

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

An Analysis of the Title I Adult Workforce Program and Adult Priority of Service

Conducted by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development - June 2024

Executive Summary

The Indiana Department of Workforce Development (DWD) evaluated the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult Program and Adult Priority of Service (APOS). This report presents key findings and points of further interest in a comparative analysis of employment and wage results for adult participants whose Priority of Service was determined in the program year 2022 (7/1/2022 - 6/30/2023).

Indiana has consistently increased service levels to adults with APOS barriers over the last four program years. Currently (PY23- Q3), 73.6 percent of participants receiving individualized career and training services in the adult program are from at least one of three APOS priority groups established by the Department of Labor (DOL);

- Recipients of Public Assistance
- Low-Income Individuals
- Basic Skills Deficient

This represents a 16 percent increase since the program year 2020 (7/1/2020 – 6/30/2021). As service levels to adults, in the three priority groups above have increased, it is important to understand, through a comprehensive evaluation of participant results, what the impact to employment and wages are for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers.

In general, adult participants during the review period who had APOS barriers, experienced employment and wage results lower than those of adult participants without APOS barriers. Of the participants who had APOS barriers, those who reported the barrier, Basic Skills Deficiency, had the highest rate of employment and average total wages for the review period. Participants that were receiving Public Assistance reported the lowest rate of employment and average total wages.

After a review of the evaluation results, several additional points of interest may be helpful to gain further insight into APOS barriers and effects on a participant's employment and wage results. For example:

- How do employment and wage results, after program exit, compare for participants with APOS barriers and participants without APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area? Or
- Of participants with APOS barriers, what percentage achieved barrier removal, by program exit? Did barrier removal result in higher employment and wage results? Or
- How do training services compared to supportive services impact the employment and wage results of participants with APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area? Or
- How does co-enrollment in WIOA Title II Adult Education impact the employment and wage results for adult participants with APOS barriers as compared to adult participants with APOS barriers who are not co-enrolled in WIOA Title II Adult Education?

To continue to understand the impact on employment and wage results for adult participants with APOS barriers, it is recommended that additional evaluation occur. Additional evaluation may result in a review of new data or data sets, a review of new participant characteristics, or a new period of review, based on the type of study selected.

Background and Purpose

WIOA Title I Adult Program

The WIOA Title I Adult Program provides individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, access to opportunities for employment, education, training, and supportive services necessary to succeed in the labor market. Indiana DWD Administers funding to twelve local workforce development boards to carry out these activities.

Adult Priority of Service (APOS)

To prioritize services for individuals with the greatest need, within the WIOA Title I Adult Program, for and who would benefit from employment and training services, WIOA sec. 134(c)(3)(E) identifies three groups with barriers to employment and requires priority to be given to these individuals.

When providing individualized career and training services in the Title I Adult program, local workforce development boards must give priority of service to participants who

receive public assistance, are low-income individuals, or have basic skills deficiency. Definitions of these priority populations are described within the Key Definitions and References section of this report.

When APOS is determined for a participant, the following priority categories, which comprise the three priority groups (Recipients of Public Assistance, Low-Income, and Basic Skills Deficient), are used to describe the order in which participants must be served.

- **Priority Category 1:** to veterans and eligible spouses who are included in the groups given statutory priority for WIOA Adult formula funding. This means that veterans and eligible spouses who are also recipients of public assistance, other low-income individuals, or individuals who are basic skills deficient receive first priority for services with WIOA Adult formula funds for individualized career services and training services.
- **Priority Category 2:** to non-covered persons (that is, individuals who are not veterans or eligible spouses) who are included in the groups given priority for WIOA adult formula funds.
- **Priority Category 3:** to veterans and eligible spouses who are not included in WIOA's priority groups.
- **Priority Category 4:** priority populations established by the Governor and/or local WDB.
- **Priority Category 5:** to non-covered persons outside the groups given priority under WIOA.

