ALABAMA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs
Workforce Development Division
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June 15, 2011

GOVERNOR'S WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT DIRECTIVE NO. PY 2009 – 04, Ch. 1

SUBJECT: Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL)

1. **Purpose.** This transmits the following TEGL:

Number	Date	Subject
31-10	06/13/11	Increasing Enrollment and Improving Services to Youth with Disabilities

2. **Discussion.** TEGL No.31-10, provides information and resources on promising practices and successful strategies that promote the enrollment, education, training and employment outcomes of youth with disabilities.

3. **Action.** Please disseminate to staff responsible for, and involved in, WIA youth programs and activities.

4. **Contact.** Please direct any questions regarding this information to Tracy Smith, Workforce Development Division at 334.353.5344.

Steve Walkley, Division Director
ADECA, Workforce Development Division

Attachment: TEGL 31-10

EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION Training
	CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL OWI
	DATE June 13, 2011

ADVISORY: TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 31-10

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCY DIRECTORS
INDIAN AND NATIVE AMERICAN GRANTEES
MIGRANT AND SEASONAL FARMWORKER GRANTEES

FROM: JANE OATES
Assistant Secretary
Employment and Training Administration

KATHLEEN MARTINEZ
Assistant Secretary
Office of Disability Employment Policy

SUBJECT: Increasing Enrollment and Improving Services to Youth with Disabilities

1. Purpose. To provide information and resources on promising practices and successful strategies that promote the enrollment, education, training and employment outcomes of youth with disabilities.

2. References.

- Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998, as amended (29 United States Code 2801 et seq.)
- WIA Regulations, 20 Code of Federal Regulations parts 652 and 660-669
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 13-09, "Contracting Strategies That Facilitate Serving The Youth Most In Need"
- Training and Employment Notice No. 10-09, "Toolkit and White Paper on Improving Transition Outcomes of Youth with Disabilities through Apprenticeship"

RESCISSIONS None	EXPIRATION DATE Continuing

3. **Background.** The U.S. Department of Labor (the Department) is committed to helping all workers obtain "good jobs." This includes helping to eliminate multiple challenges to employment that youth with disabilities face. In support of this vision, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) believe it is critical to promote improved services to youth with disabilities in the public workforce system.

   Given the current economic situation, the public workforce system is focusing its resources to meet the extremely high national demand for employment and training services. Although dedicated resources are limited, particularly in these tough economic times, the Department is encouraging the public workforce system to enhance services to youth with disabilities. While the Department acknowledges that the public workforce system currently serves a number of youth with disabilities, the resources and successful strategies included in this guidance can further assist the public workforce system to expand capacity and adopt practices for effectively serving this population.

   According to the U.S. Department of Education's National Longitudinal Transition Study, youth with disabilities are less likely to complete high school and are only half as likely to attend post-secondary education as their non-disabled peers. In 2005-2006, the percentage of youth with disabilities exiting school with a regular high school diploma was 57 percent, compared to 87.6 percent of the general student population. During the same time period, 46 percent of youth with disabilities enrolled in post-secondary schools, compared to 63 percent of the general population. Youth with disabilities that are not easily recognized through observation, or that have not been identified through traditional testing within the educational system, may experience difficulty with traditional educational settings or may drop out of school. Included in this group are youth with learning disabilities, attention deficit disorders, and emotional or behavioral disabilities, such as depression, anxiety disorders, or conduct disorders.

   Youth with disabilities experience particularly poor employment and education outcomes. The December 2010 employment rate for all youth, ages 16 to 19, was 25 percent compared to an employment rate of 11.9 percent for youth with disabilities. For youth ages 20 to 24, the employment rate was 60.6 percent for youth without disabilities and 32.7 percent for youth with disabilities (Labor Force Statistics, Current Population Survey, Bureau of Labor Statistics, December 2010). Research shows that at least one-third of dropouts with disabilities spend one or more nights in jail; this rate is three times that of students with disabilities who complete high school. Three to five years after dropping out, the cumulative arrest record for youth with "serious emotional disturbances" was 73 percent. According to the U.S. Department of Justice, more than 30 percent of youth in the juvenile justice system have a learning disability. Many of these same youth then represent a disproportionate number of unemployed or underemployed adults in the future.

