

**State of Florida Waiver Renewal Request
Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)
Out-of-School Youth Expenditure Requirement**

Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived

The State of Florida (State) is requesting a renewal of the waiver of Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Section 129(a)(4)(A) and 20 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 681.410, which requires state and local areas to expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY).

The State is requesting to renew the waiver of the requirement to expend 75 percent of Governor's reserve youth funds and local formula youth funds on OSY, allowing Florida to continue to lower the minimum expenditure requirement to 50 percent. 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.

The State will continue to serve OSY by providing occupational skills training, work-based learning, to include employer-provided training programs like pre-apprenticeship and registered apprenticeship, tutoring/study skills, education and workforce preparation activities, leadership development opportunities, supportive services, mentoring, guidance and counseling, financial literacy, entrepreneurial skills training, career counseling, transition to post-secondary education activities, and follow up services.

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

This waiver will allow the State to support its strategic goals with targeted strategies aimed at reducing barriers and increasing employability for its youth. There are several barriers experienced by at-risk ISY that impact their ability to avoid dropping out of secondary school or obtaining/retaining gainful employment. Some of these barriers include:

- Lower labor force participation - For year to date, the labor participation rate was 31.1 percent for younger youth ages 16-19 with an estimated 31.6 percent for February 2026.
- The age group of 16-19 is the target age group that is at risk of experiencing challenges to remain in school and earn a high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Drop-out rate - Based on data from the Florida Department of Education, for the period of 2024-2025, of Florida's 67 counties, approximately 9 percent have a dropout rate of five percent or more. Florida continues to seek an expansion of partnerships with schools and community programs that serve populations such as at-risk ISY. By investing additional funds to support ISY at-risk of dropping out of school, the State expects to continue to lower the number of youth who drop out of school and obtain their high school diploma or its equivalent.
- Poverty rate – Based on the Florida Chamber of Commerce's Florida Scorecard, it is estimated that 16.5 percent of youth in Florida live in poverty.

- Unemployment rate - The unemployment rate for youth ages 16-19 is approximately 15 percent while Florida's unemployment rate is 4.6 percent.

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. Allow local areas to serve OSY and ISY in a way that best meets the needs of the local workforce area according to populations, resources, and other labor market factors.
3. Expand opportunities at the local level for recruitment and enrollment of at-risk ISY who could benefit from the services of the workforce system.
4. Allow the State to spend its federal WIOA resources with more flexibility.

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

WIOA encourages strategies that connect education and training, support work-based learning, and improve job and career results. This waiver will increase at-risk ISY access to opportunities for necessary education, training, employment, and support services. Generally, this waiver will align with WIOA's career pathways strategy and prepare more ISY for in-demand careers. Approving this waiver request will increase the connection between education and training, provide work-based learning opportunities that include work experience and pre-apprenticeship, and increased access to workforce services for ISY. Specifically, this waiver will align with the following USDOL policy priorities, as found in the USDOL Fiscal Year 2026 - 2030 Strategic Plan, America's Talent Strategy, WIOA, and federal regulations:

- The USDOL ETA prioritizes youth skill development for jobs of the future through the development of AI skills and promotion of work-based learning within occupations using AI;
- The ETA has prioritized implementing innovative strategies to enhance workforce development and boost economic growth;
- The ETA focuses on optimizing federal investments to align America's reindustrialization and economic growth needs, preparing workers to fill high-demand skilled trade positions, and empowering qualified protected veterans and individuals with disabilities to secure jobs;
- America's Talent Strategy's Pillar I focuses on industry-driven strategies such as Registered Apprenticeships and other high-quality work-based learning models, to transform the workforce system into a reliable pipeline of American talent led by industry and aligned with America's economic priorities.
- America's Talent Strategy's Pillar III focuses on creating a modern workforce system that is unified, navigable, and built around the needs of its users.
- WIOA places a strong emphasis on work experience for youth participants, requiring that 20 percent of WIOA Youth funding be expended on this element;
- WIOA promotes strong partnerships to leverage resources and increase opportunities for youth; and
- WIOA prioritizes participant success, as measured by skill gains, entry into and retention of employment or post-secondary education attendance, and achievement of an industry-recognized credential.

Projected Programmatic Outcomes Resulting from Implementation of the Waiver

This waiver will allow the State and LWDBs to develop strategies that address challenges of at-risk youth whether in school or out and will help address student retention, engagement, and immediate transition to post-secondary education, meaningful employment, and/or the military. Expected outcomes for youth participants include an increase of five percent in the:

- Number that attain a measurable skill gain.
- Number that attend post-secondary education.
- Number that participate in occupational skills training.
- Number of ISY who participate in work experience opportunities.
- Number that earn an industry-recognized credential.

For the three preceding program years, Florida has experienced an overall increase of two percent between the PY 2022 through PY 2024 in the number of ISY participating in work experience opportunities.

Program Year	ISY Work Experience	Difference
2022	498	N/A
2023	597	+19.9%
2024	508	-14.9%

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

1. Future employers.
2. Florida at-risk ISY and OSY populations.
3. Youth service providers.
4. Florida 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.

The first chart provides a comparison of the total number of OSY and ISY served statewide for PY 2022, 2023 and 2024. Additionally, the latter chart below compares new ISY and OSY participations in PYs 2022, 2023 and 2024. Florida saw an increase of 89 new ISY participations in PY 2023 compared to the prior year.

Florida anticipates continued growth in the number of new ISY enrollments over the upcoming program years as more LWDBs expand opportunities at the local level for recruitment and enrollment of at-risk ISY.

**Out-of-School Youth and In-School Youth Participation
for Program Years 2022 - 2024¹**

	PY	Program	OSY Youth Participants	ISY Youth Participants	Total Youth Participants
SW	2022	Youth Participants	4,375 (83%)	884 (16.9%)	5,259
SW	2023	Youth Participants	4,378 (82%)	957 (18%)	5,335
SW	2024	Youth Participants	3,665 (82.3%)	788 (17%)	4,453

	PY	Program	New OSY Youth Participants	New ISY Youth Participants	Total New Youth Participants
SW	2022	New Youth Participants	2,604	421	3,025
SW	2023	New Youth Participants	2,509	510	3,019
SW	2024	New Youth Participants	1,991	360	2,351

Below are counts of ISY and OSY enrolled in education or training programs leading to a recognized credential by PY. In summary, ISY enrollments experienced an increase from PY 2022 to PY 2023 by eight (8) percent. Conversely, from PY 2023 to PY 2024 the enrollments decreased in education or training programs leading to a credential by 18 percent. Although ISY enrollments in education or training programs decreased in PYs 2023 and 2024, Florida was able to maintain its momentum and increased the rate at which ISY obtain a measurable skill gain by 7.4% in PY2024.

**In-School Youth and Out-of-School Youth
Enrolled in Education or Training Programs Leading to Credentials²**

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%

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,

¹ Data sourced from ETA 9170

² Data sourced from ETA 9170

CareerSourceFlorida.com, in the WIOA combined plan. The public comment period was open for 30 calendar days; no comments were received.