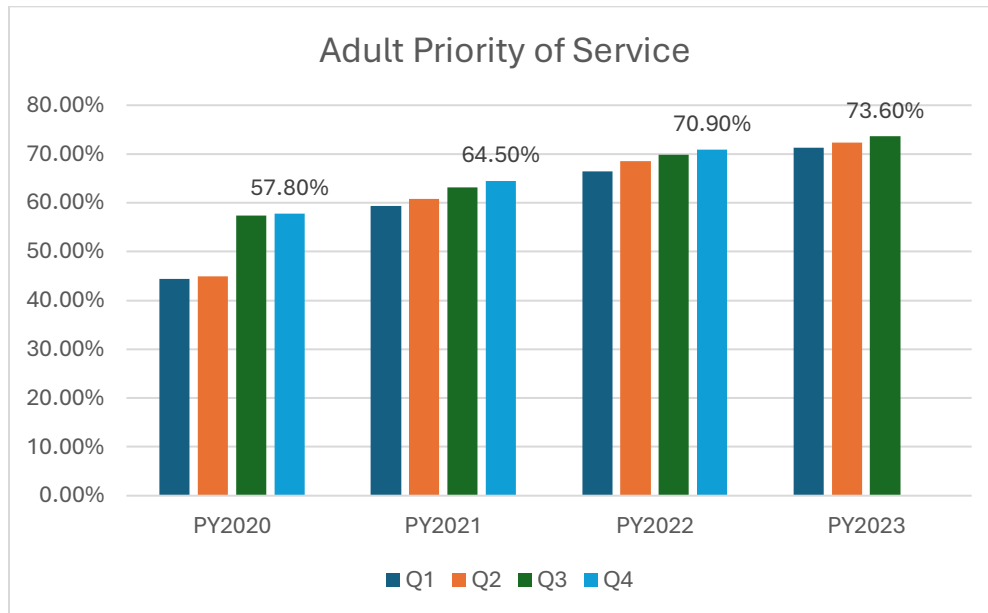
Priority categories 1, 2, and 4 include adult participants who have at least one APOS barrier, while participants in categories 3 and 5 do not have an APOS barrier.

USDOL revised its position on APOS, within the WIOA Adult Program and envisions that giving priority of service to public assistance recipients, low-income individuals, or basic skills deficient individuals means ensuring that at least 75 percent of a state's participants receiving individualized career and training services in the adult program are from at least one of the three priority groups. Indiana continues to strive towards this goal.

Indiana Adult Priority of Service Goals and Strategies

During the past four years, Indiana has implemented a targeted approach to bolster service levels for adults within priority categories. This strategy has primarily involved the articulation of clear definitions and the provision of guidance on APOS through

policy development and local area training. As of the third quarter of program year 2023, service levels for APOS were at 73.60 percent. This represents an increase of nearly 16 percent, approaching the Department of Labor's envisioned goal of 75 percent. The subsequent chart illustrates the steady rise in APOS service levels in Indiana, quarterly, since the program year 2020 (7/1/2020- 6/30/2021).



Evaluation Purpose and Target Populations

Given the strategic increase in service levels to adult participants with APOS barriers by Indiana over the past four years, there is a need to comprehensively evaluate the results for these participants in comparison to adults without APOS barriers. The purpose of conducting this evaluation is to compare the employment and wage results for adult participants whose priority of service was determined in the program year 2022. The comparative analysis focuses on participants with APOS barriers and without APOS barriers and their respective employment and wage results for the review period.

Additionally, this evaluation reviewed the specific barriers, public assistance, low income, and basic skills deficiency, and the potential impact these barriers may have on a participant's employment and wages.

This evaluation is intended to provide the groundwork for future evaluations through the identification of key findings and points of interest to further evaluate. These key findings and points of further interest are featured in the Findings and Conclusions and Recommendations section of this report.

Evaluation Methods

Evaluation Methodology

The type of program evaluation conducted is an *Outcome Study*, the comparison of multiple outcomes across programs. The methodology selected for this evaluation is a *Cross-Sectional Study or Comparative Analysis*. A comparative analysis is a side-by-side comparison of two or more data elements to identify similarities and differences. This methodology uses systematic data collection and analysis of one or more programs and policies, to find answers to questions related to effectiveness and efficiency.