   In the most recent completed program year (PY 2009), the percentage of exiters in the WIA Youth program who self-identified as having a disability was 12.9 percent.

This rate is a six-year low, decreasing each of the last six years from a high of 15.9 percent in both PY 2003 and PY 2004, and down from 13.6 percent in the previous year. This represents a 19 percent drop in the percentage of youth with identified disabilities in the WIA Youth program over the past six years.

The Department recently implemented the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) to improve coordination and collaboration among employment and training programs at state and local levels and to build effective partnerships that leverage public and private resources to better identify and serve individuals with disabilities. In September 2010, the Department awarded the first round of funds, $21,276,575, to nine states (Alaska, Arkansas, Delaware, Illinois, Kansas, Maine, New Jersey, New York, and Virginia) for three years to improve education, training, and employment opportunities and outcomes of youth and adults who are unemployed, underemployed, and/or receiving Social Security disability benefits. Arkansas, Delaware, and New Jersey have a primary focus on serving youth with disabilities. These investments will allow the Department to identify and replicate promising practices when serving adult and youth with disabilities.

4. **Program Emphasis.** Given the research and data that shows that youth with disabilities are less likely to have positive labor market outcomes and that there has been a decline in the number of these youth served by the WIA system over the past few years, it is critical that WIA Youth programs increase their focus on youth with disabilities. ETA encourages providers of WIA youth services to increase both their capacity to serve and the number of youth with disabilities that they serve. In order to accomplish this, the WIA Youth program needs to increase its knowledge base regarding how to provide quality services to this population. The ultimate goal is to better assist youth with disabilities and enable them to become economically self-sufficient through training, educational opportunities, and jobs with career pathways that will lead to success in the labor market.

   This guidance is intended to offer specific strategies and tools to states, workforce investment boards, youth councils, and youth providers within the workforce system to increase the number of youth with disabilities they serve and support positive outcomes. For the purpose of this guidance, the term "youth provider " includes those providing WIA services to youth within One-Stop Career Centers, community-based organizations, educational institutions, or other appropriate settings where youth are being served within the public workforce system.

5. **Strategies for Increasing Effective Services to Youth with Disabilities.**

   A. Enhancing Staff Capacity to Serve Youth with Disabilities.

   1. **Design and Implement Front-Line Staff Training on Working with Youth with Disabilities.** The goals for youth with disabilities and the types of opportunities they need are no different from other youth; they need help in career exploration, accessing further education and training, and gaining work experience. Services to youth with disabilities should be integrated into all the

programs and services the workforce investment system is providing to youth. Front-line workforce investment staff can benefit from training that increases their ability to identify and serve youth with disabilities.

Ongoing professional staff development addressing youth with disabilities can be an integral part of the WIA youth service provider capacity building. Training can include basic information on the following topics: Disability 101 (disability etiquette, awareness of variety of disabilities, accommodations); universal design; disability disclosure; and community-based resources. Additional training may be provided on: recruitment and outreach; self-advocacy for youth, community-based services; strength-based assessment; and identification of possible learning disabilities and other non-visible disabilities through records review or utilizing other training tools.

Increased awareness of the broad spectrum of disabilities can assist youth providers in identifying support and service needs when serving youth who may or may not have been previously formally diagnosed with a disability. This information can increase the likelihood of providing improved services and may help a young person with accessing additional services.

Among the tools available to assist youth providers with these issues are the following resources:

- PACER Center's "Project Swift": "Building Program Capacity to Serve Youth with Disabilities" is an easy to implement tool for increasing an organization's capacity to serve youth with disabilities and to work in partnership with their families.
  http://www.pacer.org/c3/curriculum/

- In addition to the curriculum, PACER Center has a variety of resources to assist professionals to expand educational and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities available on its Web site.
  http://www.pacer.org

- Project C3: Connecting Youth to Communities and Careers is a partnership between PACER Center, Pathways to Employment, the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development, and Minnesota Department of Education, and other state and local organizations. Other PACER Projects include the Dropout Prevention Project Exploring Interest Technology and Engineering (E.X.I.T.E.) for middle and high school girls, Simon Technology Center.
  http://www.c3online.org/employment.htm

