



ARKANSAS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD
Special Called Meeting



Thursday, March 26, 2026
11:00 am- 2:00 pm



Arkansas Department of Commerce
1 Commerce Way, Little Rock, AR 72202





AGENDA



FULL BOARD- SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

March 26, 2026
11:00am

Call to OrderThomas Anderson Jr., Chairman
Roll Call.....Board Staff

Agenda Item 1: Approval of Minutes- Action

Minutes of January 7, 2026 Full Board MeetingThomas Anderson Jr., Chairman

Agenda Item 2: Administrative Reports- Informational

Report of Chairperson..... Thomas Anderson Jr., Chairman
State Plan Development & Submission

[USDOL TEGL 07-25 Modification Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) State Plans for Program
Years \(PYs\) 2026 and 2027](#)

Report of State Board Director.....Dr. Charisse Childers, Executive Director
Arkansas Workforce Development Board

Agenda Item 3: WIOA State Plan PY’ 26-27 Modifications- Informational

Workforce System Vision 2026-2027.....Cody Waits, Executive Director
Arkansas Workforce Connections

Eddie Thomas, Director
Arkansas Workforce Connections-Office of Employment & Training

Combined Plan Highlights..... State Program Directors

(working lunch)

<u>Program</u>	<u>Director</u>
• WIOA Title II- Adult Education and Family Literacy Act programs	Dr. Trenia Miles
• WIOA Title IV (ARS)- Vocational Rehabilitation programs	Commissioner Joseph Baxter
• WIOA Title IV (DSB)- Vocational Rehabilitation programs	Executive Director Cody Waits
• Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP E&T)	Director Lorie Williams
• Unemployment Insurance programs	Director Kristen Rhodes
• Career & Technical Education (CTE) programs (Perkins V)	Director Ross White (ADE)
• Trade Adjustment Assistance program	Director Eddie Thomas
• Jobs for Veterans State Grant program	Director Eddie Thomas
• WIOA Title III- Wagner Peyser/Employment Services program	Director Eddie Thomas
• WIOA Title I- Youth, Adult & Dislocated Worker programs	Director Eddie Thomas

USDOL Waiver Requests..... Eddie Thomas, Director
[USDOL TEGL 05-25- Maximizing Innovation in WIOA Programs](#) Angela Cook, Assistant Director
Arkansas Workforce Connections- Office of Employment and Training

Board Open Discussion

Public Opportunity to Address the Board

Agenda Item 4: Waiver Requests – Action

Board Vote.....Thomas Anderson Jr., Chairman

Agenda Item 5: WIOA Combined State Plan PY’ 26-27 Modification Vote – Action

Board Vote.....Thomas Anderson Jr., Chairman

Agenda Item 6: WIOA Regional and Local Plan Modifications PY ’26-27- Action

Issuance/Templates.....Stephanie Blair, WIOA Policy Program Manager
Arkansas Workforce Connections- Office of Employment and Training

Agenda Item 7: USDOE Connecting Talent to Opportunity (CTO Challenge) - Action

[U.S. Department of Education Launches \\$15 Million Challenge to Create the Next Generation of Talent Marketplaces](#)

Overview/State Board Support.....Dr. Tina Moore, Education Professional Supervisor/Expert
Arkansas Department of Higher Education (ADHE)

Erin McCarley, SAS Program Supervisor/Expert
Office of State Technology | Shared Administrative Services

Agenda Item 8: USDOL Reentry Employment in Skilled Trades, Advanced Manufacturing, Registered Apprenticeships, and Training (RESTART) Grant- Action

[US Department of Labor announces \\$81M to support training, employment for formerly incarcerated individuals \(RESTART grants to prioritize skilled trades, high-demand industries\)](#)

Overview/State Board Support.....Cody Waits, Executive Director
Arkansas Workforce Connections

Board Open Discussion

Public Opportunity to Address the Board

Announcements

Adjournment

Resources:

- [First Class Graduates from Governor Sanders’ Recidivism Reduction Pilot Program](#)
- [Governor Sanders Receives AI Center of Excellence Effectiveness and Safety Report](#)
- [TEN 07-25- The U.S. Department of Labor’s Artificial Intelligence Literacy Framework](#)
- [USDOL TEGL 10-23, Change 3- Rescission of Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 10-23, Change 2: Work Authorization Verification in Grant Programs Administered by the Employment and Training Administration](#)
- [Coordination of Workforce Development and Social Services Program in Arkansas- Final Report-ALC Subcommittee](#)
- [America’s Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age](#)
- [Arkansas Selected to Lead National Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeship Expansion](#)

Policies/Issuances for Review

N/A



Agenda Item 1: ACTION
MINUTES from January 7, 2026 Meeting



Arkansas Workforce Development Board
Minutes

January 7, 2026
SEARK College

The Arkansas Workforce Development Board convened in person at the Southeast Arkansas College in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, beginning at 12:50 pm. Chairman Thomas Anderson Jr. presided with the following members voicing their presence: Mr. Mike Rogers, proxy for Governor Sarah Sanders, Commissioner Joseph Baxter, Mr. Aaron Chastain, Dr. Teri Cox-Meadows, Mr. Miles Crawford, Judge Brandon Ellison, Mr. Randy Henderson, Ms. Rebecca Ives, Mr. Randy Zook, proxy for Ms. Candice Lawrence, Mr. Brian Marsh, Dr. Trenia Miles, Mr. Clint O’Neal, Mr. George Nunnally, Ms. Latanyua Robinson, Mr. Barry Sellers, Mr. Kelley Sharp, Mr. Timothy Thorne, Director Cody Waits, Dr. Ken Warden, and Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes.

Mr. Len Blaylock, Ms. Karen Breashears, and Mayor Ray Bowman were unable to attend. Board staff confirmed that a quorum was present.

Action Item 1-ACTION-Approval of Minutes from November 12, 2025: Chairman Anderson asked whether any corrections/revisions needed to be made to the November 12, 2025, minutes.

Hearing none, a motion was made by Mr. Kelley Sharp and seconded by Mr. Brian Marsh. The motion carried unanimously, with none opposed.

Agenda Item 2-INFORMATIONAL-Administrative Reports:

Report of Chairperson: Chairman Anderson reported on the addition of board members to the Executive, Strategic Planning, and Program and Performance Evaluation Committees. Dr. Ken Warden has been added to the Executive Committee. Dr. Teri Cox-Meadows, Mayor Ray Bowman, and Mr. Aaron Chastain have been added to the Strategic Planning Committee. Mr. Barry Sellers has been added to the Program and Performance Evaluation Committee.

Report of AWDB Director: Dr. Charisse Childers instructed board members to review supporting resources listed in their agenda packet, including TEGE guidance that outlines what was covered in committee meetings. Executive Order 14278, issued April 23, 2025, establishes five strategic pillars for Arkansas’s workforce system, creating a comprehensive plan to meet employer workforce needs. The main points include an emphasis on flexibility through waivers to better utilize funding and services, addressing a tight labor market with more targeted guidance for job seekers, especially concerning employment pathways and registered apprenticeships. There is also encouragement to fully leverage available resources and funding mechanisms. Furthermore, initiatives like Arkansas GROW with Google support workforce development and skill-building

efforts. Overall, the focus remains on strategic alignment, flexibility, and improving workforce outcomes through better resource use and guidance.

Report of Agency Director: Director Cody Waits provided key updates on program implementation, funding, and strategic direction. A major focus is the \$35.8 million U.S. Department of Labor cooperative agreement supporting Registered Apprenticeships. Less than 10% of funds are allocated to administration, while approximately 90% is reserved for employer incentives. 120 occupations are approved, and employers may apply through OSD, hire staff, and begin outreach efforts. Incentive distribution will follow a first-come, first-served model, with rollout tied to achieving 90% enrollment.

The state plan is undergoing revisions to improve alignment and efficiency, including efforts to consolidate regions across the Offices of Employment and Training, Arkansas Rehabilitation Services, the Division of Services for the Blind, and Adult Education. Mr. Waits emphasized the importance of competition as a driver of performance, alongside the development of state-specific metrics that complement federal requirements, such as efficiency ratings and weighted measures.

To enhance transparency and accountability, a dashboard/scoreboard is being developed to track performance and highlight areas of excellence across programs and regions. Additional stakeholder input will be gathered through an upcoming meeting with local workforce boards to refine outcomes and inform revisions.

Finally, an “investment by industry” report is in development to better understand sector performance and identify factors contributing to higher success rates, supporting more strategic allocation of resources moving forward.

Report of Staff: Director Eddie Thomas stated that the Annual Report for PY24 highlights key accomplishments and activities and is available on the agency’s website. He reported that the ALC- Hospital, Medicaid and Developmental Disabilities Study subcommittee held meetings to review findings from a workforce and social services evaluation conducted by the Alliance for Opportunity. It was stated that the study focused on WIOA programs and DHS programs and their effectiveness in Arkansas; and a link to the study will be shared with interested board members. For Arkansas Work Ready Communities, Mr. Thomas invited Cheri Hughes from ACT to co-present. Ms. Hughes reported that Arkansas’ progress includes 26 counties engaged between 2020 and 2026. In 2022, the southeast region became the first in the state to be fully certified. Boot camps were held in Hot Springs in 2023 and Conway in 2024. Arkansas currently ranks 4th in the nation for this initiative.