Data Elements Reviewed and Review Period

The evaluation examined records of WIOA Title I Adult Participants whose Priority of Service was determined in the program year 2022 (7/01/2022 - 06/30/2023). The review compares participants with APOS barriers to participants without APOS barriers and analyzes the results of their employment and wages. DWD analyzed participant wages for eight quarters, which may have included wages reported before, during, or after a participant's time in the program. The quarters selected for review were intended to capture the maximum data available for participants' employment and wages. The below chart illustrates the quarters in which employment and wages were reviewed for participants within the data set.

PY21- Q3	PY22- Q3
PY21- Q4	PY22- Q4
PY22- Q1	PY23- Q1
PY22- Q2	PY23- Q2

Additionally, DWD reviewed the priority populations of the participants and the specific types of APOS barriers that were reported.

Data Collection and Sources

The data elements used to conduct this evaluation were collected from Indiana's case management system, Indiana Career Connect. Indiana Career Connect is the system of

record for WIOA Title I participants and all associated Department of Labor federal reporting. Employment and wage data for participants was obtained through employment wage records. The data was retrieved using SQL for the specified review period and Tableau was utilized to review the results of the comparative analysis.

Findings

Key Findings

How do the average total wages, for the defined period, compare for participants with APOS barriers and participants without APOS barriers?

- Participants with APOS barriers, (priority categories 1, 2, and 4) reported average total wages at \$40,666 compared to participants without APOS barriers, (priority categories 3 and 5), whose average total wages were reported at \$58,200. This represents a 43 percent difference in the average total wages reported for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers.
- While Indiana does allow local areas to define additional priority populations (priority category 4), based on the DOL calculation for adult participants with APOS barriers, additional locally defined priorities are not included. To more accurately reflect participants served with APOS barriers, based on the DOL calculation, the average total wages for participants in priority categories 1 and 2 was reported at \$35,200 compared to participants without APOS barriers, priority categories 3, 4, and 5, whose average total wages were reported at \$56,000. This represents a 59 percent difference in the average total wages reported for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers.

Which priority category reported the highest and lowest average total wages?

- Priority categories 3 and 5, participants who were without APOS barriers reported the highest average total wages for the review period, \$62,600 and \$53,800 respectively. The highest average total wages were reported in priority category 3, which is service to Veterans and Eligible Spouses, who are not included in priority category 1 and do not have APOS barriers.
- Priority categories 1 and 2, participants with APOS barriers, reported the lowest average total wages for the review period \$35,600 and \$34,800 respectively.

Participants with APOS barriers reported lower average total wages during the review period than participants without APOS barriers. Of the participants with APOS barriers, which of the three barriers (Public Assistance, Low Income, Basic Skills Deficient) resulted in the highest and lowest average total wages?

- Of the participants with APOS barriers, those who reported Basic Skills Deficiency reported the highest average total wages for the review period, while participants who were receiving Public Assistance reported the lowest average total wages.

How does employment, for the defined period, compare for participants with APOS barriers to participants without APOS barriers?

- 80 percent of participants with APOS barriers (priority categories 1, 2, and 4) reported employment results compared to 89 percent of participants without APOS barriers (priority categories 3 and 5) who reported employment results. This represents a 9 percent difference in employment reported for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers.
- While Indiana does allow local areas to define additional priority populations (priority category 4), based on the DOL calculation for adult participants with APOS barriers, additional locally defined priorities are not included. To more accurately reflect adult participants with APOS barriers, based on the DOL calculation (priority categories 1 and 2) 79 percent reported employment results compared to 90 percent of participants, without APOS barriers, (priority categories 3, 4, and 5), who reported employment results. This represents an 11 percent difference in employment results for participants with APOS barriers as compared to participants without APOS barriers.

Which priority category reported the highest and lowest employment?

