

# Special Populations as Defined by the Perkins Act

## Special Populations in Perkins V

Overview of key points related to the definitions, support and implications for special populations.

Specifies one of the purposes of the Act is to develop more fully the academic knowledge and technical employability skills by increasing the employment opportunities for populations who are chronically unemployed or underemployed, including individuals with disabilities, individuals from economically disadvantaged families, out-of-workforce individuals, youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system, and homeless individuals.

- individuals with disabilities;
- individuals from economically disadvantaged families, including low- income youth and adults;
- individuals preparing for non-traditional fields;
- single parents, including single pregnant women;
- out-of-workforce individuals;
- English learners;
- homeless individuals;
- youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and
- youth with a parent on active duty in the armed forces

In the current text of the Act, six groups have been identified as Special Populations. These include:

1. **Individuals with disabilities:** These are those individuals who meet the disability eligibility criteria under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2005. For a detailed account of this group, please access our Disability Awareness module on our website.
2. **Economically disadvantaged families:** Any individual or member of a family who receives need based financial assistance, or whose income is at or below the poverty level as defined by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services is considered an individual who is from an economically disadvantaged background. Foster children are children that are in the legal guardianship or custody of a state, county, or a private adoption or foster care agency, yet are cared for by foster parents under a short-term or a long-term foster care arrangement with the custodial agency.
3. **Individuals preparing them for nontraditional fields:** Occupations or fields of work in which individuals from one gender comprise less than 25% of the total number of individuals employed in that occupation or field of work. For example, the occupation of male nurses or female engineers would qualify as non-traditional. To learn more about this area, please visit our website.

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4. **Single parents including single pregnant women:** These also include single, pregnant women. Single parents are defined as individuals who are unmarried or legally separated and have custody or joint custody of one or more minor children. This group also includes teenagers or women who are pregnant.
5. **Out-of-workforce individuals:** These are adults who have worked for a substantial number of years providing unpaid household services for family members, and are not currently gainfully employed. This term includes those who are unemployed or underemployed and individuals who have had or would have difficulty in securing employment. This group also includes those individuals who: 1) have been dependent on the income of another household member but are no longer supported by such income or 2) have been dependent on public assistance but are no longer eligible for such assistance or may have been terminated from such assistance. 3) Finally, these are the parents of a minor child who is supported by public assistance or child support but are within two years of termination from such support.
6. **English Learners:** These are students whose primary language is not English and/ or live in a family or community in which a language other than English is dominant. This group also includes individuals who need to enhance their abilities in the areas of speaking reading, writing and understanding the English language.
7. **homeless individuals;**
8. **youth who are in, or have aged out of, the foster care system; and**
9. **youth with a parent on active duty in the armed forces**