

Myth Busters 2.0

WIOA American Job Center (AJC) Services



Myths are misconceptions that interfere with the ability to fully implement an integrated workforce development system as envisioned under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Myths may result from misunderstanding laws and regulations and from lack of experience with other workforce partners. Listed below are some myths and the facts that provide the real story:

Priority of Service

Myth:

States and local areas don't need to focus on prioritizing service for individuals with barriers to employment.

Fact:

One of the purposes of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) is to increase access to and opportunities for employment, particularly for those individuals with barriers to employment. States, local areas, and grantees should design their service delivery strategies to ensure that service levels remain robust for those populations of individuals most in need of employment and self-sufficiency assistance. Because funding levels are limited for each of the one-stop partner programs, at-risk populations should be given priority for services and referred to services where a need is demonstrated in local demographics.

For example, under the WIOA Adult program, title I of WIOA requires that priority be given to individuals who have barriers to employment, such as those who: are on public assistance, have low income, or are basic skills deficient. The Adult program requires States and local areas to have policies in place to prioritize these populations.

For more information on the priority populations in the WIOA Adult Program, please see: <https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/10/05/14/01/WIOA-Desk-Reference>.

Additionally, the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program, title II of WIOA, requires that in making funding decisions for eligible providers of adult education, States must consider a number of factors for awarding grants and contracts, including two factors that relate to barriers to employment. For example, the eligible State agency must consider the degree to which the eligible provider would be responsive to serving individuals in the community who are identified as most in need of adult education and literacy activities, including individuals who have low levels of literacy skills or who are English language learners. The State must also consider the ability of the eligible provider to serve individuals with disabilities, including eligible individuals with learning disabilities, among other considerations for funding. These particular populations are two of several categories of individuals with barriers to employment served by the AEFLA program.

Similarly, States must prioritize the provision of Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program services to individuals with the most significant disabilities when there are insufficient resources in the State to serve all eligible individuals with disabilities in the State. Under WIOA, individuals with disabilities, including those with the most significant disabilities, are considered to be individuals with barriers to employment.