

Frequently Asked Questions about the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

1. What is WIA and what can it do for me?
 - a. WIA is a federally funded program which assists individuals in returning to the workforce. WIA will provide skills assessment and identification, identify any gaps you may have in obtaining full-time self-sufficient employment, and will try to fill those gaps with case management, job placement, and/or training services.

2. How am I eligible for WIA assistance?
 - a. First you must reside in Sarasota or Manatee County; provide all required documentation as identified on the document checklist for your WIA Category and meet ALL WIA eligibility and suitability requirements. This is just the first step in our process to determine what services are available to you.

3. What is the next step after the Information Session?
 - a. The next step is to determine which eligibility criteria you meet (Dislocated Worker, Displaced Homemaker, and Adult Unemployed/Underemployed), collect all required documents necessary under that criteria and attend an Intake Session at your local Suncoast Workforce office to see if you meet the eligibility requirements.

4. How will WIA affect my Unemployment payments?
 - a. If you are involved with WIA it will not affect your Unemployment payment. You will continue receiving payments until your account is exhausted. The State of Florida considers your participation in WIA as increasing your employability, but should you start school without being part of the WIA program your Unemployment payments may stop.

5. What if I have a Degree, do I still have to take the TABE?
 - a. If you have a Degree which has been obtained within the last five (5) years you may be exempt from taking the TABE test.

6. What if I have taken the TABE already?
 - a. If you have taken the TABE in the last six months we can accept those scores but if it was longer you will be asked to re-take the test.

7. What if I have a criminal record?
 - a. It depends on what you were charged with and what career training or employment field you intend on pursuing. Certain areas of study require state license and/or certification, which is difficult to obtain if you have been convicted of certain crimes. For instance, if you have an assault charge, it could be very difficult for you to pursue a nursing degree.
8. Would I still qualify if I defaulted on a Student Loan?
 - a. If you have made arrangements to pay the loan back and have a record of making payments then you would qualify.
9. What can you do for me if I am not interested in Training?
 - a. We can assist you with Career Planning, Job Searching, Assessment testing, obtaining certain certifications and licenses, and a number of other services to help you find the right job for you.
10. How long will it be before someone contacts me for a face-to-face meeting?
 - a. After you have completed eligibility and all required assessments (TABE and Career scope), you will meet with a career counselor face-to-face for a formal counseling session, this could take 6-8 weeks as an average. If you have not been contacted after this time frame, please ask to speak with a WIA Career Counselor in the office in which you applied.
11. All Veterans:
 - a. Please make sure you see a Vet Representative before you leave if you have not already done so. If one is not available please ask for a Vet Rep business card and make contact by calling the listed number, extension, leave your name and call back number for the Rep to return your call.
12. What kind of training can I receive through the WIA program?
 - a. You may receive training through any of the approved training providers listed on the Suncoast Workforce approved Training provider list. The Suncoast Workforce approved training providers and programs can be found on our website at www.suncoastworkforce.org by selecting Career Seekers and then Workforce Investment Act (WIA).
13. I don't know what kind of training I am interested in pursuing; can I get help in making my decision?
 - a. Your Career Counselor can assist you with career exploration and assessment tools which may assist you in making an informed decision. However, it is up to you to

research the training providers listed on the Suncoast Workforce Approved Training Provider list and select the school/course that would be most appropriate for you.

14. Is there an age limit for WIA training?

- a. All ages are encouraged to apply for the WIA Program. We have specialized Youth Services for those individuals who are 18-21 and meet additional requirements.

15. What if I have a high school diploma/degree from another country?

- a. This will not disqualify you from WIA enrollment, however, you must check with the school of your choice for acceptance, transferability of credits and other enrollment requirements.

16. I am already attending school. Will the Suncoast Workforce WIA Program pay my tuition retroactively?

- a. No, WIA will only pay for training from the time that you are approved for and receiving a training voucher. Any costs incurred prior to your approval will be your responsibility.

17. Can I qualify for WIA-funded training if I have a Bachelor's degree?

- a. Yes, participants with a bachelor's degree are able to apply for WIA training.

18. Can I apply for WIA if I am collecting unemployment from another state?

- a. Yes. However, you must provide documentation showing that you are receiving, eligible for, or have exhausted unemployment benefits in that state. We are unable to pull records from another state.

If You Have Any Additional Questions, Please Contact Irma Mendoza 941-358-4200 ext 3117