Agenda Item 3-ACTION-Administrative Requirement, Annual Stipend Assessment, and Required Paperwork: Ms. Victoria Hall reminded the board of annual documentation due to the state and offered her assistance when needed. Dr. Charisse Childers provided a proposal with reasoning to reduce the stipend amount for board members, citing comparisons with similar

boards and budget constraints within the agency. After discussion, Chairman Anderson asked if there was a motion to lower the stipend amount from \$110.00 to \$85.00.

A motion was made by Mr. Miles Crawford and seconded by Mr. Randy Henderson. The motion carried unanimously, with none opposed.

After additional discussion and clarifying remarks from ADWS general counsel, Chairman Anderson asked for a motion to approve travel reimbursement at the state rate for board members.

A motion was made by Mr. Kelley Sharp and seconded by Mr. Timothy Thorne. The motion carried unanimously, with none opposed.

Agenda Item 4-INFORMATIONAL- Governor’s Workforce Strategy and Updates: Chief Workforce Officer Mike Rogers discussed the Arkansas Next Deployment Magazine. This magazine highlights efforts to help transitioning military members and current National Guard personnel move into the private sector. Chief Rogers shared that Governor Sanders has initiated a reducing recidivism pilot program (including incarcerated populations) that has gained traction, with grant funding secured, alignment at the state level, and national attention. Mr. Rogers concluded with a reference to the Governor’s Workforce Strategy and its focus and priorities.

Agenda Item 5-INFORMATIONAL & ACTION-Committee Reports:

A timeline was presented that projected the activities and submission date of the WIOA combined state plan for program years 2026-2027. Chairman Anderson asked for a motion to approve the state plan timeline.

A motion was made by Judge Brandon Ellison and seconded by Mr. Brian Marsh. The motion carried unanimously, with none opposed.

Executive Committee: Chairman Anderson and Executive Director Cody Waits led the Executive Committee in a discussion regarding Pilar IV, Flexibility & Innovation. There was also a discussion on waiver flexibility, and Arkansas applying for waivers in the upcoming state plan modification cycle. Staff shared that a recent emphasis was placed on the utilization of the waivers by federal agencies. The committee discussed several waiver options including the desire to operate in a single workforce planning area state model. Dr. Ken Warden was appointed to the Executive Committee by Chairman Anderson.

Strategic Planning Committee: The Strategic Planning Committee discussed Pillars I–V of the America’s Talent Strategy and focused on the progress on the Strategic Plan. 80% of the items that are due by December 31, 2026, are completed or on track. Items scheduled for completion by March 31, 2026, will be transitioned to the appropriate committees. By June 30, 2026, all

items should either be completed or have status reports. Barry Seller and Aaron Chastain were appointed to the Strategic Planning Committee by Chairman Anderson.

Program & Performance Evaluation Committee: Chairman Gan Nunnally and the Program & Performance Evaluation Committee discussed Pillar III, focusing on integrating programs into a single system, building innovative partnerships, addressing gaps between digital access and in-person support, and creating a standardized schedule to reduce registration fatigue. For Pillar IV, the focus was on prioritizing KPIs by evaluating effectiveness and ROI, conducting a survey to rank existing KPIs, setting thresholds, assessing initial investment, and defining success through measurable outcomes and success rate factors. There was also an emphasis on increasing workforce enrollment in rural areas. Dr. Teri Cox Meadows and Mayor Ray Bowman were appointed to the committee by Chairman Anderson

Agenda Item 6-INFORMATIONAL-State Plan Modification Summaries:

Title IV: Title IV updates were made by Commissioner Joseph Baxter who discussed the completion of the ARS Statewide needs assessment and the merger of ARS and DSB. Dr. Cassandra Williams-Stokes reported that DSB goals have been approved by the DSB board and shared that software programs have been updated to better support visually impaired individuals.

Title II: Dr. Trena Miles reported that enrollment is still increasing, as well as credentials and certifications by participants. TANF programs have been removed from Title II; Title II is still the largest provider of DHS SNAP E&T Services. Distance learning has been an asset to the Adult Education Program. An individual can earn their GED without walking into a brick-and-mortar Adult Education building.

Titles I & III- Director Eddie Thomas spoke on the waivers that were included in the agenda packet and, as a part of the Committees' discussion, would be included under Title I. Pillars I-IV would also be included. He is working with the Office of State Technology to make sure all the systems we have in place (Launch, Civiform, AJL) are able to communicate with one another. Mr. Thomas mentioned that within the plan there will be a focus on the integration of AI in state government and on the connection between workforce and economic development. For Title III, the focus will be on the integration of Initiative 10:33 and the Hope Hub system to give individuals access to all services through a No Wrong Door model.

Board Open Discussion: None

Public Opportunity to Address the Board: None

Announcements:

Adjournment: Chairman Anderson asked for a motion to adjourn.

A Motion was made by Mr. Kelley Sharp and seconded by Mr. Timothy Thorne. The meeting adjourned at 2:47 pm.



Agenda Item 2: Informational Administrative Reports





Agenda Item 3: Informational
WIOA Combined State Plan PY' 26-27
Modifications



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION WIOA
	CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL OWI - DASG
	DATE November 25, 2025

ADVISORY: TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 05-25

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
LABOR COMMISSIONERS
AMERICAN JOB CENTERS
RAPID RESPONSE COORDINATORS

FROM: LORI FRAZIER BEARDEN /s/
Acting Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Maximizing Innovation in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs

1. **Purpose.** To maximize innovation in the public workforce system and better serve job seekers and employers by providing state and local workforce development systems waiver opportunities, to promote flexibility within the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) formula funded programs, and to achieve the Administration’s vision for America’s workforce under Executive Order 14278 on Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future.

2. **Action Requested.** State and local workforce development boards should review current policies and practices to maximize opportunities provided by WIOA to modernize and innovate operations and optimize service delivery of workforce development programs. ETA encourages states to work with ETA to mitigate or remove barriers where they exist, which includes the use of waivers of statutory requirements to support innovative solutions for building a skilled workforce in alignment with the Administration’s strategic pillars for workforce investment.

3. **Summary and Background.**
 - a. Summary – This TEGL offers options that the public workforce system can use to innovate and modernize operations and program services by using existing WIOA flexibilities, and encourages increased waiver use to scale industry-driven strategies, enhance worker mobility, create opportunities to integrate systems and realign resources, optimize service delivery, improve accountability for participant outcomes, and remove barriers to innovation.

	EXPIRATION DATE Continuing
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- b. Background – On April 23, 2025, President Trump issued Executive Order 14278 on Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future. In the *Comprehensive Worker Investment and Development Strategy* developed under this EO, the Administration set forth five strategic pillars for America’s workforce system:
- i. **Industry-Driven Strategies:** The skill demands and hiring needs of industry must drive how workforce development programs train and prepare the participants they serve. Local employers should play a central role in defining in-demand skills, validating training models, and steering investments toward the roles and credentials that propel workers into secure, well-paying, and high-need American jobs. The public workforce system can support this pillar by prioritizing Registered Apprenticeships and other high-quality work-based learning models, aligning eligible training programs to career pathways within the state or regional economy, and targeting investments towards employer-led upskilling initiatives designed to fill talent shortages in priority industries
 - ii. **Worker Mobility:** Individuals returning to the workforce or seeking better career opportunities should be able to take tangible steps that lead to upward mobility and long-term economic independence. Next-generation workforce and labor market intelligence tools should help participants see their skills, understand career options, and take clear steps toward better-paying jobs. The public workforce system can support this pillar by clearly identifying credentials that are valued in the labor market to support informed decision making, advancing innovative use of technology and labor market data, integrating AI-powered tools and competency-based assessments that allow workers to advance based on demonstrated skills and abilities, and getting the disconnected workforce into training opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency.
 - iii. **Integrated Systems:** The workforce system must be unified, navigable, and built around the needs of its users. Job seekers should be able to access training and employment opportunities without getting lost in a maze of government agencies, and employers should be able to engage with the system just as easily to find talent and grow their workforce. The public workforce system can support this pillar by working to integrate disparate funding streams; improve service delivery through shared eligibility standards across programs; and advance education and workforce alignment, streamlined intake processes, and digital tools that help frontline staff guide individuals to the right services.
 - iv. **Accountability:** Taxpayer funded workforce development programs must deliver measurable and transparent results for job seekers and employers. Ineffective training providers will be removed from public funding lists and new funding models will tie resources to outcomes, including through the expanded use of pay-for-performance contracts to ensure public investments generate measurable returns in employment, earnings, and credential attainment. The public workforce system can support this pillar by identifying and eliminating ineffective spending, redirecting funding to programs that demonstrate success in connecting Americans

with high-wage jobs, and by enhancing data linkages to produce valid and transparent data that assesses the return on investment and the impact on closing talent gaps.

- v. **Flexibility and Innovation:** The federal workforce system must be adaptable and designed for continuous iteration, with exponentially faster feedback loops between employers, educators, and training providers to ensure that programs can evolve in step with economic shifts, particularly those driven by AI. States and local communities need more control to tailor solutions to their regional economies without being constrained by outdated program rules or processes. The public workforce system can support this pillar by leveraging existing statutory authorities to promote flexibility and innovation within the system, creating new models of workforce innovation built to match the speed and scale of AI-driven economic transformation, prioritizing AI literacy and skills development across the workforce system, and developing pilot projects to drive rapid reskilling and fuel other AI-era innovations.

