

**Transition Services and the Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act
(WIOA)
What it means for Schools, Families and Youth with Disabilities**



Workforce Innovation and Opportunities Act

Overview

WIOA is the acronym for a federal law called the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. It was signed into law in July 2014 to replace the portion of the Rehabilitation Act formerly called the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). WIOA creates both new opportunities and responsibilities for schools in partnership with the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to support students and youth with disabilities as they transition from school to college and/or competitive integrated employment in the community. WIOA aligns with the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (WDPI) agenda, College and Career Readiness for all students.

The WDPI promotes the objective of educational services for all students as preparation for College and Career readiness. Academic Career Planning (ACP) is a requirement of educational services for all students in grades 6-12. In addition, the federal WIOA includes the collaborative responsibility of school district, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation services and long-term support to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities.

Postsecondary goals and transition planning have been required under IDEA for many years. The intent of the strengthened transition planning requirements in IDEA Amendment 2004 were directed to support improved college and career outcomes for students who received special education services. As a part of the IEP, Postsecondary Transition Plans (PTP) require goals for after high school in the areas of:

- Education and Training
- Employment
- Independent Living as appropriate for the student's transition plan

Setting these goals must be supported by:

- An Age Appropriate Transition Assessment
- Course of Study
- Transition Services
- Annual Goals

Meaningful post-school goals based on age appropriate transition assessments were already required under IDEA; along with determining a student's course of study, transition service needs, and annual goals to support movement toward post-school goals. The role of schools is to prepare students to be ready to launch into the next phase of reaching their life goals after graduation.

What does this mean to add WIOA law into the game? Transition requirements remain the same as they were. WIOA is an opportunity to strengthen the original intent of transition planning requirements for students.

WIOA simply is:

- New FEDERAL Legislation
- Part of the Rehabilitation Act
- Replaces WIA (Workforce Investment Act)



The intent of WIOA is to enhance the services available in school for students with disabilities; however, the partnership with DVR does not replace or reduce the school district's obligation to provide transition services as part of the IDEA.

School and the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) Collaboration

In 2014, Vocational Rehabilitation was mandated by the Rehabilitation Services Administration to reserve 15% of its service budget to provide Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) to students with disabilities in high school. This is a great opportunity for schools and DVR to work together, share responsibilities, and create positive postsecondary outcomes for students with disabilities. This shift requires:

- Increased responsibility to collaborate with the DVR.

Under WIOA, students ages 14-24 can no longer go to work for sub-minimum wage without first exploring community employment through DVR services. This means the school district will no longer be allowed to purchase transition services that involve training in work that typically pays sub-minimum wage paid under a 14(c) sub-minimum wage certificate. A school district can however contract with community service providers/vendors for community-based services aimed at supporting competitive integrated employment. Teachers, school counselors, and other school staff members can increase collaboration with DVR, families and students by:

- Sharing information with students and their family about what services DVR can provide.
 - Creating additional ways for DVR Counselors to be in schools and meeting with students and family members on a regular basis.
 - Helping students apply for DVR services through an on-line process to connect them to employment services.
 - Engaging students and their family to learn what matters to them.
 - Raising expectations for the student's future plans and dreaming the possibilities.
 - Identifying the student's and their family's expectations, interests, strengths, motivators, successes, personal satisfaction and relationships with others in their community.
 - Continuing to foster self-advocacy skills, self-awareness and self-determination skills for all students!
- Reframe the provisions of transition services to match the Pre-ETS outlined in WIOA.

School districts and the DVR are responsible for providing Pre-ETS to students with the intention of increasing their outcomes and more importantly the outcomes of students with disabilities. The WDPI, along with the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG), has created transition service options in the Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP) to align with WIOA Pre-ETS categories. This list was written to be as student and family-friendly as possible to assure all transition partners will have the opportunity to engage in the transition planning with the student. Schools/WDPI will be responsible to share data with DVR to ensure the provision of Pre-ETS to students is completed and vocational opportunities are provided.

