

Myth Busters



WIOA American Job Center (AJC) Network

Myths perceived as fact can interfere with the ability of States to fully implement an integrated workforce development system envisioned under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). Myths thought to be true may result from misunderstanding the law and regulations and from a lack of experience with other workforce development system partners. Described below are some myths about the changes made by WIOA and the facts that provide the real story:

TANF and WIOA AJCs

Myth:

Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) participants or “welfare recipients” are generally not work-ready and lack the basic skills to perform on the job.

Fact:

Most TANF recipients have a high school or higher level of education and many have significant work experience. Some may only need assistance with transportation or child care, or need cash assistance for a short period of time. Other recipients can benefit from job search services and connections to employers provided by AJCs.

Myth:

TANF participants are unwilling to work.

Fact:

States require most adult TANF recipients to engage in work activities and impose sanctions on those who refuse to participate. States must engage a certain percentage of their TANF assistance caseloads in work activities or face financial penalties from the federal government. Because work is integral to the TANF program, coordinating with the employment-oriented programs of the AJCs is a win-win for both TANF and other title I programs.

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Myth:

TANF and the workforce system have no shared performance outcomes.

Fact:

While TANF and WIOA currently have different performance indicators to measure outcomes, WIOA's emphasis on state and local coordination across programs gives TANF and workforce system programs the opportunity to develop more synchronous performance measures and benefit from each other's data collections. In addition, the shared focus of TANF and WIOA on employment means that coordinating with AJCs is an important component of achieving the goals of both partners.

Myth:

TANF and AJC coordination will create larger bureaucratic structures and make it more difficult to manage client needs.

Fact:

Colocation and coordination may provide a more seamless service delivery approach, reduce duplicative services, and provide individuals with access to real-world employment data and services to increase employment outcomes.

Myth:

TANF is a complex and confusing program that may limit the ability of AJCs to function according to their mission.

Fact:

TANF is an extremely flexible program that can provide employment and training services and work supports, such as child care, not only to TANF recipients, but also other low-income adults with children. This flexibility can help facilitate integrated services to participants of both TANF and other WIOA partner programs.