- "Advising Youth with Disabilities on Disclosure": Disclosure is a very personal decision and youth service professionals can assist youth in

exploring disclosure options. Both young people with visible disabilities and those with non-visible disabilities benefit from accurate information on disclosure.
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/disability-disclosure

In addition to the resources listed above, the following local, state, or national agencies and organizations may be available to provide technical assistance and training: Social Security Work Incentives Planning and Projects, Community Work Incentive Coordinators, Area Work Incentive Coordinators http://www.socialsecurity.gov/work/wipafactsheet.html, state vocational rehabilitation agencies, mental health, intellectual/developmental disabilities agencies, Disability and Business Technical Assistance Centers, centers of independent living, private, non-profit disability advocacy organizations, and community-based providers.

The Department funds two technical assistance (TA) centers: 1) National Disability Institute Consulting, Inc. (NDI), which is the TA center for the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI) http://www.dei-ideas.org/ ; and 2) National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD/Youth) which is the TA center for ODEP's Youth Policy Team http://www.ncwd-youth.info/.

2. **Designate a Staff Person/Systems Coordinator.** A staff person/systems coordinator, including an existing and/or new staff member with expertise in disability and workforce issues, can improve access to programs and services to youth with disabilities and assist in the development of partnerships within and outside the workforce system. This position can coordinate services and leverage resources; and facilitate integrated, seamless, and comprehensive services and supports that are individualized to meet the needs of youth with disabilities. This person can train staff on issues pertaining to disability, including recruitment, identification, assessment, and resources. Additional duties could also include conducting outreach to youth with disabilities and agencies and organizations serving them, and conducting outreach and marketing to employers.

Examples illustrating the usefulness of expert, staff persons to better coordinate services to youth with disabilities are the Disability Program Navigators (DPNs) and the Disability Resource Coordinators (DRCs), located within One-Stop Career Centers. Although national funding for the DPN initiative ended, several states continue to fund Navigators and DEI builds upon the DPN initiative by hiring dedicated staff with expertise in disability and workforce development to serve as DRCs. Both Florida and Texas provide funding for DPNs:
http://www.floridajobs.org/workforce/dis_Nav.html; and
http://www.twc.state.tx.us/boards/disnav.html. For additional information on the DPNs and DRCs and related strategies for serving youth with

disabilities and a list of state contacts, visit http://disability.workforce3one.org or http://www.doleta.gov/disability.

In addition to Regional Disability Coordinators (RDCs), the Job Corps program also designates a dedicated staff person with disability expertise at each of the 124 Job Corps Centers. RDCs are responsible for ensuring that all students with disabilities are provided appropriate services and to assist in the management of any accommodations.

B. Implement a Universal Design Approach and Universal Learning Strategies.

WIA youth providers should ensure that their program is universally accessible and that physical, programmatic, and communications access is available to everyone, including persons with disabilities. Many youth have multiple challenges to employment and may need a variety of supports and services. "Universal design" refers to the use of common strategies that reinforce the concept of an inclusive setting that welcomes diversity. It means products and environments that are accessible to and useable by all. The use of universal design strategies enables workforce staff to provide easier access, a welcoming atmosphere, and better customer service. Universal design strengthens practices to better serve youth with a wide range of learning styles, languages, educational levels, intelligence, and abilities. It provides multiple and flexible methods to ensure that the learners acquire the information and knowledge they need. Service providers need to consider the individual learning styles and preferences of youth with disabilities to increase effective service delivery.

