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## What's In Your WIOA State Plan?

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February 1, 2016

The workforce development system is the foundation for job training in the U.S. It provides millions of jobseekers and workers the opportunity to learn new skills and obtain new and better jobs.

Essential to the workforce development system is its accessibility to everyone – equal and free of discrimination. To that end, in 2014, the Obama Administration signed the *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)*, the first reform of federal job training programs in nearly 20 years. This overture, which aims to improve the public workforce system, is also critical when it comes to providing increased employment and economic opportunity for jobseekers, especially low-income and homeless jobseekers.

Now the time has come to implement the Act. To ensure that the system is accessible to everyone and free of discrimination, the U.S. Department of Labor's Civil Rights Center has announced a Notice of Proposed Rulemaking to provide important updates to its existing nondiscrimination and equal opportunity regulations.

### ARE YOU OR YOUR STATE IN THE PROCESS OF CREATING OR REVISING YOUR WIOA STATE PLANS?

If not, it's a great time to do so. Here's why: it's an opportunity to ensure that State Plans include the strategic language that's necessary for serving high-need or high-barrier individuals, specifically those who are at risk for or currently experiencing homelessness. Therefore, the Alliance encourages you to begin reviewing your state's draft plan with the following specific considerations:

Are homeless job seekers specifically and adequately represented in the State Plan's workforce development efforts?

Will the State Plan provide an extensive approach to employment services which involves cooperation with partner programs and agencies? Will the plan specifically encourage coordination with homelessness services?

Will the proposed employer services help potential employers to understand and reap the benefits of hiring homeless job seekers?

Will workforce systems, under the proposed Plan updates, offer opportunities for homeless job seekers to increase their wages or advance their careers by emphasizing competitive employment with opportunities for development?

Does the plan address improving employment services for youth, specifically homeless youth?

Final versions of State Plans must be submitted no later than April 1; drafts of these state plans are required to be posted for public comment for a minimum of 30 days prior to finalization and submission.

In our next blog post, we will focus on specific ways that a State Plan can best reflect the workforce system's potential to serve homeless job seekers.

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