

Nebraska's WIOA youth program

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) affirms the Nation's commitment to providing high quality services for youth and young adults beginning with career exploration and guidance; continuing support for educational attainment, opportunities for skills training in in-demand industries and occupations; and culminating with a good job along a career pathway or enrollment in postsecondary education. Under WIOA, local youth programs offer access to 14 services designed to prepare young people for the workforce and are described below. WIOA youth program services are available throughout the State of Nebraska. If you are interested in learning more about WIOA youth program services, please contact the youth program service provider for your county.

- For **Lancaster** and **Saunders Counties**, contact Amber Knapp, Dynamic Workforce Solutions at 402-441-7975 or ajc@lincoln.ne.gov.
- For **Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington Counties**, contact Dawn Coffey, Dynamic Workforce Solutions at 402-934-2165 or Dawn.Coffey@hws-ne.org.
- For **all other Nebraska Counties**, contact Jami Canham, Nebraska Department of Labor at (402) 370-4405 or jami.canham@nebraska.gov.

Youth program services

1. Tutoring, study skills training, instruction, and dropout prevention

Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction that lead to a high school diploma include services, such as providing academic support, helping youth identify areas of academic concern, assisting with overcoming learning obstacles, or providing tools and resources to develop learning strategies. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction can be provided one-on-one, in a group setting, or through developed resources and workshops.

Dropout prevention strategies are intended to lead to a high school diploma and include activities that keep youth in school and engaged in a formal learning or training setting. Strategies include tutoring, literacy development, active learning experiences, after-school opportunities, and individualized instruction.

2. Alternative secondary school and dropout recovery

Alternative secondary school services are services that assist youth who have struggled in traditional secondary education. Dropout recovery services are designed to assist youth who have dropped out of school. Both types of services help youth re-engage in education that leads to the completion of a recognized high school equivalent. Examples of activities these services include:

- basic education skills training;
- individualized academic instruction;
- English-as-a-second-language training;
- credit recovery; and
- counseling and educational plan development.

3. Paid and unpaid work experience

Work experience is a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in a workplace for a limited time and includes academic and occupational education. Work experiences may be paid or unpaid, as appropriate, and may take place in the private for-profit sector, non-profit sector, or public sector. Types of work experiences include:

- summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities available throughout the year;

- pre-apprenticeship programs;
- internships and job shadowing; and
- on-the-job training.

4. Occupational skills training

Occupational skills training is an organized program of study that provides specific vocational skills that lead to proficiency in performing actual tasks and technical functions required by certain occupations at entry, intermediate, or advanced levels.

5. Education offered in combination with workforce preparation and training

Education offered in combination with workforce preparation and training for a specific occupation refers to an integrated education and training model and describes how workforce preparation activities, basic academic skills, and hands-on occupational skills training are to be taught within the same period and connected to training in a specific occupation, occupational cluster, or career pathway.

6. Leadership development opportunities

Leadership development opportunities are opportunities that encourage responsibility, confidence, employability, self-determination, and other positive social behaviors. Leadership development includes activities like:

- exposure to postsecondary educational possibilities;
- community and service-learning projects;
- peer-centered activities, including peer mentoring and tutoring;
- organizational and teamwork training, including team leadership training;
- training in decision making, including determining priorities and problem solving;
- citizenship training, including life skills training such as parenting and work behavior training;
- civic engagement activities that promote the quality of life in a community; and
- other leadership activities that place youth in a leadership role, such as serving on youth leadership committees.

7. Supportive services

Supportive services are services that enable young people to take part in local youth program activities. Supportive services include:

- linkages to community services;
- assistance with transportation;
- assistance with childcare and dependent care;
- assistance with housing;
- needs-related payments that provide financial assistance to participants to enable them to take part in local youth program activities;
- assistance with educational testing;
- reasonable accommodations for youth with disabilities;
- legal aid services;
- referrals to health care;
- assistance with uniforms or other appropriate work attire and work-related tools, including such items as eyeglasses and protective eye gear;
- 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.

8. Adult mentoring

Adult mentoring is a formal relationship between a youth program participant and an adult mentor that includes structured activities where the mentor offers guidance, support, and encouragement to develop the competence and character of the mentee. Mentoring may include workplace mentoring where the local program matches a youth participant with an employer or employee of a company. Adult mentoring lasts *at least* 12 months and may take place during program participation and following exit from the program.

9. Follow-up services

Follow-up services are critical services provided following a youth program participant's exit from the program to help ensure that the young person is successful in employment and/or postsecondary education and training. Follow-up services are provided for *at least* 12 months after program exit and may include:

- regular contact with the youth participant's employer, including assistance in addressing work-related problems that may arise; and
- supportive services;
- adult mentoring;
- financial literacy education;
- services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; and
- activities that help the youth participant prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training.

10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling

Comprehensive guidance and counseling means individualized counseling for the youth program participant provided by licensed practitioners. This service includes substance and alcohol abuse counseling, mental health counseling, and referral to qualified partner programs.

11. Financial literacy education

Financial literacy education refers to activities that provide youth with the knowledge and skills they need to achieve long-term financial stability, including activities that:

- support the ability of youth program participants to create budgets, initiate checking and savings accounts at banks, and make informed financial decisions;
- supports youth program participants in learning how to effectively manage spending, credit, and debt, including student loans, consumer credit, and credit cards;
- teach youth program participants about the significance of credit reports and credit scores, what their rights are regarding their credit and financial information, how to determine the accuracy of a credit report and how to correct inaccuracies, and how to improve or maintain good credit;
- support a youth program participant's ability to understand, evaluate, and compare financial products, services, and opportunities and to make informed financial decisions;
- educate youth program participants about identity theft, ways to protect themselves from identify theft, how to resolve cases of identity theft, and understand their rights and protections related to personal identity and financial data;
- support activities that address the financial literacy needs of non-English speakers, including providing support through the development and distribution of multilingual financial literacy and education materials;
- support activities that address the financial literacy needs of youth with disabilities, including connecting them to benefits planning and work incentives counseling;
- provide financial education that is age appropriate, timely, and provides opportunities to put lessons into practice, such as providing access to safe and affordable financial products that enable money management and savings; and

- implement other approaches to help youth program participants gain the knowledge, skills, and confidence to make informed financial decisions that enable them to attain greater financial health and stability through use of high quality, age-appropriate, and relevant strategies and channels.

12. Entrepreneurial skills training

Entrepreneurial skills training provides training on the basics of starting and operating a small business and develops skills associated with entrepreneurship, such as:

- taking initiative;
- creatively seeking out and identifying business opportunities;
- developing budgets and forecasting resource needs;
- understanding various options for acquiring capital and the trade-offs associated with each option; and
- communicating effectively and marketing oneself and one's ideas.

13. Labor market information services

Labor market information services are services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available locally and include career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services. Labor market services also help youth program participants identify employment opportunities and provide knowledge of job market expectations, including education and skill requirements and potential earnings.

14. Postsecondary preparation and transition activities

Postsecondary preparation and transition activities are activities that help youth program participants prepare for and transition to postsecondary education and training. These activities include helping youth program participants explore postsecondary education options, including technical training schools, community colleges, four-year colleges and universities, and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Examples of other postsecondary preparation and transition activities include:

- assisting youth with preparation for SAT/ACT testing;
- assisting with college admission applications;
- searching and applying for scholarships and grants;
- filling out the proper financial aid applications and adhering to changing guidelines; and
- connecting youth to postsecondary education programs.