

## **Wyoming Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act State Plan**

Executive Summary

2024-2027

Under Section 101(d) of the Workforce Innovation Opportunity Act (WIOA) and State Executive Order 2015-5, the Governor has established the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC) as the State Board to help facilitate the functions of WIOA programs. Under WIOA legislation, workforce development boards are the key institutions that carry out state and local plans for workforce development and coordinate federal, state, and local funding for core workforce programs.

WIOA requires states to administer six core programs in partnership with local authorities. The six core programs include the Adult Program (Title 1), Dislocated Worker Program (Title I), Youth Program (Title I), Adult Education and Family Literacy Act program (Title II), Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service program (authorized under the Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended by title III), and the Vocational Rehabilitation program. States can tailor these programs to meet job seekers and employers' needs.

A guiding principle of WIOA funding is collaboration across economic development, workforce development, and education. The WWDC's membership structure is intentionally designed to ensure maximum representation across each of these sectors. This structure provides enhanced flexibility to meet the needs of businesses and job seekers by integrating best practices such as industry partnerships and career pathways.

In order to establish a strategic plan that supports business growth and development, as well as workforce development, the WWDC is focused on implementing NextGen Sector Partnerships. Using Labor Market Information collected by the Research and Planning division of DWS, the WWDC developed an in-demand and emerging-demand occupation list. By identifying in-demand and emerging-demand occupations, the WWDC can identify potential regional business clusters that can benefit from establishing NextGen Sector Partnerships. Strong industry clusters in a particular region fuel the regional economy, generate payrolls that can sustain families and create strong innovation. Industry clusters also help position specific regions for uniquely competitive jobs and private investment.

To prepare for the upcoming period (2024-2027) as it relates to the Unified State Plan, the WWDC contracted with a third party to facilitate the strategic planning process, which was completed in 2023. Key leaders of the various programs were involved in this process. Other stakeholder input was requested through in-person and electronic

communication methods, which included listening sessions and surveys. Key areas identified to pursue for this upcoming period include improving the perception of the many programs, enhancing collaboration with key partners throughout the state, improving access to services, and further engaging in community outreach to help inform Wyoming's workforce of the many opportunities available, which include training and credentialing for growing Wyoming industries, as evidenced in *Table 1. 2024-2027 WIOA Strategic Plan*.

Table 1. 2024-2027 WIOA Strategic Plan

<b>Vision</b>	We envision a Wyoming where every employee and job seeker has an opportunity to secure purposeful and rewarding work and where employers can access a prepared workforce to help grow the state's economy.
<b>Mission</b>	To take a lead role in supporting a workforce system that meets the current and future needs of Wyoming.
<b>Goal 1: Build Awareness and understanding of the Workforce System as more than unemployment support.</b>	
<b>Challenges</b>	WIOA programs often struggle with the public's perception of the services offered. Negative perceptions may include Adult Education being viewed as the high-school equivalent, being referred to as the "unemployment office," the connotation that services provided and sought are required by law, among others.
<b>Solutions</b>	Focus on rebranding workforce centers, providing professional staff development opportunities to further heighten their role, and continue to build relationships with key stakeholders to further educate on the services and programs provided through WIOA.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop key messaging regarding the Wyoming Workforce Development Council (WWDC), America's Job Centers, and WIOA.</li> <li>- Drive more effective relationships in the workforce centers and consider rebranding/positioning workforce centers.</li> <li>- Identify ways to support business/business representatives and build relationships.</li> <li>- Build WWDC members' training/expectations/orientation processes to help develop effective members.</li> </ul>
<b>Goal 2: Drive Collaboration with Partners and Business Sectors</b>	
<b>Challenges</b>	Limited knowledge and funding of the different services and programs provided hinder the ability to further collaborate with partners across the state.
<b>Solutions</b>	Work towards strengthening existing relationships by performing more outreach and educational services through different channels and initiatives.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Streamline terminology across all partner programs and partner agencies.</li> <li>- Using LMI, in-demand and emerging-demand markets data, identify, develop and implement regional industry clusters through the NextGen Sector Partnership model.</li> <li>- Each WWDC meeting, conduct a showcase of local business, economic needs and efforts that will inform funding</li> </ul>

	<p>priorities for the WIOA program and NextGen Sector Partners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop next steps for the WWDC outreach plan emphasizing increased communication among One-Stop partners.</li> <li>- Strengthen the “no wrong door” approach by developing an understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the partnering agencies and the services they provide.</li> <li>- Promote Integrated Education and Training (IET) initiatives to employers and other relevant stakeholders.</li> <li>- Engage high school representatives, tribal leaders, Job Corps, and other entities with high-risk populations for the completion of high school equivalency programs of study.</li> <li>- Encourage and support collaborations with community service providers, inclusive of Wyoming’s Community Colleges, to leverage local resources and support integrated service delivery.</li> <li>- Implement strategies to increase co-enrollments between the WIOA core partners.</li> <li>- DVR will continue to emphasize co-enrolling eligible participants in an effort to collaborate with partner agencies to provide increased opportunities for training and credentials.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 3: Enhance Access to Workforce Development Services</b></p>	
<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p>Much of Wyoming is rural, with limited access to key job seeker services, employer assistance, psychiatric care, and therapeutic intervention services, among other important services.</p>
<p><b>Solutions</b></p>	<p>Provide a more robust online platform to assist job seekers and employers, provide more in-person options for rural areas with limited access to the internet, and continue to expand services that may be beneficial for rural areas through the use of technological advances.</p>
<p><b>Actions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Ensure the new MIS system (HireWyo.com) will meet user needs.</li> <li>- Research, purchase, and install kiosks (likely tablet form) across the state for better remote access to services.</li> <li>- Create and implement a plan to improve access to services in remote locations.</li> <li>- Utilize follow-up surveys to measure the success of initiatives.</li> <li>- Core partners co-present applicable career services to qualified individuals to reduce duplication of services.</li> <li>- Implement a unified career pathways system that aligns workforce, education and economic development to address the most in-demand jobs in the State.</li> <li>- Utilize technology and data to enhance the accessibility and outcomes of Wyoming’s workforce system.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Goal 4: Engage in Community Outreach</b></p>	

<b>Challenges</b>	Programs and services provided by WIOA may face funding and geographical challenges when it comes to engaging different communities throughout Wyoming, but at the same time, need to make the effort to reach people where they are located.
<b>Solutions</b>	Identify solutions to the various Wyoming-specific challenges and take advantage of the different opportunities for engaging the community to further expand services and educate the workforce.
<b>Actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research best practices/methods for engagement/outreach.</li> <li>- Seek funding from WWDC for engagement/outreach opportunities, and determine measurable outcomes that are best practices in the state.</li> <li>- Identify existing and potential community partners to be champions of the workforce system efforts</li> <li>- Evaluate processes on measurable outcomes, and request funding for any additional engagement/outreach opportunities.</li> <li>- Expand access to core partner services through virtual means so that individuals in the most remote areas of the State have access.</li> </ul>