



**Final Report**

**Services for Youth With  
Disabilities Provided Under  
Title I of the Workforce  
Investment Act: Results From  
a Survey of Local Workforce  
Investment Boards**

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## List of Acronyms and Abbreviations

<b>ADA</b>	The Americans with Disabilities Act
<b>AJC</b>	American Job Center
<b>BLS</b>	Bureau of Labor Statistics
<b>CPS</b>	Current Population Survey
<b>The Department</b>	the United States Department of Labor
<b>DEI</b>	Disability Employment Initiative
<b>ETA</b>	Employment and Training Administration
<b>GED</b>	General Educational Development
<b>IDEA</b>	Individuals with Disabilities Education Act
<b>IEP</b>	Individual Education Program
<b>IRT</b>	Integrated Resource Team
<b>LWIA</b>	Local Workforce Investment Area
<b>LWIB</b>	Local Workforce Investment Board
<b>NCWD-Youth</b>	National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
<b>ODEP</b>	Office of Disability Employment Policy
<b>RFP</b>	Request for Proposal
<b>SIDP</b>	State Intermediary Demonstration Project
<b>TEGL</b>	Training and Employment Guidance Letter
<b>TEN</b>	Training and Employment Notice
<b>WIA</b>	The Workforce Investment Act of 1998
<b>WIASRD</b>	Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data
<b>WIB</b>	Workforce Investment Board
<b>YSP</b>	Youth Service Provider



## Executive Summary

### Introduction

As the country continues to emerge from the Great Recession, the challenges identified with youth unemployment remains particularly complex. The road to employment and economic self-sufficiency is considerably steeper for youth who face some type of physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health, chronic health, or other disability. Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) mandates the provision of workforce development services such as assessment, basic skills education, career readiness, occupational training, and job search assistance to both youth and adults, including to those with disabilities. While many aspects of WIA have been studied, much remains unknown about the scope and level of services provided specifically to youth with disabilities. To address this issue, Abt Associates was retained by the U.S. Department of Labor (Department) to examine the extent to which WIA's Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) are providing services to youth with disabilities through their American Job Centers (AJCs) and network of service providers. In addition, the research seeks to identify factors that may be challenges to the provision of these services.

The cornerstone of this research is a survey of the universe of LWIB Executive Directors. This empirical research was supported by a preliminary literature and program review that shaped its design and focus. The survey data were gathered via an on-line survey that was completed (or partially completed) by 69 percent of the Executive Directors or their designees. In addition to examining general perspectives and challenges in serving youth with disabilities, the survey examines how LWIBs: 1) identify participant needs and customize services; 2) build staff capacity to better serve this population; 3) integrate activities and funding to provide an expanded resource base; 4) reach the out-of-school population of youth with disabilities; and 5) provide employment and community service opportunities. The results of the study are presented in this final report.

### LWIB Approach to Serving Youth With Disabilities

The study begins by examining LWIBs' philosophy for serving youth with disabilities and the basic commitments and investments they have made in this area. Nearly three-quarters of the LWIBs (72 percent) report that youth with disabilities are viewed as a natural component of the larger youth population and distinctions are generally not made when delivering services. Nonetheless, a distinct minority (28 percent) respond that they consider youth with disabilities a unique service population that requires proactive targeting and customization of program resources.

The survey also examines various practices LWIBs use to encourage serving youth with disabilities. Exhibit E.1 shows a minority (less than one-third) of the respondents use specific practices to encourage their AJCs and providers to serve youth with disabilities. For instance, approximately three in ten (29 percent) of LWIBs report that they give additional consideration when awarding contracts to those who explicitly target this population. The survey results show that LWIBs subscribing to the unique service population philosophy are more likely to engage in these practices.

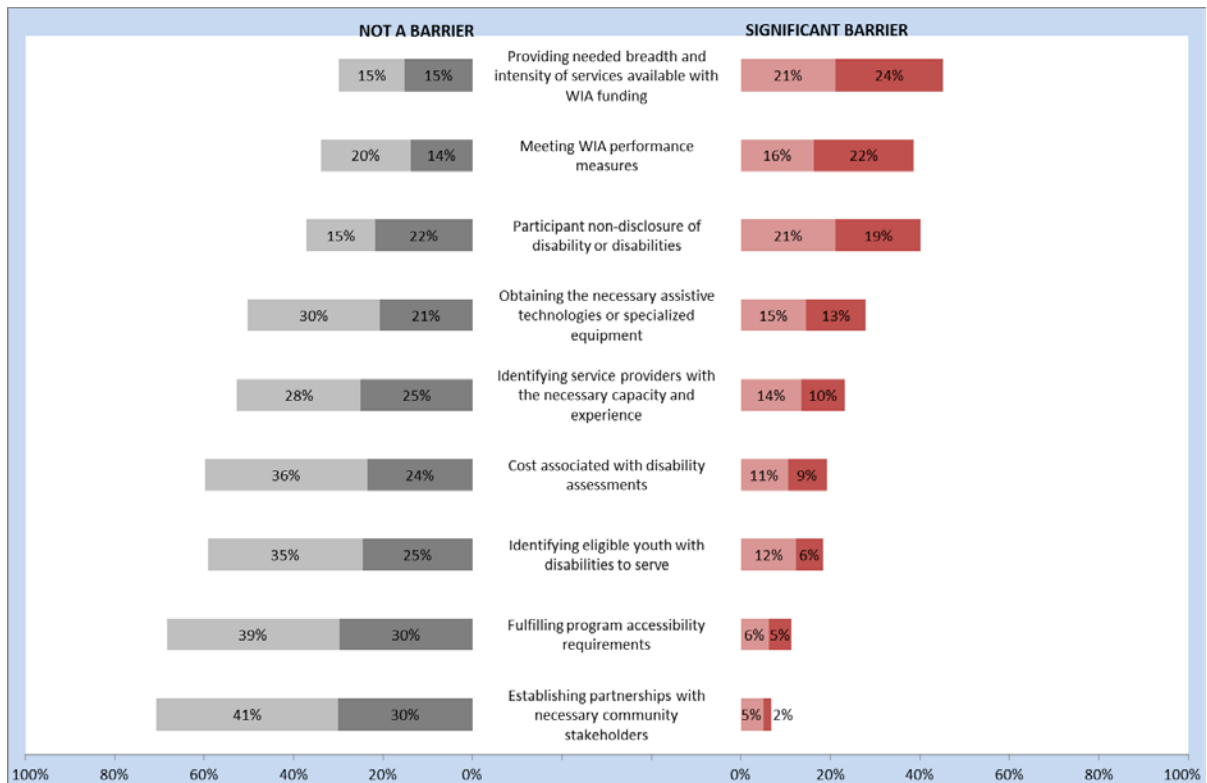
The survey also examines barriers reported by the LWIBs that impede their ability to serve youth with disabilities. As shown on Exhibit E.2, the two most common barriers cited by survey respondents are the challenges of providing the needed breadth and intensity of services (i.e., adequate to meet what may be significant barriers to employment) with the WIA funding that is available (45 percent) and meeting the established WIA performance standards (38 percent).

**Exhibit E.1 Practices Used To Encourage YSPs and AJCs to Serve Youth with Disabilities under WIA Funding, by Service Philosophy**

Practice	Service Philosophy	
	Unique Service Population (%)	Component of Larger Population (%)
Additional consideration in response to target population or proposed services criteria when awarding contracts	29	18
Explicit language in Requests for Proposal for service providers that reflects the LWIA's emphasis on serving youth with disabilities	38	26
Negotiation of performance measures	8	9
Service quotas or targets	19	9
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities	38	19
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit youth with disabilities	41	25
None of the above	23	40

Notes: n=364.

**Exhibit E.2 Barriers to Serving Youth with Disabilities**



Note: For all barriers, n=391. Response strength is ordered from left to right with the weakest response (not a barrier) on the far left in light grey and the strongest response (significant barrier) on the right in dark red. The graphic omits the middle category of “moderate barrier.”

## Identification of Disabilities among Youth and Response to Their Service Needs

Individual assessments are used by the workforce development system to assist those in need of more specialized or intensive services. This process can be considerably more difficult for youth with disabilities. The first challenge is to reliably and appropriately identify those who may have a disability. LWIBs may rely on obtaining Individual Education Programs (IEPs) as well as on self-disclosure by the youth. Each of these identification methods poses a challenge. Specifically, IEPs are not always available (particularly for out-of-school youth) and self-disclosure is often complicated by issues of awareness, relevance, and stigma.

Due in part to these limitations, the study found that many disabilities among youth served through WIA are not disclosed. As reported through the Department's Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) 14 percent of the youth served by LWIBs are recorded as having a disclosed disability in 2012 (U.S. DOL 2013d). In contrast, in the survey LWIBs report that an average of 18 percent of all youth served have a disability that remains undisclosed. It is likely, then, that the true incidence of disabilities is more than double the rate recorded in WIASRD.

Clearly the problems of disclosure exacerbate the challenge of assessing skills, aptitudes, and interests to create a customized service plan. For youth with disabilities, these assessments may need to be customized. This customization can be done through various accommodations including changes in the way a test is administered or the way a test-taker responds. Customization can also occur through the use of alternative assessments that also measure competencies, aptitudes or interests. This may include, for instance, a one-on-one interview, a portfolio assessment, or the use of a different test.

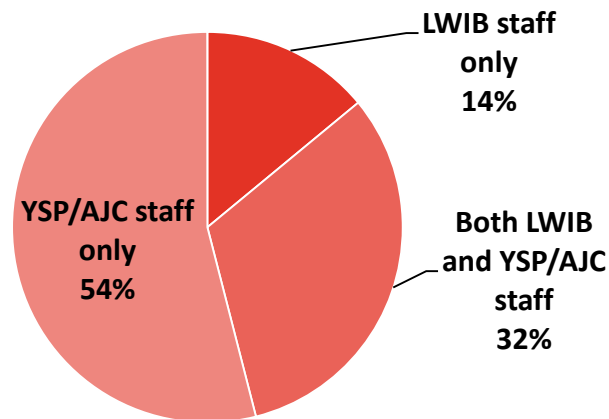
The survey shows that slightly more than half (52 percent) of LWIBs report that they provide at least some customization during the assessment process for youth with disabilities. Of those, a large majority report that the AJCs and Youth Service Providers (YSPs) in their area offer some basic accommodations when conducting assessments for youth with disabilities, many of which require a minimal investment of resources. They include, for instance, allowing for extra time, giving more frequent breaks, and providing alternative response options.

## Building Staff Capacity

Effectively developing and implementing service plans for youth with disabilities requires that staff possess a specialized level of knowledge and behaviors. The survey reveals that slightly more than two-thirds (68 percent) of LWIBs currently offer some type of staff training on serving youth with disabilities. As shown in Exhibit E.3, this training targets various combinations of LWIB, AJC, and YSP staff.

Despite the fact that 68 percent of LWIBs currently offer staff training on serving youth with disabilities, a sizeable majority of survey respondents perceive a need for additional training. Specifically, over nine out of ten respondents identify one or more training needs. Approximately two-thirds of LWIBs perceive the need for staff training on Federal, state, and local disability policies, on accommodations (67 percent), on leveraging funding sources (67 percent), and on disclosure procedures (62 percent). Only 7 percent of respondents do not perceive the need for additional training.

### Exhibit E.3      LWIBs Offering Staff Training



Notes: n=247.

### Expanding Services and Funding for Youth with Disabilities

Given the resource constraints that generally characterize the WIA system, it is important that Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) remain aware of and pursue opportunities for expanding resources and services. Three important strategies are explored in this study as they potentially relate to serving youth with disabilities. These include the formation of partnerships, the blending and braiding of program funds, and co-enrollment of youth in both WIA Youth and WIA Adult services.

The survey finds that LWIBs have partnerships with a range of organizations. As shown in Exhibit E.4, large majorities (over 75 percent) have partnerships with vocational rehabilitation, secondary and/or alternative schools, community-based organizations, adult education providers, and human service agencies to recruit, assess, and serve those with disabilities. Moreover, nearly 90 percent of all LWIBs report that forming partnerships is “not a barrier” to serving youth with disabilities (not on table).

Blending or braiding resources allows AJCs and YSPs to integrate separate funding streams to potentially expand procurement options or program activities. Blending resources combines distinct funding streams into one pool for use without restriction. Braiding is a less integrated form of sharing resources in which a funding source makes an earmarked commitment to pay for a service specific component such as staff or classroom space. Overall, approximately half of LWIBs report that they have procured services for youth with disabilities by blending or braiding resources from other agencies and/or organizations. In addition to pursuing resources externally, LWIBs often have the option of co-enrolling youth with disabilities in the WIA Adult and WIA Youth programs simultaneously. Doing so can be beneficial to the organization and the participant, as it results in the organization being eligible to receive additional funding leading to additional services such as occupational training for the participant. Despite these advantages, it appears that co-enrollment is rare. More than four-fifths of respondents (81 percent) report co-enrolling less than 10 percent of youth with disabilities in the two programs.

**Exhibit E.4 Partnerships Used to Recruit, Assess, Serve, and/or Place Youth with Disabilities**

<b>Partnerships Used</b>	<b>Percent of WIBs</b>
Vocational rehabilitation	89
Secondary and/or alternative schools	87
Community-based organizations	84
Adult education providers	78
Human service agencies	76
Juvenile justice agencies	74
Postsecondary institutions	71
Mental health providers	57
Transportation providers (local or Federal)	33
Social Security offices	26
None of the above	2

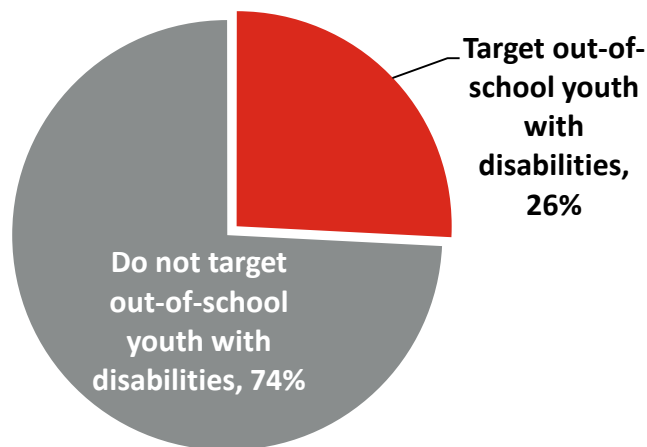
Notes: n=386.

**Reaching Out-of-School Youth**

Out-of-school youth who also have a disability are another group of interest to this study. These individuals may require more intensive developmental support, and may have also lost connection to the public education system that can play a role in both identifying disabilities and addressing developmental needs.

The survey asks LWIBs whether they target out-of-school youth with disabilities in their marketing efforts. Overall, approximately one-quarter (26 percent) report that they do so (see Exhibit E.5). LWIBs that market to out-of-school youth are substantially more likely to engage in practices to encourage YSPs and AJCs to serve youth with disabilities in general. A focus on out-of-school youth appears to be one component of a broader strategy that emphasizes serving all youth with disabilities.

**Exhibit E.5 LWIBs Engaging in Targeted Marketing and Outreach to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities**



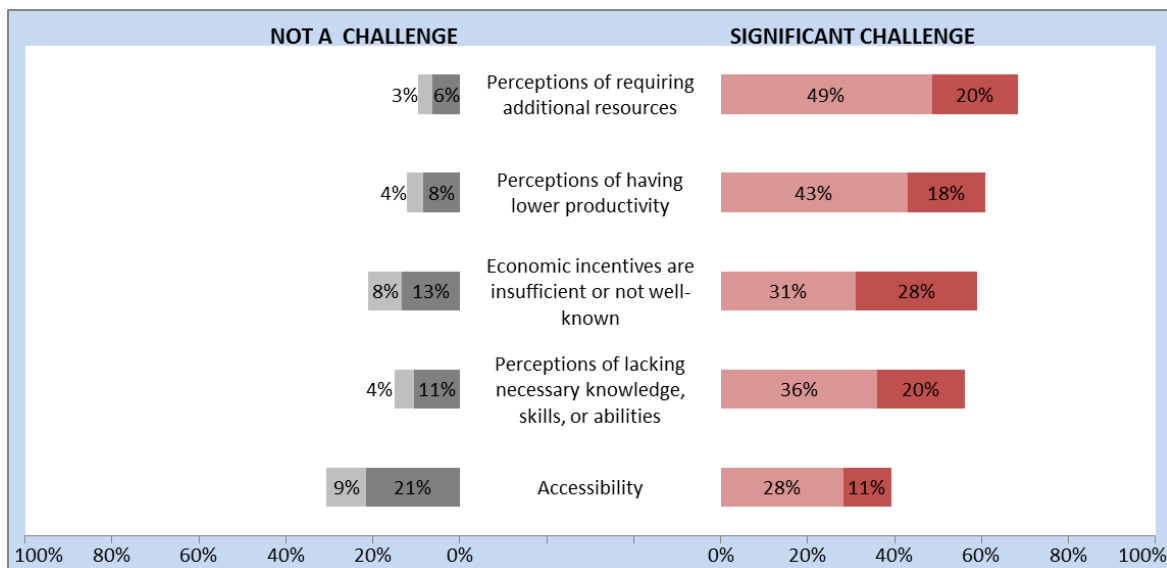
Notes: n=364.

## Providing Employment-Related Services

Work experience whether gained through paid or unpaid employment or community service, can play a vital role in the developmental process. The survey examines the extent to which paid and unpaid work experience, on-the-job training, summer jobs, job shadowing, career planning/exploration, and volunteer opportunities in a community service setting are provided to youth with disabilities. Over 80 percent of the LWIBs report that youth with disabilities are offered these same employment-related services as the broader youth population.

Despite these efforts, LWIBs do perceive that they face significant barriers in getting employers to hire youth with disabilities. As shown in Exhibit E.6, LWIBs report that the most significant barriers they face are the perceptions that youth with disabilities require additional resources in the workplace (69 percent); and that they are also perceived to be less productive (61 percent). To proactively address these barriers, over two-thirds of all LWIBs engage in employer training. Slightly more than half of LWIBs note that they directly address misconceptions about hiring youth with disabilities in training they provide to employers.

**Exhibit E.6 Barriers Faced by LWIBs When Encouraging Employers to Hire Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: For all barriers, n=390. Response strength is ordered from left to right with the weakest response (not a barrier) on the far left in light grey and the strongest response (significant barrier) on the right in dark red. The graphic omits the middle category of “moderate barrier.”

## Conclusion

The survey revealed that, currently, a minority of LWIBs proactively seek to serve youth with disabilities. While targeting and resource allocation decisions remain local responsibilities, the Department can provide encouragement, support, and incentives that can influence these decisions. In that spirit, we forward the following recommendations for the Department's consideration.

- Seek greater insight into the size and mix of the youth with disabilities population.
- Maintain flexibility in establishing performance standards.
- Sustain efforts to build staff capacity around both basic and advanced topics regarding serving those with disabilities.
- Adopt a broader perspective on the issue of “access.”
- Emphasize co-enrollment in both WIA Youth and WIA Adult programs to expand services to youth with disabilities.
- Continue to promote cross agency coordination across all youth services.
- Seek trial work opportunities, particularly with the more “reluctant” employers.
- Continue to examine the economic incentives of hiring youth with disabilities.
- Expand partnerships with the mental health community.

This study provided the most accurate and up-to-date profile of system-wide efforts to target and serve youth with disabilities. The accompanying recommendations provide an opportunity for the Department to further consider its role in addressing perceived barriers to serving this population.

## 1. Introduction

As the country continues to emerge from the Great Recession, the challenges identified with youth unemployment remains particularly complex. The road to employment and economic self-sufficiency is considerably steeper for those youth who face some type of physical, sensory, cognitive, mental health, chronic health, or other disability. These individuals may face challenges in accessing training or a work site. Similarly, a physical disability may limit the types of occupations that can be pursued. Speech or language disabilities may hamper the ability to fully express strengths and talents during an interview. Youth with visual or hearing impairments may not have the same awareness of opportunities because job postings, websites, or advertisements may not be fully accessible. These challenges may be compounded if an employer has never hired an individual with a disability and holds some misconceptions about, for instance, their preparedness or productivity.

The most recent statistics from the Current Population Survey (CPS) released by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) details just how striking the youth unemployment rate is, particularly for those with disabilities. In August 2013, the unemployment rate in the United States was 7.2 percent (U.S. DOL 2013a). During the same month, BLS estimated that the unemployment rate for youth with disabilities ages 16 to 19 was two-and-a-half times as high at 19.4 percent (BLS 2013). Even more worrisome is the unemployment of older youth with disabilities, ages 20 to 24, who are unemployed at a rate nearly five times the general population (33 percent) (U.S. DOL 2013b). This population may encounter real or perceived disincentives to work for fear of compromising other disability benefits they may receive.

People with disabilities represent a sizeable population. The Census Bureau reports that approximately 19 percent of all people in the United States have some type of disability (2012). Concerning youth, the Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics (2013) indicates that approximately 13 percent of youth ages 3 to 21 in the public school system are receiving services for some type of disability.