This TEGE encourages states and local boards to assess their existing state and local policies, evaluate state legislative flexibilities, and identify opportunities to modernize operations and service delivery in alignment with the five strategic pillars. It promotes the maximum use of WIOA waiver authority to achieve this purpose and provides clarification on allowable uses of funds and other WIOA flexibilities. ETA recognizes that certain statutory requirements and federal mandates may have previously prevented state and local leaders from instituting the reforms necessary to better serve America's workers and businesses. This TEGE is intended to encourage state and local leaders to reconsider what is possible and partner with ETA to achieve the bold vision for reform set forth by this Administration.

4. Maximize use of WIOA Waiver Authority.

- a. States are encouraged to request waivers of existing WIOA statutory or regulatory requirements that can help overcome specific barriers to innovation and align with the five strategic pillars for workforce investment. Under the Secretary of Labor's (Secretary) waiver authority outlined in WIOA sec. 189(i)(3)(A), the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I subtitles A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8 – 10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act.

States are empowered to identify where current policies impede system modernization and to adopt existing waivers or propose new waivers that support the key priorities of industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, integrated systems, accountability, and flexibility and innovation. ETA is interested in receiving waiver requests that include strategic goals and projected programmatic outcomes directly aligned to the administration's five pillars. For example, a state waiver request proposing to advance the strategic goal of industry-led strategies could propose the projected programmatic outcome of co-enrolling at least 10 percent of adult and dislocated worker participants in Registered Apprenticeship programs. In exchange for expanded and bold waivers, ETA

expects the state to propose and demonstrate measurable improvements and to report its results in the WIOA Annual Report. ETA will not support waiver requests that do not advance the administration's key priorities, such as waivers of performance outcomes of participants and training providers.

While waivers can be a helpful innovation tool, there are some limitations to waiver authority, as outlined in WIOA secs. 189(i)(3)(A)(i) and 189(i)(3)(A)(ii). Limitations to WIOA Title I waiver authority can be found in TEGL 8-18, Attachment I at [TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER No. 08-18 | U.S. Department of Labor](#). The process and requirements for states to request a waiver can be found in this TEGL. Notwithstanding the examples of approved and suggested waivers described in this TEGL, the Secretary will consider each waiver request on its own merits in accordance with the applicable legal authorities.

Several states have already used waiver authority to take advantage of the flexibility in WIOA. While not a complete list, the examples below describe previously approved waivers that support innovative service delivery. For a full list of approved waivers, see [WIOA Waiver Information](#).

b. Currently Approved Waivers.

i. WIOA Governance Waivers.

Waiver of the state workforce development board membership requirements at WIOA Section 101(b)(1) and (c) and the corresponding regulations at 20 CFR 679.110(b)-(c), which specify board membership and category/subcategory representations requirements. This waiver allows states to change the structure and operation of the state board to streamline overall board membership and better address the employment and skills needs of the state. This serves to create a more agile board that is poised to innovate, while allowing for a tailor-made leadership team of workforce champions to create stronger alignment between workforce programs, education partners driving career and technical education (CTE) growth, Registered Apprenticeships, and business. Reducing board size while elevating critical partnerships has the potential to position the board to better facilitate continuous improvement of traditional workforce development programs, while more rapidly identifying and creating new opportunities for economic, education, and workforce collaboration. While this waiver permits flexibility in overall board membership, including the organizational representation of the board chair, ETA requires significant business representation and leadership.

Waiver of the requirements outlined in WIOA sec. 107(b) to allow the State Board to act as the Local Board. This waiver allows the Governor to designate the state board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the local boards in the state. In implementing this waiver, the state board must continue to include local input into its activities and allocate funding to each local area in the state. This waiver is often helpful for states that want to streamline state and local board functions and grant

administration activities for low-funded local areas that benefit from centralized WIOA governance, which would maximize the amount of funds made available for direct services to businesses and individuals rather than administrative oversight.

This waiver may be helpful in several scenarios and allow states that are not currently designated as a single state local area to achieve integrated systems through uniform state governance of the workforce system. A state may seek to better integrate safety net and workforce systems to increase labor force participation and help more individuals move out of poverty. A rural state or one with many small local areas may find that distributing funds via a local board stretches administrative oversight costs and makes it difficult to provide high quality services in all local areas. This waiver may also be useful as an alternative solution when merging local areas is not a viable option. For example, at times chief elected officials (CEOs) may want to dissolve a local area but adjacent local area CEOs may not desire to merge. To ensure continuity of services, the state board can serve in the role as the local board.

Waiver of the requirement to establish and maintain a comprehensive American Job Center (AJC) in each of the State’s local workforce development areas.

In some states, particularly those with remote and rural local workforce development areas, cost factors associated with the infrastructure maintenance and co-location requirements for a comprehensive AJC may create barriers to effective service delivery. A state may determine that virtual AJCs or a network of affiliated sites, such as public libraries or community colleges, can more effectively reach job seekers and employers in the state. ETA can waive the requirement in Section 121(e)(1) and 20 CFR 678.300(c) to establish and maintain a comprehensive AJC in each of a state’s local workforce areas in circumstances where alternative delivery approaches can similarly address the full spectrum of community workforce needs that would be expected of a physical comprehensive AJC.

Waiver of the requirements in WIOA sec. 106(a)(2) to allow the state to assign a single local workforce development area to multiple planning regions.

This waiver allows the state to waive the requirement that a planning region consist of one local workforce development area, two or more intrastate local areas, or two or more interstate local areas. This waiver allows states to better provide services in the context of their identified planning regions. For example, in some states, geographic regions do not align with defined local workforce areas. Sometimes, those local workforce areas span multiple regions. While this can help local areas provide coordinated services to multiple regions, it is vital they ensure the planning burden does not fall unfairly on local areas assigned to more than one region.

ii. **Title I Youth Program Waivers.**

Waiver of the restriction in 20 CFR 681.550 to allow local areas to provide in-school youth (ISY) with individual training accounts (ITAs). This waiver allows local workforce investment areas to offer ITAs to ISY, in addition to out-of-school youth (OSY). This provides ISY access to training from providers on the state’s list

of eligible training providers. This waiver allows local areas to offer ITAs to in-school youth to expand occupational training options in coordination with their K-12 school district to students prior to high school graduation or to fund Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for in-school youth. In utilizing this waiver, states and local areas should coordinate with local CTE programs funded by the Department of Education's Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act (Perkins V) funds, particularly at the secondary school level, to ensure integration and alignment of training opportunities for ISY in secondary school.

This waiver may be an effective response to challenges states and local areas face providing ISY with a variety of career pathway development options, enhancing students' educational freedom. States have used this waiver to increase training options available to ISY upon high school graduation. They have also leveraged this waiver to fund Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for youth that respond to local business needs, including pre-apprenticeship. In utilizing this waiver for ISY graduating high school, states and local areas should coordinate with CTE programs to align opportunities for pre- and Registered Apprenticeships as well as with other CTE postsecondary programs.

The ISY ITA waiver also gives responsibility back to the local workforce investment areas, providing them with flexibility in spending limited resources for training services. The local areas can use their demographic and labor market data to determine how to invest in career pathways for their ISY population.

Waiver of the requirement that states and local areas expend 75 percent of all Governor's reserve and/or local formula youth funds on OSY. The waiver allows states to lower the 75 percent minimum expenditure requirement to 50 percent under WIOA sec. 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 CFR 681.410 for either, or both local area WIOA youth funds and statewide Governor's reserve funds. Some states also ask to waive the requirement that each local area is held to the OSY expenditure requirement and instead request a waiver to allow the OSY expenditure requirement for local area funds apply only to the state as a whole, rather than to individual local areas, which allows local areas to dedicate additional resources to ISY and provide needed services to help youth stay in school and focus on career pathways beyond high school. Some states may also request to include Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds spent on co-enrolled youth in the OSY expenditure calculation.

The OSY waiver complements the ISY ITA waiver, as it allows states and local areas to allocate more funding to ISY services, including for work experience and training. Local areas without large OSY populations can use the additional ISY funding to fund additional work experience opportunities, including Registered Apprenticeship opportunities for ISY. This additional funding also allows for local areas with fewer OSY to dedicate additional resources to ISY and provide needed services to help youth stay in school and focus on career pathways beyond high school. This waiver also provides greater opportunities for states and local areas to coordinate ISY services with Perkins V funded CTE programs.

Waiver to allow local workforce development areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and TANF funds toward the minimum 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience.

This waiver allows states to include TANF funds spent on co-enrolled youth in the work experience expenditure calculation under WIOA sec. 129(c)(4) and 20 CFR 681.590(b). The waiver creates opportunities for partnerships across youth-serving agencies as well as efficiencies with federal funds; states can leverage multiple funding sources to serve youth effectively, which may free up Title I Youth funds for other programmatic priorities.

iii. Funds Flexibility Waivers.

Waiver of the requirements at WIOA secs. 133(a)(2) and 134(a)(2)(A) to allow flexibility to use up to 50 percent of funds reserved by the Governor to provide statewide rapid response activities to also provide statewide employment and training activities in the first year of funding availability.