The following "Principles and Guidelines for Universal Design" were developed by the Center for Universal Design at North Carolina State University:

- Equitable Use - The design is useful and marketable to people with diverse abilities;
- Flexibility in Use - The design accommodates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities;
- Simple and Intuitive - The design is easy to understand, regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills, or current concentration levels;
- Perceptible Information - The design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities;
- Tolerance for Error - The design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions;
- Low Physical Effort - The design can be used efficiently and comfortably, with a minimum of fatigue; and
- Size and Space for Approach and Use - Appropriate size and spaces are provided for approach, reach, manipulation, and use regardless of the

user's body size, posture, or mobility.
http://www.communityinclusion.org/article.php?article_id=268

When developing a fully inclusive, integrated, comprehensive, person-centered workforce investment system based on universal design features, youth providers can reference the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth's publication entitled "Universal Design for the Workforce Development System", http://www.ncwd-youth.info/assets/guides/quick_reference_guides/universal_design_matrix.pdf. This resource provides an innovative collection of tools and resources, designed to assist workforce development professionals in creating services to meet the diverse needs of all customers. The National Center on Workforce and Disability (NCWD) is an additional resource that provides a wealth of other tools pertaining to accessibility. http://www.onestops.info/

C. **Incorporate Strength-Based Assessment and Career Development Plan Strategies.** Strength-based assessments identify the strengths, competencies, resources, preferences, and supportive services needs of youth with disabilities. Multiple assessment tools are required since there is no standard approach that will work for all youth, including youth with disabilities. Assessments need to incorporate and focus on employment, continuing education, and training to determine the interests and strengths of the youth. It is important that staff presume all youth with disabilities can work. Career assessments help youth with disabilities to understand how a variety of their personal attributes (e.g., interests, values, preferences, motivations, aptitudes, and skills) impact their potential success and satisfaction with different career options and work environments. To connect with better workforce development opportunities, all youth, including youth with disabilities, can benefit from participation in focused career assessment activities, including, but not limited to, structured goal-setting, interest inventories, abilities and aptitudes assessments, formal and informal academic and vocational assessments. Youth need access to reliable information about career opportunities (based on labor market information) that provides a living wage, including information about education, entry requirements, and income potential. Youth with disabilities may also need information on benefits planning, work place supports (e.g., assistive technology), and accommodations. This may occur directly through WIA-funded staff and/or through referrals to national and community-based partners and resources.

One useful career resource is "My Next Move", http://www.mynextmove.org/, an interactive on-line tool designed especially for students, young adults, and others new to the workforce. Through this electronic tool, users can explore occupations and find related information including job openings, job outlook information, salaries, apprenticeship opportunities, and other related education and training programs based on their interests. "My Next Move" complements the Department's "my Skills my

Future" http: //www.mySkillsmyFuture.org, which is designed to help persons with previous work experience match their existing skills to new occupations.

Another effective tool is "Career Planning Begins with Assessment: A Guide for Professionals Serving Youth with Educational and Career Development Challenges". This guide serves as a resource for multiple audiences within the workforce system. Youth providers will find information on selecting career-related assessments, determining when to refer youth for additional assessments, and additional issues such as accommodations, legal issues, and ethical considerations.
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/career-planning-begins-with-assessment

In addition to appropriate assessments, youth need the necessary employability skills to succeed in the workplace. The "Guideposts for Success" is a framework that can be used to assist young people in developing needed workplace skills and can expand the knowledge gained from career assessments. The "Guideposts" delineate what all youth, including youth with disabilities, need to succeed and there is also "Guideposts" that focus on the needs of youth within specific at-risk populations, including youth in the foster care system, juvenile justice system, those with learning disabilities, and youth with mental health needs.
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/topic/guideposts

One strategy that several workforce programs successfully use in connection with mental health association is having a local mental health provider train the workforce system staff and/or assist with assessing the customer's needs. The following provides some successful examples:

- Baltimore City Office of Employment Development (http://www.oedworks.com/) provides mental health assessments for youth using local mental health providers and partners with organizations in the city to provide direct services to youth with mental health needs;

- MontgomeryWorks One-Stop (http://www.montgomeryworks.com/index.asp) partnership with St. Luke's House, whereby St. Luke's provides a staff person to work at the One-Stop Career Center to help serve customers, including youth with mental health disabilities.

D. **Provide Work Experience Opportunities.** Internships, work-based learning, on-the- job training, apprenticeships, mentoring programs, cooperative work-education programs, and summer employment are effective ways that youth with disabilities can gain employment experience, confidence, and demonstrate to potential employers their ability to perform the job. In addition to being an outcome, work experience can be used as an assessment tool and can expose youth to a variety of environments. According to "Work-based Learning and

Future Employment for Youth: A Guide for Parents and Guardians" http://www.ncset.org/publications/viewdesc.asp?id=1222, paid work experience is one of the strongest indicators of future employment success by youth with disabilities and can represent a specific goal in a youth's Individual Service Strategy. Employability skills training needs to be part of this plan in order to enhance the overall performance of a youth placed within a work experience activity.

