Today’s Conversation

• A quick refresher on WIOA
• Bringing practitioner wisdom into policy conversations
• Putting policy into practice: Career pathways; workforce and employer partners, and ensuring service to the lowest-level learners

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Our Vision

We seek an America that grows its economy by investing in its people, so that every worker and every industry has the skills to compete and prosper.
Our Mission

• We **organize** broad-based coalitions seeking to raise the skills of America’s workers across a range of industries.

• We **advocate** for public policies that invest in what works, as informed by our members’ real-world expertise.

• And we **communicate** these goals to an American public seeking a vision for a strong U.S. economy that allows everyone to be part of its success.
A WIOA Refresher

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), July 2014
- Passed with overwhelming, bipartisan support in the House (415-6) and Senate (95-3)
- Reauthorizes prior Workforce Investment Act (WIA) legislation

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What’s in WIOA

• Title I - Workforce *(for work-authorized individuals)*

• Title II - Adult Education
  – English Language/Civics
  – Integrated basic education and occupational training ("I-BEST" type models)
  – Adult Basic Education
  – Adult Secondary Education
Reorienting the System

Key themes in WIOA:

• Stronger connections between adult education & workforce
• Career pathways
• Sector partnerships
• Common performance measures
• Serving people with barriers to employment
New in WIOA: Unified State Plans

States must produce a Unified or Combined State Plan. Plans cover four years and are due in March 2016.

- **Unified Plans** include the 6 core programs (WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth; Title II Adult Ed; Title III Wagner-Peyser, and Title IV Vocational Rehabilitation)

- **Combined Plans** include the 6 core programs *plus* at least one additional federal program
WIOA State Plans

• More detailed than past Title II plans

• Meant to be truly coordinated; don’t just “staple together” plans from each WIOA title

• Alignment is not just aspirational; should describe existing efforts

www.nationalskillscoalition.org/resources/webinars/getting-started-planning-for-wioa-in-your-state
Reminder: *Local* WIOA Plans

- **Alignment** between state and local plans also important
- Future adult ed **funding applications** will be reviewed by the Local Workforce Board for alignment with the local WIOA plan
Informing WIOA Plans

Get specific:

• What needs to be in place to facilitate a secure handoff of client referrals to/from one-stops?

• Who needs to be at the table to ensure that career pathways are made accessible to lower-level learners?

• How will employer engagement be coordinated across partners?
A Show of Hands

Have you been involved in Virginia’s WIOA planning process?
Bringing Practitioner Wisdom into Policy Conversations

• Practitioners are the **vertical integration** between the policy on paper and the ground-level impact on learners.

• Just as we teach learners **meta-cognitive** skills, we ourselves can apply those skills to make connections between concrete classroom experience and abstract policies.

*Image credit: Vadim Yerofeyev, 123rf.com*
Weighing In

• Not every policy opportunity comes with a formal invitation

• **Be creative**: Consider how your pedagogy can inform policy conversations

*Photo credit: Le Moal Olivier, 123rf*
A Show of Hands

Have your learners written a letter to policymakers?
From Policy to Practice

- Career pathways now **codified** in federal law (WIOA)
- But other working definitions **already** existed
- Important to distinguish between an **individual’s** pathway and the **systems-level** alignment of pathways

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Career Pathways: WIOA’s Definition

The term “career pathway” means a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that—

(A) aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved;

(B) prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including registered apprenticeships;

(C) includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual’s education and career goals;

(D) includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster;

(E) organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable;

(F) enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential; and

(G) helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

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WIOA Mandates for Career Pathways

- **State board** must develop strategies to support the use of career pathways

- **Local board** must lead efforts to develop and implement career pathways and include descriptions in local plans

- Title II **state leadership funds** must be used to align adult education activities with core programs, including career pathways
Career Pathways & Adult Ed

- Adult education is the base of the pyramid

- Speak out against assumption that students must already have HS diploma/ equivalent in order to participate in a career pathway

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Borrow Wisely

There are a wealth of already developed resources, including:

- Systems alignment advice
- Policy briefs
- Return-on-investment calculations
- Program models
- Lesson plans
Career Pathways Resources

• Career Pathways Toolkit (*revised 2015*)

• Federal *Career Pathways Exchange* newsletter

• Alliance for Quality Career Pathways initiative

http://tinyurl.com/DOLtoolkit
Career Pathways Classroom Resources

• *Career Foundations Curriculum* helps learners assess their skills and interests, explore career paths, and craft a plan to get to college.

• Designed for 4th grade reading level or intermediate ESOL level

www.womenemployed.org
Helping Your Learners Identify their Credential Options

• Several states are attempting to compile lists of industry-recognized credentials

• The federal CareerOneStop.org site also has a “Certification Finder” feature for providers or learners. Available in English and Spanish:
Adult Ed/Workforce Collaboration

• Be proactive in defining your role

• Opportunity to educate workforce partners on what adult educators can add

• Share past program data (in aggregate) to provide context

The bottom line:
Get in the game to make sure adult ed POV is represented!

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Use Big-Picture Data to Make Your Local Case

- **PIIAC Gateway** has useful materials for presentations to workforce stakeholders and policymakers

- NSC’s website has state fact sheets *(see right)* on middle-skill jobs, and a 2-pager on the need to invest in foundational skills
A Common Concern

• How to ensure that the most vulnerable learners do not get left behind in WIOA?

• Our 2-page brief on hard-to-serve individuals offers context on this issue

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New in WIOA: A Tool to Protect the Hardest-to-Serve

WIOA requires that a state’s performance targets be adjusted using statistical models that take into account participant characteristics such as:

- Lack of work experience
- Lack of educational or occupational skills attainment
- Low levels of literacy or English proficiency
- Disability status
- Homelessness
- Ex-offender status
- ...and more
The Big Unknowns

There is much more to discover as WIOA implementation moves forward.
Your Questions

Please share your questions and experiences.
Additional Resources

- **Aligned by Design: WIOA and Adult Education 2-pager**

- **Other WIOA implementation resources**

- **Available on the National Skills Coalition website**
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