

State of Florida Waiver Request Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) In-School Youth Individual Training Accounts

Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived

The State of Florida (State) is requesting renewal of the waiver of 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 681.550, which allows Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) individual training accounts (ITAs) for out-of-school youth (OSY), ages 16 to 24, using WIOA youth funds when appropriate.

20 CFR 681.550 allows ITAs funded by WIOA youth funds to be used for OSY. The final rule did not expand the use of ITAs for in-school youth (ISY). Instead, ISY wishing to access ITAs may only do so through co-enrollment in the WIOA Adult program. The State would like to continue to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY and expand this use of ITAs to ISY, ages 14-21. Additionally, the State is requesting retroactive approval to avoid any lapse in approval through the review process post the anticipated expiration date of June 30, 2025.

Waiving this requirement will provide greater flexibility and increase the State's capacity for responding to the training and employment needs of the State's youth. The waiver will also ensure a responsive approach to preparing youth for future career success.

Actions the State Has Undertaken to Remove State or Local Barriers

There are no state, local, statutory, or regulatory barriers to implementing the waiver.

Strategic Goals of the Waiver

The strategic goals associated with this waiver are to:

1. Address the talent pipeline shortages faced by many employers by ensuring the State's youth have the skills and preparation needed to enter the workforce and become contributing members of the local and State economy.
2. Expand access to apprenticeships by reducing barriers for related training instruction provided by post-secondary institutions.
3. Increase opportunities for youth to acquire occupational skills in post-secondary settings irrespective of their education status.
4. Enhance partnerships with schools and preparing ISY for post-secondary education in occupations that lead to self-sufficiency.

Alignment with U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration Policy Priorities

WIOA encourages strategies that connect education and training and support educational opportunities to improve job and career results. This waiver request is being made to permit local workforce development boards' use of the State's Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) to provide training through an ITA to ISY who are preparing to complete secondary education and begin post-secondary education.

This waiver request is aligned with the pillars of the America Talent Strategy, which emphasizes strengthening the nation's talent pipeline through early, coordinated, and access to high-quality

education-to-career pathways. Below are ways in which expanding the use of the ITAs to ISY directly supports the America Talent Strategy Pillars:

- **Aligning Education with Workforce Needs** - Allowing ITAs for ISY will strengthen Florida's partnerships with school districts, youth service providers, and training institutions to ensure youth have a seamless transition into post-secondary training and employment, reinforcing one of the core goals identified in this waiver.
- **Engaging and Supporting Disconnected Workers** – Allowing the use of ITAs for ISY expands access to post-secondary training, industry-recognized credentials, and other structured learning pathways providing early exposure to high-value career pathways and increased opportunities for youth to prepare to fill high-demand occupations being vacated by aging, retiring workers.

Growing Industry-Specific Training – Expanding access to ITAs allows youth to pursue portable, industry-recognized credentials resulting in stronger pipelines into high-demand, high-skill occupations.

Projected Programmatic Outcomes Resulting from Implementation of the Waiver

The State expects to achieve the following goals and programmatic outcomes because of this waiver:

1. Improve the local workforce development boards' and youth service providers' ability to respond to the workforce needs of ISY.
2. Increase the number of youth who utilize an ITA to pursue an industry-recognized postsecondary credential by five percent.
3. Increase access to, and engagement of, ISY in need of post-secondary education, training, apprenticeships and support necessary to succeed in the labor market and meet current high-growth industry demand in the State through acquisition of portable credentials, college credit, and a degree.
4. Improvement in the primary indicators of performance for the WIOA Youth program as set forth in WIOA Section 116(b)(2)(A)(ii), thus increasing credential attainment and measurable skills gains by five percent.
5. Increase the number of prepared youth candidates who are ready to work by five percent.

Description of Individuals, Groups, or Populations Impacted by the Waiver

1. Employers.
2. The State's ISY populations.
3. Youth service providers.
4. The State's career centers and the one-stop delivery system.

The Process to Monitor the Waived Activities and Collect Waiver Outcome Information

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 the stated goals and outcomes. Youth service providers will also be responsible for assessing the use and effectiveness of the waiver.

Most Recent Data Available Regarding the Results and Outcomes Observed Through the Implementation of the Existing Waiver

Over the prior three program years (PY), Florida served 8,882 OSY and 1,756 ISY. Additionally, from PYs 2023-2024 to 2024-2025, Florida experienced a 17.7 percent decrease in the number of ISY served. . During PY 2024, Florida experienced three hurricanes and two occurrences of inclement weather that caused some local areas to cease operations for a period of time. Florida attributes this steep decrease to the five weather systems experienced during one program year, which led to a focus on disaster recovery and dislocated workers.

The State and local workforce development boards (LWDBs) are continuing to develop strategies to optimize the flexibility afforded by this waiver, even in the wake extended career center closures.

The below data¹ represents information available for PYs 2022, 2023, and 2024.

**In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth
Enrolled in Education or Training Programs Leading to Credentials**

PY	Program	OSY in Education and Training	OSY w/ Measurable skill gains	OSY Measurable Skill Gain Rate	ISY in Education and Training	ISY with Measurable Skill Gain	ISY Measurable Skill Gain Rate
2022	Youth	2,976	2,254	75.7%	843	707	83.9%
2023	Youth	3,911	2,576	69.9%	911	764	83.9%
2024	Youth	3,266	2,188	67.0%	744	670	90.1%

The above chart provides the number of ISY and OSY enrolled in education or training programs leading to a recognized credential by PY.

**In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth
Enrolled in Education or Training Using an Individual Training Account**

PY	Program	Education and Training	Training Accounts	ISY Enrolled in Education and Training	Using Individual Training Accounts
2022	Youth	2,976	846	843	14
2023	Youth	3,911	967	911	18
2024	Youth	3,266	577	733	17

The above chart reflects the number of OSY and ISY that were enrolled in education or training and utilized an ITA to pursue an industry-recognized postsecondary credential. Based on the data provided, the number of ISY using an ITA in PY 2023 increased by 28.6 percent from the prior year. Conversely, there was a slight decrease of 5.6 percent from PY 2023 to PY 2024. The State anticipates that as more LWDBs and youth service providers develop effective strategies and service delivery models to respond to the workforce needs of ISY, there will be a continued increase in the current and upcoming program years.

Youth Placements (Quarter 2 After Exit)

¹ All data provided on ISY/OSY participation is obtained from ETA 9170 reports

PY	Program	ISY Placements	OSY Placements	Total Placements	Difference
2022	Youth	496 (20.1%)	1,975 (79.9%)	2,471	N/A
2023	Youth	267 (12.4%)	1,892 (87.6%)	2,159	-12.6%
2024	Youth	301 (13.2%)	1,971 (86.8%)	2,272	+5.2%

The above chart provides the number of youth, including a breakdown of ISY and OSY, that were employed post-exit. There was a 12.6 percent decrease in youth employed from PY 2022 to PY 2023; however, there was an increase in placements by 5.2 percent from PY 2023 to PY 2024.

Opportunity for Local Workforce Development Board and Public Comment on the Waiver

Workforce development stakeholders, including LWDBs, businesses, and Chief Local Elected Officials, were notified of the State's waiver request through an email alert and post on CareerSource Florida's website. This included instructions on how to submit comments. In addition, both the public and stakeholders had access to the waiver request on CareerSource Florida's website, CareerSourceFlorida.com, in the WIOA combined plan. The public comment period was open for 30 calendar days; no comments were received.