or further the academic mission of the campus sponsoring the tax free community. Each business must create and maintain new jobs to participate, and the business must either be a new startup, a company relocating to New York from out of state or an expansion of an existing New York company.
- g. Jobs Express:** On October 31, 2011, Governor Cuomo launched Jobs Express, a website taking a regional approach to helping New Yorkers who are seeking employment. The site takes thousands of jobs listed on the New York Job Bank and sorts them by region to help job seekers evaluate what industries are growing in their area and find out what opportunities are available in specific economic sectors. From launch to December 31, 2013, there have been 27,011 businesses that have submitted 1,228,074 job orders for 1,723,290 positions. In December 2013, there were 65,248 unique visits to the website, with an average of 2,105 per day.

B. Economic and Workforce Information Analysis

The New York State Department of Labor, Research and Statistics Division, which also serves as the State's Data Center, generates a wealth of labor market data and analysis to support workforce and economic development planning. Over 30 pages of data and analysis are included in the State Plan covering topics such as occupational projections, trends in major statewide industry sectors, labor force demographics, and economic clusters.

C. Performance

1. Section I also outlines the required metrics by which the workforce system measures its results. New York State uses the Common Measures which establish State and Local Workforce Investment Area performance goals for nine Common Measure performance indicators covering the Workforce Investment Act and Wagner-Peyser Adult, Youth and Dislocated Worker programs. Adult measures include: Entered Employment; Employment Retention; and Average Earnings. Youth measures include: Placement in Employment or Education; Attainment of a Degree or Certificate; and Literacy and Numeracy Gains.

a. **Performance Goals:** Each State negotiates performance goals with USDOL which must be included in the State Plan. Once performance measures are negotiated each state is evaluated based on continuous improvement towards the negotiated goals. Satisfactory performance is reached when at least 80% of the performance goal is met. Performance that fails to meet 80% of the goal is considered unsatisfactory performance.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Wagner-Peyser (WP) Standards Program Year 2013

| Program | Performance Measure | PY 2012 Performance* | PY 12 Goal | PY 13 Goal |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|----------------------|------------|------------|
| Workforce Investment Act | Adult Entered Employment | 57.9 | 57.0 | 59.0 |
| | DLW Entered Employment | 50.3 | 53.0 | 53.4 |
| | Adult Retention Rate | 79.6 | 81.0 | 81.0 |
| | DLW Retention Rate | 81.2 | 81.5 | 82.0 |
| | Adult Average Earnings ¹ | \$12,930 | \$13,401 | \$13,401 |
| | DLW Average Earnings ¹ | \$18,801 | \$19,172 | \$19,172 |
| | Youth Placement Rate ¹ | 69.2 | 66.5 | 68.7 |
| | Youth Attainment Rate | 66.0 | 59.9 | 63.0 |
| | Literacy Numeracy Rate | 56.5 | 48.0 | 53.0 |
| Wagner-Peyser | Entered Employment | 53.7 | 57.0 | 57.0 |
| | Employment Retention | 79.9 | 82.0 | 82.0 |
| | Average Earnings | \$15,299 | \$14,648 | \$15,035 |

*80% of goal must be achieved

- b. Incentive Grants:** The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) authorizes the Secretary of Labor to award incentive grants to states that exceed performance levels in workforce and education programs. The grants are used for a variety of purposes, including infrastructure support, coordinated training with partner programs, and staff capacity building. USDOL authorizes the state to use its incentive grant award as greater flexibility in carrying out an innovative program consistent with the requirements of any one or more of the programs within Title IB of WIA, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, or the Perkins Act. This provides states greater flexibility in using these funds, and governors and state agencies are not limited to only one type of innovative program.

New York is eligible for the highest award of the 15 states eligible to receive funds for Program Year (PY) 2011 performance. New York State received \$769,862 for PY 2011 in incentive grant funding for exceeding Common Measure performance goals. NYSDOL is responsible for administering and reporting on the use of all funds.

