11.27.19

**Requirements and Considerations for WIOA Unified and Combined State Plans: Overview**

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Welcome to our presentation today on Requirements and Considerations for Workforce IOA Unified and Combined State Plans for program years 2020 through 2023.

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Hi, I’m Heather Fleck and I am the Unit Chief with the WIOA Governance team at the Employment and Training Administration, US Department of Labor. I am representing the Title I and Title III programs of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. And I am happy to be joined today by my colleagues from the Department of Education.

I am Karla Ver Bryck Block. I serve as the Team Leader for the Monitoring and Administration Team for the title II programs in the Division of Adult Education and Literacy which is located in the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education at the US Department of Education.

 Hi, my name is Shannon Moler. I am a Vocational Rehabilitation Program Specialist with the Rehabilitation Services Administration, and I’m representing Title IV programs.

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Today’s webcast has 4 objectives. First, because each State and outlying area is required to submit a 4-year Plan addressing activities under each of the WIOA titles, we want to provide you with the information you need to fully understand the process that you will be using for the submission of your four-year State plan that begins in program year 2020. Second, we will provide you with the information regarding the legal requirements for submitting a State plan. These requirements are contained in both the WIOA statute and regulations.

Third, we will cover what some of the drivers are, as well as programmatic considerations, which may affect the State plan you submit. In hearing more about these items, you may find that some apply to your state but not all. Or perhaps all apply. These are items for you to think about when developing your plan.

And fourth, we will provide you with information about strategies and policies, as well as resources, for developing your plan for the next four years.

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 We encourage you to think about the plan as both a compliance document as well as a living document. As you know, an approved plan is required in order for a State to receive funds for the six core WIOA programs. That approved plan is used for monitoring how the State is carrying out the program activities as well as the use of funds that the State addressed in its plan. That’s the compliance part. You may receive an onsite monitoring visit, or a virtual visit, or be part of desktop monitoring during the life of the plan as Federal staff carry out our fiduciary duties.

As for the “living” part, we encourage you to think of the plan as a roadmap for delivering services under WIOA. During the life of a plan, States have the opportunity to refine and adjust their efforts regarding WIOA implementation and continuous improvement. The key word is “plan” – so the plan is a document of what the State hopes and expects to implement but there is understanding that with the passage of time and changing conditions, further adjustments may be needed to your plan. We’ll say more on that later.

Slide 5: About this Technical Assistance series – we are coordinating a series of pre-recorded Webcasts for state plan process. Check out the podcast featuring John Pallasch, ETA’s Assistant Secretary, Mark Schultz, the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration in the

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, Scott Stump, the assistant Secretary for the Office of Career, Technical, and Adult Education, and Clarence Carter, director of the office of family assistance and acting director of community services, for Administration for Children and Families. They discuss what they view as the opportunity presented by joint planning across workforce programs.

Federal staff from the 6 core WIOA programs as well as the Combined partner programs have prepared webcasts. The webcasts are modular, that is recorded as separate files, so that you may choose which file or files are of interest to your State. We hope that you will bookmark these helpful webcasts and revisit them as needed during the four-year plan cycle.

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 Hopefully this slide looks familiar to you. This is essentially the Table of Contents for your State plan. These 7 sections follow the sections in the Information Collection Request (which is the plan template). These are the same 7 sections of the ICR used for the 2016 plan submission process and they have not changed

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To encourage implementation and integration of workforce development services, WIOA requires States to submit a four-year Unified or Combined State Plan that covers, at a minimum, the six core programs of the workforce development system.  In order to satisfy the submission requirements of WIOA for these State Plans, each State’s Governor must submit a Unified or Combined State Plan for the four-year period covering program years 2020-2023 **by March 2, 2020**.

The Unified or Combined State Plan covering the six core programs of the workforce development system will be considered approved 90 days after the date the Plan is submitted, unless the Secretaries of Labor and Education inform the State in writing within that time period that the Plan is inconsistent with the State Plan requirements or the provisions authorizing the core programs, as appropriate.

For those States submitting Unified or Combined State Plans for the core programs after April 1, 2020, the Secretaries of Labor and Education, as well as the Commissioner of the Rehabilitation Services Administration, will do their best to approve the Unified or Combined State Plans prior to July 1, 2020, which is the start of program year 2020. However, because Plans submitted after April 1, 2020 will not give the Secretaries the full 90 days allowed by law to review and approve the Plans, the awarding of funds for those States could be delayed.