The Department addresses labor market challenges of those with disabilities through two key avenues. First, the Department's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) oversees the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 (Public Law 105-220; WIA). Title I of WIA mandates the provision of a range of workforce development services, including assessment, basic skills education, career readiness, occupational training, and job search assistance to both youth and adults, including those with disabilities.

In addition, the Department's Office of Disability Employment Policy directly supports the interests of those with disabilities by promoting the adoption and implementation of inclusive disability employment policy strategies and effective practices (U.S. DOL 2013c).

Recent data from ETA show that youth with disabilities are an important group served through WIA with 14 percent of all youth served reporting they have a disability (U.S. DOL 2013d). However, system-wide insight into the scope and nature of these services is limited. Conducted by Abt Associates and sponsored by ETA, this study examines the current status of services provided by Title I of WIA to youth with disabilities. Specifically, the goals of this study are to:

- Determine the extent to which the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) target services to this unique population;



- Examine select strategies that enhance local capacity to serve youth with disabilities; and
- Identify factors that may be barriers to the provision of targeted services.

The primary source of input for the research was a survey of the Executive Directors of LWIBs that oversee the American Job Centers (AJCs) and Youth Service Providers (YSPs). The content and focus of this survey were shaped by a review of relevant literature and site visits to three select programs that offer some WIA-funded programming and specialize in serving this population. The remainder of this chapter provides context for the study with a broad overview of WIA and its provisions for serving youth with disabilities. This is followed by a brief overview of several key initiatives undertaken by ETA to support this population. The chapter closes with an overview of the organization of the report.

## 1.1 Serving Youth with Disabilities under WIA

The WIA Adult program differs from the WIA Youth program. The WIA Adult program offers three levels of service sequentially: core, core and intensive, and training. To be eligible for core services, an individual needs to be aged 18 or older. Receipt of intensive services first requires receipt of core services, after which the individual was unable “to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency.” To receive training the individual must have the skills and qualifications to participate in the training, choose a training that is applicable in the area (or be willing to relocate), and be unable to receive other grant assistance, as well as still being unable “to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency.” When funds are limited, people who receive public assistance and are considered low-income receive priority for intensive and training services. Employed adults are also able to receive services under some conditions (U.S. DOL 2013e).

The WIA Youth program differs in that the person served must be 14 to 21 years old and qualify as a low income individual. In addition to these basic criteria, people seeking WIA Youth services must also demonstrate that they fall into one or more of the following categories:

- Deficient in basic literacy skills
- School dropout
- Homeless, runaway, or foster child
- Pregnant or parenting
- Offender
- Require additional assistance to complete an education program or to secure and hold employment

The program itself assesses the skills of the youth and offers 10 service components: 1) tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies; 2) alternative secondary school services, as appropriate; 3) summer employment opportunities that are directly linked to academic and occupational learning; 4) as appropriate, paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing; 5) occupational skill training, as appropriate; 6) leadership development opportunities; 7) supportive services; 8) adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months; 9) comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol

abuse counseling and referral, as appropriate; and 10) follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation, as appropriate.

The WIA Youth and Adult programs are typically provided by AJCs in partnership with YSPs. AJCs (formerly called One-Stop Career Centers) provide both youth and adults with publicly funded workforce development services. YSPs are eligible<sup>1</sup> local organizations such as community-based organizations or non-profit organizations that are awarded grants or contracts by LWIBs to provide services to youth as part of WIA (U.S. DOL 2000).

Although youth with disabilities are considered eligible for services if they meet one of these criteria, they can qualify for WIA Youth services in other ways as well. First, youth with disabilities can qualify for services through an exception to the low-income qualification. Under WIA, only a youth with disabilities' personal (not family) income is used to determine service eligibility. All other youth must use their family's income to qualify. Second, even if a youth with a disability does not meet the income qualification,<sup>2</sup> he or she can receive WIA services if the individual is eligible to receive cash payments under a Federal, state, or local public assistance program (such as Social Security Insurance or Disability Insurance). In addition, WIA specifies that up to 5 percent of participants in the WIA Youth program do not have to meet income criteria as long as they are from specific priority populations, and youth with disabilities are among those eligible for this exception. Finally, youth aged 18 to 21, including those with disabilities, can "co-enroll" to receive both WIA Adult and Youth program services. Section 101 (1) and (13) provide age limitations for receiving WIA funds, however, 18- to 21-year-olds appear in both age groups. Thus, youth with disabilities who are 18 to 21 are eligible to receive both youth and adult services. Given each of these exceptions, youth with disabilities can qualify for WIA youth (and adult) services at a much higher rate than other young people.

As reported through the Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) management system, service levels to youth with disabilities vary widely across LWIBs. Overall, LWIBs report that 9 percent of the individuals they serve are youth. Of all the youth served by LWIBs, 14 percent have a documented disability (U.S. DOL 2013d). There is variation across LWIBs. For example, nearly 30 percent of LWIBs report that of the youth they serve, less than 5 percent have a disability.

There are several factors that may shape these service levels. First, it is important to note the challenge of identifying individuals with disabilities. Disabilities may be undisclosed for any number of reasons ranging from a fear of discrimination to the perception that it is simply not relevant to their eligibility for, or receipt of WIA services. Still others may not even know they have a disability. Regardless of the circumstances, it is likely that these statistics understate the actual prevalence of youth with disabilities served by WIA. In addition, providing services to youth with disabilities in some instances may require more comprehensive interventions (i.e., more intensive or extensive) that

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<sup>1</sup> See 663.515 for eligibility requirements for being a service provider under WIA:  
<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/finalrule.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> For a single person to be considered low income for the purposes of WIA eligibility they can earn no more than approximately \$7,500-\$12,000 annually (i.e., less than 70 percent of DOL's Lower Living Standard Income Level).

may be more difficult or costly for LWIBs to provide. These individuals may require, for instance, additional assistive technologies, special accommodations, or customized assessments. In addition, there may be a limited number of providers that offer specialized services or expertise that may be required when working with youth with disabilities.

## 1.2 Recent Department Initiatives Targeting Youth with Disabilities

In addition to WIA, the Department supports a range of efforts designed to improve employment outcomes for youth with disabilities. Specifically, they examine service delivery designs that may more effectively serve this population, conduct targeted research and evaluations, develop and provide technical assistance, and facilitate cross-agency cooperation. Collectively, these initiatives have advanced their strategic objective of making the public workforce system more accessible and effective for those with disabilities, and for youth with disabilities in particular.

One recent example is the Disability Employment Initiative (DEI). DEI was launched in 2010 to promote partnerships and coordination of resources among workforce training programs at the local and state level. Twenty-three projects in 26 states have been funded through four rounds of DEI funding. Of the nine states in the initial DEI grant cycle, three—Arkansas, Delaware, and New Jersey—focus primarily on youth with disabilities. In the second and third grant cycles, just one grantee in each round (South Dakota in the second round and Minnesota in the third) focuses on youth with disabilities. The fourth grant cycle has two states (Alabama and Idaho) that focus on youth with disabilities. Two important components of this initiative are the Integrated Resource Team and the Disability Resource Coordinator. The Integrated Resource Team is composed of representatives across agencies and coordinates services and leverages funding to assist job seekers. The Disability Resource Coordinator works at the LWIB level to implement the strategic approach of the grantee. Grantees' activities are being evaluated, specifically to “measure their outcomes and impact on both the individuals and the system,” (DEI 2011, 1). These initiatives aim to increase employment opportunities and improve outcomes for individuals that are unemployed, underemployed, or receiving Social Security Disability benefits.

The Department also provides technical assistance to those serving youth with disabilities through its support for the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD-Youth). NCWD-Youth offers a range of training and technical assistance services and tools to state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), Youth Councils, and other workforce development youth serving systems and programs. One example is the *Guideposts for Success*, a framework that outlines key strategies for successful transition into employment for all youth, including those with disabilities. According to the *Guideposts for Success*, key strategies include: school-based preparatory experiences; career preparation and work-based learning experiences; youth development and leadership opportunities; and family involvement in and support of education and career development activities (NCWD 2013a).

ETA issued a [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 31-10](#) in June 2011. This TEGL was distributed widely to a broad range of stakeholders: state workforce agencies, liaisons and administrators; state and local WIB chairs and directors; state labor commissions; state apprenticeship agency directors; Indian and Native American grantees; and migrant and seasonal farmworker grantees. The purpose of this TEGL is to provide information and resources on promising practices and successful strategies for promoting enrollment, education, training, and employment outcomes for youth with disabilities.

Overall, these three initiatives underscore a number of common themes in serving those with disabilities, including the importance of resource integration and leveraging, the value of community partnerships, the value of staff training, and the need for customized and comprehensive interventions that can support this highly diverse population.

### **1.3 Structure of the Report**

The remainder of the report is organized as follows:

- Chapter 2 provides an overview of the study goals and research questions.
- Chapter 3 offers the survey design and analytic approach taken for the survey responses.
- Chapter 4 provides a reflection of LWIBs' perspectives on serving the population of youth with disabilities.
- Chapter 5 details the efforts LWIBs make to improve their ability to identify and respond to the service needs of youth with disabilities.
- Chapter 6 outlines efforts LWIBs make to enhance staff capacity to serve youth with disabilities.
- Chapter 7 discusses LWIBs' efforts to integrate activities and funding to provide more comprehensive services to youth with disabilities.
- Chapter 8 describes LWIBs' efforts to reach out-of-school youth with disabilities.
- Chapter 9 provides an analysis of LWIBs' efforts to provide workforce and community service opportunities to youth with disabilities.
- Chapter 10 offers a conclusion to the report.

## 2. Study Goals and Research Questions

Two initiatives hosted by the Department helped to shape the objectives and priorities for this study. First, in October 2010, the Employment and Training Administration and the Office of Disability Employment Policy (ODEP) convened and facilitated a roundtable discussion on serving youth with disabilities in the public workforce system. During this session local practitioners, researchers, and members of the advocacy community shared challenges, best practices, and recommendations for the Department and the workforce investment system (U.S. DOL 2010). Second, the [Training and Employment Guidance Letter 31-10](#) provided information on promising practices and successful strategies for promoting enrollment, education, training, and employment outcomes for this population. Recommendations from the roundtable discussion and the TEGL's strategies for enhancing services for youth with disabilities contributed to the initial research questions established by the Department for this study. Ultimately, ETA specified that the following five research questions would form the foundation of this research initiative.

- What efforts have Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs) made to improve their ability to identify and respond to the distinct service needs of this population?
- What efforts have LWIAs made to leverage resources and create partnerships to serve this population?
- What efforts have Local Workforce Investment Boards made to enhance staff capacity to serve youth with disabilities?
- What efforts do LWIBs make to reach and serve out-of-school youth with disabilities?
- What efforts LWIAs made to provide work and community service opportunities for youth with disabilities, including partnerships with employers?

### 2.1 Understanding the Program Context

To address these questions, the research team first examined background and contextual information to establish an informed understanding of the research and program landscape regarding serving youth with disabilities. This review examined both traditional research literature as well as program summaries and implementation analyses. The dual purpose of this effort was to establish up-to-date insight into effective programming practices as well as to gather input that would help to shape the focus and content of the empirical research to be undertaken on this project.

Working with ETA, the research team also assembled a panel of experts to serve as a sounding board for the design, implementation, and findings of the study. (A list of the members of the expert panel and affiliations are contained in Appendix B.) Experts were chosen based on their knowledge, background, and participation in previous activities relating to youth with disabilities. ETA and ODEP suggested some experts to include and the research team identified others. These experts provided feedback at three points during the study. First, an initial interview informed the study design and identified important topics for the survey. Next, the experts were engaged to help review and refine the LWIB survey. In addition, the experts reviewed this final report.

The final component of this background work consisted of three site visits to LWIBs identified by the expert panel and ETA as having strong initiatives for serving youth with disabilities. The Abt team conducted these site visits in summer 2012 to gain greater insight into the LWIBs' strategies,

practices, and challenges when serving youth with disabilities, and to inform the survey development. Site visits were conducted at the North Shore Workforce Investment Board (WIB) in Salem, MA, the Jefferson County Workforce Center in Golden, CO, and Bridges from School to Work in Chicago, IL, and included interviews with management and program staff at American Job Centers (AJCs) and key service providers.

## 2.2 Key Findings from the Literature and Program Review

To help inform and focus the empirical research, ETA specified that the research team undertake an initial literature and program review. This effort primarily entailed a review of secondary sources, although the team visited three program sites in person. Key findings from this background investigation are summarized below on a question by question basis.

- **What efforts have LWIAs made to improve their ability to identify and respond to the distinctive service needs of this population?**

While the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) offers a set of universal services, the services can be customized to reflect the distinct needs of the individual participant. This is particularly important when serving youth with disabilities, since their service needs can be more complex and multi-dimensional than others served through WIA, and the full nature of the disability may be difficult to identify. Citing the work of the National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth (NCWD-Youth), the literature and program review first examined the assessment function and its role in “helping youth with disabilities transition to adulthood and stable career.” Several key points emerged.

There are four domains of assessment, with some overlap among the categories (Timmons et al. 2005). The first two domains are educational and vocational—assessments in these categories are used to measure achievement, aptitude, skill levels, physical functions, and cognition. The second two domains are psychological and medical—assessments in these categories are used to identify any physical or mental conditions that would impair an individual’s functioning in the workplace, and to identify appropriate treatment and any necessary workplace accommodations.

Youth with disabilities often struggle with traditional test-taking, so there are two assessment strategies that allow individuals with disabilities to demonstrate their skills—the use of accommodations and the use of alternative assessments. Accommodations include changes in the way a test is administered or the way a test-taker responds. This can include allowing for frequent breaks, ensuring a quiet test environment, or providing different options for how to respond. Alternative assessments measure basic skills using a tool that is different than the standard assessment tool, and could include a one-on-one interview, a portfolio assessment, or the use of a different test. Accommodations and alternative assessments increase accessibility to the workforce system for people with disabilities. Research by Berkley Policy Associates (BPA) found only 15 states had in place specific formal guidance concerning accommodations and alternative assessments (Berkeley Policy Associates 2010).

Some youth who begin receiving WIA services have already had a disability identified during their time in the public school system. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) funds special services for students with disabilities, based on the criteria that an individual falls into one of the 13 disability categories recognized by IDEA, and that the

condition creates the need for special education services. These youth tend to carry the identification of their disability into the workforce system, and have accommodation of the disability built into their career plans.

For youth with “hidden” disabilities that have not been previously documented, identification and accommodation of the disability outside the school setting is more difficult (includes Specific Learning Disabilities, AD/HD, and mental health or anxiety problems). Program staff may have less knowledge of hidden disabilities and the appropriate services. It can be valuable for workforce development programs to collaborate with outside professionals, using a screening tool to identify potential hidden disabilities and making referrals to professionals for further diagnosis.

- **What efforts have LWIAs made to leverage resources and create partnerships to serve this population?**

For programs that serve youth with disabilities, building partnerships with other local organizations is a way to broaden the resource base and improve the likelihood that each youth receives the necessary level of services. This strategy is aided when programs have the flexibility to “blend” or “braid” their funds—contributing resources from separate funding streams towards a common service goal. Blending resources combines distinct funding streams into one pool for use without restriction. Since this typically requires a written agreement or change of regulations it can be challenging to implement and is a less common than braiding. Braiding is a less integrated form of sharing resources, in which a funding source makes an earmarked commitment to pay for a service specific component such as staff or classroom space. Braiding is generally accomplished through informal agreements.

A previous study for ETA (Berkeley Policy Associates 2010) finds that the existing literature on serving youth with disabilities through interagency collaboration is limited and only a small portion specifically addresses serving youth with disabilities in the WIA-funded workforce system. The bulk of the literature on interagency collaboration describes strategies for transitioning youth with disabilities from school or incarceration into employment, not with the WIA system but by using partnerships with adult disability service providers. The study noted that providers serving youth with disabilities most often partner with vocational rehabilitation systems, secondary schools, community colleges, adult and juvenile justice systems, child welfare and foster care systems, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, and mental health services. There was minimal use of Integrated Resource Teams (IRT), which are representatives from various local agencies that meet to coordinate services for a particular individual with disabilities. Team members discuss the individual’s needs on the path to employment and arrange for the appropriate agency to address each of those needs.

Other literature pointed to the designation or formation of an intermediary organization to facilitate the integration of resources. NCWD-Youth notes that intermediary organizations can connect programs that are traditionally separate in their priorities and funding streams, and identify ways to blend or braid funds that are mutually beneficial to both parties. In 2003, ODEP awarded grants to eight WIBs (or WIB equivalents) to implement the State Intermediary Demonstration Project (SIDP). The goal of the SIDP was to improve transition services for youth with disabilities through the use of intermediary organizations, whose role was to facilitate partnerships, promote systems change, and increase capacity building

(Westat 2008). Both sources cited numerous examples of resource mapping, blending, braiding, and other evidence of systems integration. However, little is known about the sustainability of these efforts.

- **What efforts have LWIBs made to enhance staff capacity to serve youth with disabilities?**

AJCs and Youth Service Providers (YSPs) are typically prepared to work with a diverse range of individuals. Nonetheless, serving youth with disabilities may require specialized expertise and sensitivity. For instance, staff may require knowledge to recognize various disabilities, understand available and appropriate accommodations, design appropriate training and employment strategies, and collaborate with employers to ensure the full consideration of candidates with disabilities. The literature and program review examined two primary strategies for bolstering staff capacity.

First, is the implementation of required training for program staff either by more experienced program staff or by a third party with specialized expertise in this area. The review highlights the curriculum developed by the Parent Advocacy Coalition for Educational Rights Center that was originally developed as a “parent-to-parent” initiative.

Also highlighted is the Disability Program Navigator (DPN) initiative, which was jointly funded by ETA and the Social Security Administration from 2003 to 2010. A DPN (or sometimes a Disability Resource Coordinator) is a designated staff person in each AJC who is tasked with coordinating services for people with disabilities in the workforce development system. In the context of enhancing staff capacity, one of the DPN’s roles is to act as a resource for staff, answering their questions and providing guidance on how to serve those with disabilities or with multiple challenges to employment.

- **What efforts do LWIBs make to reach and serve out-of-school youth with disabilities?**

Youth with disabilities who are transitioning out-of-school at the secondary level may need additional support to identify education, training, and/or employment opportunities in which they can thrive. The challenge is considerably greater if the youth has left school prematurely. The literature and program review empirically profiles this challenge by reviewing a variety of employment and education statistics generated by a 10-year study, funded by the Office of Special Education Programs of the Department of Education, of youth with disabilities who had been out-of-school for two or more years. Study findings that are most applicable to this study include: 1) the rate of attending postsecondary school was less than half that of out-of-school youth in the general population; 2) long-term employment was fairly rare for this group, more than 60 percent of those surveyed had been at their most recent job for six months or less; and 3) only 4 percent of those who were working received any type of workplace accommodations for their disability, largely because their employers were unaware of their disability (Wagner et al. 2005).

In light of these challenges, out-of-school youth with disabilities are a natural clientele of the public workforce system. The literature and program review highlights the findings of a Government Accountability Office (GAO) investigation in which local youth programs reported that LWIBs often require them to meet performance goals within time frames that are too short to reasonably achieve successful outcomes for difficult-to-serve youth, such as



out-of-school youth. In the GAO investigation, performance requirements acted as a significant disincentive for YSPs to reach out to and initiate work with difficult-to-serve youth. GAO recommended that ETA work with states and WIBs to provide youth program operators with the guidance needed to develop and implement contracts that enable local programs to serve the neediest youth while still achieving performance goals (GAO 2008). In response to GAO's recommendations, the Department developed TEGs<sup>3</sup> that provided several approaches to negotiating performance goals and promoting services so as not to discourage services to youth most in need.

- **What efforts have LWIAs made to provide work and community service opportunities for youth with disabilities, including partnerships with employers?**

Transitioning youth from school to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living is required under Federal law and specifically under the IDEA. The mechanism for transition under the law is a coordinated set of activities based upon an individual student's needs, strengths, preferences, and interests. Youth transitions can be supported in many ways, but research has demonstrated that "real world" work experience can be a particularly effective tool for helping to prepare youth with disabilities for employment and adult life. According to a recent report on lessons learned from the Social Security Administration's Youth Transition Demonstration project (Mathematica Policy Research 2010), transitioning youth from high school is most successful when youth have access to services and programs that go beyond the basic provision of case management benefits planning, such as apprenticeship and internship programs.

Work experience opportunities can help individuals discover career paths, develop skills, and make connections to future employment. Although there has been increasing emphasis on providing work experience and career development opportunities for youth with disabilities, a recent study examining the extent to which these opportunities were available to and accessed by high-school aged youth with severe disabilities or emotional and behavioral disorders found that participation was reported to be fairly limited (Carter et al. 2010). This suggests that it is not enough to open up work opportunities for these individuals, the work must be tailored to meet the needs of the individual and to facilitate participation. According to the NCWD-Youth, the highest-quality programs that focus on helping youth with disabilities gain work experience have several key characteristics, including: 1) exposure to a wide range of work sites; 2) experiences that are age and stage appropriate; 3) work site learning that is structured and linked to classroom instruction; and 4) use of assessment, feedback mechanisms, and measured outcomes.

