

# Workforce Development

*For people with disabilities*

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## **Agency Involved: U.S. Department of Labor**

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The Department of Labor (DOL) helps workers, job seekers, and retirees by improving working conditions and opportunities for employment. It is responsible for occupational safety, wage and hour standards, unemployment insurance benefits, re-employment services, and some economic statistics.

The DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) administers unemployment insurance benefits, job training services, and re-employment services. Through its Office of Workforce Investment, ETA funds a series of community-based employment resource centers.

Officially these centers are called *One-Stop Career Centers*, but people use several names for them, including *Workforce Development Centers*, *Workforce Investment Centers*, *Career Centers*, *One-Stops*, *WIA Centers* (WIA is short for Workforce Investment Act), and *American Job Centers*. They will be called WIA career centers in this document.

(NOTE: It is important to distinguish between WIA career centers and other career centers associated with local schools, colleges, or universities).

In Missouri, the Division of Workforce Development manages the *Missouri Career Centers* and the website [jobs.mo.gov](http://jobs.mo.gov).

More details available at:

[DOL's Overview of the Public Workforce System](#)

[DOL's ETA Homepage](#)

[DOL's Office of Workforce Investment](#)

[The Missouri website jobs.mo.gov](http://jobs.mo.gov)

## **Summary**

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Through the WIA career centers, ETA & the Office of Workforce Investment try to strengthen local economies by supporting both people seeking jobs and local businesses seeking employees. The centers offer job listings, skill assessments, career counseling, training referrals, and similar employment-related services. Customers can visit centers in person or connect to centers' information through websites. Any city or county with a population of 500,000 or more will usually have at least one WIA Career Center.

In each state, a State Workforce Investment Board and a network of local Workforce Investment Boards administer the career centers. Half of the members of the local boards must be local business people, and at least two members must represent local labor organizations. These state and local boards decide how many WIA career centers a community will have, what services the

centers will offer, and what organizations will run the centers. Some centers are run by a single organization (public or private) and others are run by two or more organizations in collaboration. Although the local board adjusts services to fit local needs, federal regulations require certain minimal types of services.

More details available at:

[DOL's CareerOneStop Career Center locator](#)  
[DOL's Employment & Training Administration](#)  
[ETA's O\\*Net Career Exploration Site](#)

## ***Specific Benefits***

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All WIA career centers must provide the following levels of service. The first level of service is available to anyone who visits a WIA career center. The additional levels are progressive – you must have gotten at least one service from the previous level and still need job help to qualify (among other requirements).

- **Level I: Core Services** - all WIA career centers must provide at least some of the following core services.
  - Intake and orientation to WIA career center services (usually a guided tour of the facility)
  - Eligibility determination
  - Initial assessment of skill and abilities
  - Job vacancy listings, and help with job search and placement
  - Information on job skills requirements and vocational rehabilitation providers
  - List of eligible training providers
  - Information about filing for Unemployment Insurance and other available services
- **Level II: Intensive Services** – Provided to people who have used Level I services and are still unemployed, or whom center staff determine need these services.
  - Career counseling and individualized career planning
  - Resume preparation and Job clubs
  - Internships
  - Comprehensive assessments
  - Sometimes offered: basic education, English as a second language, and basic computer literacy
- **Level III: Training Services** (Individual Training Account voucher) – When a person still cannot find a job after using the other levels of support, and is interested in local training which will lead to a career but there is no outside funding to pay for it, the WIA career center will give the person an Individual Training Account voucher to help pay for training from a WIA-certified training provider.
- **Other Possible Services** (not offered at every center)

- On-the-Job-Training – the WIA career center will pay a local employer a wage subsidy of up to 50% of a trainee’s salary in return for training the person on the job. The expectation is that the employer will eventually hire the person.
- Customized Training – The WIA career center will pay half a person's training expense (for classroom/lab training) while the future employer pays the other half. The employer then hires the person once they have finished the training.
- Support Services – services to help people get to the WIA career center to access services. This can include transportation and childcare services, among other things.
- Needs-Related Payment – If a person does not qualify for unemployment (or has used it up) and needs some income while participating in WIA career center programs, the center can provide money based on need.
- Workready (Missouri-specific) – people who are currently getting unemployment insurance may be able to get up to six weeks of part-time workplace training, plus a stipend in addition to their unemployment benefits.

