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Partnering with Local Workforce Systems to Meet Community Workforce Needs: Public Library Association Webinar

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Defining the Workforce System

- **Public workforce system** – US Department of Labor defines a network of federal, state, and local government-funded agencies and programs that provide services to workers, job seekers, and employers “to support economic expansion and develop the talent of our nation’s workforce.”
- **Local workforce system** – Set of organizations and activities that prepares people for employment, helps workers advance in their careers, and seeks to build a skilled workforce to support employers and the local economy.

Sources of Information

- *Local Workforce System Guide*
 - <https://workforce.urban.org/>
- *Understanding Local Workforce Systems*
 - <https://www.urban.org/research/publication/understanding-local-workforce-systems>
- Building America's Workforce Initiative
 - <https://www.urban.org/policy-centers/cross-center-initiatives/building-americas-workforce>



What organizations are part of local workforce systems?

Government Federal agencies (DOL, Ed., HHS) State government Local government	Workforce Collaboratives Industry collaboratives Regional coalitions Funder groups
Service providers American Job Centers Community and technical colleges Four-year colleges and universities K-12 public school districts Community and faith-based organizations Public libraries For-profit employment and training entities	
Advocates Labor and trade unions Worker advocacy organizations	Employers Individual employers Business and industry associations



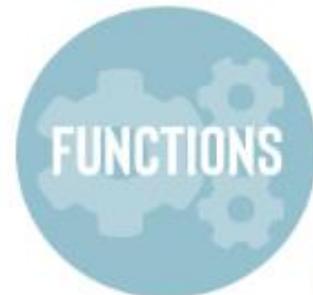
Who do local workforce systems serve?

- Unemployed or underemployed workers
- Workers seeking career change or advancement
- People who face personal or structural barriers to work
 - Parents with young children
 - People with criminal records
 - Individuals who are low-income
 - Black, Latinx, indigenous and other people of color
- Youth (16-24)
- Adults with low basic skills (academic, English language)



What are the functions of local workforce systems?

- Providing employment services
 - Explore career interests, find jobs, advance
- Providing education and training
 - Technical and occupational skills, basic academic skills, career readiness skills
- Providing supportive services
 - Personal and academic
- Supporting employers' human resources needs
 - Job requirements, recruitment, screening, onboarding, upskilling
- Improving job quality and access
 - Working with employers, advocacy
- Addressing issues of equity
 - Racial, ethnic, economic



What are roles for libraries in local workforce systems?

- **Serving/reaching special populations**
 - Libraries can be safe and welcoming spaces for certain groups (e.g., youth, older adults, immigrants, low-income populations)
- **Providing employment services**
 - Supporting career exploration and job search
 - Location of an American Job Center
- **Providing education and training**
 - Digital skills training
 - English Language instruction
- **Providing location for services and convenings**
 - Where people can learn about and connect with support services
 - Where employers can interview candidates
 - Where advocates or workforce collaboratives can meet

Considerations and Opportunities

- Libraries can be important partners in local workforce systems
- Public workforce system (WIOA) offers limited dollars but there are opportunities for strategic partnerships
- Reauthorization of WIOA may present new opportunities
- New federal relief funding (American Rescue Plan, infrastructure bill) offers potential for resources
- State and local governments are important source of funding



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