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<sup>3</sup> [TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 23-09](#)

[TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 31-10](#)

### 3. Survey Design and Analytic Approach

The primary source of data for this study is a web-based survey that was administered to all 580 Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) across the country. The Executive Director of each LWIB was sent the survey, and the instructions that accompanied it encouraged them to forward the survey link to the person in their Local Workforce Investment Area most knowledgeable about services provided to youth with disabilities. The instrument was primarily designed for online administration. However, the questionnaires were also available to be completed by phone and hard copy, when requested. Exhibit 3.1 provides an overview of the survey respondents, estimated length of time to complete, and topic areas.

#### Exhibit 3.1 Summary of the Survey Instrument

**Primary respondents: LWIB Executive Directors**

**Estimated time to complete: 40-60 minutes**

**Content:**

***LWIBs current practices for***

- Enhancing staff capacity to serve youth with disabilities.
- Collaborating with other systems and integrate funding streams.
- Reaching and serving out-of-school youth with disabilities,
- Providing work experience and community service opportunities for youth with disabilities, including partnerships with employers.
- Improving the system's ability to identify and meet youth with disabilities service needs.

#### 3.1 Survey Administration and Response

The surveys were fielded during an eight-week period during May and June 2013. Contact information for all respondents, including e-mail addresses and phone numbers, was provided from the [America's Service Locator](#) database at the Department of Labor. This database provides the general public access to workforce services through American Job Centers (AJCs) in states and localities. America's Service Locator is updated regularly by staff at the Employment and Training Administration (ETA).

To notify potential respondents of the survey, an advisory was sent from the Assistant Secretary of ETA to all primary respondents, as well as to ETA Regional Administrators, state and local workforce agencies and LWIBs, and all state LWIB Executive Directors ([Training and Employment Notice 31-12](#)). Primary respondents were then sent an e-mail invitation to participate in the survey that contained a live personalized hyperlink to the online instrument (see Appendix A for communications about the survey and the survey instruments). An in-house "solutions desk" was staffed to handle inquiries from the field, provide reminders, encourage survey completion, administer the instrument via phone, and conduct follow-up as necessary.

Exhibit 3.2 summarizes the total number of surveys distributed and the rates of response. The survey was fielded to 580 LWIB representatives, with a total of 400 completions (a very small number (10) completed part, but not all of the survey) for an overall response rate of 69 percent.<sup>4</sup>

**Exhibit 3.2 LWIB Survey Response Rate**

<b>Fielded and Completed Surveys</b>	
Total number of LWIBs	580
Completed entire survey	390
Completed part of survey	10
Total completions	400
Response rate	69%

### 3.2 Analytical Approach

The study uses several conventions for reporting the results. For binary variables (e.g., responses to yes or no questions), the report presents the percentage of respondents who answered affirmatively. For categorical variables with more than two response categories (e.g., responses on a scale from 1 to 5) the report presents the percentage of respondents who selected each category as well as, in some cases, the average response. For items with continuous responses (e.g., estimated percentages of youth that fall within certain categories), the report presents summary statistics on the average and distribution. Because the survey was fielded with the universe of LWIB Executive Directors, this report does not present margins of error or statistical tests for differences.

Throughout this report, the number of observations included in the analysis varies based on the number of respondents who answered the particular survey item. It should be noted that some questions were not applicable to all LWIBs, depending on their programs and policies, and the reported number of observations does not include those who did not answer the question. To maximize the available sample, the analysis includes all respondents who provided data for the relevant data item(s), even if they did not complete the whole survey. Finally, unless otherwise noted, the analysis excludes respondents who responded “Unknown” to a particular data element.

Several limitations of this study should be noted. First, the analysis is descriptive: the results should not be interpreted to provide information about causal relationships, though they may be used to develop hypotheses about causality that could be investigated in future studies. Moreover, although the survey was fielded to representatives from the universe of LWIBs, the overall response rate was 69 percent. As such, it is possible that the survey data are affected by nonresponse bias if the characteristics of the LWIBs in our analytic sample differ systematically from the characteristics of the LWIBs in the population at large. However, response rates did not differ by geographical region or type of respondent, which in part mitigates this concern. In addition, while respondents were encouraged to consult with other stakeholders and data sources as needed, these data are still limited by respondents’ knowledge, recall, and role in the organization. In response to a final question, many

<sup>4</sup> For a survey to be considered complete, the respondent must have provided data (including responses of “unknown”) for all items in the survey.

respondents noted that they consulted additional sources in completing the questionnaire, suggesting that some effort was made to address this concern. Nonetheless, it is important to note that the survey does not systematically include the perspective of Youth Service Providers, who may have the most in-depth insight into the challenge of serving youth with disabilities. Finally, it is important to note that these data represent a snapshot of services provided to youth with disabilities in the workforce system at a single point in time.

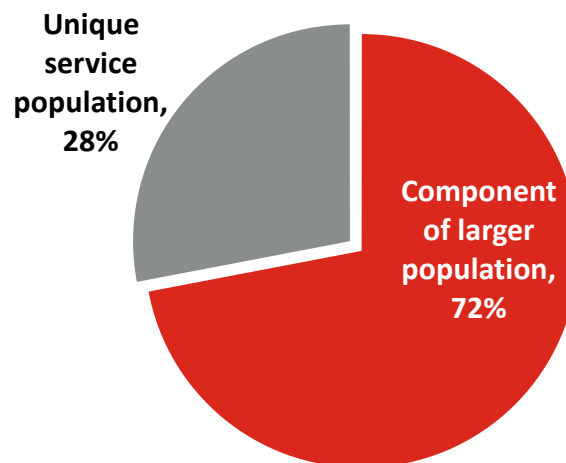
## 4. LWIB Approach to Serving Youth with Disabilities

While youth with disabilities are served by all Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs), the extent to which LWIAs actively target this group is influenced by both demand and supply factors. On the demand side, the level of awareness of relevant Workforce Investment Act (WIA) services and the extent to which referrals to WIA are made by outside organizations are important. These factors are influenced in part by the types of partnerships that the Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) has established with schools and other community organizations. Not only are these partners potential job referral providers, they also can be part of the LWIB's broader stakeholder base at the American Job Centers (AJCs) and help attract prospective enrollees. On the supply side, serving youth with disabilities, particularly if more intensive services or accommodations are necessary, must be balanced against other competing needs for limited program resources. In addition, service strategies may require specialized expertise and/or technology that may not be readily available in a given LWIA. No doubt, many of these factors contribute to the service variability that exists. This variability is quite evident even when examining service levels across Department of Labor regions. As was noted earlier in this report, approximately 14 percent of all youth being served by LWIAs are recorded as having some type of disability. However, in two regions this service level is 20 percent or more and in two other regions it is 10 percent or less.

The survey examines the overall policy and program context in which service delivery decisions for youth with disabilities take place. This chapter presents a review of the LWIBs' philosophy for serving youth with disabilities and an overview of basic commitments and investments they have made that potentially affect supply and demand for these services.

The survey asks LWIBs which of two distinct philosophies best describes their organization's commitment to serving youth with disabilities. As can be seen in Exhibit 4.1, almost three-quarters (72 percent) respond that youth with disabilities are viewed as a natural component of the larger youth population and distinctions are generally not made when delivering services. Nonetheless, a distinct minority (28 percent) respond that they consider youth with disabilities a unique service population that requires proactive targeting and customization of program resources.

**Exhibit 4.1 Service Philosophy Regarding Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: n=386.

While LWIBs may vary in their philosophical outlook, the data show a comparative response in the level of staff resources that support the provision of services to youth with disabilities. The survey provides respondents with a list of various staff resources and asks if any are used by their LWIB. Respondents also have the option of identifying additional (unlisted) resources.

As shown in Exhibit 4.2, LWIBs make a wide variety of organizational investments intended to support the interests of prospective and actual participants with disabilities. With few exceptions, these resources target the broader disability community and not exclusively youth. By far the most common support strategy, reported by over half of the LWIBs (68 percent), is to appoint a workforce board member to represent the interests of those with disabilities. Membership of a community-based organization representing individuals with disabilities is mandated in the WIA legislation if such an organization is present, and thus it is a widely but not universally employed strategy.<sup>5</sup> Approximately one-quarter (26 percent) of the LWIBs who appoint a board member also report augmenting this broad strategy by appointing a youth with disabilities member to a Youth Council.<sup>6</sup> The hiring of dedicated staff such as Disability Navigators or Resource Coordinators is used by fewer LWIBs (28 percent and 23 percent, respectively). Disability Navigators and Disability Resource Coordinators are AJC staff members who are responsible for a variety of roles intended to promote programmatic and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. These may include, for instance, training LWIB, AJC, and/or provider staff as well as facilitating community partnerships and using Integrated Resource Teams (IRTs).

**Exhibit 4.2 Specialized Resources Used by LWIBs to Serve Youth with Disabilities**

<b>Resource</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs</b>
Workforce board member appointed to represent the disability community	68
Youth Council with an appointed youth with disabilities member	30
Disability Program Navigator	28
Disability Resource Coordinator	23
Other (with school special education departments, special disability-related speakers, and training sessions for a WIA service provider affinity group, or staff that have been trained by the Disability Program Navigator)	22
Integrated Resource Team	22
Disability Action Advisory Committee or Subcommittee	11
Disability Task Force	7
None of the above	8

Notes: Respondents can report using one of more of these resources. n=380.

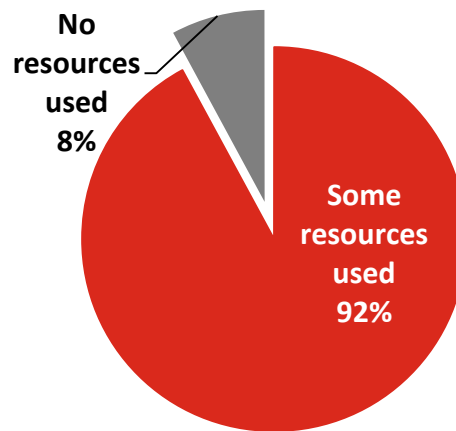
<sup>5</sup> Section 117 of the WIA legislation outlines required membership of LWIBs. Clause (b)(2)(a)(iv) states that each LWIB must have a representative of the disability community.

<sup>6</sup> Overall, 30 percent of LWIBs responding to the survey report appointing a youth with disabilities member to a Youth Council.

Other LWIBs report using an IRT (22 percent), a disability action advisory committee or subcommittee (11 percent), or a disability task force (7 percent). More than one-fifth (22 percent) of respondents report using other resources such as partnerships with school special education departments, special disability-related speakers, training sessions for a WIA service provider affinity group, or staff that have been trained by the disability program navigator.

In total (as seen in Exhibit 4.3), over 90 percent of LWIBs have made some type of investment in either staff or advocacy resources to directly promote the interests of those with disabilities. Only 8 percent of LWIBs report that they have not.

**Exhibit 4.3 Are Specialized Resources Used to Serve Youth with Disabilities?**



Notes: n=380.

While most LWIBs incorporate specialized resources to target youth with disabilities, fewer extend this commitment into procurement and marketing practices. Exhibit 4.4 shows that approximately one-third (31 percent) report engaging in targeted marketing or outreach, and an equal number report using explicit language in Requests for Proposal (RFPs) that emphasizes serving youth with disabilities. Smaller numbers report using targeted marketing or outreach efforts to specifically recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities (26 percent), giving additional consideration when awarding contracts (22 percent), using service quotas or targets (12 percent), or negotiating performance measures (10 percent). Finally, it is important to note that nearly four in ten LWIBs (38 percent) indicate that they do not engage in any of these practices.

Those respondents who view youth with disabilities as a unique service population are substantially more likely to engage in procurement and marketing strategies to actively encourage the provision of services. As shown in Exhibit 4.5, these LWIBs are considerably more likely to reward the targeting efforts of service providers as well as to engage in targeted outreach efforts themselves.

**Exhibit 4.4 Practices Used to Encourage YSPs and AJCs to Serve Youth with Disabilities Under WIA**

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs</b>
Explicit language in RFPs for service providers that reflects the LWIA's emphasis on serving youth with disabilities	31
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit youth with disabilities	31
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities	26
Additional consideration in response to target population or proposed services criteria when awarding contracts	22
Service quotas or targets	12
Negotiation of performance measures	10
None of the above	38

Notes: n=364.

**Exhibit 4.5 Practices Used to Encourage YSPs and AJCs to Serve Youth with Disabilities under WIA, by Service Philosophy**

<b>Practice</b>	<b>Service Philosophy</b>	
	<b>Unique Service Population (%)</b>	<b>Component of Larger Population (%)</b>
Additional consideration in response to target population or proposed services criteria when awarding contracts	29	18
Explicit language in RFPs for service providers that reflects the LWIA's emphasis on serving youth with disabilities	38	26
Negotiation of performance measures	8	9
Service quotas or targets	19	9
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities	38	19
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit youth with disabilities	41	25
None of the above	23	40

Notes: n=364.

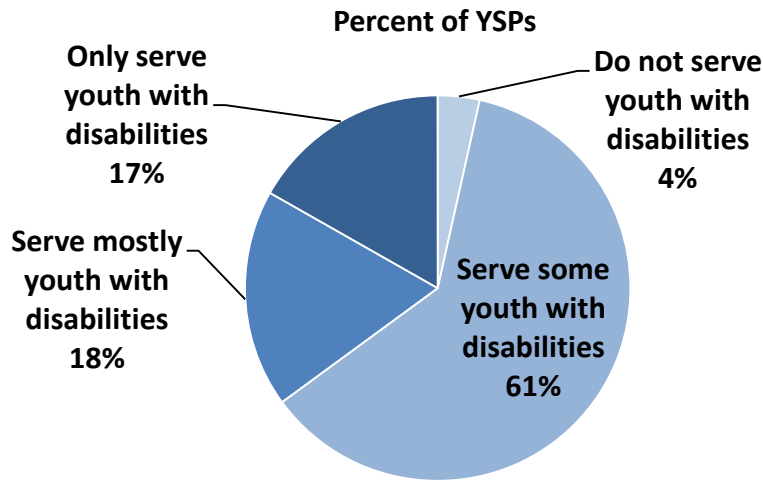
Overall, over three-quarters of respondents (77 percent) who view youth with disabilities as a unique service population engage in one or more of these practices compared with 60 percent of respondents who view youth with disabilities as a natural component of the larger youth population (as indicated by the proportion answering “none of the above”). This finding indicates that the local service philosophy may shape the use of these practices.

It is also conceivable that LWIBs service philosophy may be shaped by the size and mix of service providers available. Exhibit 4.6 shows the extent to which the respondents' network of Youth Service Providers (YSPs) serves youth with disabilities. As can be seen, LWIBs in the aggregate report that



35 percent of all providers serve “only” (17 percent) or “mostly” (18 percent) youth with disabilities. This composition varies somewhat by service philosophy. Specifically, those LWIBs who view youth with disabilities as a “unique service population” report that 42 percent of their YSPs serve “only” or “mostly” youth with disabilities. This suggests that their service philosophy may in part, be shaped by the availability of specialized expertise and program support. Regardless of service philosophy, however, only 4 percent of the providers do not serve youth with disabilities at all.

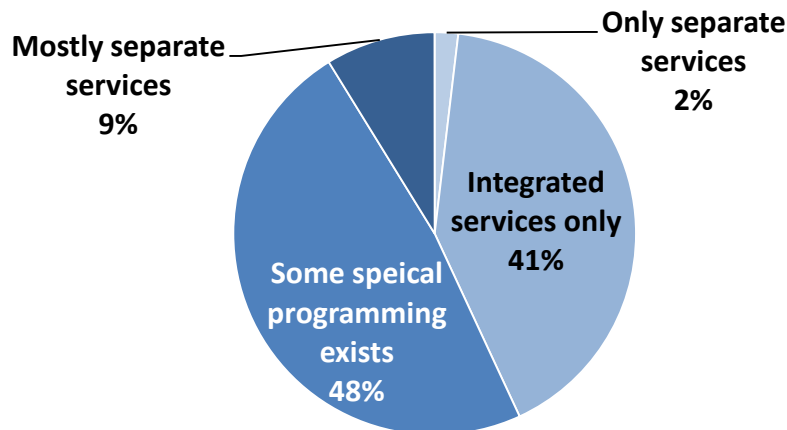
**Exhibit 4.6 Provision of Services to Youth with Disabilities Among YSPs**



Notes: n=339.

Exhibit 4.7 shows that almost half of LWIBs report that they provide some special programming for youth with disabilities (48 percent), which may be using a specialized provider or some type of assistive technology to aid training. Overall, only 41 percent report that they do not provide any separate services for these youth, and that services for this population are instead integrated with those provided to other youth. Only a small minority (11 percent) reports that most or all services for youth with disabilities are provided separately from services for all youth.

**Exhibit 4.7 Integration of Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: n=318.

These data are further illuminated in Exhibit 4.8 where the mix of programming strategies is examined according to respondents' expressed service philosophy. As shown, LWIBs who view youth with disabilities as a component of the larger service population are distinctly more likely to make use of integrated services only compared with LWIBs that view them as a unique service population (46 percent vs. 29 percent). Similarly, they are less likely to make use of some special programming (46 percent vs. 54 percent). At the same time, nearly half of LWIBs that view youth with disabilities as part of a larger service population nonetheless make active use of "special" programming services. This finding suggests that while an LWIB may report a certain programmatic philosophy, programming decisions could reflect individual needs and the availability of services.

**Exhibit 4.8 Integration of Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities, by Service Philosophy**

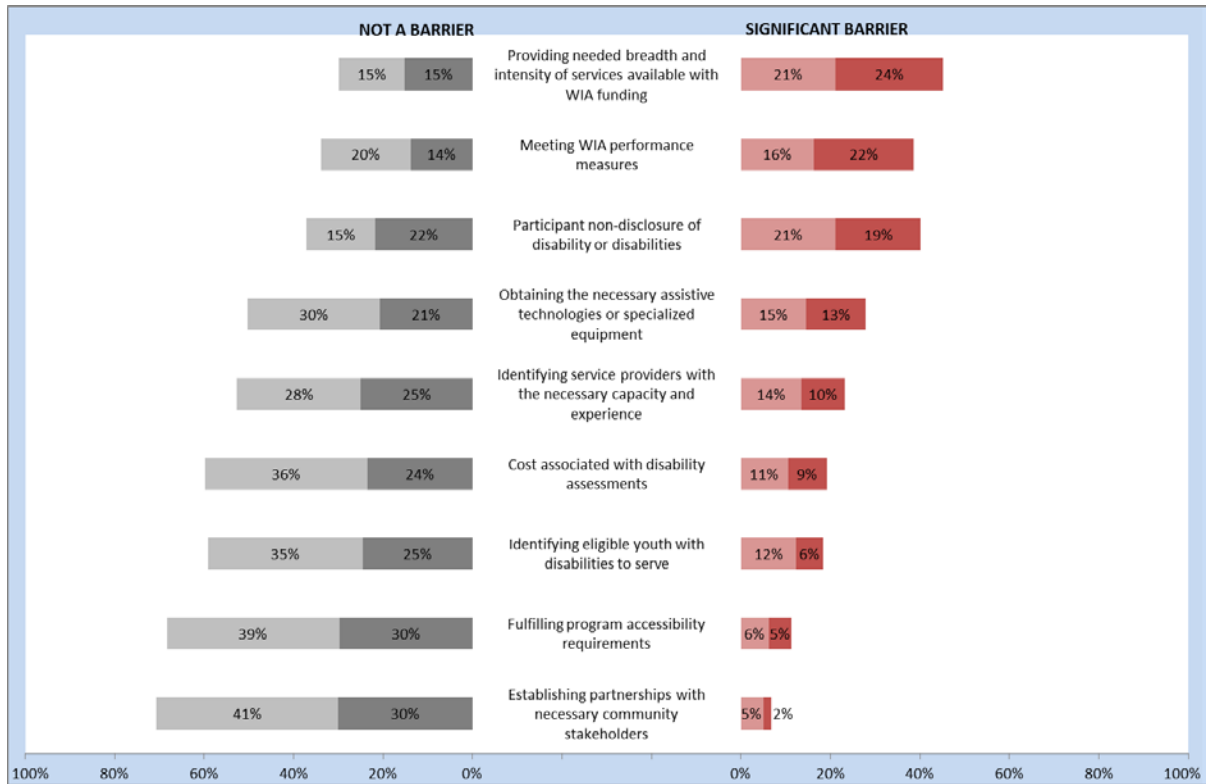
Type of Integration	Service Philosophy	
	Unique Service Population (%)	Component of Larger Population (%)
Some special programming exists	54	46
Integrated services only	29	46
Mostly separate services	11	7
Only separate services	6	0.4

Notes: n=316.

Finally, we examine the extent to which LWIBs perceive barriers to serving youth with disabilities. Using a five point scale (5=significant barrier, 1=not a barrier) the survey asks the LWIBs to rate a series of prospective barriers to serving youth with disabilities. As shown in Exhibit 4.9, respondents point to the challenge of providing the needed breadth and intensity of services with existing WIA funding (45 percent cite as a significant barrier). At the same time they acknowledge that serving youth with disabilities elevates the challenge of adhering to established performance standards (36 percent cite as a significant barrier). The inter-relationship between these two perceived barriers remains an open question. That is, it is not clear if the perceived "barrier" is one of overall resources (the associated cost per participant precludes serving many more individuals without disabilities) or one of performance (the associated service challenge makes it more difficult to achieve performance standards).