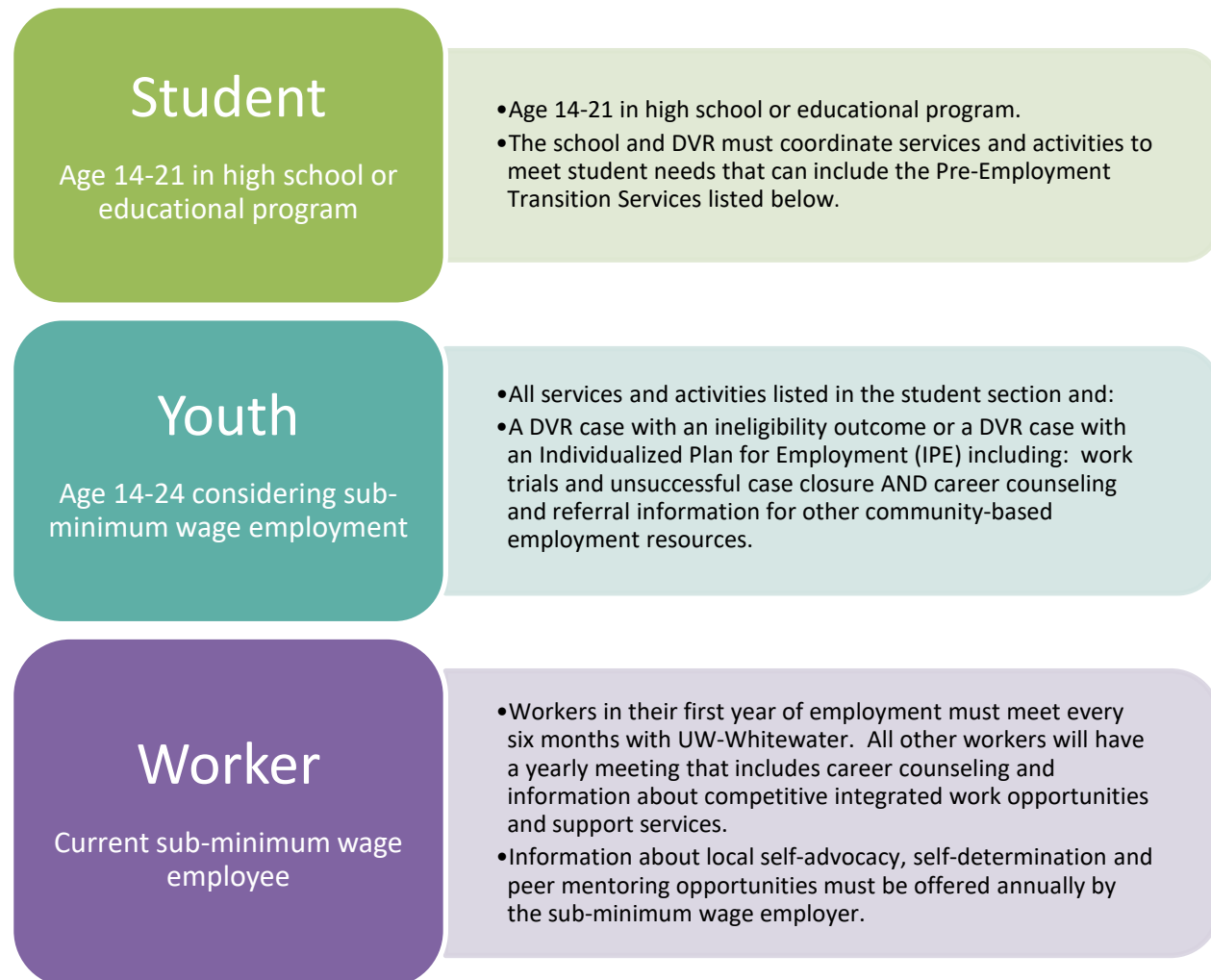
Competitive Integrated Employment

Competitive integrated employment is the goal for all students. This is defined under WIOA as:

- Work should be performed on a full-time or part-time basis;
- Work should be compensated not less than the applicable state or local minimum wage law (is the customary wage-not below minimum wage);
- The worker should be eligible for the level of benefits provided to other employees;
- The work should be at a location that is in the community where the employee works with people without disabilities who do not supervise them;
- The job presents opportunities for advancement.

