

ETA Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has developed a Frequently Answered Questions (FAQs) to address questions related to Coronavirus (COVID-19) to help state and local workforce leaders, and other stakeholders and partners to assist the public workforce system during this crisis.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) - General

Updated as of April 14, 2020

(New as of 4/14/20) Q. How can supportive services be used to support those whose jobs may be impacted by COVID-19 (e.g., transit costs, child care supports for participants, temporarily unemployed individuals)?

Response: Under WIOA title I, supportive services are available to enable individual adults and dislocated workers to participate in career or training services. Supportive services can be provided to youth served under WIOA title I during program participation and follow-up services, and may be provided based on the needs of the participant as identified in the youth's Individual Service Strategy (ISS).

As a result of the COVID-19 emergency, current participants may need additional supportive services to continue participating in their program, and there may also be individuals who are laid off and in need of career, training services, or supportive services. States and local areas have flexibility in developing policies for supportive services and existing policies can be updated to respond to the COVID-19 emergency.

Examples of allowable supportive services for WIOA title I participants include but are not limited to:

- ▶ Linkages to community services;
- ▶ Assistance with transportation;
- ▶ Assistance with child care and dependent care;
- ▶ Assistance with housing;
- ▶ Needs-related payments, as described in the link below;
- ▶ Assistance with educational testing;
- ▶ Reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities;
- ▶ Legal aid services;

- ▶ Referrals to healthcare;
- ▶ Assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses, protective eye gear, and other essential safety equipment;
- ▶ Assistance with books, fees, school supplies, and other necessary items for students enrolled in postsecondary education classes; and
- ▶ Payments and fees for employment and training-related applications, tests, and certifications.

For more information, please visit the Supportive Service Desk Reference available here:
https://ion.workforcegps.org/resources/2017/07/14/09/22/Supportive_Services_Desk_Reference.

Q. Will ETA delay State Plan due dates?

Response: Many states have already submitted State Plans. Therefore, ETA does not plan to issue a blanket extension for State Plans. However, states should contact their Federal Project Officer if they are concerned about meeting the April 1, 2020 deadline. Please note that while some state by-laws require the board to vote on the plan before submittal, such a vote, or an in-person vote, is not a WIOA requirement.

Q. Our local area uses benchmark timeframes, and contract payments are tied to benchmark attainment. Can USDOL extend these timeframes?

Response: Local areas that established performance-based contracts with sub-recipients can renegotiate benchmarks, following existing state and local policies.

Q. Can ETA ensure funding is received on time this year?

Response: ETA is working to ensure a timely release of the WIOA Allotments guidance providing states with their funding levels. We anticipate that a Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) will be released in early April 2020.

Q. If services are disrupted for a few weeks, will WIOA formula grantees be able to extend the period of performance so we can complete all planned grant activities?

Response: Unfortunately, for WIOA PY 2017 grants ending June 30, 2020, due to the language in the WIOA statute 189(g)(2)(A), ETA cannot extend the period of performance for these grants.

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) – American Job Centers

Q. Since the President has declared a National Emergency, does this mean states are mandated to close the American Job Centers (AJC) if they are open?

Response: No. The operation status of American Job Centers (AJC) is a state decision. However, ETA strongly encourages states to ensure critical services are provided through alternative means such as conference calls, electronic referrals, and video conferencing. Several states are adapting their services to continue to operate virtually.

Q. If we are closing our AJC, should we inform anyone?

Response: Yes, please inform your Regional Office of AJC or State Workforce Agency (SWA) closures. ETA will use this information to update the Service Locator website (<https://www.careeronestop.org/LocalHelp/service-locator.aspx>), and to update information disseminated by the Toll-Free Helpline.