### Online Services

In addition to the local services of WIA career centers, the ETA offers a variety of online resources. People can access them (free) through the site [CareerOnestop.com](http://CareerOnestop.com). The services include:

- **America’s Service Locator** – a search tool for finding local WIA career centers and a listing of the services each provides ([www.ServiceLocator.org](http://www.ServiceLocator.org)).
- **My Next Move** – A career exploration tool ([www.mynextmove.org/](http://www.mynextmove.org/)). This national site gives job seekers three simple ways to explore careers, an interest assessment, and easy-to-read, one-page profiles of different occupations, and links to specific training and employment opportunities.
  - **MyNextMove for Veterans** is also available ([www.MyNextMove.org/VETS](http://www.MyNextMove.org/VETS)).
- **America’s Career InfoNet** – A career exploration tool. Compared to My Next Move, this site is for job seekers with more advanced skills in searching online databases. The site provides detailed information about the salary, skill requirements, work expectations, etc. of various industries, as well as self-assessment tools and links to educational resources ([www.CareerInfoNet.org](http://www.CareerInfoNet.org)).
- **mySkills myFuture** – A career exploration tool specifically for people who have been laid off from a previous job and need to change careers. It allows people to match their current skills and job experiences to potential new careers, learn more about those careers, and locate training resources for getting the new skills they need ([www.mySkillsmyFuture.org](http://www.mySkillsmyFuture.org)).
- **Competency Model Clearinghouse** – Mostly a resource for educators and employment service providers. This site lists the skill needs of the business community to help training providers learn about high-growth industries and develop curriculums to meet their needs.

- **Worker ReEmployment** – A job-hunting tool for unemployed workers. This national site provides local job listings, plus information about applying for unemployment benefits, about health care options, and about general job hunting skills (including resume writing, upgrading skills, job searching techniques, etc.) ([www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment](http://www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment)).
- **Veterans ReEmployment** – a version of the ReEmployment site just for veterans. Vets can search for jobs based on their service-related skills, and learn about other employment resources for veterans ([www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans](http://www.CareerOneStop.org/ReEmployment/Veterans)).

## ACT College Testing and Workforce Development

Keywords: **WorkKeys™**, **National Career Readiness Certificate™**, **Keytrain Quick Guide**

Over the last 20 years, the organization which offers the ACT college readiness tests has developed a set of workforce support services. Although ACT Inc. is a non-profit organization, these are commercial products, which ACT has marketed to state workforce agencies, large companies, and individual job seekers.

The overall system is called **WorkKeys™** and includes three elements: skills assessment, job analysis, and training. The skills assessment includes 12 possible assessments of different work-related skills, each tied to ACT's profiles of several thousand jobs and careers. The assessments are available in person or online, but are fee-based. The job analysis element is a service to employers, helping them determine the essential tasks of jobs within their business and relating each to an achievement level on the assessments. The training element is skills training also keyed to the specific assessments.

In parallel with this, ACT offers the **National Career Readiness Certificate™** (NCRC), which ACT described as a "portable credential" to employers as documentation of a person's skill in three core areas: applied mathematics, locating information, and reading for information (3 of the 12 WorkKeys™ assessments). ACT awards certificates at four achievement levels: Platinum, Gold, Silver, and Bronze. ACT says people earning the Bronze level qualify for around 35% of the jobs in the WorkKeys™ database, those earning Silver qualify for around 65%, and Gold, 95%. People who do not score as high as they wish/need can take online training to improve their scores.

ACT has also developed the career-center-specific **Keytrain Quick Guide** as a basic intake assessment which WIA career centers can offer new clients. It is linked to ACT online trainings and the NCRC certificate. (Missouri WIA Career Centers also offer Missouri DWD's WIN Quick Assessment, in addition to the ACT Keytrain Quick Guide)

A number of states (including Missouri) offer the NCRC certificates and associated services through the WIA career centers, with the state paying all or part of the fee, depending on the person's eligibility for service levels. In Michigan, the WorkKeys™ program is reportedly part of mandatory high school testing for all students.

More details available at:

[DOL E&TA Adult Programs Page](#)

[CareerOnestop.com](http://CareerOnestop.com)  
[DOL's national Career Center locator](#)  
[ACT's WorkKeys™ System](#)  
[The Missouri website jobs.mo.gov](http://The Missouri website jobs.mo.gov)

## ***Populations Served (eligibility)***

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A few of the Level One Core Services of WIA career centers are free to anyone, with no eligibility requirements. These include any self-service or informational core services, such as orientation to services, viewing job listings, posting a resume, and information about filing for unemployment benefits.

There are eligibility requirements for the more intensive, staff-assisted services. These are only available to people who are either currently unemployed, are employed at low-paying jobs, or are part of a special priority group such as displaced workers. WIA career center staff can help the person file for eligibility for these services.

Eligibility for staff-assisted or intensive WIA career center services is based on whether a person is "self-sufficient" financially. Federal regulations require each Workforce Investment Board to develop an income standard for self-sufficiency for the area it covers.

There are two different definitions of self-sufficiency which are widely used by these boards – the WOW Self-Sufficiency Standard and the Basic Family Budgets standard (WOW stands for Wider Opportunities for Women – an anti-poverty project which developed the standard). The WOW Self-Sufficiency Standard measures how much money a family needs to cover basic costs such as housing, child care, food, transportation, taxes, etc. The amount varies from community to community and by family size. The WOW project has calculated this standard for 37 US states and the District of Columbia. The Basic Family Budgets standard comes from a different source – the Economic Policy Institute – and does not include as many factors, but it is available for all 50 states. Most Workforce Boards use one of these two, but a few states have developed their own.