It is the responsibility of the DVR and the school district to provide services and documentation of those services at different milestones which align and support the new competitive integrated employment definition defined by the Department of Workforce Development.

Those milestones include:



At this time, a student in Wisconsin would not be allowed to engage in sub-minimum wage employment. Rather, students will be given the opportunity to explore competitive integrated employment to fully engage in their skills, abilities, and talents while working in a community setting

along with their same age peers and individuals without disabilities. The WIOA specifies requirements for both school districts and the DVR is to ensure that students with all disabilities, including students with significant disabilities, are included in supports and services in order to facilitate transition to competitive integrated employment and other outcomes. Section 113 of the WIOA states specific responsibility for “developing and improving strategies for individuals with intellectual disabilities and individuals with significant disabilities to:

- Obtain and retain competitive integrated employment
- Participate in postsecondary education experiences
- Live independently

The WIOA includes use of customized employment strategies to support students with significant disabilities as well. Customized employment is developed through an agreement between the employee and employer to meet the needs of both parties to create a positive job match.

Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP)

Early transition planning is an integral part of planning for the future. In Wisconsin, we have an online application for developing a Postsecondary Transition Plan called the PTP. The PTP assists the Individual Education Program (IEP) teams in documenting the transition requirements while individualizing the student’s needs in planning for their future after high school. PTP documentation is required at age 14 and above, but is encouraged at an earlier age if the IEP Team feels it is necessary. There are eight components to consider when completing the PTP.



WDPI and the TIG have also created an online app, WiTransition, which can be found at www.witransition.com. This app mirrors the PTP while providing a fun and language friendly way to incorporate the student and family voice in the transition planning process.