In general, states may use unspent Rapid Response funds at the end of the first year of availability for the same uses allowed for Governor's Reserve funds. With this waiver, states can use up to 50 percent of the Rapid Response funds they reserved before the end of the first year as long as their proposed use advances innovation and modernization of the workforce development system or otherwise benefits job seeker and employer customers.

On May 6, 2025, ETA published [Training and Employment Notice \(TEN\) 25-24, Leveraging Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waivers to Increase Labor Force Participation and Worker Productivity](#). This TEN describes additional funds flexibility waivers states can consider. A few examples of ways in which states can leverage the waiver authority to increase labor force participation and employment opportunities for American workers include:

- Increasing On-the-Job Training (OJT) reimbursement for Local Workforce Boards;
- Increasing Transitional Jobs;
- Increasing Funds available for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT); and
- Increasing work experience opportunities for In-School Youth.

iv. Potential New Waivers. In addition to the above waivers, ETA is empowering states to broaden their use of waiver authority to promote flexibility and innovation, prioritizing skills development across the workforce system, successfully connecting Americans with high-wage jobs and advancing the Administration's strategic priorities. While not an exhaustive list of all the new waivers states could request, the examples below describe some potential waivers that support innovative service delivery.

Waive requirement for local areas to provide all 14 youth program elements.

WIOA sec. 129(c)(2) requires each local area to make all 14 youth program elements

available to eligible youth. To increase flexibility in providing the services most in need in a given local workforce area, DOL will consider waiving the requirement to make all 14 youth program elements available. This waiver is useful if the state is seeking to focus greater funding on work experiences, including pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships, beyond the minimum 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement. Additionally, this waiver is useful if the state plans to increase occupational skills training opportunities training through ITAs. Increasing opportunities for both work experience and training advance educational freedom for youth beyond traditional secondary school education.

Raise pay-for-performance funding cap to allow for more flexibility. Pay for Performance (PFP) contract strategies as defined in WIOA Section 3(47) and 20 CFR part 683, subpart E seek to maximize the likelihood that the federal government pays only for demonstrably effective services and secure performance outcomes at a lower cost than might otherwise occur. WIOA authorizes local WDBs to reserve not more than 10 percent of the local allocation for WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds for PFP contract strategies. States could request waivers allowing local WDBs to reserve up to 50% of the local allocation of WIOA title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds for PFP contract strategies.

Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(2) and 20 CFR 680.910 to allow use of supportive services for participants within 12 months of exit for employment retention. WIOA allows provision of supportive services to enable participants to successfully participate in career or training services; however for Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants, it does not authorize their use during the 12-month period post exit. This waiver can assist Adult and Dislocated Worker program participants who successfully obtain employment to have access to short-term supportive services that can ease the transition period to a new job. DOL will consider waiving this requirement to allow states to provide targeted supportive services to participants who have exited and are recipients of public assistance if such services are designed to address benefit cliffs and temporarily replace lost benefits as the exited participant secures higher earnings through employment. Such supportive services may include transportation, temporary living costs, or childcare expenses while the individual adjusts to his or her employment situation and earnings cadence.

Waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(F)(i) and (G) and 20 CFR 680.320(a) and 680.340(a) to allow for all training services to be provided through training contracts. While ETA is supportive of the consumer choice requirements established in WIOA and understands the value of delivering training services through individual training accounts, ETA recognizes that the quality of training programs on state eligible training provider lists may vary across states and regions. In response to the Administration's strategic pillar supporting industry-driven strategies, DOL will consider state waiver requests to the consumer choice and use of individual training account requirements to allow states and local areas to deliver all training services through training contracts for services directly aligned to local employer needs. In considering these waiver requests, DOL will evaluate the expected programmatic

outcomes included in the waiver plans. DOL is most interested in outcomes that demonstrate significant increases in the use of the allowable work-based training strategies, including on-the-job training, customized training, and incumbent worker training, enrollment of participants in pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs, and contracted training with training providers for programs that feature explicit employer validation and offer job guarantees, interview guarantees, or other mechanisms that ensure training leads directly to employment opportunities.

- v. Workforce Flexibility (Workflex) Plans. Under WIOA Section 190, a state may submit a Workflex plan to the Secretary, under which the state has the authority to waive statutory or regulatory requirements applicable to local areas; sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act (W-P); and Older Americans Act of 1965 (OAA) activities. With an approved Workflex plan, the state may approve local area waivers directly, rather than submitting waivers to the Secretary for approval. With this authority, the state can review and approve waivers to local areas, allowing them to develop responsive strategies to address local workforce needs. The provisions that can and cannot be waived under Workflex are described at [20 CFR 679.630\(a\)\(1-2\)](#) for WIOA and Wagner-Peyser and at [20 CFR 679.630\(a\)\(3\)](#) for OAA. Notably, provisions relating to the eligibility of training providers, the funding of infrastructure costs for one-stop centers, and the OAA that cannot be waived through the Secretary's waiver authority, may be waived for a local area through an approved Workflex plan. The examples below illustrate how an approved Workflex plan could allow for additional flexibility.

Waiver to use the state infrastructure funding mechanism as the sole mechanism for funding one-stop infrastructure. Section 121(h)(1)(A) sets forth two options for funding the costs of infrastructure in a local area, while only permitting the use of the state infrastructure funding mechanism if the local board, chief elected officials, and one-stop partners fail to reach consensus agreement on a local option for infrastructure funding. Under an approved Workflex plan, States could grant a local area's request for a waiver from this requirement, which would enable the State to use the state infrastructure mechanism as the primary method of funding one-stop infrastructure in that local area. This waiver could promote flexibility and innovation, reduce administrative costs and compliance burdens for local areas, reduce friction between one-stop partners, streamline data, strengthen intake assessment and enrollment, and improve system alignment and efficiency.

A state may submit a Workflex plan at any time as a stand-alone request; as a part of its Unified or Combined State Plan; or as a component of the 2-year modification of the State Plan. To receive Workflex approval, the state must submit a plan including all required information outlined in 20 CFR 679.630(b) and also submit quarterly reports to ETA. If approved, the Workflex plan may be approved for no more than five years. A state may choose to align its plan with its WIOA State Plan period of performance. During this period, the state will be able to review and approve waivers to local areas, allowing them more opportunity to innovatively respond to local needs. While some

states used WorkFlex under the Workforce Investment Act, as of February 2025, no states have applied for a Workflex plan under WIOA, so this authority presents untapped potential and opportunity for states. See Attachment II for requirements states must address in a Workflex plan submission and, if approved, the requirements for quarterly reports.

Once approved, the Workflex plan is generally approved for the length of a state's approved State Plan, and no more than five years; states can also reapply after the conclusion of their original WorkFlex plan.

5. Leveraging Flexibilities under WIOA.

All states and local boards are encouraged to explore new models of workforce innovation under existing WIOA authority to improve services for job seekers and employers and align with the Administration's five strategic pillars. For example, states may use their WIOA Governor's Reserve for statewide activities to pilot innovations such as integrating AJCs and partner services and activities; piloting Registered Apprenticeship programs in partnership with career and technical education programs; unifying access points, assessing service efficacy; driving rapid reskilling, and creating administrative efficiencies. Additionally, ETA encourages states and local areas to review state laws, regulations, and policies that unnecessarily or inadvertently restrict flexibility and innovation of WIOA or that impose additional requirements on the workforce system beyond what is required under WIOA and consider removing these state-level barriers to maximize impact.

- a. Flexible uses of funds – Below highlights several examples of flexible uses of WIOA title I-B funds that states and local boards can use to spur innovation.
 - i. Transfer of Adult and Dislocated Worker (DW) Funds. WIOA allows, with the Governor's written approval, local areas to transfer up to 100 percent of WIOA Adult funds to the DW program and vice versa. Such flexibility allows local areas to respond to specific needs more nimbly, like a sudden increase in dislocated workers that cannot be fully served with available DW funds or to increase training investments for adult program priority populations during periods of lower unemployment. WIOA also permits, with the Governor's approval, up to 75 percent reimbursement of wages to employers hosting participants in on-the-job training, and it allows even higher reimbursement levels with an approved waiver. Another flexibility includes using up to 20 percent of WIOA Adult and DW funds for IWT.
 - ii. Braid Multiple Funding Streams. WIOA permits grantees to braid funds. Braiding occurs when states and local boards deploy multiple funding streams separately and simultaneously to provide specific services. Braiding funds helps states and local areas more efficiently and effectively use federal funds, by aligning goal setting, eliminating duplication, thereby increasing the number of participants served, improving the quality of program services offered, and enabling more timely responses to economic shifts.

Local boards have used braiding to expand services for their participants. For example, the WIOA Youth programs often partner with WIOA Title II Adult Education-funded programs to serve out-of-school youth, where the Title I Youth program provides work experience and supportive services, while the Title II program provides basic literacy skills education. Because both programs report against the WIOA core performance indicators, it is a natural fit to co-enroll participants and share in performance outcomes. The result is often stretching each program's respective funds further, each providing the priority service of their program, and both helping the youth attain positive outcomes.

Another example includes states or local areas braiding TANF program funds with WIOA Youth program funds to increase the number of low-income youth served with a more cost-effective service delivery approach. By co-enrolling and braiding WIOA Youth and TANF funds, states and local areas have more flexibility in serving shared youth populations, such as single parents and foster youth.

