

Approved X
Disapproved

Action Item 6

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR ON-THE-JOB TRAINING REIMBURSEMENT WAIVER REQUEST

The U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) Secretary is granted certain waiver authority under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) to promote workforce system innovation and focus on outcomes. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(A)(i) establishes the limitations of the Secretary's general waiver authority for WIOA Title I, subtitles A, B, and E and the Wagner-Peyser Act Sections 8-10. USDOL may approve waivers for a period of time shorter than the full life of the WIOA Combined State Plan, which will give USDOL an opportunity to assess the State's progress in meeting specific conditions of the waiver.

USDOL review of waiver requests includes assessing alignment with the Governor's strategic vision for workforce services in Florida, USDOL priorities, state strategic goals, quantifiable programmatic outcomes and WIOA populations affected by the waiver. At the direction of the Executive Office of the Governor, the CareerSource Florida professional team works with the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) to evaluate opportunities for Florida's workforce system to request certain waivers from USDOL.

[Training and Employment Notice Letter \(TEN\) No. 25-24](#) was issued May 6, 2025 to encourage state and local WIOA Title I grantees to leverage waivers that may increase labor force participation and enhance worker productivity in response to the Presidential Memorandum of January 20, 2025, titled, "[Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis](#)." All state and local grantees are encouraged to request waivers as necessary, to ensure WIOA Funds are being used effectively to increase labor force participation by drawing discouraged workers into the labor force, and to upskill the workforce to enhance worker productivity.

In accordance with the Governor's strategic vision for workforce services in Florida, The Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) and CareerSource Florida request approval from the state workforce board to submit a waiver to USDOL

requesting that the Secretary of Labor waive the requirements outlined in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and [20 CFR 680.720\(b\)](#). If approved, this waiver will increase the percentage allowed for employer reimbursement for on-the-job training (OJT). Florida currently allows an employer reimbursement of up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an OJT participant, and up to 75 percent using the criteria in [s. 680.730](#), if specific criteria is met, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to OJT.

FloridaCommerce and CareerSource Florida are seeking a waiver to increase the OJT wage reimbursements up to 90 percent statewide and up to 100 percent for OJT opportunities with businesses located in areas designated as [Opportunity Zones](#) or residents within an Opportunity Zone. Opportunity Zones represent economically distressed census tracts identified by state governors and certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Nationally, there are 8,764 Opportunity Zones, which are in all 50 states, five territories and the District of Columbia. These communities have historically faced significant barriers to economic growth and have often been overlooked for investment and job creation. These areas continue to face chronic underinvestment and disproportionately high barriers to employment. In Florida, there are a total of 427 Qualified Opportunity Zones, covering every county in the state. These Opportunity Zones equate to 40,292 business establishments, representing 936,691 jobs statewide.

Consistent with [20 CFR 679.410](#), [20 CFR 679.610](#), and [20 CFR 679.620](#) and CareerSource Florida Workforce Policy G1 – State Workforce Development Board Roles and Responsibilities, the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors must review, approve, or consider all waiver requests.

If approved by the CareerSource Florida Board of Directors, Florida will include in its WIOA Combined Plan, submitted to USDOL and the U.S. Department of Education in March 2026, this waiver will allow Florida to align with its additional goals outlined in the WIOA Combined Plan by:

1. Providing a targeted incentive to employers in Opportunity Zones to drive job creation and improve access to work-based learning opportunities for job seekers in need.
2. Addressing the talent pipeline shortages faced by many employers in Opportunity Zones by ensuring participants have the skills and preparation needed to enter the workforce and be contributing members of the local and State economy.
3. Attracting additional private investment in Opportunity Zones.
4. Expanding access to work-based learning in Opportunity Zones, particularly for those individuals residing within the Opportunity Zone with limited experience or credentials, to gain access to hands-on training and career pathways, improving their long-term earning potential and job stability.
5. Accelerating hiring and job placements, reduce unemployment duration and increase workforce participation.

6. Improving WIOA performance outcomes statewide such as employment rate and median earnings.

There are no state, local, statutory, or regulatory barriers to implementing the waiver requested. Strategic goals projected programmatic outcomes, and description of individual, groups, or populations impacted by the waiver are described in the document attached as: FloridaCommerce State of Florida Waiver Request – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Increasing On-the-Job Training Reimbursement Limits for Businesses in Opportunity Zones.

FOR CONSIDERATION

- **Authorize FloridaCommerce and CareerSource Florida to submit a USDOL waiver requesting authority to increase the wage rate reimbursement to employers statewide up to 90 percent and up to 100 percent for businesses in Opportunity Zones or residents that reside within an Opportunity Zone.**
- **Once prepared, the waiver will be posted for public comment at careersourceflorida.com for 30 calendar days before submission to USDOL.**
- **The waiver request will be included in Florida’s WIOA Combined Plan Two-Year Modification.**

Attachments

- FloridaCommerce State of Florida Waiver Request – Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Increasing On-the-Job Training Reimbursement Limits for Businesses in Opportunity Zones.
- [Training and Employment Notice No. 25-24 – Leveraging Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waivers to Increase Labor Force Participation and Worker Productivity \(May 6, 2025\).](#)