

Welcome to the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the “SSA Corner”.

### What’s New?

#### THE WORKFORCE INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT (WIOA)

- President Barack Obama signed WIOA into law on July 22, 2014.
- WIOA is designed to help job seekers access employment, education, training, and support services to succeed in the labor market and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.
- WIOA authorizes key employment and training programs and the American Job Center (referred to as One-Stop Center in the law) service delivery system to help workers acquire the tools and skills they need to be successful and to connect employers to the skilled workers they need.
- WIOA aligns the “core” programs to provide coordinated, comprehensive services. The core programs are:
  - (1) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs administered by DOL;
  - (2) The Adult Education and Literacy programs administered by the Department of Education (ED);
  - (3) Wagner-Peyser Employment Service program administered by DOL; and
  - (4) The programs under title I of the Rehabilitation Act that provide services to individuals with disabilities administered by the ED.

#### Q. How does WIOA improve services to individuals with disabilities?

- WIOA promotes better alignment of the Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth formula programs with vocational rehabilitation state grant programs carried out under title I of the Rehabilitation Act to help provide comprehensive services to individuals with disabilities.
- WIOA makes important amendments to the employment grant programs under the Rehabilitation Act to emphasize entry into and retention in competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.
- The Act strengthens collaboration of vocational rehabilitation agencies with employers.
- The Act requires at least 15% of the funding to state vocational rehabilitation agencies to provide pre-employment transition services to support youth with disabilities in transition

from secondary school to post-secondary school and employment.

- At the Federal level, WIOA requires that the Secretary of Labor establish an advisory committee focused on increasing competitive integrated employment for individuals with disabilities.
- Q. How does this effect me or my family member?**
- July 22, 2016, restrictions go into effect on placement of youth age 24 or younger in center-based commensurate wage (sub-minimum wage) programs
  - We are still awaiting Federal regulations, but basically all people looking to enter into sub-minimum wage program must have attempted and been unsuccessful with vocational rehabilitation for competitive employment.
  - This would typically mean that they have applied for Vocational Rehabilitation, had 2 trial work experiences and was determined “unable to benefit from VR services.”
  - The individual/family would receive a letter from Opportunities for Ohioans with Disabilities (OOD), which we’re assuming would be the documentation needed in order to enter into a sub-minimum wage program at age 24 or younger
  - Also, a requirement goes into effect that those over age 24 receive annual counseling and information about opportunities for competitive integrated employment.

#### Q. Does this mean my child cannot go into a non-work adult day program under the age of 24?

- No. WIOA has nothing to do with non-vocational adult day services.
- WIOA only applies to earning sub-minimum wage
- The theory being that if you are entering into a sheltered workshop it is because you have an eventual goal of community employment.
- Attempting community employment should then be your first option, and if that is not possible, you would need vocational rehabilitation or sheltered (sub-minimum) work to help train/prepare for eventual community or competitive employment.