An additional opportunity for increasing alignment across workforce programs is braiding WIOA Youth funds, both local areas funds and Governor's Reserve funds, with Perkins V CTE funds. Braiding of these funds could include funding pre-apprenticeships where WIOA youth programs provide work experience, while Perkins funds support education and training through CTE programs of study. In addition, such braiding could fund Registered Apprenticeship programs where Perkins funds support related instruction training while WIOA Youth funds support the on the job learning of a RAP.

It is important to note that braided funds retain their unique programmatic identities and must be monitored individually to ensure each funding stream meets accounting, reporting, and auditing requirements. For reporting purposes, braided funds must be tracked and reported on the corresponding ETA-9130. States should look to statewide grants, including those funded by WIOA-mandated partners, local community grants, and the private sector as potential braiding partners. States may choose to develop interagency agreements that outline the specific resources and service role for which each funder is responsible and include a procedure for resolving disputes regarding payment or reimbursement for specific services.

- iii. Use of Statewide Reserve Funds. States may reserve up to 15 percent of their annual Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth program allotments to carry out both required and allowable statewide activities. These funds are often referred to as Governor's Reserve funds. Creative use of these funds can transform state workforce investments into customized action to meet the unique needs of state employers, advance critical credentials of need, and accelerate growth of state specific industry clusters. While this reserve may be minimal for some states, all States have wide latitude to use statewide reserve funds to pilot new, innovative projects, such as developing IWT with employers or partnering with community colleges and economic development organizations to develop coursework responsive to skill needs for industry sector needs.

Allowable statewide youth activities provide states with several different ways to pursue innovative youth programming and advance educational freedom. For example, one of the allowable statewide youth activities is supporting the development of alternative, evidence-based programs and other activities that enhance the choices available to eligible youth. Increasing available options presented to youth encourages such youth to reenter and complete secondary education, enroll in postsecondary education and advanced training, progress through a career pathway, and enter unsubsidized employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. States may use these flexible dollars for innovative youth education, training, and work-based learning programs to expand pathways and educational choices for youth, including pre-apprenticeships and Registered Apprenticeships.

States may also use unobligated Rapid Response funds at the end of the program year in which they were allocated for statewide activities. For the most part, WIOA does not restrict the uses of statewide Governor's reserve funds if the following conditions are met:

- Funded activities conform with the Uniform Guidance;
- If serving youth with the funds, states must observe WIOA Youth eligibility and adhere to the out-of-school youth expenditure requirement; and,
- Individuals who receive participant services with statewide reserve funds must be included in all required WIOA performance reporting.

States may also reserve up to 25 percent of their annual Dislocated Worker allotment for statewide rapid response activities to address events that lead to substantial increases in unemployment and to quickly assist affected workers. Rapid Response funds allow states to implement innovative solutions beyond direct reemployment services and provide ongoing, comprehensive approaches to identifying, planning for, or responding to layoffs and dislocations to prevent or minimize their impacts on workers, businesses, and communities. These funds can help businesses respond to and minimize potential layoffs by funding IWT, as a supplement to or instead of using local Adult and Dislocated Worker funds. Note that WIOA requires employers to contribute a portion of the cost of IWT and to meet certain conditions.

- iv. Coordinate resources across local areas and regions to maximize alignment and effectiveness.

Regional Planning and Coordination. WIOA encourages partnership development to achieve successful service delivery, including among local boards. While WIOA requires formal regional planning and coordination among local workforce areas assigned to identified regions (WIOA Section 106(c)), local boards may choose to coordinate with other boards without formal regional designations. Boards in areas

with similar workforce needs may find this coordination beneficial; opportunities to do so may include:

- cooperative service delivery agreements;
- industry-specific initiatives;
- collection and analysis of labor market information;
- administrative cost arrangements, including the pooling of funds for administrative costs or sharing the responsibility to conduct local annual monitoring;
- coordination of supportive services, such as transportation; and
- coordination with other partners in the shared area.

Local boards have several fixed costs, such as case management and software systems, procurement operations, and other standard operational costs where collaboration and pooling resources with other boards can help reduce costs for any single board or allow the purchase of better systems. Regions may also choose to partner with state universities to provide evaluation services for local and regional WIOA programs. Evaluations are a WIOA requirement at the state level (20 CFR 682.220) and are useful at the local and regional levels as well. As local economies and regional assets evolve over time, chief elected officials (CEO) and local boards may find it beneficial to merge with an adjacent local area(s) and establish a newly designated local area to better align the regional labor and economic market and maximize available resources. If local CEOs and boards decide on such a merger, WIOA requires the State to provide funding to those local boards to facilitate the redesignation process (WIOA Section 106(b)(6)). Voluntary local area redesignation that consolidates multiple local areas can lead to cost efficiencies, allowing the local board to direct more resources to modernize systems.

- v. Provide innovative participant and business services through integrated service delivery via the AJC and other service providers.

AJCs as Hubs for Innovation. AJCs and other WIOA service providers -are a hub for innovative service delivery. AJCs are where many program participants first learn about employment services, the workforce system, and discover in-demand occupations. States and local areas are encouraged to modernize frontline services that respond to worker needs by investing in virtual and mobile services, allowable under WIOA sec. 121(e)(2)(B). States are encouraged to consider investment in mobile AJCs, which enable service providers to meet customers where they are, especially in rural areas. Some states have launched these mobile workforce centers that are equipped to provide career services directly to rural populations, as well as to provide rapid response services in the case of large layoffs. In addition to mobile AJCs, virtual online job services are critical to providing access to AJC services. Local areas should ensure that self-service and information only services are readily available, including via mobile phones.

Funding technology. States and local areas may also choose to invest in new technologies to better support job seekers and businesses. AJCs may choose to use digital tools to enhance career navigation and mobility for customers, including tools that provide personalized career guidance, identify skills-based recommendations, allow for event registration, streamline intake and eligibility determination, or make virtual connections with AJC staff. Digital tools can also facilitate enhanced business services, including tools that provide recruiting resources, job posting services, skills-based candidate recommendations, event participation opportunities, or shared case management systems, which can ease state agency reporting challenges and ensure seamless, non-duplicative service delivery to businesses. For example, digital platforms can facilitate the provision of virtual Rapid Response sessions and job fairs, which can broaden business and job seeker participation.

AJCs and other partner programs may also invest in technology to increase virtual training options for participants, such as through virtual reality, generative AI, and adaptive learning platforms, which can be particularly valuable for customers in rural areas, who may not have access to ample training opportunities. This may include virtual reality experiences that enable occupational skills training or upskilling, which are considered career services in the WIOA Title I program, or that enhance provision of career information, which is a labor exchange service provided under WIOA Title I or under the Wagner-Peyser program.

Local boards may use one-stop infrastructure funds to purchase technology, per 20 CFR 678.700, if it aligns with state procurement policy and the Uniform Guidance. States have also leveraged other funding sources, including Dislocated Worker Grant, Workforce Information Grant, and Workforce Data Quality Initiative funds, to support the adoption of new digital technologies.

Staffing and Staff Training. In addition to new technologies, AJCs invest in staffing and staff training to improve services for both participants and businesses. Investing in apprenticeship navigators in AJCs, for example, can assist in moving more participants into Registered Apprenticeships, as well as help grow the number of employers providing Registered Apprenticeship opportunities. Local Boards should work with AJCs to cross-train frontline staff, particularly career counselors, to provide customers with access to a full suite of services. At a minimum, career counselors should understand the full array of work-based learning options available to program participants, including Registered Apprenticeship programs, in their local areas and work closely with Business Services Representatives, Registered Apprenticeship navigators and intermediaries, and industry partners to connect job seekers to Registered Apprenticeship programs.

6. Inquiries. For further information, please contact the appropriate ETA [Regional Office](#).

7. References.

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (Pub. L. 113-128);
- [Executive Order 14191 on Expanding Educational Freedom and Opportunity for Families](#);
- Wagner-Peyser Act, as amended (29 U.S.C. 49 et seq.);
- TEGL No. 8-18, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act Waiver Requirements and Request Process*; published December 19, 2018 [TEGL 08-18 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- WIOA Waiver Information Page [WIOA Waiver Information | U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- TEGL No. 3-23, *Allowable Uses of Funds for Outreach Activities for Federal Formula and Competitive Grant Awards*; published September 6, 2023 [TEGL 03-23 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)
- TEN No. 25-24, *Leveraging Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waivers to Increase Labor Force Participation and Worker Productivity*; published May 6, 2025 [TEN 25-24 | U.S. Department of Labor](#)

8. Attachment(s).

- Attachment I: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Workforce Flexibility (Workflex) Plan Collection Form



Agenda Item 4: Action Waiver Requests-State Plan



EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION ADVISORY SYSTEM U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR Washington, D.C. 20210	CLASSIFICATION WIOA State Plans
	CORRESPONDENCE SYMBOL OWI
	DATE January 26, 2026

ADVISORY: TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT GUIDANCE LETTER NO. 07-25

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE ADMINISTRATORS
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
STATE AND LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD CHAIRS AND DIRECTORS
AMERICAN JOB CENTER DIRECTORS
STATE LABOR MARKET INFORMATION DIRECTORS
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES
STATE DIRECTORS OF THE OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP
STATE EDUCATIONAL AGENCIES
STATE CTE DIRECTORS
STATE EDUCATION COMMISSIONERS
STATE AND LOCAL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE WORKFORCE
INNOVATION AND OPPORTUNITY ACT