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As part of the process, States must submit the new four-year Plan via the redesigned WIOA State Plan portal. Training on how to use the State plan portal will be offered to State users separately from this webcast series.

States should be aware that stakeholder collaboration, review, and comment remain key requirements of the planning process to produce the new four-year Plan.

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Content requirements include developing plans to reflect implementation of WIOA and to improve areas of the plan impacted by the publication of joint regulations and guidance, or changes in circumstances in the State, since the initial State Plan and modification submissions. For example, States may be better able with the passage of time to describe their progress in revising data collection and reporting systems as well as strengthening program strategies reflecting current economic and labor market conditions throughout State regions.

The State Plan must be developed with the assistance of the State Workforce Development Board, or State Board, as required by WIOA, and in coordination with administrators that have policymaking authority for the core programs and required one-stop partner programs.

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A copy of the Information Collection Request, which complies with Sections 102 and 103 of WIOA, is available at the link on the slide and will also be posted on the new portal website. States should have also received an e-mail message several weeks ago. These are the requirements for planning that should guide your efforts.

OMB approved a three-year ICR extension through September 2022, which includes a small number of changes to the requirements. These changes include removal of references to past dates, correction of typographical errors, introduction of an optional data element to provide an executive summary, updating title II Section 243 narrative and assurance requirements, and updating instructions for Appendix I of the ICR.

The ICR contains both strategic and operational elements that support integration and alignment of the workforce system. The Strategic and Operational Planning Elements constitute the “common elements” of the Plan—elements that apply to all programs that states include in their plan. The Strategic Elements must include an analysis of the state’s current economic environment and identification of the state’s overall vision for its workforce development system, including an analysis of the economy and workforce development activities. The Operational Elements must identify the state’s planned actions to implement the state’s strategic vision and goals identified in the Strategic Elements. This section requires description of the policy, infrastructure, and program integration and alignment activities the state will undertake, as well as planning elements specific to each of the core programs and any required one-stop partner programs.

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Federal review and approval of the State plan will occur within 90 days of State Plan submission and the Departments will issue notifications to States within the 90 day timeframe from plan submission. Please note that State plans will be made available to the public in PDF format. Also, the State Plan Portal has a friendly public interface where stakeholders can search across plans for key words or trends or other data.

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There are a number of considerations a state might want to take into account when it’s developing its State plan, which may include changes in economic conditions or environmental conditions or decisions made by governors or legislation passed by state legislatures that affect education and workforce development.

Since the initial 4 year plans, we understand that states’ economies have likely changed and circumstances have evolved among employers and the labor market. So these are the type of things you might look at and consider when working with your state labor market information shop.

In addition, we know that many states unfortunately continue to be affected by recent natural disasters, which might have caused increased unemployment in some sectors or some areas of the state. Taking those factors into account should also be an opportunity for you to refine your strategy or adjust where necessary to differently serve those populations or areas that have been affected.

Finally, we know that many Governors are new to the states and may have their own vision that they have expressed through different reports or speeches that they’ve given during the last year or two. State legislature might have passed legislation that affects perhaps the composition of state boards or the amount of money that should be spent on training vs. other services or have different emphases that are external to your programs’ implementation. These should be taken into account when developing your goals and objectives for the next four year period.

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States have gained experience during the initial years of implementation of WIOA. Guidance, regulations and technical assistance have been provided at the federal level as well as by multiple stakeholders in our system. And states have new experiences that they can consider for adapting and refining their strategies during the next four years. You might have identified opportunities to bring new partners into your service delivery strategy and you might want to consider how those partners are integrated and explained in the state plans.

Some states might have changed how they are structuring service delivery geographically, like adjusting local area designation or looking at more regional plans for delivering services, and we expect your state plans to articulate your new strategies and operations as a result.

Many of you are using continuous improvement assessments and constantly assessing the success of your initiatives and adjusting your approaches in that regard. We encourage you to include such information in your state plan.

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As mentioned at the beginning of this webcast, there is program specific technical assistance available from each core program as well as many of the combined plan partner programs. This information is posted on workforce GPS along with this webcast.

Slide 15:

This slide provides some resources you might want to check out as you are preparing your State plan.

It provides resources that have been issued by the Departments of Education and Labor. The link to the information collection request and other technical assistance documents we think will be useful to you as you’re thinking about WIOA implementation.

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Thank you for participating in this webcast. If you have any questions, contact your Federal program office representative.