

Unlocking the Potential of WIOA Title I to Help America's Youth and Young Adults with Disabilities Access Jobs

April 28th 2026

The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth

The Center for Advancing Policy on Employment for Youth seeks to improve employment outcomes for youth and young adults with disabilities (Y&YAD) by helping states enhance their youth service delivery and workforce systems.

CAPE-Youth Partners

The Center is a consortium led by The Council of State Governments and includes the K. Lisa Yang and Hock E. Tan Institute on Employment and Disability at Cornell University, the Interwork Institute at San Diego State University, and the National Association of Workforce Development Professionals.

The Center is fully funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) in the amount of \$7.5 million under Cooperative Agreement No. 23475OD000001-01-00. This item does not necessarily reflect the views or policies of the U.S. Department of Labor, nor does mention of trade names, commercial products, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

Technical Assistance

CAPE-Youth provides policymakers and workforce development professionals with **no-cost technical assistance (TA)**:

1. **Universal:** Implementing the Guideposts for Success.
 - Ongoing activities and deliverables, such as publications, webinars, and emerging research.
2. **Targeted:** Policy development and best practices.
 - Research requests, virtual meetings, and in-person state visits to support goals.
3. **Intensive:** Partnership and collaboration.
 - Specific requests for professional development to review, devise, and/or develop internal structures and evaluate ongoing needs.

*Do you need
Technical assistance?*



Today's Panel

Antoinette Williams

Workforce Programs Specialist 1 -
Career Development and Inclusion
New York State Department of
Labor

Ellie Hartman, Ph.D.

Chief Evaluation Officer for the
Workforce Data Integration System
Wisconsin Department of
Workforce Development

Shauna-Lee Ruglass

Chief People and Culture Officer,
YouthBuild USA

Matthew Rector

Education Coordinator/Instructor
SEAT Center

WIOA Title I: Intended Services and Activities

- Provides formula funding to states through the **Youth, Adult and Dislocated Worker Grant Program** to support employment training and other related services to unemployed and underemployed individuals.
- Provides opportunities to meet the career and employment needs of **out-of-school and in-school youth and young adults ages 14 to 24** who have one or more barriers to employment through the provision of comprehensive youth services.

WIOA Title I Funding: Who is Served

Populations served include American youth who are:

- Experiencing homelessness.
- In the foster care system or have aged out.
- In an out-of-home placement.
- Low-income and require additional assistance to begin or complete an educational program or to secure or hold employment.
- In economic need.
- Basic-skills deficient, English-language learner, and others.

WIOA Title I & Y&YAD

- **85 percent of youth** served under Title I are eligible to receive services based on income status alone.
- Y&YAD are a sample of this group, **representing 19.5 percent** of those served under Title I.



WIOA Title I

Key Considerations to Support Y&YAD

Policy Levers that Support Y&YAD through WIOA Title I

1

Leverage Federal Initiatives Across State Workforce Agencies

Utilize emerging federal funding opportunities and learn from existing pilots.

2

Enhance Systems Integration Among State and Local Workforce and Education Partners

Explore opportunities to integrate TANF, juvenile justice, foster care, unhoused programs.

3

Build Braided Service Approaches with VR Agencies

Identify ways to braid Title I, III, and IV funding to implement programs.

4

Support Partnership with YouthBuild

Work with local YouthBuild programs to support Y&YAD.



**Leverage other federal initiatives
across state workforce agencies to
initiate innovation at the local level**

Federal Opportunities Serve as a Driver for Innovation

- Opportunities existed in pilot and demonstration projects funded by the U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP), Social Security Administration (SSA), and Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).
- Identifying the following models, which build the connections of Title I workforce:
 - Integrated Resource Teams
 - Career Pathways
 - Mentoring

The Impact of Federal Projects in New York

Antoinette Williams, New York State Department of Labor

1. Can you provide an overview of how New York used the Disability Employment Initiatives to strengthen the workforce system?
2. How can states enhance their partnership with Title I programs when implementing projects like the Employment Transition Model (ETM) Demonstration?
3. What are some lessons learned from implementing program(s) of this nature? Please note any successes or challenges.

Enhance systems integration to effectively support Y&YAD

Systems Integration to Advance Workforce Access for Youth Facing Significant Barriers

- Explore opportunities to integrate systems with WIOA partners such as Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), juvenile justice, foster care, shelters for the unhoused, and others.
- Out-of-school youth historically present a challenge for the workforce system.
- Look to Learn and Earn to Achieve Potential (LEAP):
 - Initiated by Annie E. Casey Foundation
 - Y&YAD ages 14 to 25 who are in foster care or involved in the criminal justice system or who are unhoused
 - 10 local partnerships in Alaska, Arizona, California, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska and New York

Systems Integration – A Local Level Example

Matthew Rector, SEAT Center

- Can you elaborate on the Mockingbird Education model that SEAT Center utilizes to support learners?
- What are some key lessons you have learned about systems integration in leading the work at SEAT?
- What is one thing you would recommend to local workforce development partners in supporting young adults with disabilities?



Build specific braided approaches

Strategies to Expand Impact and Improve Services through Braided Funding

- In states where the VR partner is operating under an Order of Selection, a proactive approach for blending methods is critical.
- Maryland Division of VR and the Community College of Baltimore County to serve Y&YAD with cognitive, developmental, and mental health disabilities by providing academic, pre-vocational, social, and independent living skills.

Braided Funding in Action: Wisconsin

Ellie Hartman, Ph.D., Wisconsin Department of Workforce Development

- Can you provide an overview of the work that Wisconsin has done to build specific braided approaches to programs?
- How can states enhance their partnership with Title I, III, and IV programs in implementing programs to support Y&YAD?
- What are some lessons learned from implementing the program of this nature? Please note any successes or challenges.

4 Supporting approaches by YouthBuild Global

Partnering with YouthBuild Global to Support Y&YAD

- There are currently 200 DOL-funded YouthBuild programs operating in 40 states, serving approximately 5,000–6,000 youth annually.
- Heart of Oregon Corps has expanded access to YouthBuild, and other programs like Camp LEAD, a week-long outdoor paid work experience, to provide access to a broad set of experiences to build skills of Y&YAD.

YouthBuild Global – Partnerships in Action

Shauna-Lee Ruglass, YouthBuild Global

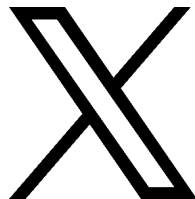
- Can you provide an overview of YouthBuild?
- How can states enhance their partnership with YouthBuild programs to meet the needs of youth and young adults with disabilities?
- What are some lessons learned from YouthBuild programs on effectively meeting these needs?

Contact Us

**Drew Karhan,
Ed.D.**
akarhan@sdsu.edu



@CAPEYouth



@CSG_CAPEYouth



@CAPE-Youth

General CAPE-Youth Inquiries

If you are interested in learning more about our work or participating in our research initiatives, please contact info@capeyouth.org or visit capeyouth.org.