FROM: HENRY MACK /s/
Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Modification Requirements for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) State Plans for Program Years (PYs) 2026 and 2027

- Purpose.** This Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) outlines the priorities, modification requirements, submission process, and deadline for the required modification of the WIOA Unified and Combined State Plans (State Plans) for PY 2026 and PY 2027, in accordance with Sections 102 and 103 of WIOA.
- Action Requested.** In accordance with WIOA, its implementing regulations, and the information collection request (ICR) *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements*, approved under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number 1205-0522, states must submit a two-year modification of their WIOA Unified or Combined State Plans (a four-year plan) to the U.S. Departments of Labor and Education (the Departments). While states should generally submit plan modifications by March 3, 2026, using the online portal described in Section 4.d. of this guidance, the Departments are offering additional flexibility to empower states to align the planning submission timeline with Perkins V and submit plan modifications until April 30, 2026. If States want to avail themselves of this additional flexibility, States must notify their relevant Employment and Training Administration (ETA) Regional Administrator in writing

	EXPIRATION DATE Continuing
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by March 3, 2026, and provide an explanation of the state’s need for additional time as well as an estimated date of submission (which cannot be later than April 30, 2026). Once submitted, the Departments will review and provide a decision within 90 days for the core programs, as required by section 102(c)(2)(B) and (3)(B) of WIOA.

3. Summary and Background.

- a. Summary – This joint guidance outlines the WIOA planning requirements for the required two-year modification of the four-year State Plan and provides submission deadlines and procedures.
- b. Background – WIOA requires the Governor of each state to submit a Unified or Combined State Plan that includes a four-year strategy and operational plan for the continuing implementation of the state’s workforce development system, with an update after two years. States must have federally approved State Plans to receive funding under the six core programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth, Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA), Wagner-Peyser, and the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) programs). All states have approved four-year WIOA State Plans for PYs 2024-2027.

WIOA requires that states review their plan every two years and update State Plan strategies to account for changes in the labor market and economic conditions or other factors affecting the implementation of the State Plan. Such factors may include: reorganization of State agencies administering WIOA programs, redesignation of local areas or establishment of new planning regions, the addition of new partner programs such as Perkins V¹ into a Combined State Plan, changes to methodology used to determine local allocation of funds, and other significant strategic or operational changes within states. States may also elect to change from a Unified to a Combined State Plan to include additional partners, such as Perkins V, during the modification process to maximize alignment between programs.

Under WIOA, the Unified and Combined State Plans communicate the State’s vision for its public workforce system and broader talent development system. WIOA planning requirements seek to align federal investments in job training and education programs, improve service delivery efficiency, and match individuals’ skills with high-paying job opportunities and employers. Cross-program planning promotes a shared understanding of the workforce needs and enables the public workforce system to provide a wider range of services that require coordination to meet the needs of employers, youth and adult learners, and workers, including individuals with disabilities and individuals facing barriers to entering and persisting in paid employment.

¹ Perkins V is the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Act of 2006, as amended by the Strengthening Career and Technical Education for the 21st Century Act.

4. Content.

a. **WIOA Planning Strategic Priorities.**

On April 23, 2025, President Trump issued [Executive Order 14278](#) titled “*Preparing Americans for High-Paying Skilled Trade Jobs of the Future*” that directed the U.S. Departments of Labor, Education, and Commerce to articulate a comprehensive worker investment and development strategy. Subsequently, the Departments published “[America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age](#)” that articulates a shared vision for America’s workforce development efforts, including the public workforce system, with five strategic pillars. States are encouraged to review their currently approved State Plans and align their strategies and investments to these pillars, which are summarized below.

PILLAR I: Industry-Driven Strategies: The skill demands and hiring needs of industry must drive how workforce development programs train and prepare the participants they serve. Local employers should play a central role in defining in-demand skills, validating training models, and steering investments toward the roles and credentials that propel workers into secure, well-paying, and high-need American jobs. The public workforce system can support this pillar by prioritizing Registered Apprenticeships, Integrated Education and Training programs, and other high-quality work-based learning models; organizing employers into industry sector partnerships to identify high-wage, high-skill, or in-demand industry sectors and occupations and design workforce strategies to address their needs; aligning eligible training programs to career pathways within the State or regional economy; and targeting investments towards employer-led upskilling initiatives designed to fill talent shortages in priority industries.

PILLAR II: Worker Mobility: Individuals returning to the workforce or seeking better career opportunities should be able to take tangible steps that lead to upward mobility and long-term economic independence. Next-generation workforce and labor market intelligence tools should help participants identify their skills, understand skills-aligned career options, and take intentional steps toward better-paying jobs. The public workforce system can support this pillar through several targeted strategies such as: clearly identifying credentials that are valued in the labor market to support informed decision making and support jobseekers to earn such credentials; developing informed customer choice policies designed to mitigate benefits cliffs; advancing innovative use of technology and labor market data, including employing competency-based assessments and benefits cliff navigation tools during intake into the public workforce system; and integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered tools including comprehensive talent marketplaces composed of comprehensive learner records or learning and employment records solutions, credential registries, and skills-based job description generators, that allow workers to advance based on demonstrated competencies. The public workforce system can also help connect disconnected workers to training opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency.

PILLAR III: Integrated Systems: The public workforce system must be unified, navigable, and built around the needs of its users. Job seekers should be able to access training and employment opportunities without getting lost in a maze of government agencies, and employers should be able to engage with the system just as easily to find talent and grow their workforce. The public workforce system can support this pillar by integrating disparate funding streams and improving service delivery through adopting shared eligibility standards across programs; implementing and scaling virtual service delivery practices to reduce overhead expenses; and advancing education and workforce alignment, streamlining intake processes, and implementing digital tools that help frontline staff guide individuals to the right services.

PILLAR IV: Accountability: Taxpayer funded workforce development programs must deliver measurable and transparent results for job seekers and employers. Ineffective training providers should be removed from public funding lists. Grantees' funding models should tie resources to outcomes, including through the expanded use of pay-for-performance contracts to ensure public investments generate measurable returns in employment, earnings, and credential attainment. The public workforce system can support this pillar by identifying and eliminating ineffective activities, adopting state-driven measures of program performance, establishing state and local area postsecondary attainment and labor force participation goals, redirecting funding to programs and providers that demonstrate success in connecting Americans with high-wage jobs, and enhancing data linkages, including by exploring enhanced wage records, and publishing education and training programs in structured, open, linked, and interoperable data formats, to produce valid and transparent data that assesses the return on investment and the impact on closing talent gaps.

PILLAR V: Flexibility and Innovation: The public workforce system must be adaptable and designed for continuous iteration, with exponentially faster feedback loops between employers, educators, and training providers to ensure that programs can evolve in step with economic shifts, particularly those driven by AI. States and local communities need more control to tailor solutions to their regional economies without being constrained by outdated program rules or processes. The public workforce system can support this pillar by leveraging existing statutory authorities to promote flexibility and innovation within the system, braiding federal and state funding streams from multiple sources to support integrated career pathways, creating new models of workforce innovation built to match the speed and scale of AI-driven economic transformation, prioritizing AI literacy and skills development across the public workforce system, and developing pilot projects to drive rapid reskilling and fuel other AI-era innovations.

Additional Planning Priorities: It is particularly critical, for purposes of developing and submitting the State Plan modification for PYs 2026 and 2027, that states reassess economic and labor market information (LMI) and adjust strategies for what may now be a different set of growing and declining industries, occupations, and skills, thereby ensuring the State Plan modification reflects changes in the labor market and economic conditions and other factors affecting implementation of the State Plan as required by section 102(c)(3)(A) of WIOA. Additionally, state plans must not only include the in-

demand sectors and occupations, but also the employment needs of employers and the associated competencies required in those industries and occupations, and align training provided through the workforce system with the hiring needs. LMI informs the public workforce system by offering data insights to keep up with a rapidly changing economic environment driven by AI, advanced industries, and new national priorities. State planners must work closely with the LMI directors within their states to understand the current and growing needs of their economy. The State Plan modification must reflect any such strategic re-focusing. The Departments encourage states to widely share State LMI, including the State LMI used in State plans across State agencies, regardless of inclusion in the WIOA State Plan, to support data-informed decisions. For example, such data analysis could support Perkins V subrecipients in carrying out comprehensive local needs assessments in tandem with public workforce system stakeholder engagement at the state and local area levels.²

Moreover, states are encouraged to reassess how their public education and workforce systems capture, verify, and communicate the competencies (knowledge, skills, and abilities) individuals acquire. Talent marketplaces solutions *enable* student and worker employment and mobility more effectively—mapping skills to occupational and employer needs in real time. Talent marketplaces also allow for individuals to own and make portable their skills and learning assertions—controlling what, where, when, and with whom verified skills and credentials are shared.

States are particularly encouraged to prepare for implementation of Workforce Pell Grants connecting jobseekers and students with high-quality short-term training authorized under Section 83002 of the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (Public Law 119-21). Workforce Pell Grants will provide access to federal financial aid for students enrolled in high-quality, short-term workforce programs that are defined as at least 150 clock hours of instruction and less than 600 clock hours (or the equivalent in credit hours) and at least 8 weeks, but less than 15 weeks, in duration, among other criteria. Steps to prepare for Workforce Pell might include using the latest labor market information to refresh the state’s identification of in-demand industry sectors and occupations, deepening system integration across education and workforce systems, and enhancing data collection, i.e., by enhancing unemployment insurance wage records that allow states to establish program-to-occupational linkages and to crosswalk education and training programs to competency-based, industry-recognized qualifications frameworks, and data sharing.