2. Customer Service Indicators

In addition to the common measures, New York State also established and tracks several Customer Service Indicators (CSIs). CSIs are designed to move the Career Center System in New York toward specific goals that have been deemed important to the good of the State, and/or to assist Local Areas in meeting their WIA Common Measure goals. In the most recently completed Program Year (PY12), CSIs covered the following topics:

- a.** Ensure an initial assessment of customer needs;
- b.** Reduce the number of WIA participants who exit the Career Center System while still receiving Unemployment Insurance Benefits;
- c.** Ensure that customers receive an Individual Employment Plan or Individual Training Plan;
- d.** Increase the number of youth obtaining the National Work Readiness Credential;
- e.** Serve the emerging business customer base in each region including those with the highest total employment and those with the most open positions on NY's Job Bank.

Section II: State Operational Plan

Section II provides the elements for the *State Operational Plan*. A state's operational plan must make clear how specific workforce programs will operationalize, administer, and implement systems and structures to achieve the vision, strategies, and goals identified by the Strategic Plan. Virtually all items contained in this section are required by statute or regulation for inclusion in the State Plan. The State Operational Strategy for implementing the Integrated Workforce Plan falls into several major categories:

A. Strategy One: Improving access to employment resources through integrated online tools and social networking.

In 2012, the NYSDOL received a federal grant to find ways to better connect customers on Unemployment Insurance (UI) benefits with Employment Services (ES). This Unemployment Insurance/ Employment Services (UI/ES) Connectivity Grant will enable the Department to launch an on-line Integrated Workforce Registration (IWR) for all customers. The web-based common data collection system will eliminate duplication of data entry, improve quality of data, and coordinate and align the delivery of services to UI customers. After registration is complete, the customer will be presented with a unique landing page where they can access Labor Market Information, job matches and UI information customized to their specific situation.

In addition, the landing page will have two-way communication. Two-way communication is a secure email service protected behind a firewall that allows confidential and sensitive information to be shared between two parties. The two-way communication service will be used between UI- Customer Service Agents, UI claimants and businesses. Career Center Advisors will also have access to two-way communication to provide career advisement to job seeking customers. The UI/ES Connectivity Grant will also enable New York State's Career Center system to reach out to customers through web-based workshop schedules, virtual career advisors, and virtual job fairs.

B. Strategy Two: Coordination with other state agencies by using a single point of access for customer records.

Over the last several years, the NYS Department of Labor has been inviting other state agencies that provide employment related services to customers to join NYSDOL's case management system, the One Stop Operating System (OSOS). Through this effort, the New York Employment Services System (NYESS) was established for employment related data collection. There are currently seven state agencies participating in this comprehensive case management system. NYESS provides all New Yorkers with a single point of access to employment-related services and supports, including job matching on the NYS Job Bank.

C. Strategy Three: Targeting specific populations to better meet their employment and training needs.

1. New York's Veterans

- a. **Jobs for Veterans Initiative:** The Jobs for Veterans initiative (JFV) is a Governor's initiative that requires all veterans who are new to the Career Center System to receive a minimum of three specific service appointments to receive comprehensive job search assistance, career guidance, and job placement services. In addition, Career Center staff maintains contact with veterans a minimum of two times between these scheduled appointments. Should a veteran remain unemployed upon completion of the third appointment, staff conducts a case conference to determine next steps.

- b. **Experience Counts Campaign:** The Governor's Experience Counts Campaign helps veterans get jobs in New York State. This campaign facilitates the transfer of military skills to the public and private sectors. As an example, NYSDOL has partnered with the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS), the Department of State (DOS) and the Division of Veterans Affairs to help veterans use their military experience to obtain security guard licensure. In lieu of the standard DCJS security guard curriculum which consisted of eight hour pre-assignment training and the 16 hour on-the-job training, a two hour on-line Legal Powers and Limitations Course training video was created by NYSDOL. Veterans with the required military experience can complete the online training, take a written test based on the online video, complete an online National Incident Management System (NIMS) training, and become registered with DOS to work as a security guard.

