What is a WIOA Youth Program?
The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title IB Youth Programs serve youth and young adults who face barriers to employment and education. The programs work with participants to build the skills necessary to explore and develop careers, pursue education and occupational skills training, and gain work experiences and employment.

What Services do WIOA Youth Programs Offer?
WIOA Youth Programs foster supportive environments for youth and young adults to develop their career pathways with avenues for career exploration, awareness and counseling. The programs:

Support educational attainment through:
- Educational opportunities that lead to a high school diploma or equivalency
- Basic and English-language learner skills development
- Post-secondary transition, technical training, or apprenticeship guidance

Prepare youth for employment success by:
- Providing work readiness and life skills training
- Connecting youth with paid and unpaid work experiences, including jobs, internships, job shadowing, pre-apprenticeship and on-the-job training
- Supporting occupational skills trainings leading to industry-recognized credentials
- Facilitating career exploration and development

Build leaders by:
- Cultivating entrepreneurial skills
- Connecting participants with mentors
- Offering peer learning opportunities
- Facilitating financial education
- Supporting civic engagement

WIOA Youth Programs also link youth to support services, such as drug, alcohol and mental health treatment. The programs facilitate connections with community organizations, and address barriers like inaccessible transportation or childcare.

Who is Eligible to Participate?
Out-of-School or In-School Youth are eligible to participate in the WIOA Youth Programs.

Out-of-School Youth - are 16 to 24 years old, who do not attend school per New York State Education Law, and experience one or more designated barriers to employment and educational success. Examples of barriers include pregnancy, parenting, disability, or involvement in foster care or the justice system.

In-School Youth - are 14 to 21 years old, and are attending school. These participants must be typically low-income and facing at least one designated barrier to employment or completion of education.

Learn about designated barriers to employment: https://www.labor.ny.gov/youth/PDFs/wioa-youth-eligibility.pdf
Why Choose a WIOA Youth Program?
WIOA Youth Programs uniquely integrate the needs, goals, and strengths of young people with youth voice and culture and provide one-of-a-kind services like:

- Academic, career and occupational assessments
- Exploration of career interests and development of a service plan focusing on career goals and in-demand jobs
- A safe, social setting that creates a sense of belonging and builds leadership capacity
- Engaging peer group activities such as game nights, job clubs, workshops and leadership opportunities
- Continual support and follow-up for career navigation and planning

What Emphasis is Placed on Employment or Internship Experiences?
WIOA Youth Programs are heavily invested in providing hands-on, paid or unpaid work experiences for participants.

Work experiences, such as internships, job shadowing, jobs and on-the-job training, and pre-apprenticeship programs help build foundational work readiness, networking, employment and occupational skills. These planned, structured learning experiences occur in a workplace and offer academic and occupational education.

How do the Programs Measure Success?
Along with participants gaining foundational life, work and leadership skills, outcomes are measured by:

- Placement of youth in employment, education or occupational skills training
- Increase in youth’s wages
- Attainment of measurable skills and industry recognized credentials
- Engagement with businesses for employment, trainings and work experiences

Success in Their Words:
Michelle - “As a timid student with no idea what I’d study in college, the program helped guide the way. Not only did the program teach me how to network, improve my public speaking and write a captivating resume, but empowered me to chase my dreams.” (Department of Youth & Community Development)

Quadreek’s Story - After obtaining his Medical Office Assistant Certificate, Quadreek participated in a work experience program. This gave him the opportunity to build experience in his field of training. Quadreek was placed as an office assistant at a dental office. He was so successful in this position that he was asked to train the interns of the practice. After the work experience program ended, the practice hired Quadreek! (Dutchess County Youth One-Stop)

Aaron - “This program has helped me on so many levels. It has helped me with managing my time throughout the week. It has helped me to prepare for the real working world. I am so blessed to be part of this program.” (RochesterWorks! Youth Services)

How do I Find Out More?
WIOA Youth Programs are offered through a network of community organizations and government entities and monitored by the 33 Local Workforce Development Boards across the state.

To find your local WIOA Youth Program, visit: https://www.labor.ny.gov/youth/get-local-assistance.shtm

For more information, email: YouthTeam@labor.ny.gov