As states develop their plan modifications for PYs 2026 and 2027, grantees must not use federal funds in any manner that violates the United States Constitution, Title VI or Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (42 U.S.C. § 2000d et seq. or 42 U.S.C. § 2000e et seq.), Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. § 1681 et seq.), section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. § 794), the Age Discrimination Act of 1975 (42 U.S.C. 6101 et seq.), Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 U.S.C. § 12131 et seq.), the Boy Scouts of America Equal Access Act of 2001 (20 U.S.C. § 7905),

² Section 135(c) of Perkins V requires comprehensive local needs assessments.

section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. § 1011f), or other applicable federal law.

It is important to note the provisions of Executive Orders 14151, 14168, 14173, and 14190 as well as the U.S. Department of Justice’s July 29, 2025, non-regulatory “Guidance for Recipients of Federal Funding Regarding Unlawful Discrimination.” States and subgrantees that have implemented diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) activities, and any other initiatives that discriminate on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, or national origin may risk violating federal civil rights laws referenced above and jeopardizing federal funding. This includes any discriminatory equity ideology in violation of a Federal anti-discrimination law. The definition of “discriminatory equity ideology” is in Section 2(b) of Executive Order 14190. To the extent that a U.S. Department of Education (the Department) grantee uses grant funds for unallowable activities, the Department reserves the right to take appropriate enforcement action including under section 451 of the General Education Provisions Act (GEPA), which may include the recovery of funds under section 452 of GEPA.

- b. **Planning Requirements.** States must use the ICR *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Unified and Combined State Plan Requirements* (OMB control # 1205-0522) to develop and submit both the WIOA Unified or Combined State Plan and the two-year modification. A copy of the ICR, which complies with statutory requirements set forth in, as appropriate, sections 102 and 103 of WIOA, is available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/resources>. A copy of these requirements is also available through the State Plan portal (<https://wioaplans.dol.gov>), developed specifically for the required electronic submission.

Note that the ICR includes a requirement for states to describe how they will use State merit staff for the provision of Wagner-Peyser Employment Services. The Department of Labor will notify states of any changes to this planning requirement because of ongoing rulemaking related to proposed flexibility in Employment Service staffing, as described in the notice of proposed rulemaking entitled “Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Staffing,” published on July 1, 2025 (90 FR 28239).

- c. **Stakeholder Collaboration and Comment.** The State Workforce Development Board (State Board) assists the Governor in the development, implementation, and modification of the State Plan and convenes all relevant programs, required partners, and stakeholders. The Departments encourage inclusion of the state LMI, chief information officers, state higher education executive officers, education and articulation offices, Career and Technical Education agencies, and workforce and education evaluation offices (or their equivalent) during plan development and modification to obtain labor market data and related evidence and analysis.

States are also encouraged to engage the Perkins V eligible agency and stakeholders in the modification processes, even if the Perkins V program is not already included in the State Plan. The Departments have received feedback from states and recognize that some states may need additional time to conduct planning activities as they align WIOA and Perkins V programs prior to the submission of their plan modifications. As such, as noted

above, the Departments will accept plan modifications through April 30, 2026, to accommodate cross-program planning for this cycle (see Section 2 of this guidance). States are encouraged to hold concurrent public engagement sessions with Perkins V stakeholders from other core and partner programs to the public workforce system. These stakeholders may include state and local educational agencies, community and technical colleges, state workforce agencies, business and industry partners, and others. A combination of virtual and in-person stakeholder engagement sessions are encouraged at both the state and local area levels. The State Plan must be developed with the assistance of the State Board, as required by Section 101(d) of WIOA, and in coordination with administrators that have optimal policymaking authority for the core programs and required one-stop partner programs. For Combined State Plans, the portions of the plan that cover partner programs other than the core programs are subject to any public comment requirements applicable to those partner programs.³ States must provide the opportunity for public comment and input which allows interested stakeholders to participate actively, effectively, and transparently in the development of the plan and the modification, including via accessible means for individuals with disabilities. The Governor must ensure that the State Plan modification is developed with an opportunity for public comment from representatives of:

- Local Workforce Development Boards and chief elected officials;
- businesses;
- labor organizations;
- community-based organizations;
- state educational agencies;
- adult education providers;
- faith-based organizations;
- institutions of higher education;
- other stakeholders with an interest in the services provided by the six core programs;
- and
- the general public, including individuals with disabilities.

The State Board also must make information regarding the modification of the State Plan and planning process available to the public through electronic and accessible means and by holding regularly occurring open meetings in accordance with state law prior to the submission of the State Plan.⁴

- d. **Instructions for State Plan Modification Submission.** States must submit their modification of their State Plan via the State Plan Portal which has been developed for the purpose of cross-program collaboration in states and to facilitate the simultaneous receipt and review of plans across multiple federal agencies. While multiple individuals in states may enter content into the portal, only one individual from each state may submit to the Departments the entire plan on behalf of the Governor for all included programs. The Office of the Governor for each state must notify the Departments of the

³ See 20 CFR § 676.143(c)(3) and 34 CFR §§ 361.143(c)(3) and 463.143(c)(3).

⁴ See WIOA Section 101(g) and 20 CFR § 676.130(d) and 34 CFR §§ 361.130(d) and 463.130(d).

individual designated to submit the plan modification on behalf of the Governor for all programs included in the State Plan, even if that designee has not changed since the PY 2024 submission. By February 02, 2026, the Governor's office must submit a letter or email with the name of the designee to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov with a copy to the appropriate ETA Regional Office.

To request a State Plan portal user account or to update existing account login information, visit <https://wioaplans.dol.gov>. Previously approved WIOA State Plans are available within the portal; content from currently approved four-year plans will be available in the data entry fields for editing or updating, so State editors can either delete entire sections or update specific portions of the plan.

- e. **Performance Negotiations for Core Programs.** To outline the requirements for reaching agreement on the negotiated levels of performance for the states outlined in WIOA section 116, the Departments issued joint guidance titled, *Negotiations and Sanctions Guidance for the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Core Programs*, [ETA TEGL 11-19 \(Change 2\)](#), [OCTAE Program Memorandum 20-2](#) (revised January 2025), and [RSA TAC-20-02](#) (revised January 2025). The Departments will continue to negotiate program specific levels of performance. The Unified and Combined State Plan ICR Appendix 1, also discussed in Attachment I of this guidance, reflect which indicators the Departments will negotiate for which programs for PYs 2026 and 2027. See Attachment I of this guidance for more instructions on submitting expected levels of performance and establishing negotiated levels of performance.
- f. **Waivers.** As articulated in ETA [TEGL 05-25: Maximizing Innovation in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs](#), states are encouraged to request waivers of existing WIOA statutory or regulatory requirements that can help overcome specific barriers to innovation and align with the [Five Strategic Pillars](#) for workforce investment. Waivers are a tool for reducing barriers to WIOA implementation and spurring innovative programming options. The Secretary of Labor's waiver authority is outlined in WIOA sec. 189(i)(3)(A); the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I subtitles A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8 – 10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. States may submit WIOA Title I and III waiver requests as part of their State Plan or as a separate waiver plan. For more information on the process for states to request waivers, see ETA [TEGL 08-18: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(WIOA\) Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act Waiver Requirements and Request Process](#). States are encouraged to involve the Perkins eligible agency and stakeholders in the development of innovation and flexibility waivers.

States are encouraged to review all currently approved waivers, along with their respective expiration dates, to consider renewing or resubmitting new waivers.⁵ Therefore, states should submit new waiver requests as part of the State Plan modification submission for re-consideration if they wish to continue implementing particular waivers that had been approved previously but are expiring. As articulated in

⁵ For waivers related to the 75% out-of-school youth expenditure requirement, waivers are in effect for the full amount of time that states have to spend program year funds.

waiver approval letters, states agreed to meet certain performance or other program measures resulting from the waiver. States requesting a waiver must provide the most recent data available about the outcomes of the waiver in the renewal request.⁶ The Department of Labor will consider this information as part of its thorough consideration on whether to approve the requested waiver. Find waiver-related resources at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/waivers>.

5. Inquiries. Please direct inquiries to the appropriate Regional Office.

6. References.

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) ([Pub. L. 113-128](#)) (July 22, 2014);
- Joint Rule for Unified and Combined State Plans, Performance Accountability, and the One-Stop System Joint Provisions; Final Rule (WIOA Joint Final Rule) published at [81 FR 55792](#) (Aug. 19, 2016);
- Employment and Training Administration, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Final Rule (WIOA DOL Final Rule) published at [81 FR 56072](#) (Aug. 19, 2016);
- State Vocational Rehabilitation Services Program; State Supported Employment Services Program; Limitations on Use of Subminimum Wage—Final Rule (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS) Final Rule) published at [81 FR 55630](#) (August 19, 2016);
- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act: Miscellaneous Program Changes—Final Rule (WIOA OSERS Final Rule) published at [81 FR 55562](#) (August 19, 2016);
- Programs and Activities Authorized by the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (Title II of WIOA)—Final Rule (WIOA OCTAE Final Rule) published at [81 FR 55526](#) (August 19, 2016);
- Information Collection Request, [*Required Elements for Submission of the Unified or Combined State Plan and Plan Modifications Under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act*](#), approved under Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number 1205-0522; and
- ETA [TEGL 08-18](#): *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act Waiver Requirements and Request Process*, dated December 19, 2018.