A secondary level of concern reflects the service delivery challenge posed by undisclosed disabilities and the need for specialized technologies or services. Alternatively, meeting accessibility requirements and forming partnerships among key stakeholders is not considered a barrier by most LWIBs, and it is rated a significant barrier by only 7 percent of LWIBs. (See chapters 5 and 7 for additional discussion of these issues).

## Exhibit 4.9 Barriers to Serving Youth with Disabilities



Notes: For all barriers, n=391. Response strength is ordered from left to right with the weakest response (not a barrier) on the far left in light grey and the strongest response (significant barrier) on the right in dark red. The graphic omits the middle category of “moderate barrier.”

## 5. Identification of and Response to Distinctive Needs of Youth with Disabilities

Individual assessments are used by service providers in the workforce development system to assist those in need of more specialized or intensive services. This type of service can entail the use of various diagnostic instruments to identify levels of academic proficiency, skills gaps, aptitudes, work readiness, support service needs, and/or interests. The proper administration and interpretation of these tools helps program staff customize a service strategy that balances individual needs against other practical considerations, such as cost and accessibility. When serving youth with disabilities, customized assessments may be used as well as accommodations and alternatives. Accommodations include changes in the way a test is administered or the way a test-taker responds. This form of accommodation includes allowing for frequent breaks, ensuring a quiet test environment, or providing different options for how to respond. Alternative assessments make use of instruments or tools that differ from those used for more mainstream populations. These uses of specialized processes include, for instance, personal one-on-one interviews, portfolio assessments, or the use of different testing tools.

Accommodations and alternative assessments are particularly important because they potentially increase accessibility to the workforce system for people with disabilities. In addition, these customized assessment strategies increase the likelihood that appropriate and effective service delivery strategies are employed. Once in the system it remains incumbent upon the Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) to provide a fully accessible service and training environment.

The Americans with Disabilities Act Standards of Accessible Design of 2010 outlines requirements for making buildings and facilities accessible to persons with disabilities. Universal design is the design of products and environments that are usable by all people to the greatest extent possible without the need for adaptation or specialized design (Universal Design Institute 2013).

In this chapter, we outline how American Job Centers (AJCs) and Youth Service Providers (YSPs) identify the disability status of youth. We also describe the prevalence and types of disabilities that are identified, as well as the perceived degree to which disabilities remain undisclosed. We then show the extent to which customized assessment tools and accommodations are used for youth with disabilities, including how universal design elements are incorporated into the service environment to better serve youth with disabilities

### 5.1 Identifying Disabilities and Needs

Chapter 4 notes that “participant non-disclosure of disabilities” is perceived to be one of the most significant challenges faced by practitioners serving this population. Exhibit 5.1 below suggests that this may in part reflect the need to rely on multiple reporting channels as the primary way to identify an individual’s disability status. Nearly 90 percent of all LWIBs rely at least partly on self-identification of disabilities. This can be unreliable, either because an individual may not wish to disclose their condition or they may not be familiar with all the various circumstances that might qualify as a disability. A similar proportion of respondents rely on consulting the Individual Education Program (IEP) provided by a school. While likely more reliable, an IEP may not be routinely available for some, such as out-of-school youth or for those whose disability does not adversely impact their educational performance.

Half of the LWIBs report using some types of assessments to identify a disability. For the most part, these tools do not specifically target youth with disabilities and are used to assess the broader youth population as well. A little more than one in seven LWIBs (15 percent) use a more select review and assessment based on staff judgment. Very few LWIBs (6 percent) collaborate with other social service delivery programs to share or link this information in some type of cross-organization database for the area. A small number of LWIBS (5 percent) use other methods to identify the disability status of youth; of those using other methods, 43 percent report using documentation from a doctor.

**Exhibit 5.1 Methods Used by LWIBs to Identify Disability Status**

Method Used	Percent of LWIBs
Students' Individual Education Program from school	88
Self-identification	88
Information from referral source	80
Assessments given to all youth seeking services	50
Assessments given to select youth based on staff judgment	15
Central case management database used across social service programs in the area	6
Other	5
None of the above	0.0

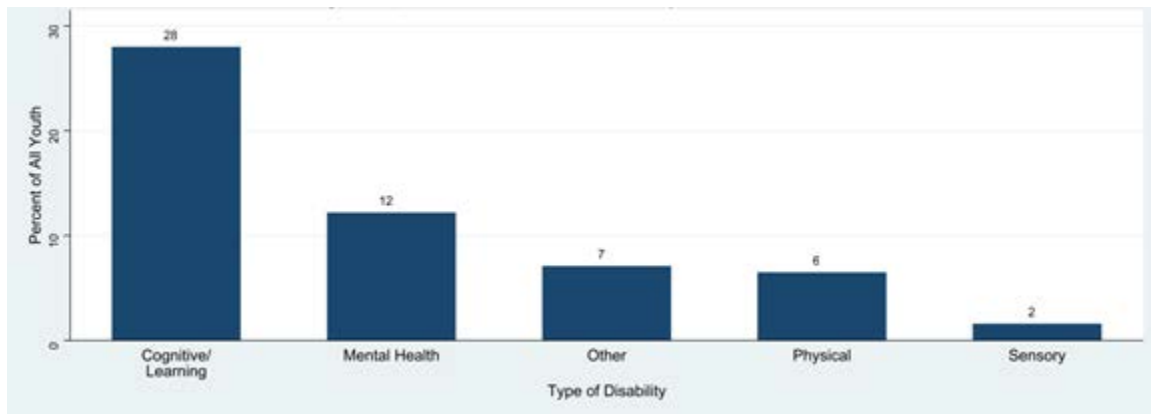
Notes: n=389.

Despite the variety of methods used to identify disability status, LWIBs estimate that the prevalence of undisclosed disabilities among youth is widespread for any number of reasons, including fear of being stigmatized, a disability being undiagnosed, or the youth do not realize that their disability status is relevant to disclose. As discussed in the Executive Summary, Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD) shows that 14 percent of the youth served by LWIBs are recorded as having a disability that is disclosed. In contrast, respondents estimate that an average of 18 percent of all youth served have a disability that remains undisclosed, i.e., a disability that would not be reported in WIASRD. This indicates incidence of disabilities is substantially—perhaps more than double—the rate recorded in WIASRD.<sup>7</sup>

On the survey, the LWIBs provide an estimate of the type and composition of the disabilities their participants bring to the program based on their understanding of both disclosed and undisclosed disabilities. Respondents estimate that an average of 28 percent of youth served has a cognitive and/or learning disability and 12 percent have a mental health disability. Smaller numbers of youth are reported to have physical (6 percent), sensory (2 percent), or other (7 percent) disabilities.

<sup>7</sup> Some youth may have more than one disability, making the precise proportion of undisclosed disabilities impossible to calculate from the provided responses. However, we can say that a *minimum* of 32 percent of all disabilities are undisclosed (calculated as undisclosed disabilities divided by all disabilities, or 18/[28+12+6+7+2]).

**Exhibit 5.2 Type of Disabilities among Youth with Disabilities Served in WIA**



Notes: n=316. Respondents were asked to include both disclosed and undisclosed disabilities in these estimates.

Interestingly, as shown in Exhibit 5.3, respondents that make a greater effort to identify disability status—and are thus presumably more likely to be able to identify and document disabilities—also generally report a higher number of undisclosed disabilities in the youth population. For example, 88 percent of LWIBs identify disabilities through the students’ IEP from school (also reported in Exhibit 5.1). These LWIBs report an undisclosed disability rate of 18 percent. In contrast; the 12 percent of LWIBs that do *not* identify disabilities using this method report an undisclosed disability rate of only 12 percent.

**Exhibit 5.3 Estimated Proportions of Youth Having an Undisclosed Disability, by Method Used to Identify Disability Status**

Method Used	Percent of LWIBs Using Method	Estimate of Undisclosed Disabilities if Method Used (%)	Estimate of Undisclosed Disabilities if Method Not Used (%)
Through students' Individual Education Program from school	88	18	12
Through self-identification	88	18	16
Through referral source	80	17	20
Through assessments given to all youth seeking services	50	18	17
Through assessments given to select youth based on staff judgment	15	22	17
Through a central case management database used across social service programs in the area	6	21	17
Other	5	17	18
None of the above	0.0	N/A	N/A

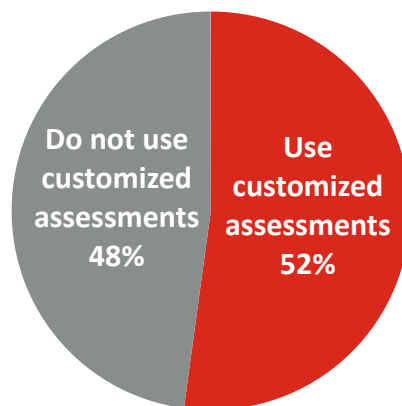
Notes: n=389.

It thus appears that LWIBs who make stronger efforts to identify disabilities may gain relevant experience in this aspect of the intake process. As a result, they may become more cognizant of the true extent to which youth they serve are affected by disabilities and the potential extent of non-disclosure and underreporting.

## 5.2 Customized Assessments Provided to Youth with Disabilities

In addition to understanding the scope and nature of a disability, assessments can be used to identify the various aptitudes, interests, and skill gaps that can shape a service strategy. Doing so can be more difficult for youth with disabilities, who sometimes struggle with traditional test-taking formats or materials. This may necessitate some sort of customization in the form of accommodations or even the use of alternative tests. A majority of LWIBs (52 percent) report that the AJCs and YSPs in their area offer some basic customization when conducting assessments for youth with disabilities, as seen in Exhibit 5.4.

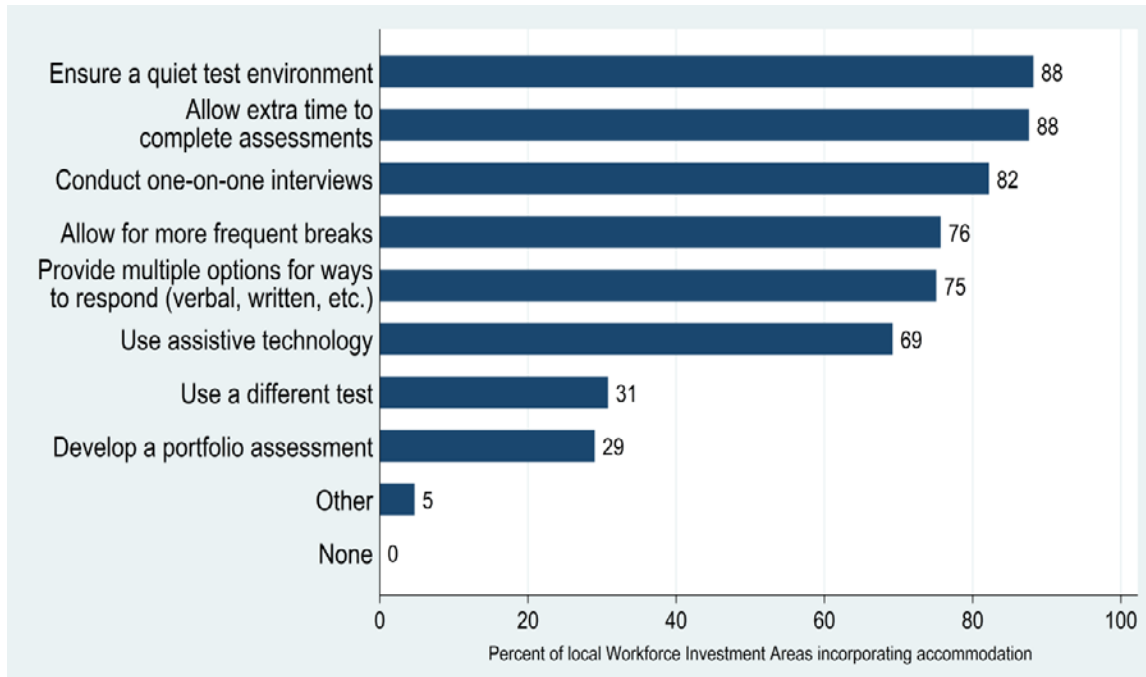
**Exhibit 5.4 LWIBs Use of Customized Assessment Tools for Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: n=324.

Exhibit 5.5 shows the ways in which assessments are customized, many of which require a minimal investment of resources. They include, for instance, allowing for extra time (used in 88 percent of LWIBs), more frequent breaks (76 percent) and providing alternative response options (75 percent). Notably, nearly two-thirds of the LWIBs make use of some type of assistive technology. The Department broadly defines assistive technology as, “any item, piece of equipment, product or system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of persons with disabilities” (U.S. DOL 2013f). In AJCs or YSPs, these may include, for example, providing wheelchairs, having computer software that reads aloud what is written on the screen (screen readers), using large print reading materials or having speech-generating devices that help those with severe speech impediments to communicate (Assistive Technology Industry Association 2013). A much smaller number report providing alternative assessments through, for instance, the use of a different test that may be more suitable for the individual with a disability (31 percent) or a portfolio assessment (29 percent) that may serve as an alternative to a formal assessment.

**Exhibit 5.5 Customizations Used in Conducting Assessments for Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: n=169.

Finally, it is important to note that LWIBs reinforce the perceived need to customize their services for youth with disabilities through the widespread adoption of various elements of universal design, as shown in Exhibit 5.6. The LWIBs are particularly attentive to issues of flexible and equitable use of services as well as physical access. Only 3 percent of all respondent have not addressed any of these elements suggesting a widespread degree of awareness and acceptance. Almost all respondents (97 percent) report the incorporation of these principles into their service delivery operation.

**Exhibit 5.6 Elements of Universal Design Incorporated Into WIA Services**

Elements of Universal Design	Percent of LWIBs
Flexibility in use	87
Equitable use	78
Simple and intuitive	66
Size and space for approach and use	64
Low physical effort	60
Perceptible information	53
Tolerance for error	48
None of the above	3

Notes: n=321.

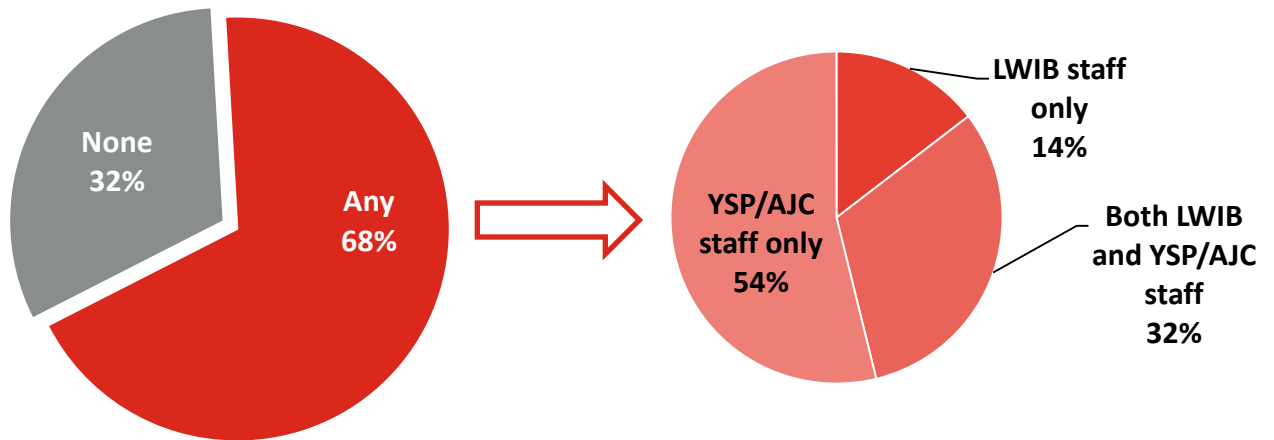


## 6. Building Staff Capacity

Effectively developing and implementing service plans for youth with disabilities requires insight into and facility with a wide variety of specialized issues, including gaining an understanding of different types of disabilities, learning how to handle issues of disclosure and disability identification with sensitivity at program intake, and determining the most effective mix of services and referrals to make when a disability is identified. Lack of appropriate training for staff and providers can potentially have an adverse effect on both the service environment and its quality. The Department engaged in a proactive effort to enhance awareness and build capacity in 2011 through a [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 31-10](#) that was issued to provide the administrators of the state workforce system with resources and information to improve the delivery of services to youth with disabilities (see Chapter 1).

A large majority of Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) report that they offer training and/or professional development to help staff serve youth with disabilities. As shown in Exhibit 6.1, approximately seven out of ten LWIB's (68 percent) report offering training to some combination of LWIB staff and their American Job Center (AJC) and Youth Service Provider (YSP) staff. LWIBs more commonly offer this type of training to staff at AJCs and YSPs than to LWIB staff. Of those that offer training, 14 percent report targeting only LWIB staff, while 54 percent report offering training to only their AJC and YSP staff; 32 percent offer training to both LWIB staff and staff at AJCs and YSPs.

**Exhibit 6.1**    **LWIBs Offering Staff Training**

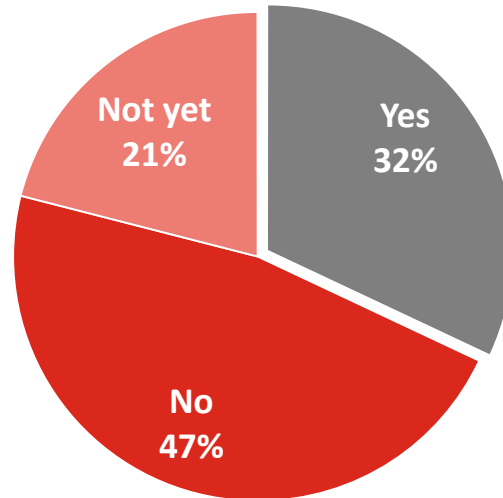


Notes: n=354.

The TEGL appears to have had some notable influence on the LWIBs. Specifically, the survey asks the LWIBS if they had made changes to improve their capacity to serve youth with disabilities based on the information provided in the TEGL. While the survey did not ask what changes had been made, these could include providing staff training, developing or strengthening partnerships, implementing elements of universal design, and improving accommodations.

As shown on Exhibit 6.2, nearly one-third (32 percent) indicate that they made some changes as a result of the TEGL. An additional 21 percent report that they had “not yet” made changes, which indicates that they may do so in the future.

**Exhibit 6.2 Have Changes Been Made Based on TEGL 31-10?**



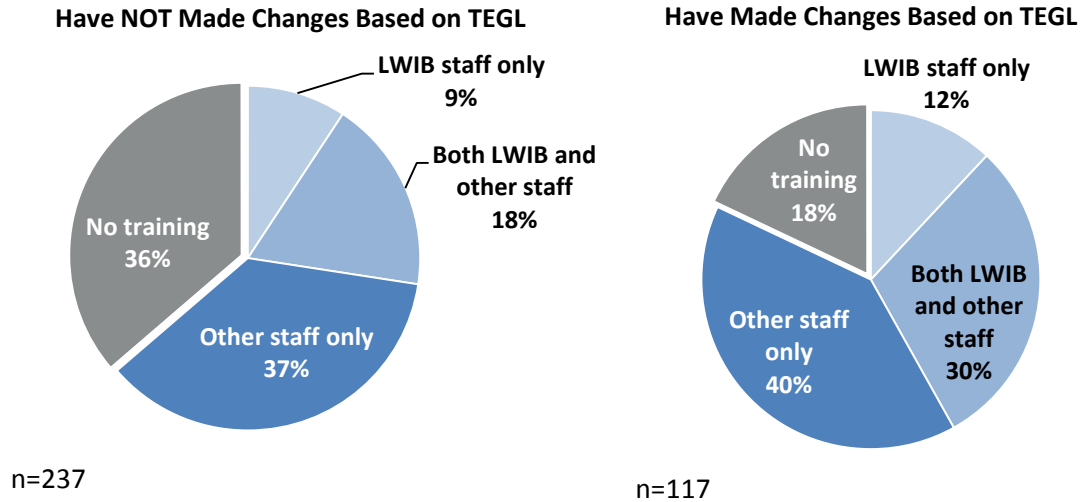
Notes: n=390.

The survey does not ask respondents to describe why they have not made changes in response to the TEGL. However, these respondents are likely to fall in one of two categories: those who already adhere to the guidance provided in the TEGL (in which case no changes would be necessary), and those whose practices do not conform to the guidance in the TEGL, but who nonetheless have not made any changes in response to it.

Although we cannot precisely differentiate between the two groups, further exploration of the data suggests that many LWIBs fall into the second group (i.e., those that have not made changes in response to the TEGL) even though they do not currently adhere to its recommendations. We draw this conclusion based on analysis of the provision of staff training among the LWIBs, which is a key element of the TEGL. We would expect that LWIBs that have not made changes in response to the TEGL because they already follow its recommendations are at least as likely to offer staff training as the LWIBs that have responded to the TEGL, who would presumably be building on a weaker base of training.