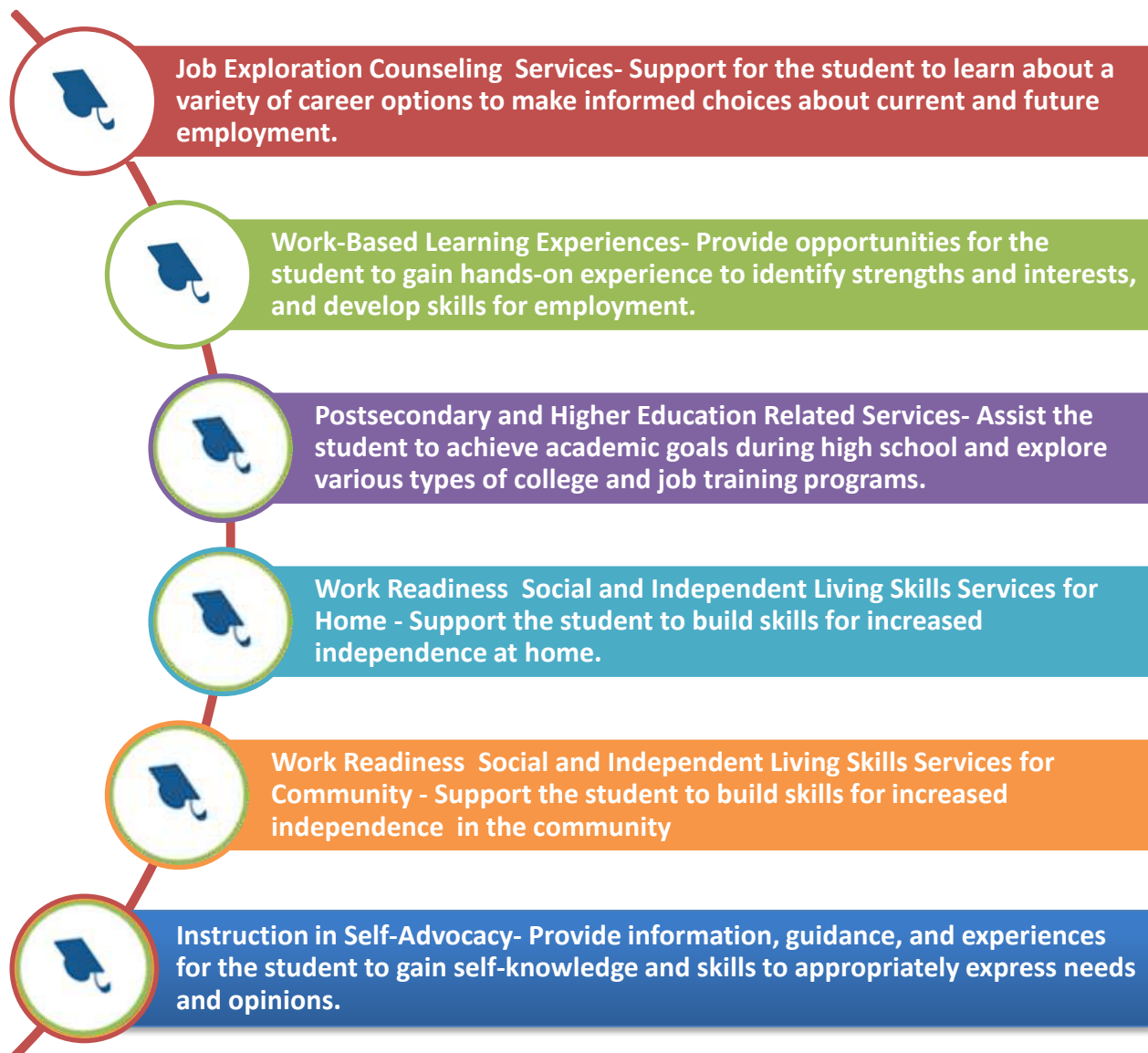
Transition Services in the PTP

Transition services are services or activities in the PTP that assist the student in meeting their postsecondary goals. Transition services are defined as educational activities and supports designed to assist students with disabilities to achieve IEP goals and leave school prepared to reach their measurable postsecondary goals. The determination of specific transition service needs stems from individual results of age-appropriate transition assessments and the IEP Team planning process. Transition Services and Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) are interchangeable terms in regards to WIOA.

The lists of services below will provide information regarding activity options for the IEP Team to consider in the transition planning process.

Transition Services/Pre-Employment Transition Services (Pre-ETS) Outlined in the PTP

There are 6 basic components to the Transition Services/Pre-ETS as outlined by WIOA law. Below you will find more information for each of the components.



Pre-Employment Transition Services Descriptions for Educators as Outlined in the Postsecondary Transition Plan (PTP)



Category 1 - Job Exploration Counseling

Support for the student to learn about a variety of career options to make informed choices about current and future employment.

1. Support student to explore career interests (Academic Career Planning (ACP))
2. Determine student's skills and strengths related to work
3. Help student take Career and Technical Education (CTE) classes
4. Help student gather information about colleges and/or job training programs
5. Give student information about the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)
6. Help student complete Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) application
7. Help student with resume, job applications, cover letters (can include visual resume)
8. Teach student interviewing skills
9. Share career fair opportunities and support student to attend
10. Give student information about adult services and the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
11. Help student apply for adult services through the Aging and Disability Resource Center (ADRC)
12. Introduce student to people who work at employment support agencies
13. Give student information about Work Incentive Benefits Counseling
14. Teach student about disability disclosure and employment rights
15. Teach student about Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, as amended by the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)
16. Teach student soft skills (e.g. - hygiene, punctuality, attendance, interpersonal and communication skills, following directions, and problem solving)
17. Take student on tours of local businesses
18. Take student for informational interviews and job shadows
19. Provide information about apprenticeships through the Department of Workforce Development
20. Provide information about level 1 and 2 youth apprenticeship certifications
21. Help student earn the DPI employability skills certificate
(<https://dpi.wi.gov/sites/default/files/imce/cte/pdf/esimpleguide.pdf>)
22. Help student take the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB)



Category 2 – Work-Based Learning Experiences

Provide opportunities for the student to gain hands-on experience to identify strengths and interests and develop skills for employment.

