

## **The Workforce Opportunity and Innovation Act and its Impact on Philadelphia's Youth Programming**

Last summer the Congress passed and President Obama signed into law the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), which reauthorizes workforce programs and services currently available under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), including those for youth activities. Philadelphia receives a significant amount of dollars annually in WIA youth activities funding, which supports the Council for College and Career Success' year-round portfolio of program models for in-school (ISY) and out-of-school youth (OSY).

WIOA maintains many current youth programmatic and funding structures, and also offers several enhancements that will improve Philadelphia's ability to meet the needs of our young people.

New WIOA features include:

- Expanding the age-range. The eligible age range for out-of-school youth is extended to include young people who are 16-24 years of age. The WIOA in-school youth age range remains at 14-21 years of age;
- Prioritizing Out-of-School Youth. WIOA will require that at least 75% of youth funding must be spent on out-of-school youth, as opposed to the current minimum of 30%. Local areas may petition to lower the threshold to 50%, based on a showing that there are insufficient numbers of OSY to justify the 75% expenditure level;
- Easing the Burdens of Eligibility Determination. Youth income eligibility determinations are eased by the allowance of income proxies, e.g. eligibility for free or reduced lunch and residency in a high-poverty area. Furthermore, out-of-school youth who are dropouts are considered automatically eligible for services without demonstrating low income status; and
- Expanding Required Elements. Required elements for youth programming are expanded to include dropout recovery, attainment of post-secondary credentials, blended education and workforce training, alignment with industry clusters and in-demand industry sectors, entrepreneurship and financial literacy.

WIOA requires the US Department of Labor to publish proposed regulations no later than January 18, 2015, followed by a public comment period, which is expected to be either 60 or 90 days. In preparation for the drafting of regulations, the Philadelphia Youth Network in conjunction with Philadelphia Works created a fact sheet highlighting additional changes in the legislation, and also hosted a series of briefings with key Philadelphia stakeholders to compile input from the field for consideration in the regulations-writing process. For additional information, please refer to the information below:

- The full text of the bill is available [here](#).
- A Philadelphia Works/Philadelphia Youth Network fact sheet highlighting some of WIOA's most significant changes is available [here](#).
- Philadelphia Works and the Philadelphia Youth Network have partnered to provide our partners and stakeholders with an overview of the new legislation and its impact on the workforce system in Philadelphia. The final document compiling input received during stakeholder sessions is entitled "[The Philadelphia Perspective on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act](#)". We encourage everyone to refer to this document to provide input on WIOA regulations both before and after the release of proposed regulations for public comment, as this report represents the multiple perspectives of those who participated in our discussion sessions.

**For more information on the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act visit our partners' resources at:**

- Department of Labor: <http://www.doleta.gov/wioa/>
- Department of Education, Office of Career, Technical and Adult Education:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/wioa-reauthorization.html>
- Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services:  
<http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/osers/rsa/wioa-reauthorization.html>