

## **WIOA Facts:**

### **Coordinating and Implementing Pre-Employment Transition Services in Arkansas Schools**

#### **What is the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA, 2014)?**

The purpose of **WIOA** is to: (a) support job seekers and workers in accessing employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market; and (b) match employers with skilled workers needed to compete in the global economy. With the passing of WIOA, many special education teachers and vocational rehabilitation (VR) counselors have questions about how it affects their work with students with disabilities. Section 4 of the Act now provides VR agencies across the nation with the opportunity to provide expanded services in five specific focus areas to students with disabilities. Pre-Employment Transition Services (PreETS) are available to students whether or not applied for VR services.

The five PreETS focus areas include:

- **Job Exploration Counseling** to support a discovery process using customized tools that help students discover their skills, abilities, and interests
- **Post-secondary Exploration** to provide counseling on opportunities for enrollment in local community college / post-secondary education programs
- **Instruction in Self-Advocacy** to assist students in gaining the knowledge and skills to effectively communicate, convey, negotiate, or assert their own interests and/or desires
- **Work-Place Readiness Training** to develop social skills and independent living
- **Work-based Learning Experiences** to provide work opportunities and experiences outside of the traditional school setting

#### **Why is WIOA important for Secondary Students with Disabilities and Families?**

WIOA ensures students with disabilities have meaningful opportunities to receive the training and other supports needed to achieve meaningful employment outcomes after they leave high school. PreETS are the earliest set of VR services a student can access; they provide an “early start” for job exploration for students with disabilities. PreETS are intended for secondary school students with disabilities:

- Students with an IEP, a 504 Plan or meet the definition of a disability under Section 504
- Students still enrolled in school and receiving special education services
- Students who meet certain age requirements and are enrolled in postsecondary or other approved training

#### **Where can you find the primary source for WIOA?**

WORKFORCE INNOVATION & OPPORTUNITY ACT TITLE IV-AMENDMENTS TO THE REHABILITATION ACT OF 1973  
<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/PLAW-113publ128/pdf/PLAW-113publ128.pdf>

**WIOA Fact Sheets:** <https://www.doleta.gov/wioa/FactSheet.cfm>

**Workforce Innovation Technical Assistance Center:** <http://www.wintac.org/>

### How does this apply to School–Level Practitioners and VR Counselors?

School-Level Practitioners and VR Counselors can provide similar services when it comes to preparing students with disabilities for work. This work provides a great opportunity for the two agencies (i.e., ADE, ARS) to collaborate to ensure effective transition planning and provision of services for students with disabilities both now and in the future. WIOA requires State VR agencies reserve no less than 15% of their Federal Award for PreETS (WIOA Section 110[d]; Section 113 [a]), but the intent of WIOA is not to “reduce the obligation under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of a local education agency or any other agency to provide or pay for any transition services that are also considered special education or related service and that are necessary for ensuring a free appropriate public education to children with disabilities” (Section 361.22[6][c]).

The following table provides the five WIOA PreETS areas for which VR counselors facilitate services cross walked with examples of transition activities/services typically facilitated by school-level practitioners via special education services. These activities/services can help prepare students for postsecondary employment and/or education/training. Activities align with the mandates of IDEA and WIOA and should continue to be facilitated by both teachers and VR personnel. Together, schools and VR personnel should collaboratively implement PreETS that support students with disabilities in achieving positive in-school and post-school outcomes.

