

MEMORANDUM

DATE: December 1, 2025
TO: Local Workforce Development Boards
FROM: Karmyn Hill, Chief, Bureau of One-Stop and Program Support
SUBJECT: Waiver of Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act On-the-Job Training Reimbursement Limits

Following the unanimous vote of the CareerSource Florida Board, and at the recommendation of CareerSource South Florida, the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce) subsequently formally requested the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor waive the requirement from the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) which states, “employers may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an on-the-job training (OJT) participant, and up to 75 percent using the criteria in § 680.730, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to OJT.”

On September 19, 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration conditionally approved the OJT reimbursement waiver request through June 30, 2027. Therefore, effective immediately for program years 2025 and 2026, local workforce development boards (LWDBs) may:

- Reimburse businesses of any size up to 90 percent.
- Reimburse businesses up to 100 percent for all businesses located in or employing current residents within designated Opportunity Zones.

Florida is the first state in the nation to obtain up to 100 percent wage reimbursement for On-the-Job Training (OJT), a major step in workforce innovation. This initiative increases the previous reimbursement rate of up to 50-75 percent to up to 100 percent, in alignment with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), further enhancing the state’s ability to maximize workforce investments in designated low-income areas. Florida is also the first state to utilize Opportunity Zones to strategically target these reimbursements—encouraging employers to invest in local talent while strengthening public-private collaboration in workforce development.

Opportunity Zones represent economically distressed census tracts identified by state governors and certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. These communities have historically faced significant barriers to economic growth and have often been overlooked for investment and job creation. These areas also continue to face chronic underinvestment and disproportionately high barriers to employment. In Florida, there are currently 427 Qualified Opportunity Zones, which include sections of each county within the state. These Opportunity Zones equate to 40,292 business establishments and represent 936,691 jobs statewide. These Opportunity Zones will remain in effect until the end of 2028.

Under the One Big Beautiful Bill (OBBA) Act, beginning July 1, 2026, governors will start the process of nominating new maps of census tracts. Once the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury

certifies those tracts, the new map of Opportunity Zones will go into effect on January 1, 2027, and last for 10 years. Additionally, pursuant to federal law, existing Opportunity Zones will remain in effect through the end of 2028, thus co-existing with the new Opportunity Zones for two calendar years. Redesignations will occur every ten years thereafter. As a result of this waiver, FloridaCommerce expects that the utilization of OJTs will increase, and performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth (including both In School Youth and Out of School Youth) will increase for a majority of the WIOA performance indicators. With the recent bolstering of support nationally and statewide for Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs), LWDBs must use the flexibility afforded by this waiver for RAPs and to increase co-enrollment between WIOA and apprenticeship opportunities.

FloridaCommerce is updating Employ Florida to utilize geocoding tools that will help automate the process of determining whether a business or individual resides within an Opportunity Zone. Once determined to be within an Opportunity Zone, Employ Florida will flag individuals and businesses accordingly. Until system updates are complete, LWDBs will be required to manually determine whether a business or individual resides within an Opportunity Zone.

To comply with this requirement, LWDBs may enter the individual or business address on the Economic Innovation Group [map](#) for a visual representation of Certified Economic Opportunity Zones. If the individual or business address is highlighted in one of the brown/orange zones, the address is considered within an Opportunity Zone, and the business may be reimbursed up to 100 percent of the OJT. Staff must adhere to all other requirements contained in [Workforce Policy 100: Work-Based Training and Work-Based Learning Opportunities](#) and [Workforce Policy 009: On-the-Job Training](#) for the use and operation of OJT.

LWDB are required to update their local operating procedures and policies to align with the guidance provided herein.

Annual WIOA on-site and remote programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of how the waiver is being utilized locally and the success of achieving state goals and outcomes as defined in the waiver. Additionally, LWDBs are required to address actions taken to implement and assess the effectiveness of these waivers as well as programmatic outcomes in the WIOA Local and Regional Plan.

Should you have questions or concerns regarding implementation, please contact the WIOA Program Team at: WIOA@Commerce.fl.gov.

The approved waiver requests and response letters can be viewed on the [CareerSource Florida website](#).

Please share this information with appropriate staff and other interested parties.

KH/dr

cc: Kate Doyle, Deputy Secretary, FloridaCommerce
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