NYSDOL has also partnered with the Division of Motor Vehicles to make eligible transitioning service members, National Guard members, and recently separated Veterans aware of the opportunity to obtain a Commercial Driver's License (CDL) without having to take the road test. This program removes a significant barrier to licensure for individuals with the requisite military training and experience. More than 250 CDLs have been issued to Veterans through this program, with 112 being hired in transportation positions.

2. Unemployed and Long-Term Unemployed

- a. **Reemployment Eligibility Assessment (REA):** The Reemployment Eligibility Assessment Program is designed to target individuals for rapid reemployment. The REA model is designed to reduce the amount of time it takes for a UI claimant to be reemployed. REA follows a three appointment strategy in which customers meet with REA Career Advisement staff for an initial assessment of their reemployment needs. After the initial assessment customers receive follow up responsibilities and are scheduled for a second

and third appointment for job search planning purposes. New York has actively pursued federal REA funding and received the largest shared of REA grant dollars in the country for the past three years. New York operates REA in 25 of its 33 LWIAs in 44 Career Centers. An additional 6 percent in funding was provided in FY 13 to expand the program in targeted, underserved LWIAs.

- b. Career Center Customer Engagement (C3E):** The system is currently undergoing significant reforms in terms of the way the needs of unemployed individuals are addressed in Career Centers. A continuous engagement service model is being deployed for both UI customers and the Long-Term Unemployed who may not be receiving UI benefits. Under C3E, these customers will be scheduled and meet with staff during three appointments over a 10-week period for customized career advisement a similar engagement model is already used with veteran customers and the REA program discussed above.

The C3E strategy is being implemented to coincide with recent New York State Unemployment Insurance reforms. Career Advisors in Career Centers will develop a work-search plan with UI customers that outlines designated work search activities. Customers will keep a detailed log of their work search activities for up to one year. Customers who are not meeting work search requirements will be called into the Career Center and provided with assistance in developing a work search plan.

3. Individuals with Disabilities

- a. New York Employment Services System (NYESS):** NYESS is a joint effort of NYSDOL and the Office of Mental Health (OMH). Using funding from a Medicaid Infrastructure Grant, New York Makes Work Pay, NYESS consists of NYSDOL's One-Stop Operating System (OSOS), which connects job seekers with employment opportunities in the NYS Job Bank, as well as a data warehouse of employment-related information operated by OMH. OSOS users can see services provided to their customers recorded by NYESS users, and NYESS users can see services provided to their customers recorded by OSOS users. This transparency helps all service providers to avoid the provision of duplicate services to customers. In 2013, the Division for Veterans' Affairs joined NYESS, thereby expanding its use to customers other than individuals with disabilities. Additional agencies and service providers will continue to be added.
- b. Ticket-to-Work Employment Network:** In February 2012, the federal Social Security Administration (SSA) announced that NYESS was designated as the first statewide Employment Network (EN) in the United States. ENs are designated by the SSA under the Ticket-to-Work program to assist people with disabilities to secure employment. As a statewide EN, NYESS creates a real time network of providers working with multiple state agencies using a

single employment data/case management system. Using data documented in NYESS, the Research Foundation for Mental Health claims and distributes Ticket-to-Work incentive payments for NYESS providers. This greatly streamlines the administrative process and generates additional funding that can be used to serve individuals with disabilities.

- c. **Disability Employment Initiative:** This USDOL-funded grant enabled New York State Career Centers in 13 Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) to offer specialized services to customers with disabilities. The services under this initiative were provided by 27 Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs) staffed throughout the 13 LWIAs. DRCs worked to build effective community partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better serve individuals with disabilities and improve employment outcomes. The initial DEI grant expired in January, 2014. New York has received an additional DEI grant to offer the program in four local workforce areas that had participated in the program during the original grant.