Below are several model programs, many of which have the potential for replication. These programs offer internships, apprenticeships, mentoring, job shadowing, and other work experience for youth with disabilities.

- **The Home Builders Institute's (HBI) Trades Training for Youth Programs.** Several of HBI's trades training programs target at-risk sectors of the American population, including youth with disabilities. These programs such as, Project CRAFT for adjudicated youth, share the goals of helping young people develop the skills needed to attain and keep employment, while also addressing the home building industry's shortage of entry-level workers. These target programs combine education, employability skills, on-site work experience, workplace skills assessment, apprenticeship, and career opportunities in the residential construction industry. http://www.hbi.org

- **The American Association of Advancement of the Sciences' (AAAS) ENTRY POINT! Program.** This program provides youth with disabilities paid internships with employers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) fields. http://ehrweb.aaas.org/entrypoint/about.htm

- **The University of Washington's Project DO-IT (Disabilities, Opportunities, Internetworking, and Technology)** promotes programs for pre-college and college students with disabilities, including mentoring, job shadowing, and internships. http://www.washington.edu/doit/

- **Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center's Project Search's "High School Transition Program."** Project Search is a one-year internship program for students with disabilities in their last year of high school. The program takes place in a business setting where total immersion in the workplace facilitates the teaching and learning process through continuous feedback and acquisition of employability and competitive work skills. http://www.projectsearch.us/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Item&id=57

- **The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth's (NCWD/Youth) High School/High Tech (HS/HT) Program.** A national network of state and locally operated programs, HS/HT equips young people with all types of disabilities the opportunity to explore jobs or further education leading to technology-related careers. http://www.ncwd-youth.info/hsht

1. **Develop an Outreach, Education, and Relationship Building Plan for Employers.** It is important to establish and maintain good relationships with employers who are vital to expanding opportunities for youth with disabilities. Staff can be trained to effectively market the business case on why employers should consider hiring youth, including youth with disabilities. As with all youth, staff should be prepared to highlight a youth's strengths and interests. Customized employment, taking tasks from existing job descriptions and assigning duties based on the youth's particular interests, strengths, skills, needs and attributes, is something employers may consider exploring along with the creation of job sharing opportunities. Information and resources on workplace accommodations and assistive technology, and incentives for hiring youth with disabilities should be provided as needed.

   One example pertains to tax credits offered under Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC), which are applicable to certain youth with disabilities, http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/. Employers can receive WOTC for hiring youth, including youth with disabilities; the following are three examples of WOTC eligibility categories:

   a) **16-17 year-old summer youth** - individual who works for the employer between May 1 and September 15, is at least age 16, but not yet 18 on the hiring date (or if later, on May 1); never worked for the employer before; and lives in an Empowerment Zone, Enterprise or Renewal Community.

   b) **Vocational rehabilitation referral** - person with a disability referred to the employer upon completion of (or while receiving) rehabilitation services approved by the state, an Employment Network under the Ticket-to-Work Program, or the Department of Veterans Affairs.

   c) **Social Security Income (SSI) recipient** – individual who is receiving SSI.
   http://www.doleta.gov/business/incentives/opptax/

   Detailed information about other tax incentives for hiring persons with disabilities, including youth, may be found in Internal Revenue Service publications located at
   http://www.irs.gov/businesses/small/article/0,,id=185704,00.html

It is important to develop collaborative relationships or partnerships with business and professional organizations, such as local chapters of the Business Leadership Network, Society for Human Resource Management, Chamber of Commerce, and/or registered apprenticeship programs. These organizations can assist youth providers in identifying employers who are "disability friendly" and who might serve as mentors, speak with other employers about their positive experiences, and hire youth with disabilities.