- Priority categories 4 and 5, reported the highest employment for the review period, 95 percent and 90 percent respectively. The highest of these was priority category 4, which encompasses all locally defined priorities.
- Priority categories 1 and 2, participants with APOS barriers reported the lowest employment for the review period, 74 percent and 80 percent respectively.

Participants with APOS barriers reported a lower rate of employment during the review period than participants without APOS barriers. Of the participants with APOS barriers, which of the three barriers (Public Assistance, Low Income, Basic Skills Deficient) resulted in the highest and lowest rate of employment?

- Of those participants with APOS barriers, those who reported Basic Skills Deficiency reported the highest employment for the review period, while

participants who were receiving Public Assistance reported the lowest employment.

How does employment, for the defined period, compare for participants with APOS barriers in priority category 1 and 2 to participants in priority category 4 (locally defined priorities)?

- 79 percent of participants with APOS barriers in priority categories 1 and 2 reported employment results while 95 percent of participants, with locally defined priority barriers, in priority category 4, reported employment results. This represents a significant difference (16 percent) in the results for participants with one or more APOS barriers as compared to participants with locally defined barriers.

Data Visualizations

The data visualization below displays the employment and wage results of adult participants whose Priority of Service was determined in the program year 2022. The analysis was completed for review by priority category.

INDIANA WIOA EVALUATION



Wages and Employment of Program Year 2022 WIOA Adults

This is an analysis of wage records for Program Year 2022 WIOA Adult participants. Wages for the 8-quarter period from PY2021Q3 to PR2023Q2 are used to compare WIOA Adult participants with and without barriers to employment.

SUMMARY OUTCOMES BY PRIORITY GROUP

PY2021Q3 to PY2023Q2

Priority Type	Total	Employed*	Quarters Employed	Avg. Quarterly Wages	Avg. Total Wages
Priority 1: Veterans & Eligible Spouses who are Public Assistance Recipient OR Low Income OR Basic Skills Deficient	160	119	3.8	\$9.4K	\$35.6K
Priority 2: Non-Covered Persons who are Public Assistance Recipient OR Low Income OR Basic Skills Deficient	2,640	2,100	4.3	\$8.0K	\$34.8K
Priority 3: Veterans and Eligible Spouses who are not included in Priority Group 1	120	106	4.9	\$12.8K	\$62.6K
Priority 4: Priority Established by the Governor and/or Local WDB	174	165	5.5	\$9.3K	\$51.6K
Total, Priority 1-4	3,094	2,490	4.4	\$8.4K	\$36.8K
Priority 5: Non-Covered Persons Outside the WIOA-Priority Groups	893	803	5.4	\$9.9K	\$53.8K

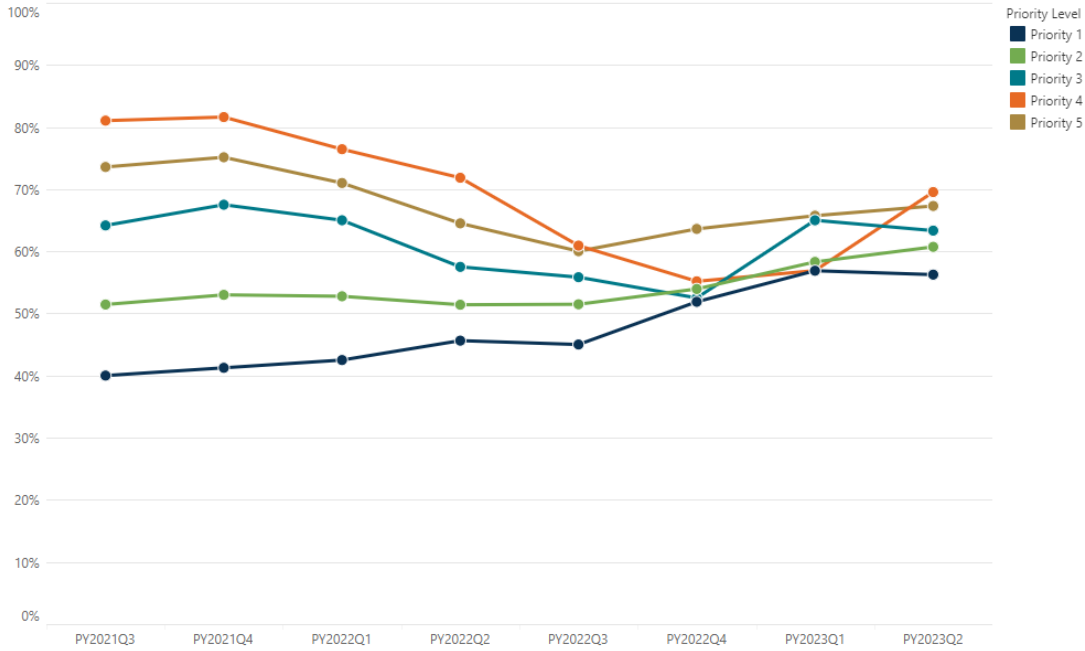
The data visualization below displays the percentage of adult participants, whose priority of service was determined in the program year 2022, that were employed- by the priority category, over an eight-quarter review period.