1. Help student get involved in jobs at school (school store, library, office, cafeteria, coffee shop)
2. Talk to student about how to discuss her/his disability with a boss
3. Support student volunteering in the community
4. Support student to gather information needed for a job (social security card, address, birth certificate, state ID or driver's license, and work permit if under 16)
5. Assist student in finding a summer job (job development – may include customized employment)
6. Support student to have an internship/youth apprenticeship (school year or summer)
7. Assist student in finding a job during the school year (job development – may include customized employment)
8. Provide systematic instruction to teach student to complete job tasks independently (job coaching)
9. Figure out what assistive technology might help student at work
10. Teach the student about money management (how to read a paycheck, taxes and deductions from a paycheck, direct deposit, budgeting)
11. Review and discuss what makes a good employee and bad employee with student
12. Review and discuss differences in workplace environments with student





Category 3 – Postsecondary and Higher Education Related Services

Assist the student to achieve academic goals during high school and explore various types of college and job training programs.

1. Review and discuss academic skills, strengths, and accommodations needed in college with student
2. Review Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and Americans with Disability Act with student and family to help them prepare for college
3. Set up student meeting with the school counselor to talk about college and job training options
4. Plan with student for high school classes to reach her/his goals
5. Work with student to figure out what assistive technology might be helpful for school
6. Assist student with academic needs through resource room, homework help, tutoring, mentoring
7. Plan student classes to match her/his goals (course of study)
8. Provide opportunities for the student to take college level courses in high school and receive college credit
9. Plan one or more college tours with student
10. Support student with evaluations needed for a college application and accommodations
11. Support student to apply for accommodations for the college entrance exams
12. Provide student opportunities to practice taking the college entrance exams (ACT, Compass)
13. Review student results of college entrance exam(s) and create plan based on results
14. Discuss college requirements and options with student, family, and school counselor
15. Share and discuss disability documentation needed for college with student and family
16. Talk to student, family, and school counselor about applying for financial aid for college
17. Assist student to audit courses at UW System and Technical Colleges
18. Support student participation in Adult/Continuing Education and/or Community College Courses





Category 4 – Work Readiness Social and Independent Living Skills Services for Home

Support the student to build skills for increased independence at home.

1. Create a list with the student and family of things the student can do at home (make a sandwich, set the table, load the dishwasher, cut the lawn, rake the leaves, etc.)
2. Support the student to become more independent at home chores based on assessment
3. Provide opportunities for student to learn about and practice being in the community (what to do at a restaurant, bank, grocery store, etc.)
4. Teach student communication skills (phone, e-mail, social media), including safety issues
5. Teach student about meal planning, healthy choices, grocery shopping, and storing food safely
6. Provide sex education and personal safety instruction
7. Figure out assistive technology needs for home
8. Teach student how to make medical appointments
9. Teach student about any medications she/he is taking
10. Teach student how to keep a calendar/schedule and manage time
11. Teach student money skills including setting up a home budget, opening a bank account, paying bills, filing taxes
12. Support student and family to explore places to live after graduation
13. Give the student and family a copy of “What you should know about Wisconsin LAW Booklet” and talk about what changes when the student turns 18 years of age
14. Talk about services needed by the student after high school to help with independence (recreational therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, speech therapy, orientation and mobility specialists, and vision/hearing supports, Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Counseling, Mental Health Counseling)
15. Provide information to the student and family about adult long-term care services and the process to apply for these services





Category 5 - Work Readiness Social and Independent Living Skills Services for Community

Support the student to build skills for increased independence in the community.

1. Figure out supports needed for student to be safe in the community
2. Teach safety skills based on assessment (street crossing, strangers, emergencies)
3. Teach student to use public transportation
4. Talk about and connect students with available community resources that match student interests (examples: libraries, museums, civic organizations, religious organizations, club sports, special interest clubs, fitness centers, volunteer opportunities etc.)
5. Support student involvement in community activities (sports, art work, volunteering)
6. Teach student about civic duties (Selective Service registration, voting, jury duty)
7. Provide support for student to get a driver's license
8. Support student to get a state ID card





Category 6 – Instruction in Self-Advocacy

Provide information, guidance, and experiences for the student to gain self-knowledge and skills to appropriately express needs and opinions.