One useful resource is a toolkit developed by Corporate Voices for Working Families, United Way Worldwide, and the Workforce Strategy Center to assist organizations in creating beneficial and sustainable partnerships with business. The toolkit, "Supporting the Education Pipeline: A Business Engagement Toolkit for Community-Based Organizations", provides lessons on how community leaders can identify potential business partners, set realistic goals, and create partnerships for long-term success to ensure that all youth are ready for college, work, and life. The toolkit is organized around the four essentials of business engagement: 1) identify business leaders who will support your efforts; 2) educate business leaders; 3) persuade business leaders to become involved; and 4) activate business leaders in your efforts.
http://www.corporatevoices.org/businessengagement

The Disabilityworks program is designed to increase economic and employment opportunities of people with disabilities while meeting the workforce needs of Illinois businesses by promoting a collaborative partnership between the private and public sectors. Disabilityworks was launched in 2002 to develop a coordinated and aggressive regional plan to bring more people with disabilities into the workforce. The result is a direct interaction between employers interested in hiring people with disabilities and people with disabilities who are trained and equipped with valuable job skills. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) entered into a partnership with the City of Chicago and the Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce to implement this initiative and bring resources to businesses, people with disabilities, and service providers throughout Illinois. DCEO, the Chamber, and the City operate the Disabilityworks initiative with links to the Virtual One-Stop System, which is designed to expand employment opportunities for all Illinois residents with and without disabilities. This initiative implemented the Department-funded DPN and Disability Employment Initiative programs. Disabilityworks is a successful model, with the potential for replication, of business engagement that promotes the hiring of persons with disabilities.
http://www.disabilityworks.org/default.asp?contentID=1

The "Guideposts for Employers' Success" were designed to better address employers' needs and supply providers of workforce development services information on how to restructure their policies, practices, and resource allocation strategies. The framework provides details on what youth providers can do to address employers' needs with regard to hiring any job applicant, as well as additional needs employers may have in hiring and retaining employees with disabilities.
http://www.ncwd-youth.info/guideposts/employers

2. **Provide Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities to Engage in Service Opportunities.** The Corporation for National and Community Services (CNCS) has several programs (AmeriCorps, VISTA, Youth Corps models), which provide opportunities for youth with disabilities to gain work experience, give back to their communities, learn soft skills, and skills relating specifically to service activities, increase their confidence and self-esteem, and earn money. This includes the integration of work and community service into learning and employment plans for youth with disabilities. The CNCS' Technical Assistance Center, the National Service Inclusion Project, provides resources, including a list of state disability coordinators, to ensure meaningful participation in all of its service programs of persons with disabilities.
http://www.serviceandinclusion.org

   The materials developed ensure service and volunteer programs are inclusive of individuals with disabilities. Specific issues include inclusive language, outreach, and recruitment; legislation and legal responsibilities; reasonable accommodations; the definition of people with disabilities; management and retention of people with disabilities; universal design; and creating an inclusive service environment. For a list of national service contacts by state, refer to http://www.nationalservice.gov.

3. **Provide Summer Employment Opportunities.** One of ten program elements provided to youth under WIA includes summer employment opportunities. Following are some examples of successful models, funded by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Successful strategies from these models can be incorporated into service delivery to youth with disabilities.

   - The WorkPlace, Inc., Southwestern Connecticut's Regional Workforce Boards' "2009 Summer Youth Earn And Learn Program" matched 170 youth with disabilities to work experiences in the Southwestern Connecticut region. For some, this was their first meaningful and paid work experience.

   - In Greenwood, Colorado, as part of the Arapahoe/Douglas Works Program, the Recovery Act provided summer work experiences for youth with disabilities in a variety of settings: jobs assisting with

event set-up and break-down; gardening; working on grounds, and general maintenance.

- Job Service North Dakota provided employment opportunities for over 70 youth and the program was geared towards participants with the most severe disabilities (including intellectual disabilities and severe mental health needs) to develop stable support systems.