To examine this, Exhibit 6.3 separates LWIBs into two groups based on whether or not they have made changes in response to the TEGL and shows the types of training offered by each group. As shown, LWIBs that have not made changes in staff training based on the TEGL are twice as likely to offer “no staff training” on youth with disabilities than those that have made changes (36 percent vs. 18 percent). It is therefore unlikely that these LWIBs have not made changes because they are already adhering to the guidance in the TEGL.

**Exhibit 6.3 Staff Trainings Offered by LWIBs Based on Their Response to TEGL**



Notes: Respondents that reported “No” or “No, not yet” are categorized as not having made changes.

Regardless of their response to the TEGL, the majority of LWIBs report a need for additional training for their staff on issues relating to youth with disabilities. Specifically, more than nine out of ten respondents identify one or more training needs. As shown in Exhibit 6.4, a large number of respondents identify training on Federal, state, and local disability policies (67 percent), accommodations in the workplace (67 percent), and leveraging funding sources (67 percent). Somewhat fewer respondents identify a need to strengthen disclosure procedures (62 percent). Training support for “building and maintaining partnerships,” while identified by a majority of respondents, is nonetheless a lesser priority. Only 6 percent of respondents report that training is not needed in any of these categories.

**Exhibit 6.4 Types of Additional Training That May Benefit Staff at Local YSPs and AJCs to Better Serve Youth with Disabilities**

Types of Additional Training	Percent of LWIBs Identifying Need
Federal, state, and local disability policies	67
Accommodations	67
Leveraging funding sources	67
Disclosure procedures	62
Building and maintaining partnerships	54
Staff would not benefit from additional training	6

Notes: n=356.

As noted above, nearly one-third of the respondents report that the TEGL has prompted them to take action. While it has clearly provided valuable guidance, its issuance has not precluded LWIBs’ perceived need for additional staff training. In fact, the data may even suggest that those responding

to the TEGL perceive a greater need for training as they become more familiar with the challenges of serving youth with disabilities. This is illustrated in Exhibit 6.5, which shows that LWIBs that have already responded to the TEGL identify a need for more training in most training categories than those that have not. The most noteworthy difference is in the perceived need for training on the “leveraging of funding sources” where a 10 percentage point difference was observed (72 percent vs. 62 percent). This particular topic may be seen as a more “advanced” consideration and may be more likely to emerge as a priority once more basic policy and programming essentials have been addressed (perhaps in response to the TEGL). In contrast, training on disclosure procedures, is identified as a slightly greater need by LWIBs that have not made changes in response to the TEGL. This underscores the uniform need for most LWIBs (and particularly those that have been less responsive to the TEGL) to be trained on a topic that can be considered a fundamental issue when serving youth with disabilities.

**Exhibit 6.5 Types of Additional Training That May Benefit Staff at Local YSPs and AJCs to Better Serve Youth with Disabilities, by Response to TEGL**

<b>Types of Additional Training</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs Identifying Need</b>	<b>No To TEGL (%)</b>	<b>Yes To TEGL (%)</b>
Federal, state, and local disability policies	67	66	68
Accommodations	67	65	68
Leveraging funding sources	67	62	72
Disclosure procedures	62	62	59
Building and maintaining partnerships	54	53	55
Staff would not benefit from additional training	6	7	5

Notes: n=328.

The reported need for additional training also appears to be influenced by whether or not an LWIB currently offers staff training. Those who do not currently offer staff training report a considerably higher need for “accommodations” training, as shown in Exhibit 6.6. Presumably, those who currently offer training may already address this. In contrast, those LWIBs that currently offer staff training report a greater interest in training on Federal, state and local disability policies. These LWIBs may be more cognizant of the need for additional training based on their exposure to date.

**Exhibit 6.6 Types of Additional Training That May Benefit Staff at YSPs and AJCs to Better Serve Youth with Disabilities, by Training Offered**

<b>Types of Additional Training</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs Identifying Need</b>	<b>Any Training (%)</b>	<b>No Training (%)</b>
Federal, state, and local disability policies	67	72	65
Accommodations	67	46	68
Leveraging funding sources	67	65	66
Disclosure procedures	62	61	61
Building and maintaining partnerships	54	56	52

<b>Types of Additional Training</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs Identifying Need</b>	<b>Any Training (%)</b>	<b>No Training (%)</b>
Staff would not benefit from additional training	6	9	6

Notes: n=328.

Finally, as shown on Exhibit 6.7, LWIBs who identified a need for additional training were asked which organization(s) should be responsible for providing that training. A majority of respondents said the training should be provided by state agencies other than the Workforce Investment Board (64 percent), by the Department of Labor through regional offices (62 percent), or by local agencies other than LWIB (57 percent). Fewer respondents report that the state WIB should be responsible (42 percent), and even fewer thought that it was a centralized function of DOL to be handled by the national office in Washington, DC. An additional 8 percent of respondents suggest the training should be provided by an organization not on the list, with the most often mentioned being vocational rehabilitation, local WIBs, and Departments or Divisions of Rehabilitation.

**Exhibit 6.7 Organizations That Should Be Responsible for Additional Training on Issues Related to Serving Youth with Disabilities**

<b>Organization</b>	<b>Percent of WIBs Identifying Organization</b>
Other state agencies	60
U.S. DOL through regional offices	59
Other local agencies	54
The state WIB	39
U.S. DOL through national office	25
Other	8
None of the above	0.0

Notes: n=319. Only the 89.6 percent of respondents that identified a need for additional training in one or more areas are represented in this exhibit.

## 7. Expanding Services and Funding for Youth with Disabilities

The constant pressure on local Workforce Investment ACT (WIA) funding allocations and program budgets underscores the need for Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) to expand their resource base. The extent to which LWIBs are expanding services and funding for youth with disabilities is explored in the survey in three ways.

The survey first examines the formation of partnerships with other organizations. While they can take multiple forms and serve multiple purposes, these partnerships can broaden the stakeholder base and facilitate sharing of expertise in support of serving youth with disabilities. In addition, partnerships may help to avoid the inefficiencies of duplication and/or fragmentation of services. The survey examines the extent to which American Job Centers (AJCs) and Youth Service Providers (YSPs) have formed partnerships with other organizations, and the perceived challenges to these partnerships.

The second approach to building services for youth with disabilities explored by the survey is expanding the resource base. This is often accomplished through the blending and braiding of funds, which means using resources from separate funding streams towards a common service goal. Braiding of funding is a less integrated form of sharing resources, in which programs often agree to pay for a specific component of a service, such as staff or classroom space. Braiding is generally accomplished through informal agreements. Blending of funding combines distinct funding streams into one pool and usually requires a written agreement or change of regulations. For this reason, blending can be difficult to implement and is less common in practice than braiding. The survey addresses the extent to which the LWIBs engage in these practices.

The third approach explored by the survey is the co-enrollment of youth with disabilities in WIA as both a youth and an adult. Doing so can be beneficial to the organization and the participant, as it results in the youth being eligible to receive additional funding leading to additional services.

### 7.1 Forming Partnerships

By and large, respondents indicate that they do not have difficulty establishing partnerships with stakeholders to provide services to youth with disabilities. As discussed in Chapter 4, LWIBs report a number of perceived challenges to effectively serving youth with disabilities, but “establishing partnerships” is seen as the least significant challenge. Similarly, as discussed in Chapter 6, LWIBs rate “building and maintaining partnerships” as the lowest priority among various training and staff development options. To develop a profile of the scope and composition of partnerships in place, survey respondents are given a list of 10 organizational types and asked to indicate which ones they have established partnerships with to recruit, assess, and serve youth with disabilities. Overall, 98 percent of all LWIBs report that they have working partnerships with one or more of the organizations. Exhibit 7.1 shows that more than three-quarters of the LWIBs report having formed partnerships with vocational rehabilitation (89 percent), secondary and/or alternative schools (87 percent), community-based organizations (84 percent), adult education providers (78 percent), and

human service agencies (76 percent). More than two-thirds report partnerships with juvenile justice agencies (74 percent) and/or post-secondary institutions (71 percent).

Although mental health issues are the second most common disability reported by LWIBs (12 percent of youth are reported to have this barrier, see Exhibit 5.2), LWIBs report somewhat fewer partnerships with mental health providers (57 percent) than with the other types of organizations discussed above. It is much less common for LWIBs to establish partnerships with transportation providers (33 percent) and Social Security offices (26 percent). These partnerships may be important in developing strategies for serving those with disabilities. Transportation can be problematic for those who are mobility impaired or who do not have drivers' licenses, particularly in locations not adequately served by public transportation. Social Security offices represent both a source of referrals as well as a potential provider of income support for individuals being served through Supplemental Security Income or Social Security Disability Insurance.

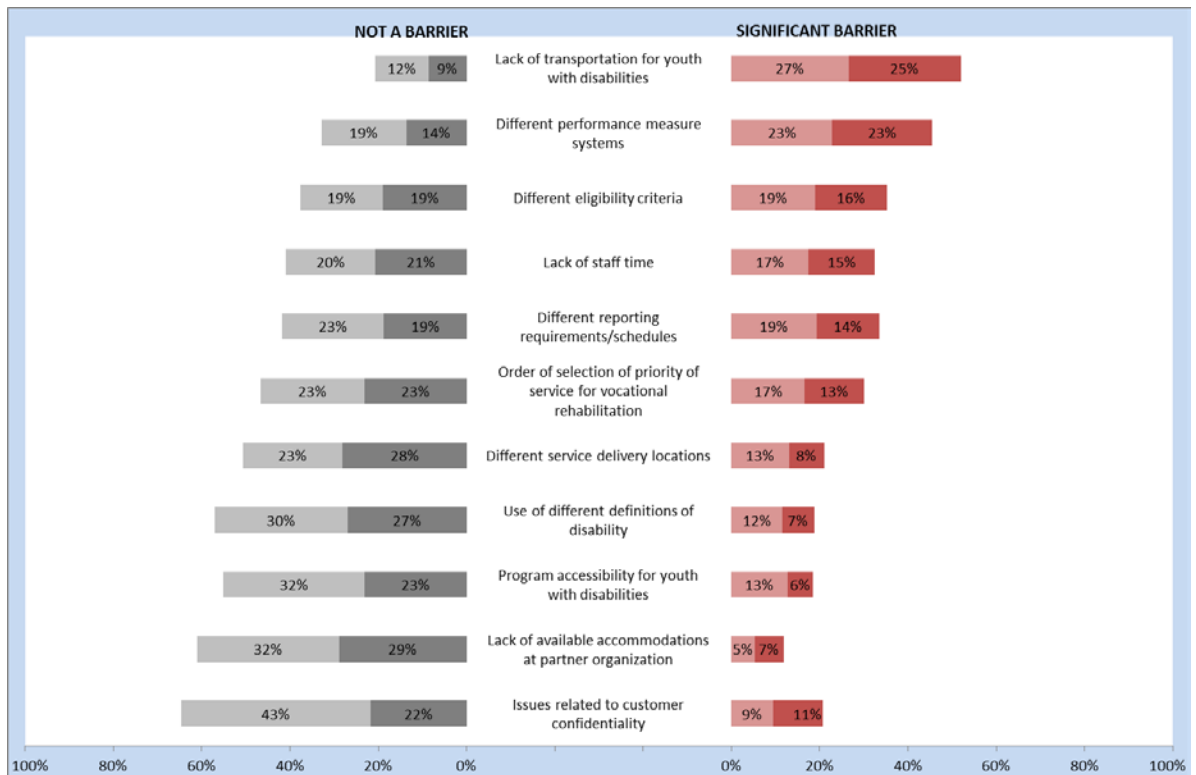
**Exhibit 7.1 Partnerships Used to Recruit, Assess, Serve, and Place Youth with Disabilities**

<b>Partnerships Used</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs</b>
Vocational rehabilitation	89
Secondary and/or alternative schools	87
Community-based organizations	84
Adult education providers	78
Human service agencies	76
Juvenile justice agencies	74
Postsecondary institutions	71
Mental health providers	57
Transportation providers (local or Federal)	33
Social Security offices	26
None of the above	2

Notes: n=386.

The survey also provides LWIBs with a list of potential barriers to forming partnerships and asks them to rate the significance of each barrier, again using a scale from 1 to 5 (5=significant barrier, 1=no barrier). Although partnership formation is not broadly considered to be a problem, a sizeable minority of respondents assign scores of at least 4 to some barriers. Notably, as shown in Exhibit 7.2, 52 percent report “lack of transportation for youth with disabilities” as a barrier, substantially more than any other barrier. This suggests that the overall functioning of the partnership may be compromised if participants lack the mobility to access the services. Additional barriers to partnerships that were reported as moderately problematic include different performance measure systems across partners (average score 3.2), the use of different eligibility criteria (3.0), lack of staff time (2.9), and different reporting requirements and/or schedules (2.8).

## Exhibit 7.2 Barriers to Forming Partnerships to Better Serve Youth with Disabilities

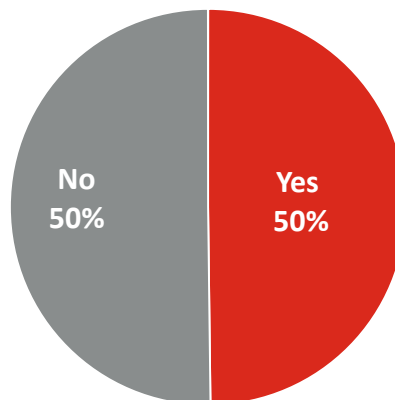


Notes: For all barriers, n=391. Response strength is ordered from left to right with the weakest response (not a barrier) on the far left in light grey and the strongest response (significant barrier) on the right in dark red. The graphic omits the middle category of “moderate barrier.” Categories are ordered from top to bottom corresponding to the average response, with higher (more significant) averages towards the top.

## 7.2 Expanding the Resource Base

Pursuing options to expand the available resources is a potentially important strategy in providing services to youth with disabilities, with approximately half of LWIBs reporting blending or braiding resources from other agencies and/or organizations (Exhibit 7.3).

### Exhibit 7.3 Does Your LWIB Blend or Braid Resources from Other Agencies and/or Organizations to Procure Services?



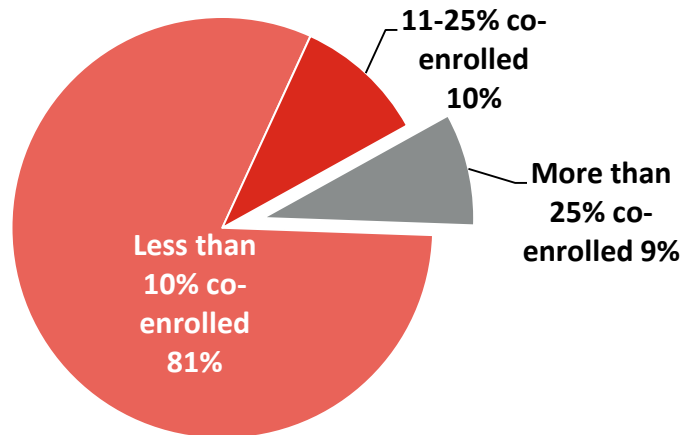


Notes: n=331.

While the survey does not gather a high degree of detail on these practices, it does appear that the most common source of funds that are blended or braided with WIA Title I come from either vocational rehabilitation agencies or educational institutions. Of the respondents that specified what funding resources they braid or blend, 35 percent indicated vocational rehabilitation, 34 percent educational sources, 23 percent other WIA funding, and 17 percent rehabilitation sources. While these are clearly active practices, half the LWIBs do not currently pursue them. This is particularly noteworthy in light of the widespread concern cited earlier about resource availability for serving this target population.

In addition to pursuing resources externally, as discussed above, LWIBs often have the option of co-enrolling youth with disabilities in the adult and youth WIA programs simultaneously.<sup>8</sup> Doing so can be beneficial to the organization and the youth, as it results in the youth being eligible to receive additional funding leading to additional services. Despite these advantages, it appears that co-enrollment is rare. More than four-fifths of respondents (81 percent) report co-enrolling less than 10 percent of youth with disabilities in the two programs. A full 91 percent report that fewer than 25 percent of youth with disabilities are co-enrolled in adult and youth services (Exhibit 7.4).

**Exhibit 7.4 Frequency of Co-Enrolling Youth with Disabilities in the Adult and Youth WIA Programs**



Notes: n=327.

<sup>8</sup> In the WIA legislation, Section 101 (1) and (13) provide age limitations for receiving WIA funds. Eighteen to 21 year olds appear in both age groups.

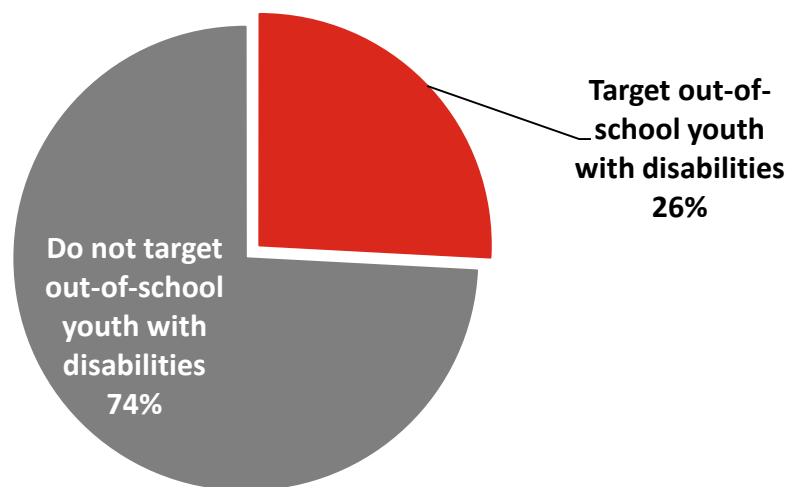
## 8. Reaching Out-of-School Youth

Under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), out-of-school youth are defined as: 1) high school dropouts, 2) students expelled from school, 3) high school graduates or General Educational Development (GED) holders who are not enrolled in any school, or 4) high school graduates or GED holders who are enrolled in postsecondary education and who are basic skills deficient.

Out-of-school youth who are also disabled represent a unique programming challenge in terms of outreach and recruitment. These youth may also have lost connection to the public education system, which often serves as an important link to the broader social service network. The survey examines the extent to which Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) explicitly target out-of-school youth with disabilities in their marketing and outreach efforts.

As shown in Exhibit 8.1, 26 percent of LWIBs report that they use targeted marketing or outreach specifically to recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities.

**Exhibit 8.1**      **LWIBs Engaging in Targeted Marketing and Outreach to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: n=364.

This is only a slightly smaller percentage of LWIBs than the 31 percent who indicate that they engage in targeted marketing and outreach for all youth with disabilities (see Exhibit 4.4). This suggests that while respondents acknowledge that out-of-school youth with disabilities is a distinct service population, they may not have a separate outreach strategy for them. While the large majority do not explicitly target out-of-school youth with disabilities, many LWIBs likely reach this population indirectly through partnerships they have established with entities such as vocational rehabilitation programs (89 percent), community-based organizations (84 percent), human service agencies (76 percent), and juvenile justice agencies (74 percent). (see Chapter 7).

The survey did not explore the specific approaches of the 26 percent of LWIBs that target marketing and outreach to out-of-school youth with disabilities. However, their interest in serving this population may be illuminated by examining other characteristics and practices of these LWIBs. We

find that LWIBs that specifically market to out-of-school youth differ from other LWIBs in some noteworthy ways. First, the practice of targeting marketing and outreach varies considerably by the respondents' reported service philosophy. Specifically, those LWIBs that view youth with disabilities as a unique service population (as opposed to a component of the larger population) are considerably more likely to report that they actively target out-of-school youth (71 percent vs. 15 percent). These findings appear to reflect their perception that youth with disabilities may require service differentiation in order to both reach and effectively serve them.

**Exhibit 8.2 Practices Used to Encourage YSPs and AJCs to Serve Youth with Disabilities under WIA Funding, by Service Philosophy**

Practice	Unique Service Population (%)	Component of Larger Population (%)
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities	74	15
Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit youth with disabilities	71	19

Notes: n=364.

Second, as shown on Exhibit 8.3, the data also show that LWIBs that market their services to out-of-school youth are substantially more likely to engage in practices to encourage Youth Service Providers (YSPs) and American Job Centers (AJCs) to serve youth with disabilities. Particularly noteworthy is their considerably greater likelihood of using explicit language in Requests for Proposal (RFPs) to emphasize the importance of reaching youth with disabilities (46 percent vs. 26 percent).

**Exhibit 8.3 Practices Used to Encourage YSPs and AJCs to Serve Youth with Disabilities under WIA Funding, by Group**

Practice	Market to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities (%)	Do Not Market to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities (%)
Explicit language in RFPs for service providers that reflects the LWIA's emphasis on serving youth with disabilities	46	26
Additional consideration in response to target population or proposed services criteria when awarding contracts	32	19
Service quotas or targets	21	9
Negotiation of performance measures	15	8
None of the above	0.0	51

Notes: n=364.