Pre-Employment Transition Services (WIOA, 2014) facilitated by VR Personnel	School-Level Transition Services (IDEA, 2004) facilitated by School-Level Practitioners
<b>Job Exploration Counseling:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct career and vocational interest inventories</li> <li>Connect interests to career pathways and in demand occupations</li> <li>Assist with transition and career fairs</li> <li>Facilitate activities related to job exploration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., career interests, independent living, self-determination)</li> <li>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data</li> <li>Provide opportunities to watch career videos</li> <li>Invite guest speakers to present about careers within the community</li> <li>Organize and provide opportunities for students to attend transition fairs</li> </ul>
<b>Postsecondary Exploration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify college and career exploration activities</li> <li>Connect students to resources that may be used to support them in post-secondary settings including application and admission process</li> <li>Assist in identifying academic &amp; workplace accommodations</li> <li>Provide counseling on college affordability and benefits planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., career interests, independent living, self-determination)</li> <li>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data</li> <li>Organize and provide opportunities for students to attend transition fairs</li> <li>Provide opportunities to visit college campuses</li> <li>Provide opportunities to attend Freshman Fifteen and College Bound Arkansas camps</li> </ul>

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<b>Instruction in Self-Advocacy:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist students in learning about their rights, responsibilities, and becoming self-aware</li> <li>Educate students on available accommodations, including how to request accommodations, services, and supports</li> <li>Develop leadership skills (ARS Youth Leadership forum)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involve students in completing age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., career interests, independent living, self-determination)</li> <li>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data</li> <li>Seek input from parents, students, and other IEP team members, related to post-school goals and transition planning</li> <li>Provide instruction on student-led IEPs</li> <li>Provide instruction to support student involvement in transition planning, including research opportunities to identify what is needed to reach post-school goals</li> <li>Involve students in completing the Summary of Performance as a tool to access to services post-school</li> </ul>
<b>Work-Place Readiness Training:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist students in understanding employer expectations</li> <li>Facilitate opportunities for students to apply soft skill knowledge within an integrated setting</li> <li>Assist students in gaining an understanding of independent living skills including financial literacy and orientation/mobility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., career interests, independent living, self-determination)</li> <li>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data</li> <li>Organize field trips to explore agency programs</li> <li>Connect students with agencies and encourage them to apply for adult services</li> </ul>
<b>Work-Based Learning Experiences:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Facilitate opportunities for students to obtain work based learning/work experiences within an integrated setting               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Recruit business mentors</li> <li>➤ Paid or non-paid work experiences</li> <li>➤ Informational Interviews</li> <li>➤ Creating internships</li> <li>➤ On the job training</li> <li>➤ Job shadowing</li> <li>➤ Worksite tours</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct age-appropriate transition assessments in multiple areas (e.g., career interests, independent living, self-determination)</li> <li>Develop post-school goals aligned with transition assessment data</li> <li>Provide job shadowing activities</li> <li>Provide work experience rotations</li> <li>Provide school-based work preparation (e.g., mock interviews, resume writing, job applications, school-based enterprises)</li> </ul>

In addition to the services provided by both agencies (as indicated above), there are multiple areas for collaboration. The following table provides suggestions for areas of collaboration between schools and VR.

Areas for Collaboration to Enhance Services when Providing Pre-Employment Transition Services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop a MOU between ARS and Schools to work toward providing PreETS and sharing of information (e.g., data sharing, transition assessment information)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct joint planning with ARS to host a transition fair</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Invite and provide opportunities for VR counselor(s) to speak to students about possible services</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly plan for students to participate in pre-employment services and programs offered through ARS</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly conduct mock student interviews</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure transition services and activities provided by schools and VR align with the predictors of positive post-school outcomes</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Identify and provide work-based learning experiences both at school and in the community</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Implement a research-based model of interagency collaboration (e.g., CIRCLES) to address transition planning needs of students</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jointly plan self-advocacy/self-determination training and experiences both in school and the community (e.g., participation in the IEP, advocating for accommodations in the workplace, disability awareness)</li> </ul>

Additional resources relevant to secondary special education and transition:

- Arkansas Transition Services [www.arkansastransition.com](http://www.arkansastransition.com)
- The Transition Coalition [www.transitioncoalition.org](http://www.transitioncoalition.org)
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition [www.transitionta.org](http://www.transitionta.org)
- The Zarrow Center <http://www.ou.edu/education/centers-and-partnerships/zarrow.html>
- Think College <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>
- The Beach Center on Disability [www.beachcenter.org](http://www.beachcenter.org)