E. Building Connections to the One-Stop Career Centers and Developing/ Strengthening their Capacity to Serve Youth with Disabilities. It is important for One-Stop Career Centers to have the capacity to serve youth with disabilities. In order to accomplish this, One-Stop Career Centers can provide an inclusive culture that welcomes young people, including youth with disabilities. Youth service providers, if not co-located with One-Stop Career Centers, can take steps to enhance their connections. This can be accomplished by implementing activities, such as inviting youth and educators to tour the One-Stops, promoting use of the resource rooms, conducting workshops (either in school settings or the One-Stop Career Centers) targeted to youth employment, and hosting youth-focused job fairs. Additional strategies include working with local high schools, community colleges, and transition teams, which are comprised of different partners that plan for the youth's transition out of the educational system. A student with a diagnosed disability may have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) to guide his/her education and transition out of the education service delivery system. An IEP transition team is generally comprised of parents/guardians, youth, school personnel, representatives from vocational rehabilitation agencies, postsecondary programs, community-based providers, the workforce system, and mental health agencies.

Additional strategies include:

- Conducting outreach targeted to youth (including the development of marketing materials), students, and educators informing them about the resources available through the One-Stop Career Center system, as well as how to access and effectively use these services.

- Developing a list of the type of services (including WIA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker services) available at the One-Stop Career Centers and distributing it to students, educators, and disability service providers.

If resources are available, One-Stops can develop and implement a comprehensive approach to serving youth, including youth with disabilities. For example: Massachusetts' North Shore One-Stop Career Center developed a Youth Career Center (http://nscareers.org//youth_career_center.html) to serve young people, including those with disabilities; and several of Minnesota's Workforce Centers established the Zone for Youth to serve youth and young adults, including those with disabilities, ages 14-21.
http://www.positivelyminnesota.com/zones

F. Expand Partnerships to Increase Services to Youth with Disabilities.
The development of broad youth partnerships can assist in the creation of a seamless array of services to meet the needs of participants for comprehensive, intensive, and long-term services. In the Training Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 13-09 (http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/corr_doc.cfm?DOCN=2854), ETA encourages the use of interagency collaboration to further the goals of serving youth most in need and achieving successful youth outcomes. To ensure systems integration and increase the likelihood of successful outcomes, WIA youth providers can benefit from communicating and working with a broad array of partners, including: vocational rehabilitation agencies, community-based providers, mental health service providers, transportation providers, service organizations, and Social Security offices. Developing and sustaining partnerships with community colleges and public and private universities is important if the workforce system is to successfully promote positive education and employment outcomes of youth with disabilities. Partnerships, both formal (Memorandum of Understanding or MOU) and informal, are essential to serving youth with disabilities, includes agreements for cross-staff training, sharing data, coordinating resources, and serving on committees and teams.

1. **Establish Integrated Resource Teams (IRT's).** IRT's bring together multiple partners at the community level across service systems, public and private, helping to build teams who work together to combine resources and help job seekers reach employment. This approach improves communication and collaboration that results in enhanced coordination of services and supports for youth with disabilities. Members of an IRT work together to identify and strategize how their combined services and resources will benefit and support a young person's training and employment goals, with the youth also assuming responsibilities to contribute to reaching his/her goals.

   An IRT represents one of many options that a local area may be able to use to provide an increased level of support for a youth with a disability. It coordinates resources, helping to facilitate blending and braiding of resources and funds for an individual's needs. To access a promising practice video on IRT strategy, visit https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/4200927376315461065/info.

   To access a promising practice brief, with how-to strategies for establishing an IRT and contact information, refer to https://disability.workforce3one.org/view/2000927554771398150/info.

2. **Establish a Disability Action (Advisory) Committee (DAC).** A DAC may be an intra-agency or inter-agency entity. It serves as a means to regularly communicate, problem solve, and work together to improve employment outcomes of youth with disabilities. A DAC's focus is to

build a support system at the local, regional, or One-Stop Career Center level. A DAC model is also effective for expanding the capacity of the service delivery system to serve youth with disabilities. To access frequently asked questions on establishing inter-agency committees, including resources, a checklist, Webinar, and Power Point presentation refer to http://www.dpnavigator.net/pages/faq_nav_p25.html.

6. **Inquiries.** Questions regarding this guidance should be directed to the appropriate ETA Regional Office, the Office of Workforce Investment, or the Office of Disability Employment Policy.

7. **Attachment**. Resources for Working with Youth with Disabilities.