1. Teach student the skills to speak up for her/himself at school, work, and in the community
2. Provide opportunities for student to choose and participate in general education classrooms, extra-curricular activities, and community-based opportunities
3. Support student to learn to keep her/himself physically healthy
4. Support student to learn to keep her/himself mentally healthy
5. Teach student ways to stay calm and deal with anger and frustration (self-regulation)
6. Teach student how to talk about their disability and tell others about support needs
7. Provide opportunities for student to talk about strengths, challenges, and accommodation needs in school
8. Provide a learning styles inventory to identify preferred learning methods and review with student and family
9. Set-up peer mentoring opportunities as a means of self-advocacy skill development and practice
10. Provide opportunities for the student to run their own IEP/PTP meetings
11. Review and discuss strengths, challenges, and accommodation needs in community, college, and employment areas with student



Ensuring Compliance with WIOA Regulations for School Districts

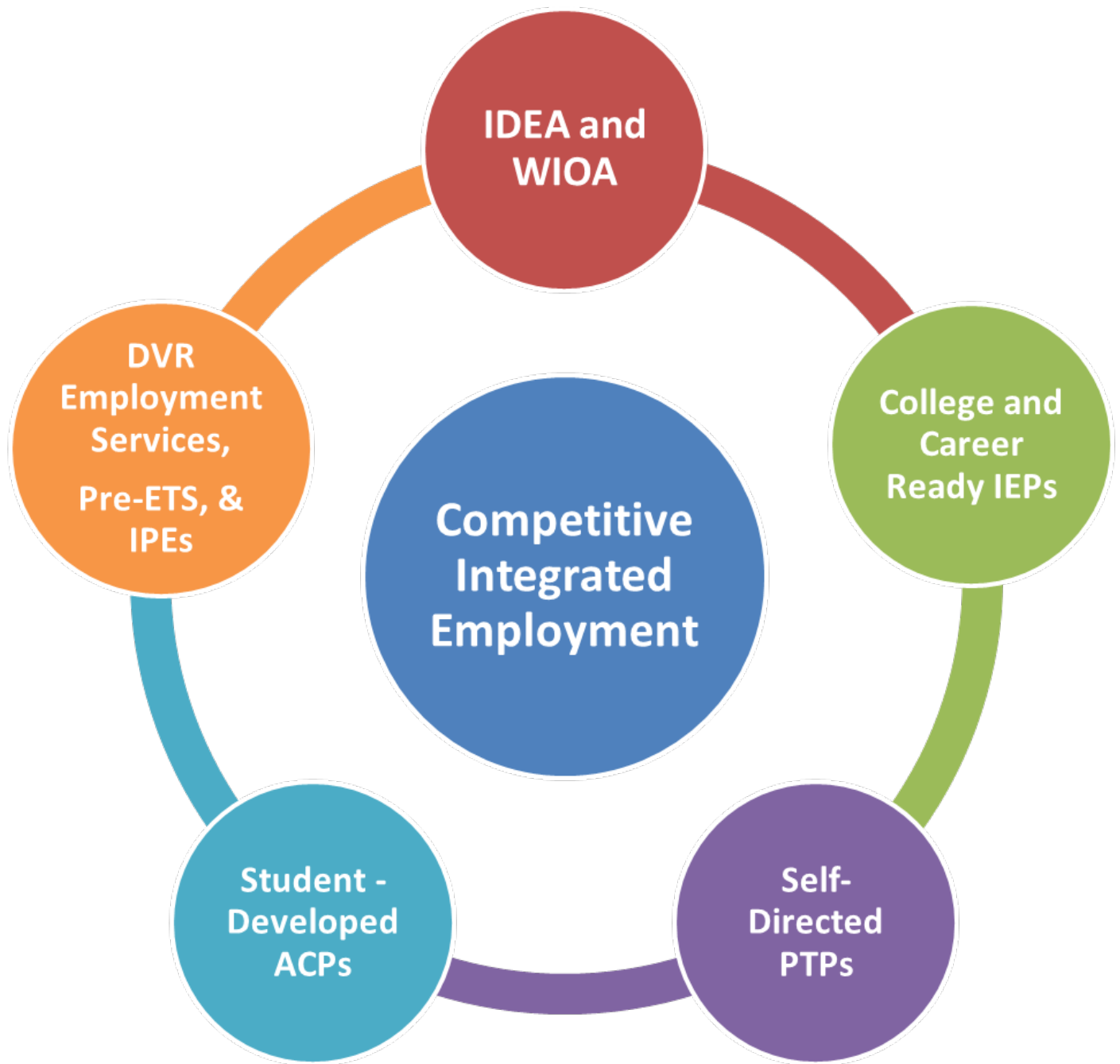
School districts have an obligation to meet WIOA regulations. Below are some ways to assure the school district is meeting compliance.