Even when a Workforce Board uses one of these two self-sufficiency standards, the eligibility formula may define salaries at a percentage of the standard, such as 90% or even 130%. In addition, eligibility determinations will usually include income from other social service agencies (SSA, TANF, etc.) as well as other assets. So the details of eligibility will vary from center to center.

As mentioned above, there are usually additional eligibility requirements for more intensive, Level Three Core Services. These usually include having already participated in Level One and Two services, as well as having an employment goal matched by available local training resources, and lack of any other financial support to pay for that training.

More details available at:  
[WIA Eligibility Guidelines, Texas WDB](#)

## ***Definition of Disability***

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WIA career centers do not usually have programs specifically for people with disabilities, but DOL requires that they partner with state vocational rehabilitation agencies. The degree of this partnership varies from state to state. In some cases, the WIA career center may simply list state voc rehab contact information, in other situations there may be voc rehab counselors closely affiliated with the WIA career center.

In general, WIA career centers can be seen as "overflow" resources for people with disabilities, either providing the services to people whose disabilities are not significant enough to qualify them for voc rehab service, or to potential voc rehab clients in states in "order of priority" (see entry on voc rehab), or providing their services as supplements to voc rehab clients. In general, WIA career centers will not have information about assistive technology, workplace accommodations, and school-to-work transition for people with disabilities.

WIA career center staff may also not have ways to accommodate individuals with cognitive disabilities (such as dyslexia, high functioning autism, or learning disorders) when administering intake assessments such as the ACT Keytrain Quick Guide.

More details available at:

[Role of Public VR and OneStops – National Center on Workforce & Disability](#)

## ***Criminal History***

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The national Workforce Development Program has no regulations that would exclude anyone with a criminal history from getting WIA career center services. It is unlikely that any local Workforce Development Board would create eligibility requirements to exclude someone with a criminal record.

## ***Substance Abuse***

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The national Workforce Development Program has no regulations that would exclude anyone with substance abuse issues from getting WIA career center services. It is unlikely that any local Workforce Development Board would create eligibility requirements to exclude someone with substance abuse issues.

## ***Application Process***

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Initial services at a WIA career center are mostly a walk-in process. Anyone who comes by will be given a tour and basic information about what they do, often there is a basic online skills assessment people can take, and information about basic core services and eligibility for more advanced services.

A full eligibility determination may require a scheduled meeting, since the WIA career center staff will need to calculate the person's family income and compare it to the eligibility standards for that

WIA career center. Applicants should be sure to bring documentation of any wages (if they are under-employed), benefits payments, unemployment insurance, child support payments, etc.

### ***Insider Tips/Comments***

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- During the initial visit, ask for a copy of the self-sufficiency eligibility standards for the WIA career center. In particular, ask for a list of required documentation.
- If a person has a cognitive disability (such as dyslexia, autism, TBI, learning disorder, etc.) and they need a reasonable accommodation when taking a skills assessment (such as extra time, a room without fluorescent lights, a quieter work area, etc.) they should request the accommodations before taking any initial intake assessments at the WIA career center.
  - It is OK to make an ADA request and disclose a disability at the WIA career center. This will NOT mean disclosing to potential employers. The person can make that decision separately.
  - It may be possible for the person to take the intake assessment and other skills assessments online from home, if they would prefer. They should ask if this is possible.
  - The person should be sure to request the accommodations for any additional standardized skills assessments they may take later on.
- When applying for financial eligibility (income below the "self-sufficiency" standard for that WIA career center) the person should be sure to bring documentation. Typical documentation might include:
  - A driver's license or state identification card
  - A birth certificate
  - Recent pay stubs
  - Letter or documents from other social service agencies showing other benefits the person is getting, such as Supplemental Security Income (SSI), SSDI, Veterans benefits, child support, alimony, unemployment, retirement, etc.
  - A rental agreement or letter from the person's landlord, or mortgage statement, which shows the person's address
  - Utility bills, such as electricity, gas, and water, for a typical month
  - Cancelled checks for any daycare or child support payments
  - Typical medical bills the person pays, especially if they are over 60 years old or have a disability
  - Any documents about legal obligation to pay child support

### ***Typical Timeline***

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- Initial services and national online services can be used immediately.
- Financial eligibility determination may take a week or so.

- Eligibility for Level Two and Level Three Core Services will depend on documentation that the person has used at least one of the previous level services and made a reasonable attempt to find work, but needs additional services. Fulfilling those requirements could take several weeks or more, depending on the situation, how actively the person is searching, and the expectations of the WIA career center staff.

## ***Contact Information***

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### Regional or National:

- [DOL's CareerOneStop Career Center locator](#)

### State:

- [The Missouri website jobs.mo.gov](#)

## ***Web links for Independent research:***

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List links for further investigation

- [DOL's Overview of the Public Workforce System](#)
- [DOL's ETA Homepage](#)
- [DOL's Office of Workforce Investment](#)
- [AFL-CIO's Basics of the Workforce Investment Act](#)
- [Workforce3 One](#) - sponsored by the DOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). On online technical assistance site for participants of the public workforce system and related professionals. Includes articles, online training, and updates on innovations.

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