4. Ex-Offenders

- a. **Young Adult Ex-Offender Initiative:** NYSDOL has awarded a \$1 million grant to a community-based organization in New York City to offer specialized services to increase the job readiness and improve employment outcomes for young adult ex-offenders between the ages of 18 and 21 who identify as homeless and/or LGBT.
- b. **Federal Bonding Program:** The purpose of the program is to provide fidelity bonding in an amount up to \$25,000 at no cost to a business for the first six months of employment for hard-to-place job applicants.
- c. **Work for Success:** Under the Work for Success program (WFS), businesses can earn up to \$2,400 in federal tax credits for each formerly incarcerated individual hired. Each Career Center throughout the state also designated a Work for Success Liaison who is dedicated to working with the formerly incarcerated and community partners to help them address barriers to successful entry (or re-entry) into the workforce.
- d. **Pay for Success (PFS):** New York State was awarded a \$12 million Pay for Success (PFS) grant from USDOL in September, 2013. The PFS model is a new way of financing social services to help governments target limited dollars to achieve a positive, measurable outcome. Under the PFS model, a government agency commits funds to pay for a specific outcome that is achieved within a given timeframe. A key feature of the concept is that the financial capital to cover the total operating costs of achieving the target outcome is provided by independent private, philanthropic, or other social investors for the entire period of performance of the project.

New York's project will expand an evidence-based intervention strategy currently delivered by the Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) to address the employment needs of 1,000 formerly incarcerated individuals, who 1) are at high risk of returning to incarceration; 2) have been recently released to Rochester or New York City from prison; and 3) have high employment needs. CEO's evidence-based employment program has shown a statistically significant impact on recidivism and employment when targeting high risk individuals (MDRC study). State funds have been reserved to expand the project to serve an additional 1,000 ex-offenders.

5. Limited English Proficiency/Immigrants

In the spring of 2010, New York State developed the Immigrant Workforce Project to address the workforce needs of Limited English Proficiency (LEP) and immigrant workers. Six specially trained Immigrant Workforce Counselors (IWCs) work in Career Centers located in areas with the highest concentration of LEP and immigrant workers. New York State hired 39 language-paraeducational staff to serve LEP populations and NYSDOL plans to hire an additional 11 bi-lingual staff to serve Spanish and Chinese populations in New York State Career Centers.

6. Youth

The Career Development and Youth Initiatives Office in NYSDOL serves as a single point of contact on youth issues and works with other youth serving agencies (e.g., New York State Education Department -NYSED, Office of Children and Family Services - OCFS, and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance – OTDA) in support of youth initiatives statewide. Through the dual lens of career and youth development, the NYSDOL Youth Office seeks to provide policy guidance, offer professional development opportunities, develop curriculum and tools, and identify best practices from the state, nation and the globe. The ultimate goal is to help position youth for a successful transition to adulthood and to help them make decisions regarding career, college, and/or training opportunities.

D. Strategy Four: Business Services

Regional Business Services Teams, comprised of NYSDOL, LWIA, and other Workforce Development System partner staff, have been established to provide integrated support to regional sector and career pathway initiatives. Business service representatives meet routinely to share workforce intelligence. Members collaborate on marketing, recruitment and outreach efforts to ensure businesses within their regions are afforded a "single point of contact" through the Workforce Development System.

- 1. Training Programs:** Business Services Teams facilitate a number of On-the-Job Training (OJT) initiatives. Not only do these programs enable New Yorkers to get back to work, they provide businesses with the opportunity to invest in their workforce and remain competitive in today's global economy.