- Determine if any students are receiving school-funded transition services that are no longer allowable under the WIOA. Convene an IEP/PTP Team meeting to revise the IEP/PTP to include Pre-Employment Transition Services and support for the exploration of employment opportunities that are competitive and integrated.
- Work with the WDPI and the Transition Improvement Grant (TIG) to develop or expand the provision of Pre-Employment Transition Services provided by your school district. TIG Coordinators are assigned by CESA areas. To contact your TIG Coordinator, go to:
<http://www.witig.org/contact-us/>.
- Contact your local DVR representative to refer students with disabilities for services at least 2 years prior to graduation/exit or earlier if additional planning and services may be required due to multiple barriers to successful competitive integrated employment. There is an assigned DVR Counselor to each school in Wisconsin. To find the DVR Counselor in your school, go to:
<https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/transition/pdf/school-liaisons.pdf>.
- Work in collaboration with the assigned DVR counselor to identify community resources and provide competitive and integrated work-related activities.
- Continue to use the Transition Action Guide (TAG) to assist in the improvement of communication, coordination, and services for students with disabilities transitioning from school to work. The TAG link is: <https://dwd.wi.gov/dvr/policy-guidance/toolkits-guides-manuals/pdf/tag.pdf>
- Contact your local DVR representative for coordination, technical assistance, funding and new services for students with disabilities.
- Use information from the Academic and Career Plan- <http://dpi.wi.gov/acp> when developing a student IEP/PTP, 504 Plan, and other accommodation plans in order to identify individualized employment goals and coordinate appropriate transition services.
- Compare activities of the ACP with the PTP.



Summary

WIOA will enhance the partnership between school districts and the DVR. It will provide more opportunities for students with disabilities in becoming involved in their classrooms, community, and workplace. It is time to have high expectations for all students and empower them to reach their full potential. Effective transition planning with the goal of competitive integrated employment will lead the way in providing opportunity for all students to be college and career ready!



Resources:

Transition Improvement Grant Resources:

- Transition Improvement Grant- www.witig.org
- <https://witig.org/transition-planning/wioa/>
- WiTransition App – www.witransition.com

Parent Resources:

- WIOA and Transition Services for Families: <https://www.witig.org/resource-link.html?id=32777>
- WIOA Frequently Asked Questions for Families: <https://www.witig.org/resource-link.html?id=32778>

DVR Resources:

- Department of Education/Department of Labor – WIOA Page: <https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ovae/pi/AdultEd/wioa-reauthorization.html>
- LEAD Center-WIOA Summaries: <http://www.leadcenter.org/>
- DVR Webpage: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/subminimum-wage/youth.htm>
- A guide to different agency roles in transition services can be found at: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/policy-guidance/toolkits-guides-manuals/pdf/tag-short-version.pdf>
- Find the DVR counselor assigned to your high school here: <https://dwd.wisconsin.gov/dvr/job-seekers/transition/pdf/school-liaisons.pdf>



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