As Exhibit 8.4 shows, LWIBs that market their services to out-of-school youth with disabilities are also more likely to have formed partnerships to recruit and serve youth with disabilities. Most likely it is reflective of a broader commitment to serving all youth with disabilities. Nearly all LWIBs that target out-of-school youth with disabilities (94 percent) report partnering with the secondary or

alternative education providers. This appears to be a high-priority partnership that is essential to addressing the compound challenge of serving youth who are both out-of-school and have some type of disability.

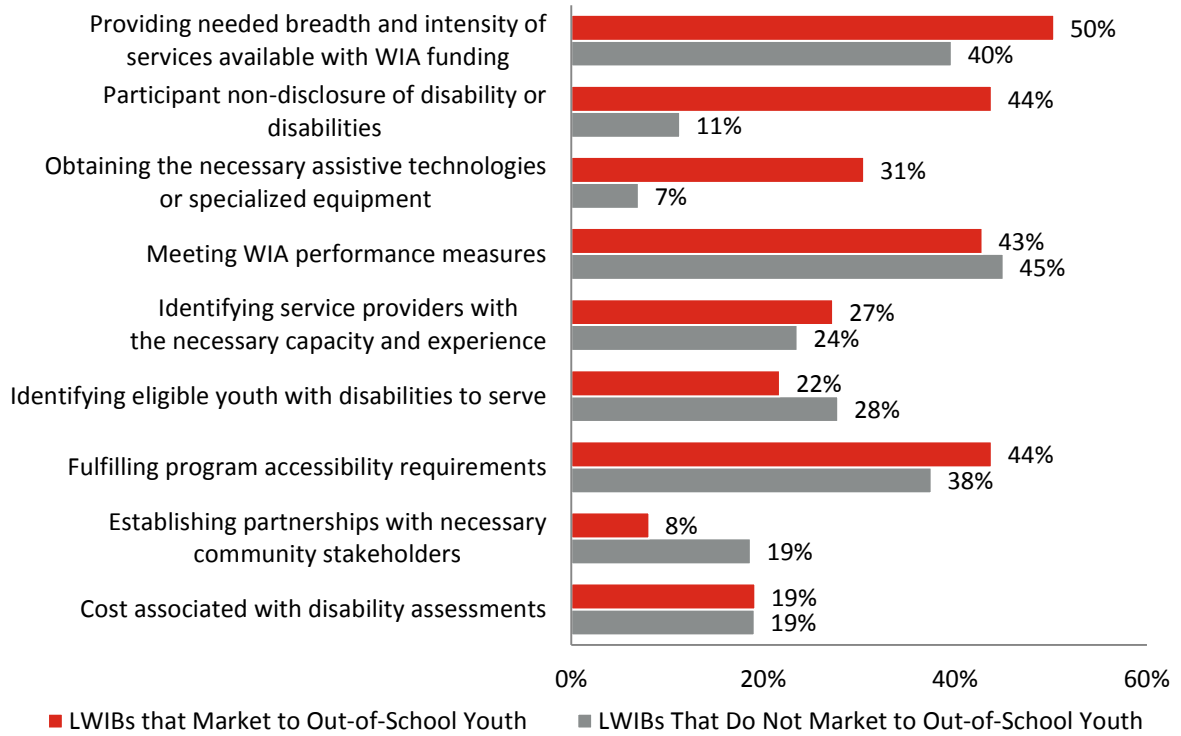
**Exhibit 8.4 Partnerships Used to Recruit, Assess, Serve, and/or Place Youth With Disabilities, for LWIBs that Market to Out-of-School Youth**

<b>Partnerships Used</b>	<b>Market to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities (%)</b>	<b>Do Not Market to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities (%)</b>
Vocational rehabilitation programs	96	85
Secondary and alternative schools	94	84
Community-based organizations	88	80
Adult education providers	83	72
Human service agencies	83	74
Juvenile justice agencies	82	73
Postsecondary institutions	79	67
Mental health providers	66	54
Transportation providers (local or Federal)	43	30
Social Security offices	39	22
None of the above	0.0	3

Notes: n=364.

Finally, LWIBs that actively target out-of-school youth with disabilities have a somewhat different view on perceived barriers to service than those who do not. As shown in Exhibit 8.5, half (50 percent) of this group reports being challenged to provide the needed intensity and breadth of services with available WIA funding, compared with 40 percent of those who do not actively target out-of-school youth. This minority of LWIBs who target out-of-school youth is also more concerned with the barriers created by non-disclosure and the challenges of obtaining assistive technology and specialized equipment. This pattern suggests those who are actively seeking to serve this subgroup of youth with disabilities are more likely to recognize and acknowledge the challenges.

**Exhibit 8.5 Barriers to Effectively Serving Youth with Disabilities, for LWIBs that Market to Out-of-School Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: For all barriers, n=364. Response proportions indicate the proportion of respondents rating the barrier as significant (a value of 4 or 5).

## 9. Providing Employment-Related Services to Youth with Disabilities

There are many ways that youth transitions from school to work can be supported, but “real world” work experience can be a particularly effective tool for helping to prepare young people with disabilities for employment and adult life. As previously mentioned, transitioning these youth from high school is most successful when they have access to services and programs that go beyond basic case management and benefits planning, such as apprenticeships and internship programs. This approach is also reflected in the Individuals with Disabilities Improvement Act of 2004, which emphasizes transitioning youth from secondary school to postsecondary education, employment, and independent living. To address this issue, the survey examines the extent to which Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) provide employment-related activities and community service opportunities to youth with disabilities compared with what they provide for other youth. In addition, the survey examines challenges employers face in hiring youth with disabilities as well as training LWIBs provide to employers to promote such employment opportunities. As noted by a member of our expert panel, employers may not have accurate information about disabilities and the programs that serve them.

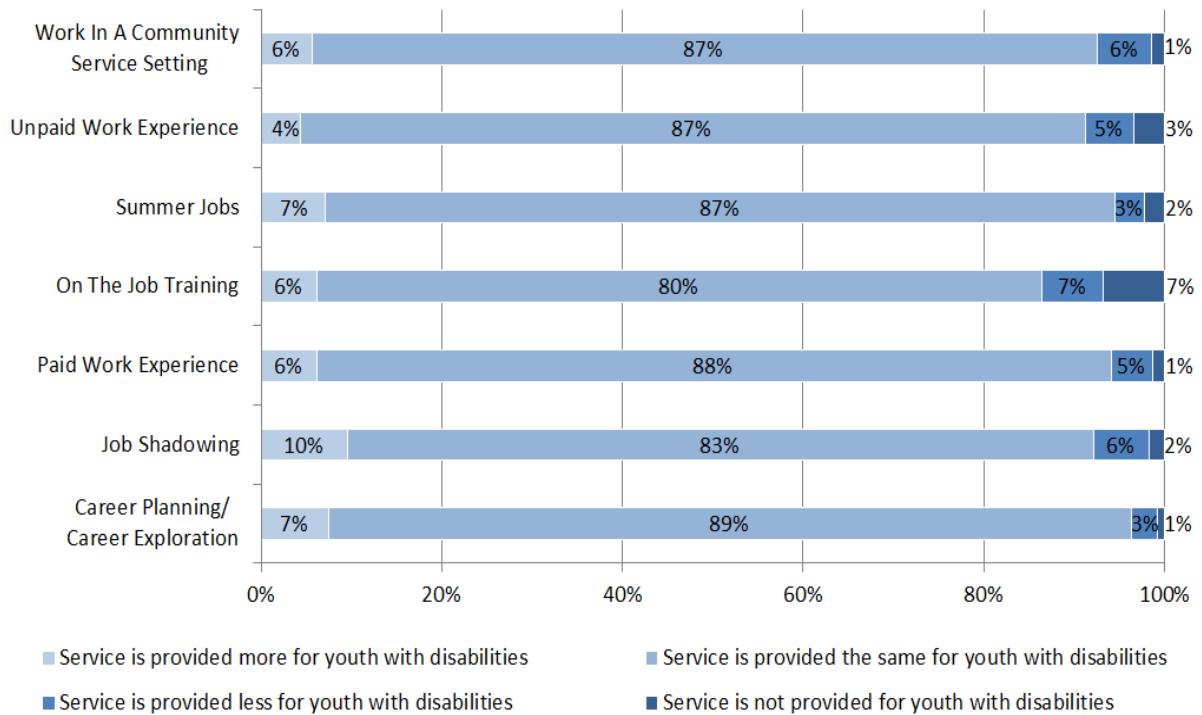
### 9.1 Types of Employment-Related Services and Community Service Opportunities Provided

The survey examines how often specific employment-related services are offered to youth with disabilities compared with all other youth in the Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA). In particular, the survey inquires about paid and unpaid work experience, on-the-job training, summer jobs, job shadowing, career planning and/or exploration, and work in a community service setting.<sup>9</sup> As shown in Exhibit 9.1, respondents consistently reported that youth with disabilities are offered the same types of services as the broader youth population. For example, 87 percent of LWIBs report that the opportunity to work in a community service setting is equally available to youth with disabilities as to all youth.

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<sup>9</sup> **Career planning/exploration** is the process in which individuals learn about employment, identify and explore potentially satisfying occupations, and develop an effective strategy to realize job goals. **Job Shadowing** is when an employer provides opportunities that allow an individual to learn certain functions under the close and constant supervision of regular employees, but the individual performs no or minimal work. **On-the-job training** is when employers teach employees what they need to know on a job after they are hired. **Paid work experience** is a transitional or supported job in which students are at a worksite doing real work for pay and are held to the same expectations as all employees. **Summer jobs** are employment periods that last for the two to three months when students are out-of-school. **Unpaid work experience** is when an individual does not receive compensation for working at an organization. Usually this work is meant to add to a person’s skills and education. **Work in a community service setting** is employment or volunteer work in a place that helps people and in community organizations.

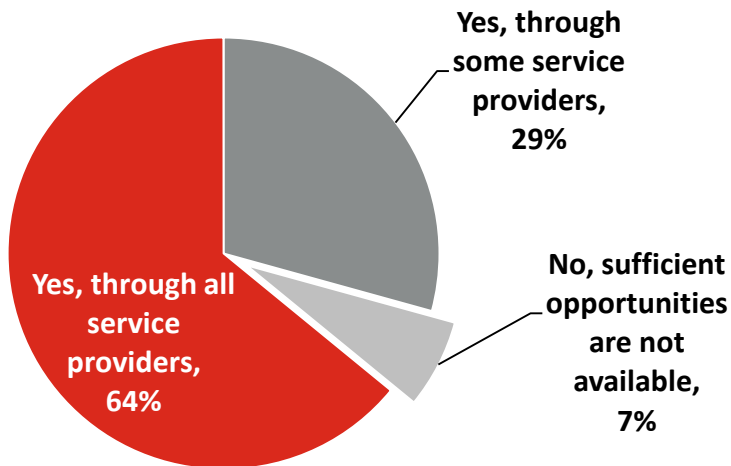
**Exhibit 9.1 Services Offered to Youth with Disabilities Compared with the Total Youth Population**



Notes: For all rows, n=390. Bar segments are ordered from left to right with the leftmost segment indicating more service for youth with disabilities and the rightmost segment indicating that service is not provided for youth with disability.

Community service, generally an unpaid work position in a public or non-profit organization, can help youth with disabilities develop work readiness skills, explore their areas of occupational interest for future employment, and potentially make connections to future employment. As shown in Exhibit 9.2, most (93 percent) LWIBs report that youth with disabilities have access to sufficient community service opportunities. Of these, 64 percent report that youth with disabilities have access to such opportunities through all service providers in their LWIA, while 29 percent indicate that only some service providers offer community service opportunities to youth with disabilities. Only 7 percent report that sufficient opportunities are not available.

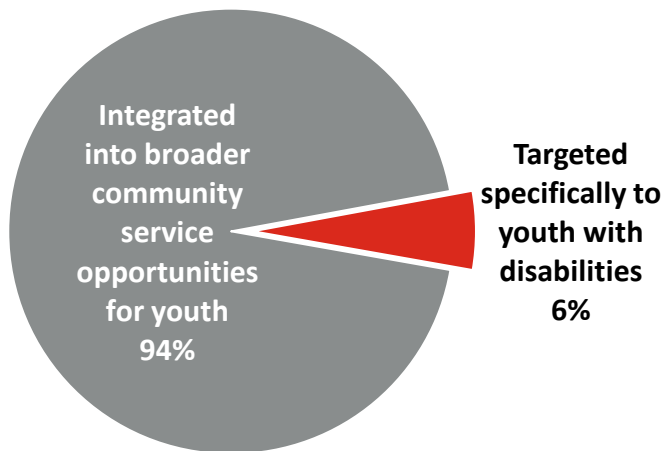
**Exhibit 9.2 Access to Community Service Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: n=362.

As discussed in Chapter 4, (Exhibit 4.7), very few services offered to youth with disabilities are provided separately from those provided for all youth. Exhibit 9.3 shows community service opportunities are similarly provided as part of the services for all youth, with only 6 percent of LWIBs reporting that their volunteer opportunities are targeted specifically to youth with disabilities.

**Exhibit 9.3 Community Service Opportunities for Youth with Disabilities**



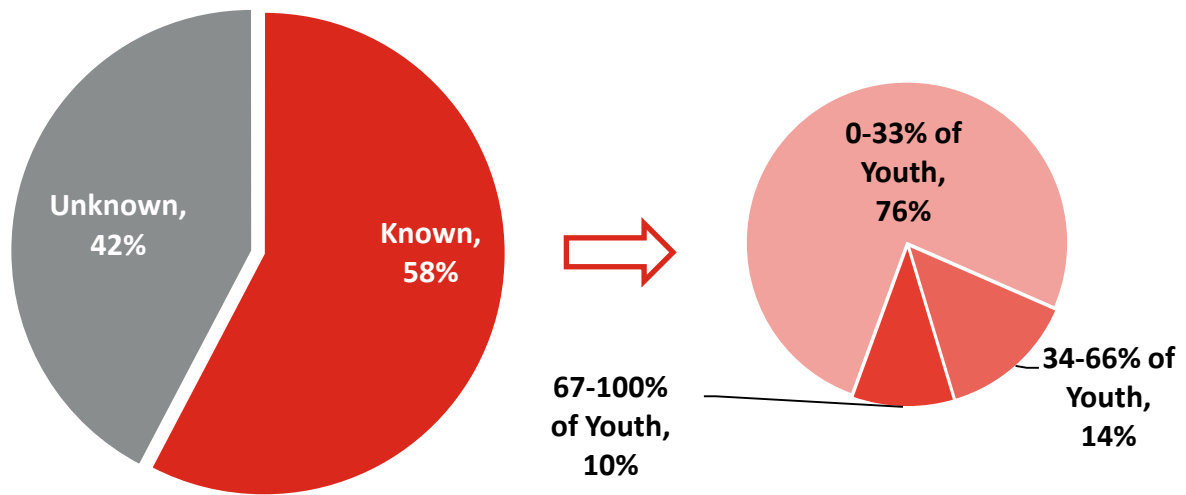
Notes: n=281.

LWIBs report they are unsure of the extent to which youth with disabilities actually engage in the community service opportunities that are offered to them, likely indicating that this information is not generally tracked. When asked to report the percentage of such youth that engage in these opportunities, 44 percent of LWIBs respond that they do not know. Of those who are able to provide



an answer, a large majority (76 percent) respond that less than one-third of youth with disabilities in their LWIA actually engage in community service. Only 10 percent of LWIBs that are able to provide an estimate report that more than two-thirds of youth with disabilities engage in community service (Carter et al. 2010).<sup>10</sup>

**Exhibit 9.4 Percentage of Youth with Disabilities that Engage in Community Service Opportunities through Service Providers in LWIAs**



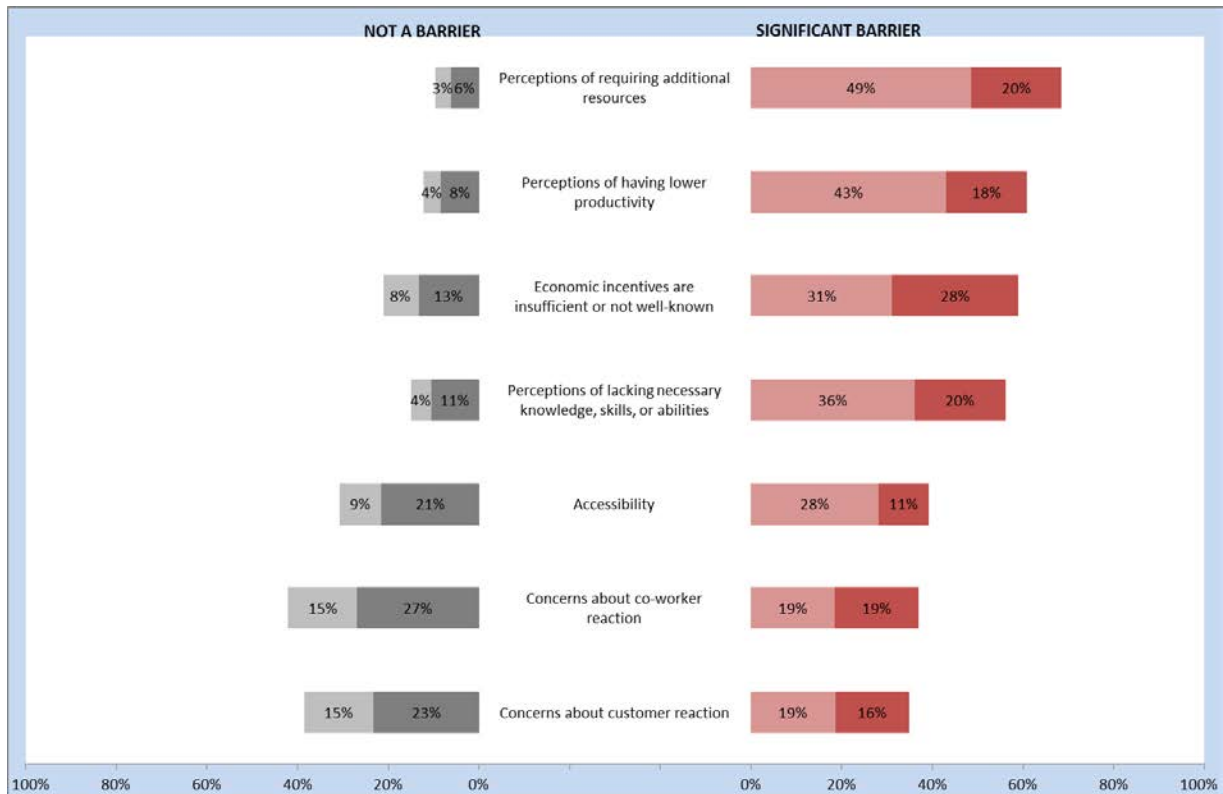
Note: n=225.

## 9.2 Employer Challenges to Hiring Youth with Disabilities

Although employment-related services are provided as frequently for youth with disabilities as for the general population of youth, LWIBs report that they face significant barriers to getting employers to hire youth with disabilities. Exhibit 9.5 suggests that these concerns reflect a combination of both perceived cost and productivity related issues. LWIBs report that the most significant barriers they face in engaging employers in this area are the employers' perception that youth with disabilities require additional resources in the workplace (69 percent), that they have lower productivity (61 percent); and that the economic incentives are insufficient or not well known (59 percent). The perception that youth with disabilities lack the necessary knowledge, skills, or abilities to be successful employees was also prevalent (56 percent). Other traditional employer concerns such as co-worker reaction and customer reaction are cited less frequently (37 percent and 35 percent, respectively).

<sup>10</sup> Another recent study also examining the extent to which these opportunities were available to and accessed by high-school aged youth with severe disabilities or emotional and behavioral disorders also found that participation was limited.

**Exhibit 9.5 Barriers Faced by LWIBs When Encouraging Employers to Hire Youth with Disabilities**



Notes: For all barriers, n=390. Response strength is ordered from left to right with the weakest response (not a barrier) on the far left in light grey and the strongest response (significant barrier) on the right in dark red. The graphic omits the middle category of “moderate barrier.”

To proactively address the barriers cited in Exhibit 9.5, over two-thirds of all LWIBs (68 percent) offer training to employers on topics related to hiring and retaining youth employees with disabilities. As shown in Exhibit 9.6, slightly more than half of the LWIBs (51 percent) report that they provide employers with training to directly address misconceptions about hiring youth with disabilities. Other types of training provided to employers appear to be designed to provide basic information to employers about the issues accompanying the hiring of youth with disabilities. Nearly two-thirds (62 percent) of the LWIBs report that training on workplace accommodations to employers is provided. This training typically addresses how low- to no-cost accommodations can potentially enhance productivity and enrich the work experience. Examples include, providing speech recognition software for someone with a visual impairment, providing an environmental sound machine for someone with a mental health disability, or providing talking calculators for someone with a cognitive disability. The majority of LWIBs also offer training to employers on available tax credits for hiring youth with disabilities (52 percent). Other topics of training provided to employers include sensitivity training (40 percent), an introduction to basic assistive technologies (36 percent), information on how to prepare job postings that do not exclude those with disabilities (29 percent), and universal design (28 percent). Only 15 percent of LWIBs do not address any topics of special relevance to youth with disabilities in employer trainings.