INDIANA WIOA EVALUATION



Wages and Employment of Program Year 2022 WIOA Adults

PERCENT EMPLOYED BY PRIORITY LEVEL



Employment in a given quarter is defined as earning wages higher than \$1,885 (determined by 20 hours/week at minimum wage).

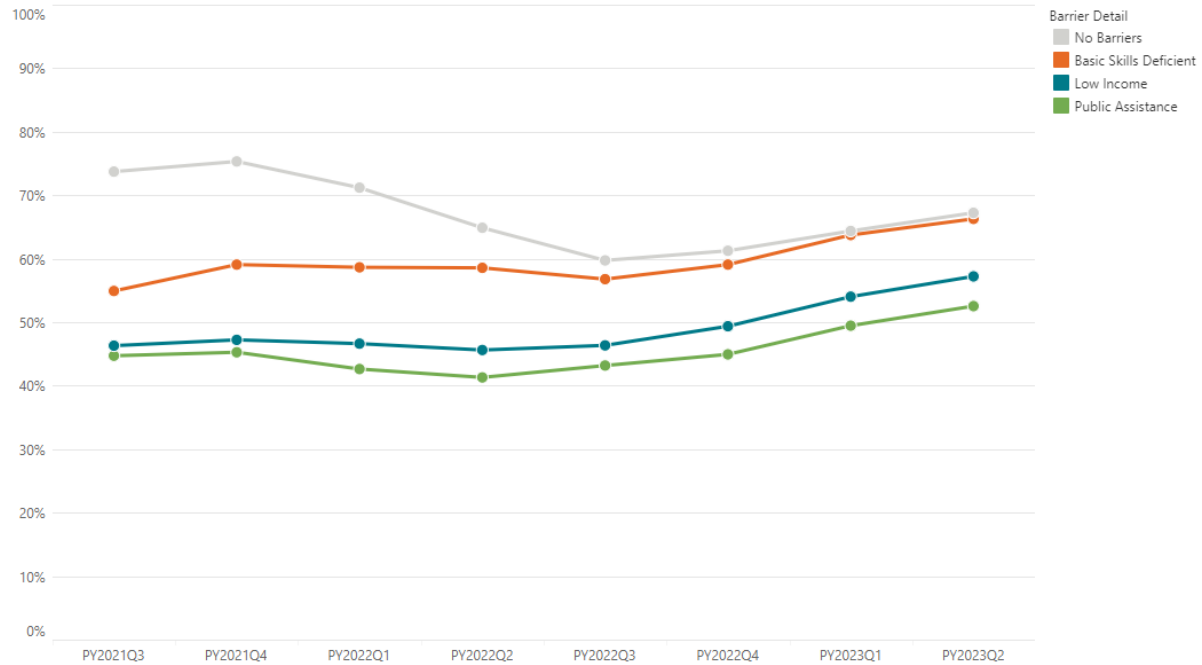
The data visualization below displays the percentage of adult participants, whose priority of service was determined in the program year 2022, that were employed- by APOS barrier, over an eight-quarter review period.