7. Attachment.

- Attachment I: Performance Goals and Instructions for the Core Programs

⁶ See 20 CFR § 679.620(d)(7).

Arkansas PY 2026-PY 2027 Waiver Requests

Under the Secretary of Labor's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A state may request a waiver in its Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification.

Required Elements - Waiver #1

Title: State Board Acts as Local Board

The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive:

As outlined in Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) 05-25, the State of Arkansas is seeking a waiver of the requirements outlined in WIOA sec. 107(b) to allow the state board to act as the local board. This waiver would allow the Governor to designate the Arkansas Workforce Development Board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the local boards for the purpose of operating as a single statewide planning area in accordance with 20 CFR 679.310(f).

Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local barriers:

There are no state or local statutory or regulatory policies in Arkansas that limit the Governor's authority to allow the state to operate as a single statewide planning area with the state board fulfilling the roles of the local boards. The state board will continue to include local input into its activities through the establishing of regional business councils comprised of employers who reside and/or work in local workforce areas; maintaining the integrity of the local board structure inclusive of representatives from industry. Appointments for state board members from the business category will be reflective of Arkansas' unique geographic footprint. The state board will allocate funding to each local area in the state using current formula funding methodologies.

A description of the state's strategic goal(s):

The Arkansas Workforce Strategy is a collaborative, competency-based, customer-centric, and responsive workforce system that meets current and future needs of employers, incumbent workers, and job seekers. The strategy fosters partnerships across sectors to align workforce development with industry needs; aligns training and career pathways with real-world skills and competencies; tailors services to meet the unique needs and goals of job seekers, incumbent workers, and employers; and adapts quickly to economic changes and labor market trends for timely alignment of workforce efforts. These themes collectively aim to create a more dynamic and effective workforce ecosystem in Arkansas.

Arkansas's primary goal for this waiver is to limit annual overhead and streamline operational expenses to maximize the limited funding available for direct services, especially training and work-based learning. It is the state's intent to serve the largest number of customers possible

with the available funding. Based on preliminary projections, the state anticipates more than \$6 million of current funding to be redirected from operational and overhead expenses to direct participant costs (i.e., training, supportive services, etc.). The statewide structure will enhance Arkansas's ability to transform operations into a demand driven system that directly supports local community partnerships without the need for additional overhead.

This structure will also enable further integration of titles I and III operations strengthening the "no wrong door" customer-centric service delivery model outlined in the Arkansas Workforce Strategy. Uniform statewide governance and integration will help Arkansas increase labor force participation and provide consistent high-quality services in all areas.

A discussion of how the waiver complements Department of Labor priorities (i.e. expansion of apprenticeship, improved employer engagement, etc.):

Approval of this waiver aligns with the following DOL strategic pillars from America's Talent Strategy: Building the Workforce for the Golden Age:

- *Industry-Driven Strategies:* This waiver will allow Arkansas to ensure the workforce system is aligned with economic priorities and further scale high-quality apprenticeship and work-based learning models. The Arkansas Workforce Strategy emphasizes sector strategies through employer collaboratives using the Talent Pipeline Management approach driven by industry. By maximizing the funding available for direct support activities, Arkansas will be well positioned to target investments toward initiatives designed to fill talent shortages in priority industries. Arkansas has begun establishing a state-led business services model that is aligned with the state's economic development agency and affiliates. In this model, Arkansas Industry Connect, along with regional outreach coordinators will serve as the public-facing employer experts equipped to engage businesses throughout the state and provide a myriad of services and resources in a fashion that is centralized and preferred by business leaders.
- *Worker Mobility:* This pillar calls for bringing more individuals into the labor force and supporting their advancement through career pathways by using innovative technology, labor market data, and valued credentials. Arkansas is leading the way in emphasizing skills-based practices to support worker mobility including the establishment of a statewide credential registry as well as digital learning and employment records (LERs). This waiver will enable Arkansas to continue connecting more individuals to the workforce and opportunities that lead to self-sufficiency.
- *Integrated Systems:* This waiver will allow Arkansas to fully integrate outreach, intake, eligibility determination, and case management processes across WIOA Titles I and III as well as possible future integrated expansion with other programs. This waiver transforms the fragmented system of workforce programs into a cohesive streamlined workforce ecosystem, reducing duplication of effort and unnecessary overhead expenses. As previously stated, Arkansas anticipates an estimated \$6M of current overhead and operating expenses that can be redirected into direct support of job seekers and employers.

- *Accountability*: This waiver will allow Arkansas to ensure workforce programs deliver results that link investments to outcomes and program performance. Programs and strategic initiatives will be monitored for continuous improvement to ensure consistent delivery of strong results and measurable impact. The performance information will be publicly available for enhanced transparency across the workforce development system.
- *Flexibility and Innovation*: This waiver will allow Arkansas to maintain an agile and adaptable workforce system, capable of evolving in step with economic shifts. As state economic priorities change, so will the prioritization of industry investments. Streamlined operations and effective governance structure statewide allow these shifts to occur more quickly and efficiently.

Quantifiable projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver:

Based on the \$6M savings projected as detailed above, Arkansas anticipates increasing Title I program enrollments significantly. Also, in the spirit of WIOA’s intent, Arkansas will be able to emphasize spending program funds towards those individuals most in need who can benefit from intensive intervention and direct training and support, all of which positively impacts the achievement of performance goals.

Individuals, groups, or populations benefitting, or otherwise impacted by the waiver from the waiver:

Streamlined operations and reduced operating/overhead costs will provide the opportunity for additional resources to meet the needs of employers, job seekers, and incumbent workers. Additionally, the waiver will allow Arkansas to continue to promote the cost benefits of improved administrative efficiencies, encouraging the increased leveraging of resources within the workforce ecosystem. As a result, Arkansas will increase services such as enhanced education, employment, and training opportunities for disadvantaged populations and individuals with multiple barriers to employment.

How the state plans to monitor waiver implementation, including collection of measurable waiver outcome information:

Upon DOL’s approval of this waiver request, Arkansas will communicate the waiver allowance to stakeholders within the workforce ecosystem. Arkansas will monitor progress under this waiver by reviewing monthly performance and expenditure reports compared to historical performance and expenditure levels. Arkansas will also monitor the quality of services provided statewide to ensure continuous improvement. Arkansas will report waiver outcomes in the state’s WIOA Annual Report. If the state requests renewal of this waiver, then Arkansas will provide the most recent outcomes data available.

FUNCTIONS OF STATE BOARD & LOCAL WORKFORCE BOARD

20 CFR § 679.130 What are the **functions of the State Workforce Development Board?**

Under [WIOA](#) sec. 101(d), the [State WDB](#) must assist the [Governor](#) in the:

- (a) Development, implementation, and modification of the 4-year [State](#) Plan;
- (b) Review of statewide policies, programs, and recommendations on actions that must be taken by the [State](#) to align workforce development programs to support a comprehensive and streamlined workforce development system. Such review of policies, programs, and recommendations must include a review and provision of comments on the [State](#) Plans, if any, for programs and activities of [one-stop partners](#) that are not core programs;
- (c) Development and continuous improvement of the workforce development system, including—
 - (1) Identification of barriers and means for removing barriers to better coordinate, align, and avoid duplication among programs and activities;
 - (2) Development of strategies to support career pathways for the purpose of providing individuals, including low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with barriers to employment, including individuals with disabilities, with [workforce investment activities](#), education, and [supportive services](#) to enter or retain employment;
 - (3) Development of strategies to provide effective outreach to and improved access for individuals and [employers](#) who could [benefit](#) from workforce development system;
 - (4) Development and expansion of strategies to meet the needs of employers, workers, and job seekers particularly through industry or sector partnerships related to in-demand industry sectors and occupations;
 - (5) Identification of regions, including planning regions for the purposes of [WIOA](#) sec. 106(a), and the designation of local areas under [WIOA](#) sec. 106, after [consultation](#) with [Local WDBs](#) and chief elected officials;
 - (6) Development and continuous improvement of the [one-stop delivery system](#) in local areas, including providing assistance to Local WDBs, one-stop operators, one-stop partners, and providers. Such assistance includes assistance with planning and delivering services, including training and [supportive services](#), to support effective delivery of services to workers, job seekers, and employers; and
 - (7) Development of strategies to support staff training and awareness across the workforce development system and its programs;
- (d) Development and updating of comprehensive [State](#) performance and accountability measures to assess core program effectiveness under [WIOA](#) sec. 116(b);
- (e) Identification and dissemination of information on best practices, including best practices for—
 - (1) The effective operation of one-stop centers, relating to the use of business outreach, partnerships, and service delivery strategies, including strategies for serving individuals with barriers to employment;
 - (2) The development of effective [Local WDBs](#), which may include information on factors that contribute to enabling [Local WDBs](#) to exceed negotiated local levels of performance, sustain fiscal integrity, and achieve other measures of effectiveness; and