**Exhibit 9.6 Topics Addressed by LWIBs during Training Provided to Employers**

<b>Topics Addressed</b>	<b>Percent of LWIBs</b>
Accommodations	62
Available tax credits for hiring youth with disabilities	52
Misconceptions about hiring youth with disabilities	51
Sensitivity training	40
Introduction to basic assistive technologies	36
Learning how to prepare job postings that don't exclude those with disabilities	29
Universal design	28
Other	4
None of the above	15

Notes: n=335.

## 10. Conclusion

Local Workforce Investment Areas, through their American Job Centers and network of providers, face a range of targeting and allocation decisions as they seek to maximize the benefits of investments in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program services. Youth with disabilities are one of many groups to be served by WIA, and they can present a unique programming challenge given the barriers they may face to entering and succeeding in the labor market. Addressing the service needs of this population may require comparatively intensive and longer-term interventions and/or different types or changes to existing services.

According to the most recent Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data (WIASRD), approximately 14 percent of the youth served through WIA have some type of documented disability (U.S. DOL 2013d). However, it is difficult to determine if youth with disabilities are being served either in proportion to their prevalence in the population or at a level that is commensurate with their needs. This difficulty in determining proportionality or meeting individual needs is in part due to the complexity of both defining the full spectrum of disabilities as well as determining their pervasiveness among those who seek WIA services. Very rough estimates provided by Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) in the survey suggest that the prevalence of youth with disabilities in the service population is twice the level that is officially reported in WIASRD.

Within this rather complex planning and service delivery environment, the survey conducted for this study provides important insights about serving youth with disabilities under WIA. First, there are distinct programming philosophies. The majority of LWIBs (72 percent) acknowledge that they view youth with disabilities as a natural component of the larger youth population and distinctions are generally not made when delivering services. Nonetheless, a distinct minority (28 percent) respond that they consider youth with disabilities a unique service population that requires proactive targeting and customization of program resources.

Second, regardless of service philosophy, the majority of LWIBs have dedicated some level of resources to enhance their capacity to effectively serve youth with disabilities. Examples include appointing constituent advocates to the Workforce Investment Board or Youth Council, hiring staff dedicated to serving those with disabilities, conducting targeted outreach and/or providing specialized staff development or employer training.

Third, many LWIBs also make proactive efforts to expand their resource and stakeholder base through the formation of partnerships with other organizations. As an example, nearly nine out of ten LWIBs have partnerships with vocational rehabilitation (89 percent), and/or secondary schools, and/or alternative schools (87 percent). These partnerships can be instrumental in contributing to a program strategy that actively supports youth with disabilities.

Collectively, these actions and investments provide an important foundation to support the provision of services to youth with disabilities. Nonetheless, the survey underscores a number of challenges that may impede the scope, effectiveness, and/or expansion potential of these services. These include:

- **Resource availability.** Limited WIA funding presents a challenge to serving youth with disabilities particularly when faced with the intensive service level this population may require.

- **Prevalence of undisclosed disabilities.** Survey respondents report a high degree of undisclosed disabilities among the youth population. Strategic commitments to serving this population are compromised if there is uncertainty about the scope of those being targeted.
- **Employer perceptions.** Despite proactive training efforts, many LWIBs report that employers continue to perceive that hiring of youth with disabilities may entail additional costs and that may compromise productivity.
- **Out-of-school youth with disabilities.** While an individual is enrolled in school there are generally more resources available to identify a disability, assess potential needs, and make appropriate referrals. Once an individual is no longer in school, the planning, identification, and delivery of these services becomes much more challenging.
- **Performance measures.** WIA performance measures are seen as a disincentive to providing the type of intensive services that youth with disabilities may need. Additionally, emphasis on different performance measures is seen as a challenge to the formation of cross agency partnerships.
- **Staff and provider preparedness.** While the Department of Labor has made a strong investment in WIA staff development to ensure they have the knowledge and skills needed to serve individuals with disabilities, approximately nine out of ten LWIBs continue to report the need for additional training.

The survey showed that a minority of LWIBs proactively seek to serve youth with disabilities by employing targeted outreach and marketing efforts, braiding or blending funds with other agencies, setting service quotas, or giving special consideration to vendors who prioritize youth with disabilities. While targeting and resource allocation decisions remain fundamentally local responsibilities, the Department does have the opportunity to provide support and incentives that can influence these decisions. In that spirit, we make the following recommendations for consideration:

- **Continue to closely examine effective and promising practices.** While this study provides the most accurate and up-to-date profile of system-wide efforts to target and serve youth with disabilities, much remains to be learned regarding local planning strategies and programming practices. In particular, the study results underscore the importance of gaining additional insight into assessment strategies for identifying disabilities, approaches to targeting out-of-school youth, and approaches to establishing effective partnerships with employers. The study found that Training and Employment Guidance Letters (TEGLs) are an effective method for communicating with LWIBs on these types of issues.
- **Seek greater insight into the size and mix of the youth with disabilities population.** Non-disclosure of disabilities will likely always be an issue that challenges local service delivery staff. Some individuals may not know they have a disability while others may simply choose not to disclose what they know. Nonetheless LWIBs should have the tools and expertise needed to better identify disabilities among those they serve. Awareness of available tools and expertise, in turn, will allow practitioners to make effective programming decisions that reflect and accommodate these individual's unique needs. To this end, the Department should review and identify resources that can support this process (e.g., specialized assessment tools, screening kits, and training modules) and ensure that they are widely available and actively promoted (for instance, on [Workforce3One](#)).

- **Maintain flexibility in establishing performance standards.** LWIBs report that WIA performance measures can undermine the targeting of services to youth with disabilities. Both empirical and anecdotal evidence suggests that the intensity of service required to provide comprehensive intervention to this population is difficult within the parameters of the established WIA performance measures. Limiting this perceived disincentive to serve youth with disabilities requires that the Department consider flexible policies at the national level that can be reflected in contracts written locally with individual service providers.
- **Sustain efforts to build staff capacity around both basic and advanced topics regarding serving those with disabilities.** Nearly all LWIBs acknowledge the need for additional training regardless of the past training they received. In developing a training strategy, note that 67 percent of all LWIBs remain in need of training on basic topics such as “providing accommodations.” Additionally, a large majority (72 percent) of the LWIBs who made a change to improve their capacity to serve youth with disabilities based on the information provided in TEG 31-10 report the need for training on more “advanced” topics such as “leveraging funding sources.”
- **Adopt a broader perspective on the issue of “access.”** This study shows that nearly all LWIBs have adopted some principles of universal design confirming their commitment to full and flexible access to services for those with disabilities. At the same time, the survey reveals that “lack of transportation for youth with disabilities” is the most widely reported barrier to creating partnerships to better serve youth with disabilities. This suggests that the overall functioning of a community partnership may be compromised if participants lack the mobility to access the services. Thus, it is important that the Department encourage LWIBs to adopt a broader perspective on the challenge of “access.” Specifically, this involves going beyond universal design principles to actively bring transportation planning and resources into the community partnerships.
- **Emphasize co-enrollment in both WIA Youth and WIA Adult programs to expand services to youth with disabilities.** Service needs among youth with disabilities may require comparatively prolonged and costly interventions. Those who are “older” youth (18-21) potentially qualify for both youth and adult services under WIA. It is important that the Department continue to encourage practitioners to consider “co-enrollment” in both of these WIA services to provide this population with the appropriate mix of services.
- **Continue to promote cross-agency coordination across all youth services.** The Department has an established history of supporting the coordination of youth services at both Federal and state levels. These initiatives have broadly supported strategies such as joint or coordinated funding, common data systems, adoption of “no wrong door” strategies, and use of common performance measures. Since policies for collaborative planning and resource integration is often set through government structures to the Department should continue to play a leadership role in promoting these objectives for the delivery of all youth services. It is particularly important for the Federal procurement specifications to mirror the types of priorities and strategies (e.g., blending, braiding, award incentives) that the Department would like to see considered and implemented at the state level.
- **Seek work opportunities, particularly with the more “reluctant” employers.** LWIBs report that a major barrier when placing youth with disabilities is employers’ concerns about cost and/or productivity. At the same time, practitioners acknowledge the importance of preparing individuals with work experience (e.g., job shadowing, internships, on-the-job

training, and transitional employment) that mirrors the actual workplace. Seeking these types of work-related opportunities, particularly with the more “reluctant” employers, may provide a lower-risk opportunity for them to consider youth with disabilities as viable job candidates. Work opportunities may serve to bolster the interest in and value of the employer training in which the majority of LWIBs are already engaged.

- **Continue to examine the economic incentives of hiring youth with disabilities.** The majority of LWIBs report that they provide training that covers the available tax incentives for hiring youth with disabilities for employers. At the same time, respondents report that one of the most significant barriers they face is that the economic incentives for hiring are insufficient or not well known when encouraging employers to hire youth with disabilities. This counter response to training on tax credits suggests the importance of examining the extent to which tax incentives are being used and the extent to which they remain a viable component of the Department’s broader strategy to promote employment among youth with disabilities.
- **Expand partnerships with the mental health community.** On the survey, LWIB representatives estimated that 12 percent of their youth population has some type of mental health disability. At the same time, respondents report that mental health providers are less likely to be service delivery partners than almost any other type of disability-related resource or interest group. Ongoing program and policy guidance from the Department should continue to point out this gap and encourage expansion of local partnerships.

This study provides the most accurate and up-to-date profile of system-wide efforts to target and serve youth with disabilities. The accompanying recommendations provide an opportunity for the Department to further consider its role in addressing perceived barriers to serving this population. However, much remains to be learned about planning strategies and programming practices at the local level. In particular, the study results underscore the importance of gaining additional insight into assessment methods for identifying disabilities, approaches to targeting out-of-school youth, and approaches to establishing effective partnerships with employers and other service delivery partners. Given the context of universal access in the workforce development system, it is crucial that the Department remain committed to identifying, examining, and sharing effective practices that genuinely promote the employment opportunities of youth with disabilities.

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## Appendix A: Survey Materials

- Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 32-12
- Survey Introduction
- Youth WIA Survey

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## Training and Employment Notice (TEN) 32-12

<b>TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE</b>	NO.  32-12
	DATE  April 29, 2013

**TO:** DOL ETA REGIONAL ADMINISTRATORS  
ALL STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS  
ALL STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE AGENCIES  
ALL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD (WIB) AGENCIES  
ALL STATE WIB EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS  
ALL LOCAL WIB EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

**FROM:** JANE OATES /s/  
Assistant Secretary  
Employment and Training Administration

KATHLEEN MARTINEZ /s/  
Assistant Secretary  
Office of Disability Employment Policy

**SUBJECT:** Administration of the Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities for Local Workforce Investment Board Executive Directors

**1. Purpose.** To alert State Workforce Agencies and Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) Executive Directors about a study being conducted on services to youth with disabilities in the public workforce system, and to encourage voluntary responses to the *Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities* (Youth with Disabilities Survey). A combined effort of the Department of Labor's (Department) Employment and Training Administration (ETA) and Office of Disability Employment Policy, the primary purpose of the Youth with Disabilities Survey is to get an analytical overview of services provided by local workforce agencies to this population. The responses to the survey will be analyzed and used to gain a better understanding of how young people with disabilities are being served within the workforce system and to identify mechanisms for enhancing these efforts.

**2. Reference.**

- Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 31-10, *Increasing and Improving Services to Youth with Disabilities*.

**3. Background.** The Youth with Disabilities Survey is one component of a study being conducted by Abt Associates, Inc. to help policy makers and practitioners use and adopt the recommendations issued in TEGL No. 31-10, and will be used to gather information to be used to improve services for the clients of the public workforce investment system.

**EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210**

LWIB Executive Directors will respond to seven sections about current practices related to:

- **Services to Youth with Disabilities:** General questions about the characteristics of youth with disabilities and the types of organizations that provide services for youth with disabilities.
- **Organizational Emphasis on Serving Youth with Disabilities:** Questions about the organizational emphasis on and use of resources for serving youth with disabilities.
- **Partnerships and Integration of Resources:** Questions about the structure of partnerships for recruiting, assessing, and serving youth with disabilities; procuring, blending and braiding resources; and potential barriers for partnerships and leveraging funds.
- **Use of Customized Assessment Tools:** Questions about how the disability status of youth is identified, what customized assessment tools are used, and the kinds of accommodations provided.
- **Work Experience and Employment Opportunities:** Questions about employment- related services and employment opportunity for youth with disabilities.
- **Community Service Opportunities:** Questions about access to and the percentage of youth with disabilities engaged in community service.
- **Staff Development and Training:** Questions related to staff capacity-building efforts in the local area.

**4. Benefits of this Study to the Public Workforce System.** After collecting all completed questionnaires, the results will be reviewed and analyzed. The results of the survey and additional information gathered will be included in a final report. The final report will highlight the survey results, include workforce system data, and identify promising practices and/or policies that demonstrate improvements to serving youth with disabilities.

The Department anticipates sharing highlights from the final report in a comprehensive briefing in the summer of 2013. Upon approval for public dissemination, we will post the final report and an abstract of this publication on the ETA Research Publication Database Web site at: <http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/keyword.cfm>.

**3. Survey Description.** The Youth with Disabilities Survey is approved by the Office of Management and Budget under the Paperwork Reduction Act (control number 1205-0436), and will be accessible electronically on an Internet-based survey platform called FluidSurveys. The link to the FluidSurveys will be made available to LWIB Executive Directors, the intended respondents for the Youth with Disabilities Survey, via a direct e-mail.

To complete the survey, support from other staff members, or program providers that work directly with youth and youth services, may be needed. This survey addresses two key program components: 1) state and local workforce policies, and 2) Workforce Investment Act services for youth with disabilities. The survey is estimated to take 40 to 60 minutes to complete but completion time may vary. Each LWIB will have one month to complete their survey from the date it is received.



**4. Action Requested.** LWIB Executive Directors are encouraged to respond to the Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities.

**5. Inquiries.** For questions specific to completing the survey, please contact Abt Associates, via e-mail at [dolyouthwia@abtassoc.com](mailto:dolyouthwia@abtassoc.com) or call 1-855-295-5528 (toll free). For more information about the youth with disabilities study, please contact Gloria Salas-Kos in ETA's Office of Policy Development and Research at 202-693-3596 or [salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov](mailto:salas-kos.gloria@dol.gov).

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## Survey Introduction

### INTRODUCTORY EMAIL FOR THE SURVEY OF WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT SERVICES PROVIDED TO YOUTH WITH DISABILITIES FOR LOCAL WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS

Dear [CONTACT NAME],

We are asking your help with an important research project about services for youth with disabilities. The U.S. Department of Labor has contracted with Abt Associates to conduct a national study of services provided to youth with disabilities under the Workforce Investment Act. The findings will be used by the Department of Labor to inform future Federal policymaking, guidance, and technical assistance efforts. As part of this research, we are surveying all Local Workforce Investment Boards about the services they provide to youth with disabilities. Additional information is provided in the Training and Employment Notice (TEN) No. 31-10, entitled "TEN-Administration of the Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities for Local Workforce Investment Board Executive Directors".

This survey should be completed by the individual(s) in your organization with the most knowledge about (a) state and local workforce policies and (b) your Workforce Investment Act services for youth with disabilities. We understand that as the Executive Director, you might not have the specific knowledge to respond to all of the questions. We do ask that you answer the questions that you can so that the study can benefit from your "big picture" perspective. Please then forward the survey link to your staff member(s) best suited to answer the survey questions. Multiple staff can access and complete the survey. If multiple individuals are involved in completing the survey, we ask that you identify a single point of contact for us to use if we need to clarify any responses. Please note that we do not expect you to do extensive research to complete the survey. We ask that you answer the questions based on your understanding of your Workforce Investment Act services for youth with disabilities. **When answering the survey questions, use the most recent full program year (July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012) as the frame of reference.** Please complete the survey by **Friday, May 31.**

Upon receipt of the completed surveys, Abt Associates will analyze responses and summarize the findings. We will not identify individual survey respondents or individual Local Workforce Investment Areas. The information provided will not affect your Local Workforce Investment Boards' relationship with the Department of Labor or future funding opportunities. A briefing discussing the survey process and findings is also planned.

Please contact the survey helpdesk with any questions: [dolyouthwia@abtassoc.com](mailto:dolyouthwia@abtassoc.com) or 888-239-7718. The Department of Labor and Abt Associates appreciate your assistance to better understand and serve the customers of the public workforce investment system, and thank you in advance for diligently and thoroughly completing this survey.

Sincerely,



Glen Schneider  
Project Director  
Abt Associates

# Youth WIA Survey

Administrator Toolbar

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Page 1



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

0%

### Introduction

Dear Executive Director,

This survey is designed to obtain information about the current status of services provided to youth with disabilities in the public workforce investment system. To review the letter introducing this data collection effort, [please click here](#). The US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration and Abt Associates appreciate your assistance in providing information that can improve services for the clients of the public workforce investment system. Thank you in advance for diligently and thoroughly completing this survey. Please send any inquiries, comments or questions to the [Solutions Desk](#) or call the Solutions Desk at (888) 239-7718 (toll-free). For general information about ETA's work with youth with disabilities, please contact [Gloria Salas-Kos](#), Office of Policy Development and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor.

According to the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995, no persons are required to respond to a collection of information unless such a collection displays a valid OMB control number. The valid OMB control number for this information collection is 1205-0436. Participation in this information collection is voluntary; however this is the single point of data for each LWIA. The time required to complete this information collection is estimated to average 50 minutes per response, including the time to review instruction, search existing data resources, gather the data needed and complete and review the information collection. Any comments concerning the accuracy of the time estimate or suggestions for improving this form should be submitted in writing to the U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Policy Development and Research, Room N-4511, Washington, D.C. 20210.



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

7%

### Instructions

Local Workforce Investment Board (LWIB) Executive Directors have **one month** to complete the survey. **By May 31, 2013, please complete and submit this survey.**

This survey should be completed by the individual(s) in your organization with the most knowledge about (a) state and local workforce policies and (b) your Workforce Investment Act services for youth with disabilities. We understand that as the Executive Director, you might not have the specific knowledge to respond to all of the questions. We do ask that you answer the questions that you can so that the study can benefit from your "big picture" perspective. Please then forward the survey link to your staff member(s) best suited to answer the survey questions. Multiple staff can access and complete the survey. Please note that we do not expect you to do extensive research to complete the survey. We ask that you answer the questions based on your understanding of your Workforce Investment Act services for youth with disabilities. **When answering the survey questions, use the most recent full program year (July 1, 2011 - June 30, 2012) as the frame of reference.**

To ensure confidential access to and completion of the survey, each LWIB Executive Director was sent an email with a personalized link to the survey. The web address you were sent is linked to your specific Local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) and can be shared with staff if they are assisting with the survey. However, the link should not be shared outside of your LWIA.

The survey is estimated to take **40-60 minutes to complete**, but completion time may vary from agency to agency. To review the entire survey before beginning, please click [here](#).

LWIB Executive Directors will respond to five sections in this survey about their LWIA's current practices to:

- Enhance staff capacity to serve youth with disabilities;
- Collaborate with other systems and integrate funding streams;
- Reach and serve out-of-school youth with disabilities;
- Provide work experience and community service opportunities for youth with disabilities including partnerships with employers; and
- Improve the system's ability to identify and meet customers' service needs.

To navigate through the survey, use the navigation buttons at the bottom of each page of the survey. **Do not use the browsers' navigation buttons.** If, while working on the survey, you are unable to navigate to the next page, please make sure that all the required questions are answered. A required question that is not answered when the "Next" button is clicked will have a pink bar above it to indicate that the question must be answered to proceed to the next page.

The survey can be completed over multiple sessions. To complete the survey at a later time, please use the "Save and continue later" button at the bottom of each page. Your responses will be saved and you will be reminded of the web link that can be used to resume the survey. To complete the survey, use either that link or the one provided in your original email.

Abt Associates may require clarification or additional information regarding your responses. **Please provide your contact information below:**

Name:

Title:

Organization:

E-mail:

If needed, survey respondents should consult with other staff or data sources within their LWIA in order to complete all questions.

**Please identify the individuals or data source(s) you consulted to complete this survey** (you will have the opportunity to confirm or update this information at the end of the survey):

Name:

Title:

Organization:

E-mail:

Data Source(s):

Name:

Title:

Organization:

E-mail:

Review responses: PDF Word



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

14%

### DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED IN THIS SURVEY:

**Accommodations:** Accommodations are changes to standard procedures made in order to enable people with disabilities to demonstrate their knowledge and skills. Accommodations are not designed to lower expectations for performance in school or work; rather, they are designed to ensure equitable access.

**American Job Centers:** Federally funded career centers that provide a full range of assistance to job seekers free of charge. Staff at the centers help people with training referrals, career counseling, job listings, and other employment related services. Please note, One-Stop Career Centers were recently renamed American Job Centers.

**Blending funds:** Blending occurs when two or more different fund sources are used to pay for a similar activity. For example, two or more programs with different purposes have an overlap in allowable services. A memorandum of understanding, cost allocation plan, regular communication, or meetings are used to reach agreement on how to pay for the activity. Under these types of agreements, an activity may be jointly funded by the partners to benefit two programs or more with cost allocated on a proportional basis back to each program.