INDIANA WIOA EVALUATION



Wages and Employment of Program Year 2022 WIOA Adults

PERCENT EMPLOYED BY BARRIER



Employment in a given quarter is defined as earning wages higher than \$1,885 (determined by 20 hours/week at minimum wage). Barrier categories are not mutually exclusive.

Points of Future Interest

- What is the impact on employment and wages for adult participants with APOS barriers and without APOS barriers for each local area? Are there factors within the data that are unique to a local area?
- What are the characteristics of participants with APOS barriers in priority category 4, locally defined priorities, that have resulted in higher-than-average total wages and employment as compared to participants in the three DOL-defined categories, Public Assistance, Low-Income Individuals, and Basic Skills Deficient?
- How do employment and wage results, after program exit, compare for participants with APOS barriers and participants without APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area?
- How do multiple barriers affect employment and wage results for participants with APOS barriers and those without APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area?
- How do a participant's APOS barriers affect the length of time to obtain employment compared to participants without APOS barriers?
- Of participants with APOS barriers, what percentage achieved barrier removal, by program exit? Did barrier removal result in higher employment and wage results?
- How do training services compared to supportive services impact the employment and wage results of participants with APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area?
- How does co-enrollment in WIOA Title II Adult Education impact the employment and wage results for adult participants with APOS barriers as compared to adult participants with APOS barriers who are not co-enrolled in WIOA Title II Adult Education?

Conclusions and Recommendations

The results of this evaluation concluded that adult participants, during the review period with APOS barriers, experienced employment and wage results lower than those of adult participants without APOS barriers. Of the participants with APOS barriers, those who reported the barrier, Basic Skills Deficiency, had the highest rate of employment

and average total wages for the review period. Participants that were receiving Public Assistance reported the lowest rate of employment and average total wages.

The review also analyzed the impact of locally defined priorities (priority category 4) and compared the results for participants with APOS barriers in priority category 1 and 2 to participants in priority category 4 (locally defined priorities). 79 percent of participants with APOS barriers in priority categories 1 and 2 (APOS barriers) reported employment results while 95 percent of participants, with locally defined priority barriers, in priority category 4, reported employment results. This represents a significant difference (16 percent) in the results for participants with one or more APOS barriers as compared to participants with locally defined barriers. Further evaluation of priority category 4 is needed to understand the unique participant characteristics that may be resulting in higher rates of employment and average total wages for participants in priority category 4.

After a review of the evaluation results, several additional points of interest may be helpful to gain further insight into APOS barriers and their effects on a participant's employment and wage results. Priority points of interest to consider:

- How do employment and wage results, after program exit, compare for participants with APOS barriers and participants without APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area?
- Of participants with APOS barriers, what percentage achieved barrier removal, by program exit? Did barrier removal result in higher employment and wage results?
- How do training services compared to supportive services impact the employment and wage results of participants with APOS barriers? How do the results differ by local area?
- How does co-enrollment in WIOA Title II Adult Education impact the employment and wage results for adult participants with APOS barriers as compared to adult participants with APOS barriers who are not co-enrolled in WIOA Title II Adult Education?

To continue to understand the impact on employment and wage results for adult participants with APOS barriers, it is recommended that additional evaluation occur. Additional evaluation may result in a review of new data or data sets, a review of new participant characteristics, or a new period of review, based on the type of study selected. As additional evaluation topics are considered, a critical component to include in the selection of data, is a granular view of the data by local area. A review of the data

in this way will provide an opportunity to understand how the results vary in each local area.

