

State of Florida
Workforce Investment Act
Waiver # 4 - Continuation Request:

EMPLOYED WORKER TRAINING FUNDING

Pursuant to WIA Section 189 (i)(4)(B) and the WIA Federal regulations at 20 CFR 661.420, the State of Florida requests a waiver to enable local Regional Workforce Boards to expand employed worker training (EWT) activities by allowing up to 20 percent of local adult and dislocated worker funds as described by WIA Section 133 (b) (2) to be expended on incumbent worker training activities pursuant to the rules adherent to statewide activities described by WIA Section 134 (a) (3).

A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived

Should the above request be deemed to be not in accord with any provision of WIA Section 134 or WIA federal regulations at 20 CFR 667.160, 20 CFR 663, or 20 CFR 665, Florida requests waiver of the federal regulations.

B. Goals of the Waiver and Expected Programmatic Outcomes if Waiver is Granted

This waiver encourages Regional Workforce Boards to further expand EWT activities, which enables further use of the public employment system through a demand-driven, business focus. Global competition has required companies to dramatically adapt in order to survive and changes in the workplace have increased employer's demand for an educated and skilled workforce. Investing public resources to support technical and/or soft skills training of incumbent workers is a practical layoff aversion strategy for the state. It retains good jobs in the economy; retains critical industries in the region and can lead to creation of jobs in Florida's targeted sectors. These identified (targeted) industry sectors play a key role in the state's economic success and competitiveness and offer a diversified economy for the state. Workforce programs coordinated for these industry sectors drive talent pipeline development and high-paying job opportunities. Developing human capital by improving workforce skills as a result of technology or workforce change increasingly serves as the foundation of competitive advantage and can be a core driver of economic success. A better skilled workforce is an effective retention tool also. It is imperative that communities retain these local businesses as they are valuable resources that generate jobs and create taxes. Training can help stabilize a company by contributing to increased productivity and overall competitiveness and in many cases provide companies employees' promotional opportunities and increased wages. Ongoing incumbent worker training is a valuable investment for a business that can have a positive impact on its bottom line. EWT programs closely align with businesses' immediate needs and invest and leverage local, regional and state limited resources.

C. State or Local Statutory of Regulatory Barriers

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the state's policy or any federal waiver necessary to implement this request. Indeed the policy is in accord with the intent of state statutes enacted to implement WIA.

D. Description of the Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

All WIA customers, as well as the state's Regional Workforce Boards, will be positively affected by the adoption of the above requested waiver. Increased numbers of individuals that are in need of service will be provided service. Regional Workforce Boards, identifying unmet needs or experiencing the sudden need for increased services in their areas, will have more timely access to additional resources. The rate of investment of WIA funds will increase.

E. Opportunity for Public Comment and the Process for Monitoring Implementation of the Waiver

The State's request to enable local Regional Workforce Boards to expand employed worker training (EWT) activities by allowing up to 20 percent of local adult and dislocated worker funds to be expended on EWT activities, was developed by Workforce Florida, Inc., the state's workforce investment board. Based on its review of the goals established in the State's strategic plan, the Board identified the need to revise policy governing the investment of local allocation funds in order to achieve the maximum investment of WIA funds. In 2002, the Board approved start-up funds to each RWB to allow local EWT programs to be initiated. Since then almost every one of Florida's regional workforce boards have an EWT program. The EWT program is still extensively discussed at RWB business liaisons meetings and through guidance papers.

The implementation of this policy will be monitored by the Workforce Florida, Inc. and the Agency for Workforce Innovation as they continue to monitor all WIA performance and the progress towards goals and objectives expressed in the State Plan. Information contained in the state's management information system and financial management tracking system will be reviewed and reported to the local areas and Workforce Florida on a regular basis. Review of the implementation and application of the policy will regularly be placed on the agenda of public meetings of State Board and regular scheduled meetings of the Board members and staff, with partner agencies, representatives of Regional Workforce Boards, one-stop operators and other partners.