**Braiding funds:** Braiding occurs when two or more fund sources are used to pay for *different but complementary* activities. For example, two or more programs with different purposes and either similar or distinct activities agree on a complimentary approach to pay for the activities. Memorandums of understanding, regular communication, or meetings are used to reach agreement on how to pay for the complementary activities. The participant receives a larger array of services without knowing how each activity is funded.

**Career planning/career exploration:** The process in which an individual learns about his/her employment, identifies and explores potentially satisfying occupations, and develops an effective strategy to realize their goals.

**Community Service:** Voluntary, unpaid work intended to help people in a particular area.

**Disability Action Advisory Committee (DAC):** An intra-agency or inter-agency entity which serves as a means to regularly communicate, problem solve, and works together to improve employment outcomes of youth with disabilities. A DAC's focus is to build a support system at the local, regional, or American Job Center level. A DAC also is effective for expanding the capacity of the service delivery system to serve youth with disabilities.

**Disability Program Navigator:** Staff position in an American Job Center who facilitates, coordinates and ensures various services, programs, and employment opportunities for people with disabilities. This position's successor is the Disability Resource Coordinator.

**Disability Task Force:** A group which assists individuals with disabilities at American Job Centers. It oversees access to services by American Job Center system providers, including vocational rehabilitation providers. Their mission is to assist individuals with disabilities in attaining full inclusion in society, employment opportunities, and economic independence as a result of services within the American Job Center system.

**Eligibility for youth services using Workforce Investment Act funds:** To qualify for these funds an individual must be between the ages of 14 and 21, low income, and meet at least one barrier to employment. Barriers include being a school dropout, basic skills deficient, pregnant or parenting, homeless, runaway or foster child, offenders, and an individual who requires additional assistance to complete an educational program, or to secure and hold employment.

**Integrated resource team:** A practice where a team comprised of representatives from different agencies and service systems coordinate services and leverage funding to meet the employment needs of an individual job seeker with a disability.

**Job shadowing:** When an employer provides opportunities that allow an individual to learn certain functions under the close and constant supervision of regular employees, but the individual performs no or minimal work.

**Local Workforce Investment Area:** An area in which workforce activities are administered locally by a Workforce Investment Board (WIB), but still taking into consideration factors such as consistency with labor market areas.

**On the job training:** When employers teach employees what they need to know for a job after they are hired.

**Out-of-school youth:** An eligible youth who is a school dropout; or an eligible youth who has received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but is basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed.

**Paid Work Experience:** A transitional or supported work job. A career preparation activity in which students are at a worksite doing real work for pay and held to the same expectations as all employees. These experiences range from regular, paid employment to subsidized employment and learning-rich work experience.

**Post-secondary institutions:** Any place that offers education beyond the high school level. They include public and private colleges and universities, professional schools, community colleges, and career and vocational schools.

**Secondary and/or alternative schools:** Secondary schools include middle and high schools. Alternative schools are middle or high schools that use nontraditional means of teaching and are often for students who have not succeeded in traditional schools.

**Summer job:** Employment that lasts for the two to three months when students are out of school.

**Training and Employment Guidance Letter:** Guidance disseminated by DOL to help guide and support agencies and grantees.

**Universal design:** A strategy for providing inclusive access and services that benefit job seekers with a wide range of learning styles, languages, educational levels, intelligences, and abilities.

**Unpaid work experience:** Internship; when an individual does not receive compensation for working at an organization. Usually this work is meant to add to a person's skills and education.

**Work in a community service setting:** Employment or volunteer work in a place that helps people and community organizations.

Review responses:





## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

21%

### 1. Services to Youth with Disabilities

This section focuses on the general characteristics of your Local Workforce Investment Area in regards to serving youth with disabilities. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey.**

#### Question 1

Thinking about all of the youth you serve, estimate the percentage that have the following disability (consider both disclosed and un-disclosed). Note: If an individual has multiple disabilities, he/she can be counted more than once.

Youth that have a physical disability:  %

Check if Unknown

Youth that have a sensory disability (blind/deaf):  %

Check if Unknown

Youth that have a cognitive/learning disability:  %

Check if Unknown

Youth that have a mental health disability:  %

Check if Unknown

Youth that have another disability:  %

Check if Unknown

#### Question 2

Estimate the percentage of all youth you serve that have an undisclosed disability:  %

Check if Unknown

Review responses: PDF Word



### Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

28%

#### Question 3

This question is designed to learn more about the organizations that provide services for youth in your area. Please distribute your Local Workforce Investment Area's youth service provider(s) and American Job Center(s) across the following four categories that describe their focus on serving youth with disabilities.

	Number of Youth Service Provider(s)	Number of American Job Center(s)	Unknown
Organizations that only serve youth with disabilities	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizations that mostly serve youth with disabilities	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizations that serve some youth with disabilities; but youth with disabilities represent less than half of the youth customers served	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Organizations that do not serve youth with disabilities	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

#### Question 4

How would you broadly characterize the services provided to youth with disabilities? Check all that apply.

**Question may be disabled depending upon your response to Question 3.**

- Integrated into services provided for all youth
- Some special programming exists for youth with disabilities
- All/most services for youth with disabilities are provided separately
- Unknown

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

35%

### 2. Organizational Emphasis on Serving Youth with Disabilities

This set of questions asks about your organization's emphasis on serving youth with disabilities. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey unless otherwise instructed (for example in question 8 in this section).**

#### Question 5

Which of the following statements best characterizes the philosophy in your local workforce investment area with respect to serving youth with disabilities?

- Youth with disabilities are a natural component of our larger youth population and we generally do not make the distinction when delivering services.
- Youth with disabilities are a unique service population that requires proactive targeting and customization of program resources.
- Unknown

#### Question 6

Does your organization make use of any of the following resources to ensure that youth with disabilities are effectively served in your local workforce investment area? Check all that apply.

- Workforce Board member appointed to represent the disability community
- Disability Action Advisory Committee or Subcommittee
- Disability Program Navigator
- Disability Resource Coordinator
- Disability Task Force
- Youth Council with an appointed youth with disabilities member
- Integrated Resource Team
- None of the above
- Other, please specify...
- Unknown

#### Question 7

Does your Local Workforce Investment Board use any of the following practices to encourage your youth service provider(s) and American Job Center(s) to serve youth with disabilities under Workforce Investment Act funding? Check all that apply.

- Service quotas or targets
- Additional consideration in response to target population or proposed services criteria when awarding contracts
- Negotiation of performance measures
- Explicit language in Request for Proposals for service providers that reflects the Local Workforce Investment Area's emphasis on serving youth with disabilities
- Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit youth with disabilities
- Targeted marketing or outreach efforts to recruit out-of-school youth with disabilities
- None of the above
- Unknown

#### Question 8

Using a five point scale where 1 is no barrier and 5 is a significant barrier, what are the potential barriers to providing services to youth with disabilities in your local workforce investment area?

	1	2	3	4	5	Unknown
Cost associated with disability assessments	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying eligible youth with disabilities to serve	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Meeting Workforce Investment Act performance measures	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Obtaining the necessary assistive technologies or specialized equipment	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Identifying service providers with the necessary capacity and experience	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Providing needed breadth and intensity of services available with Workforce Investment Act funding	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Establishing partnerships with necessary community stakeholders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Fulfilling program accessibility requirements	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participant non-disclosure of disability or disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 9**

Does the design of the services provided in your Local Workforce Investment Area by the youth service provider(s) or American Job Center(s) incorporate any of the following elements of universal design? Check all that apply.

- 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
- 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
- None of the above
- Unknown

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)

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## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

42%

### 3. Partnerships and Integration of Resources

Questions in this section refer to partnerships with other organizations associated with the services provided under the Workforce Investment Act to youth with disabilities. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey.**

#### Question 10

Has your Local Workforce Investment Board established a working partnership with any of the following organizations in order to recruit, assess, serve and/or place youth with disabilities? Check all that apply.

- Secondary and/or alternative schools
- Post-secondary institutions
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Juvenile justice agencies
- Transportation providers (local or federal)
- Human Service agencies
- Mental Health providers
- Social Security offices
- Adult education providers
- Community based organizations
- None of the above
- Unknown

#### Question 11

Has your Local Workforce Investment Board procured services for youth with disabilities by blending or braiding resources from other agencies and/or organizations?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

#### Question 12

If you blend or braid resources, please list the funding resources that have been blended or braided:

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)



### Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

50%

#### Question 13

Using a five point scale where 1 is no barrier and 5 is a significant barrier, how would you rate the following factors as potential barriers to forming partnerships that leverage funding or services to better serve youth with disabilities?

	1	2	3	4	5	Unknown
Different reporting requirements/schedules	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different service delivery locations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different performance measure systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use of different definitions of disability	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Different eligibility criteria	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Order of selection of priority of service (for Vocational Rehabilitation)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Issues related to customer confidentiality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of staff time	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of transportation for youth with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Program accessibility for youth with disabilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Lack of available accommodations at partner organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other potential barrier(s):

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

57%

### 4. Use of Customized Assessment Tools

This section focuses on assessments and the provision of accommodations during the assessment process. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey.**

#### Question 14

How is the disability status of your youth customers identified? Check all that apply.

- Through referral source
- Through students' Individual Education Program from school
- Through self-identification
- Through assessments given to all youth customers seeking services
- Through assessments given to select youth customers based on staff judgment
- Through a central case management database used across social service programs in your area
- It is often difficult to identify youth as having a disability
- Other, please specify...
- None of the above
- Unknown

#### Question 15

Do the youth service provider(s) or American Job Center(s) in your area use any customized assessment tools (e.g. aptitude, interest, skills) if a youth is identified as having a disability?

- Yes
- No
- Unknown

Review responses: PDF Word



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

64%

### Question 16

Do the youth service provider(s) or American Job Center(s) in your area incorporate any of the following accommodations in conducting assessments (e.g. aptitude, interest, skills)? Check all that apply.

- Allow extra time to complete assessments
- Allow for more frequent breaks
- Ensure a quiet test environment
- Provide multiple options for ways to respond (verbal, written, etc.)
- Conduct one-on-one interview
- Develop a portfolio assessment
- Use a different test
- Use assistive technology
- None of the above
- Other, please specify...
- Unknown

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)





**Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities**

71%

**5. Work Experience and Employment Opportunities**

This section gathers information on employment related services provided to youth with disabilities. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey.**

**Question 17**

Thinking about your American Job Center(s) and youth service provider(s) as a group, how would you characterize the mix of services they offer to youth with disabilities compared to the total youth population? Use a four point scale where 1 is the service is provided more for youth with disabilities, 2 is the service is provided the same for youth with disabilities, 3 is the service is provided less for youth with disabilities, and 4 is the service is not provided to youth with disabilities.

	1	2	3	4	Unknown
Career planning/career exploration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job shadowing	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Paid work experience (e.g. a transitional or supported work job)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
On the job training	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Summer jobs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Unpaid work experience (e.g. internship)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Work in a community service setting	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

**Question 18**

Either directly or through the youth service provider(s) or American Job Center(s), has your Local Workforce Investment Board addressed the following topics during training to employers to promote work experience and employment opportunities for youth with disabilities? Check all that apply.

- Sensitivity training
- Misonceptions about hiring youth with disabilities
- Learning how to prepare job postings that don't exclude those with disabilities
- Introduction to basic assistive technologies
- Available tax credits for hiring youth with disabilities
- Universal design
- Accommodations
- None of the above
- Other, please specify...
- Unknown

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)



### Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

78%

#### Question 19

Using a five point scale where 1 is no barrier and 5 is a significant barrier, what barriers (if any) has your Local Workforce Investment Board encountered in encouraging employers to hire youth with disabilities?

	1	2	3	4	5	Unknown
Perceptions of lacking necessary knowledge, skills or abilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Perceptions of having lower productivity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Perceptions of requiring additional resources	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns about co-worker reaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Concerns about customer reaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Economic incentives are insufficient or not well-known	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Accessibility	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

#### Question 20

How frequently are youth with disabilities co-enrolled in the adult and youth Workforce Investment Act programs?

- Less than 10% of youth with disabilities are co-enrolled in the adult and youth Workforce Investment Act programs
- 11-25% of youth with disabilities are co-enrolled in the adult and youth Workforce Investment Act programs
- More than 25% of youth with disabilities are co-enrolled in the adult and youth Workforce Investment Act programs
- Unknown

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)

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## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

85%

### 6. Community Service Opportunities

Questions in this section ask about community service opportunities for youth with disabilities. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey.**

#### Question 21

Do youth with disabilities have access to community service opportunities through the service providers in your Local Workforce Investment Area?

- Yes, for all
- Yes, for some
- No, sufficient opportunities are not available
- Unknown

#### Question 22

Are these opportunities:

- Targeted specifically to youth with disabilities
- Integrated into other broader community service opportunities for youth
- Unknown

#### Question 23

What is the percentage of youth with disabilities that engaged in community service opportunities through service providers in your Local Workforce Investment Area?

- 0-33%
- 34-66%
- 67-100%
- Unknown

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)



## Survey of Workforce Investment Act Services Provided to Youth with Disabilities

02%

### 7. Staff Development and Training

Questions in this section ask about your staff capacity building for serving youth with disabilities. **Please use the most recent program year ending on June 30, 2012 as a reference for all of the questions in this survey.**

#### Question 24

Has your Local Workforce Investment Board offered any type of training or professional development to staff in order to help them serve youth with disabilities? Check all that apply.

- Yes, to Local Workforce Investment Board staff
- Yes, to youth service provider(s) and/or American Job Center(s) staff
- No, we did not offer training or professional development
- Unknown

#### Question 25

What (additional) training do youth think staff at your youth service provider(s) and American Job Center(s) would benefit from to better serve youth with disabilities? Check all that apply.

- Disclosure procedures
- Accommodations (in the workplace or at providers)
- Federal, state and local disabilities policies and programs
- Building and maintaining partnerships
- Leveraging funding sources
- Staff would not benefit from additional training
- Unknown

#### Question 26

What organization(s) do you think should be responsible for providing that additional training? Check all that apply.

- The State Workforce Investment Board
- Other local agencies (e.g., schools, community/advocacy organization)
- Other state agencies (e.g., social services, education)
- US Department of Labor (through regional offices)
- US Department of Labor (nationally)
- None of the above
- Other, please specify...
- Unknown

#### Question 27

On June 13, 2011, the Department of Labor issued [Training and Employment Guidance Letter 31-10](#) which intended to provide information and resources for Local Workforce Investment Areas to improve their capacity to serve youth with disabilities. Were you familiar with that document before getting this survey? Based on the information provided in the Training and Employment Guidance Letter, have you made any changes to improve the capacity of your Local Workforce Investment Area to serve youth with disabilities?

- Yes (please describe)
- No, not yet but are planning to make changes (please describe planned changes)
- No

Review responses: [PDF](#) [Word](#)

## Appendix B: Experts

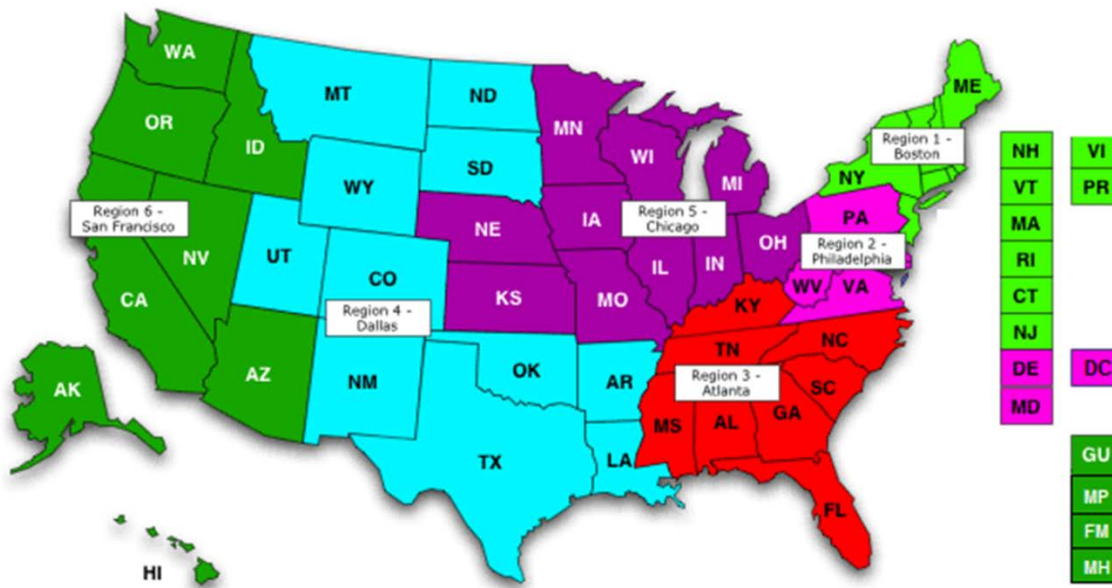
Experts Selected for WIA Youth with Disabilities Study	
Name	Title & Organization
Ellie Emanuel	Resident Coordinator Pathways to Employment Minnesota Workforce Center Saint Paul, MN
Mary Alice Escarsega-Fechner	Deputy Director Community Services and Employment Training Visalia, CA
David Hoff	Senior Technical Assistance Specialist Institute for Community Inclusion Professor University of Massachusetts Boston Boston, MA
Barbara Kaufman	Director Montgomery County Workforce Investment Board Wheaton, MD
William Kiernan	Director Institute for Community Inclusion & Professor, University of Massachusetts Boston
Rich Luecking	President TransCen Rockville, MD
Curtis Richards	Director National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth Institute for Educational Leadership Center for Workforce Development Washington, DC
Dr. Brittany Sansbury/ Dr. Chrisann Schiro-Geist	Senior Advisor University of Memphis Institute on Disability Director University of Memphis Institute on Disability Counseling & Counseling Psychology Professor University of Memphis Memphis, TN
Sue Walsh	Division Head Cambridge Office of Workforce Development Cambridge, MA

## Appendix C: Non-Response Analysis

This non-response analysis examines the extent to which the characteristics of LWIBs that responded to the survey differ systematically from those who did not. Using a chi-square test, we examine if those LWIBs that responded to the survey are geographically representative of the larger population LWIBs. If they are, this would suggest that the survey responses discussed in the body of this document are likely to be representative of the larger population as well. If, however, the LWIBs who responded to the survey are not representative of the larger population of LWIBs, findings based on survey data should be interpreted with caution.

Limited data are available to examine differences in the characteristics of survey responders and non-responders. We base the non-response analysis on: (1) the variation in response rates by geographical region and (2) whether the response rate of LWIBs that operate statewide differs from the response rate for LWIBs that do not operate statewide. It should be noted that these measures are not known or hypothesized to be associated with variations in providing services to youth with disabilities in the workforce system (this study is the first to systematically gather this type of service profile). It is however possible that there may be other un-measurable areas related to serving this population where there are differences between survey respondents and non-respondents.

**Exhibit C.1: ETA Regions**



Source: U.S. DOL, 2012c.

Exhibit C.1 presents the definitions of the geographical regions used by ETA, and Exhibit C.2 presents response rates by region. As shown, response rates range from 61 percent in Region 1 (the Boston region) to 77 percent in Region 4 (the Dallas region). However, the variation in response rates across regions is not statistically significant, indicating that there is no response bias on this measure.

**Exhibit C.2: Survey Response by Region**

Region	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total
<b>Number of units</b>							
Fielded surveys	93	58	108	84	144	93	580
Completions	57	44	71	65	95	58	390
<b>Response rates</b>							
Response rate	61%	76%	66%	77%	66%	62%	67%

Notes: Variation in response rates by region is not statistically significant at the 10 percent level (p=0.13).

In 16 states, State WIB Executive Directors are included in the fielded survey, as they oversee LWIAs in the state where there are no local WIBs.<sup>11</sup> Exhibit C.3 presents the survey response rates by whether the potential respondent was a local WIB Executive Director or a State WIB Executive Director. As shown, the response rate among LWIAs overseen by the State WIB is 75%, and is 67% for those overseen by a local WIB. A chi-squared test indicates that this variation in the response rate is not statistically significant, again indicating there is not response bias on this measure.

Because statewide LWIBs may cover a larger geographic area than other LWIBs, the benefits of and barriers to serving youth with disabilities could be systematically different for these LWIBs. However, these LWIBs were proportionally represented in the both the field and respondent sample. Specifically, 28 and 30 percent of the fielded sample and respondent sample are state WIBs, respectively (not on table).

**Exhibit C.3: Response Rates for State and Local WIBs**

Respondent	Local WIB Executive Director	State WIB Executive Director	Total
<b>Number of units</b>			
Fielded sample	564	16	580
Completions	378	12	390
<b>Response rates</b>			
Response rate	67%	75%	67%

Notes: Variation in response rates by region is not statistically significant at the 10 percent level (p=0.99).

<sup>11</sup> In Alaska, the District of Columbia, Delaware, Guam, Idaho, Mariana Islands, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Montana, New Hampshire, North Dakota, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia and Wyoming, the state WIB oversees all LWIAs because there are no local WIBs. In Alabama, the State WIB oversees the LWIA for some counties.