Key Definitions and References

Key Definitions

- **Average Total Wages:** The average of all wages earned by a participant during the 8-quarter period evaluated (PY2021Q3-PY2023Q2).
- **Basic Skills Deficient:** describes an individual who meets at least one of the following criteria
 - Unable to compute or solve problems; or
 - Read, write; or
 - Speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society. (USDOL includes English language learners in the basic skills deficient group).
- **Employment:** any participant who, in a given quarter, earns wages greater than \$1,885 (20 hours per week at minimum wage).
- **Individualized Career Services:** a type of career service, as defined by 20 CFR § 678.430, that must be made available if determined to be appropriate in order for an individual to obtain or retain employment. These services include the following services, as consistent with program requirements and Federal cost principles:
 - Comprehensive and specialized assessments of the skill levels and service needs of adults and dislocated workers, which may include:
 - Diagnostic testing and use of other assessment tools; and
 - In-depth interviewing and evaluation to identify employment barriers and appropriate employment goals;
 - Development of an individual employment plan, to identify the employment goals, appropriate achievement objectives, and appropriate combination of services for the participant to achieve his or her employment goals, including the list of, and information about, the eligible training providers (as described in 20 CFR § 680.180);
 - Group counseling;

- Individual counseling;
 - Career planning;
 - Short-term pre-vocational services including development of learning skills, communication skills, interviewing skills, punctuality, personal maintenance skills, and professional conduct services to prepare individuals for unsubsidized employment or training;
 - Internships and work experiences that are linked to careers (as described in 20 CFR § 680.170);
 - Workforce preparation activities;
 - Financial literacy services as described in sec. 129(b)(2)(D) of WIOA and 20 CFR § 681.500;
 - Out-of-area job search assistance and relocation assistance; and
 - English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs.
- **Low-Income Individuals:** describes individuals who meet one of the following criteria.
 - Receives assistance through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), Supplemental Security Income (SSI), or a state or local income-based public assistance program; or
 - In a family with total family income that does not exceed the higher of:
 - the poverty line or
 - 70 percent of the Lower Living Standard Income Level (LLSIL); or
 - A homeless individual/homeless child/youth; or
 - Receives or is eligible to receive a free or reduced-price lunch; or
 - A foster child on behalf of whom state or local government payments are made; or
 - An individual with a disability whose own income meets the income requirements above but is a member of a family whose total income does not meet this requirement.
 - **Participant:** for WIOA title I Adult, a participant is a reportable individual who has received services other than the services described in 20 CFR § 677.150(a)(3) (or 34 CFR § 463.150(a)(3), as applicable), after satisfying all applicable programmatic requirements for the provision of services, such as eligibility determination.

- **Recipients of Public Assistance:** includes individuals who receive cash payments from federal, state, or local government for which eligibility is determined by a needs or income test.
- **Training Services:** governed by sections 20 CFR 680.200 through 680.230 and 20 CFR 680.300 through 680.350 of the WIOA Final Rule. Types of training services include:
 - (a) Occupational skills training, including training for nontraditional employment;
 - (b) On-the-job training (OJT) (see 20 CFR §§ 680.700, 680.710, 680.720, and 680.730);
 - (c) Incumbent worker training, in accordance with WIOA sec. 134(d)(4) and 20 CFR §§ 680.780, 680.790, 680.800, 680.810, and 680.820;
 - (d) Programs that combine workplace training with related instruction, which may include cooperative education programs;
 - (e) Training programs operated by the private sector;
 - (f) Skills upgrading and retraining;
 - (g) Entrepreneurial training;
 - (h) Transitional jobs in accordance with WIOA sec 134(d)(5) and 20 CFR §§ 680.190 and 680.195;
 - (i) Job readiness training provided in combination with services listed in (a) through (h).
 - (j) Adult education and literacy activities, including activities of English language acquisition and integrated education and training programs, provided concurrently or in combination with training services listed in (a) through (g).
 - (k) Customized training conducted with a commitment by an employer or group of employers to employ an individual upon successful completion of the training (see 20 CFR §§ 680.760 and 680.770).

References

- DWD Policy 2019-04, Change 2 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Adult Priority of Service https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/activepolicies/2019-04-PC2_-WIOA_Title_I_Adult_POS_Change2.pdf
- DWD Policy 2020-10, Change 1 Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I Service Delivery https://www.in.gov/dwd/files/activepolicies/2020-10-PC1_WIOA_Title_I_Service_Delivery.pdf