Examples of recent facilitated OJT initiatives include:

- a. Statewide On-the-Job Training (OJT):** \$2.85 million in state-level Workforce Investment Area monies for an OJT initiative aimed at assisting long-term dislocated workers. The maximum award was \$5,000 per person and \$50,000 per business. The program awarded \$1 million to 160 businesses and put 323 individuals back to work.
 - b. National Emergency Grant (NEG) OJT:** \$3.4 million from USDOL's National Emergency Grant (NEG) program was used by 308 businesses to hire and train 543 workers. Because of New York's success with this grant, it received a second \$6.4 million grant, the largest award in the nation, to continue to implement OJT programs.
 - c. Clean Energy OJT:** New York State Energy Research and Development Agency (NYSERDA) has collaborated with DOL on the Clean Energy initiative. The program leverages \$875,000 in clean energy assets under the Green Jobs-Green New York Act to assist both new hires and incumbent workers learn green skills. This program has recently been extended until December 31, 2014.
 - d. Consolidated Funding Application (CFA):** NYSDOL has set aside funding for three rounds of the Governor's CFA initiative. Businesses may apply for three types of programs: Worker Skills Upgrade (Incumbent Workers), On-the-Job Training (New Hires), and Unemployed Worker (Classroom training).
- 2. Recruitment Services:** Career Center business services staff hold dozens of career fairs and customized recruitments across the state each year to assist businesses in meeting their workforce needs. In addition to recruitments, Career Centers provide businesses access to the JobsExpress/NYS Job Bank. The New York State Job Bank is the Career Center System's main source for job postings and job seeker resumes.
 - 3. Tax Credits:** Another way the business service staff engages businesses in the workforce system is through tax credits. For example, NYSDOL is currently marketing the VOW to Hire Heroes tax credit which targets Veterans, as well as the New York Youth Works tax credit, which provides businesses with a tax credit of up to \$4,000 for hiring and retaining disadvantaged youth age 16-24 for twelve consecutive months.

E. Strategy Five: WIA Waiver Requests

The purpose of the waiver authority is to provide flexibility to States and Local Areas and to enhance their ability to improve the statewide workforce investment system. A waiver may be requested to address impediments to the implementation of the strategic plan, including the continuous improvement strategy, consistent with the key reform principles of WIA. New York State is requesting an extension of its existing waivers for Program Years 2013 - 2016. New York State is also requesting to expand the scope of two waivers and to add one new waiver.

1. Existing Waiver Requests:

- a. Funds Flexibility:** Waiver to Increase the Employer Reimbursement for On-the-Job Training for Small- and Medium-Sized Businesses.
- b. Performance:** Waiver to permit the State to replace the performance measures at WIA Section 136(b) with the common measures.
- c. Youth:** Waiver of the prohibition (at 20 CFR 664.510) on the use of Individual Training Accounts for older and out-of-school youth.

- 2. New Waiver Request:** NYSDOL is requesting one new flexibility in funding waiver of WIA Section 133(b) (4). This section limits a Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) ability to transfer up to 20 percent of a program year allocation for adult employment and training activities, and up to 20 percent of a program year allocation for dislocated worker employment and training activities between the two programs, with the approval of the governor.

Under this waiver, the state proposes to increase the fund transfer limit to 50 percent. NYSDOL wants the flexibility to use the funds to:

- a.** Provide increased responsiveness in the Local Area labor markets and meet the needs of their local communities;
- b.** Provide greater flexibility in redirecting resources where demand for services is greatest;
- c.** Improve the ability to respond to employer's needs for workers trained in employer-specific skills; and
- d.** Improve the ability to design programs and provide targeted assistance in response to customer needs.

Section III: Assurances

Section III provides a list of *Assurances* in which the state assures USDOL that it is complying with applicable laws and regulations, and, where appropriate, attaches policies or other supporting documentation.

Conclusion

The State Plan builds upon the Governor's vision for the State's workforce development system. Key themes that emerge include: regionalization; integration of workforce and economic development; alignment of federal and state resources; data-driven decision-making; and accountability for performance. The State Plan describes initiatives that are already underway as well as strategies to implement additional enhancements. A coordinating role for the SWIB is outlined to help connect the work of the REDCs with the work of the State's workforce development system.