



JUN 30 2018

The Honorable William Walker
Governor of Alaska
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Walker:

Thank you for your waiver request of certain statutory and regulatory provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the accompanying plan to improve the statewide workforce development system, submitted as part of your WIOA State Plan modification on April 2, 2018 (copy enclosed). This letter provides the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) official response to the State's request and memorializes that Alaska will meet the outcomes and implement the measures identified in its plan to ensure accountability agreed to by Alaska and ETA. This action is taken under the Secretary's authority to waive certain requirements of WIOA Title I, Subtitles A, B, and E, and Sections 8 – 10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act in WIOA Section 189(i).

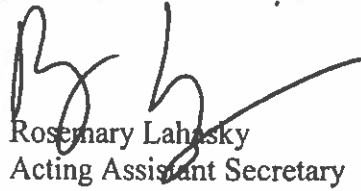
Requested Waiver: Application of WIOA Section 107(b) to allow the State Board to carry out the roles of a Local Board.

The State's request for a waiver to allow the State Board to carry out the roles of a Local Board is approved. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Alaska to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Therefore, ETA approves this waiver for Program Years 2018 and 2019 (July 1, 2018 through June 30, 2020). Under this waiver, the Governor may designate the State Board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the Local Boards in the State. As a condition of this approval, the State must continue to include local input into its activities and allocate funding to the local areas for which the State Board is carrying out Local Board functions.

ETA is available for further discussion and to provide technical assistance to the State to support achieving its goals. Also, the Department has proposed additional flexibility in its Fiscal Year 2019 Budget to give governors more flexibility to meet the workforce needs of their states.

If you have questions or wish to explore additional flexibility, feel free to contact my office at (202) 693-2772.

Sincerely,



Rosemary Lahasky
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc:

Heidi Drygas, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Labor and Workforce Development
John Bailey, Acting San Francisco Regional Administrator, Employment and Training Administration
Carol Padovan, Federal Project Officer, Employment and Training Administration

Alaska

Waiver Request to Allow the State Board to Carry Out the Roles of a Local Board

1. Identifies the statutory or regulatory requirements for which a waiver is requested and the goals that the State or local area, as appropriate, intends to achieve as a result of the waiver and how those goals relate to the Unified or Combined State Plan; Statutory requirements 20 CFR 661.300(f).
2. Goals Streamline Alaska's governance and reporting structure; Streamline the process and timeliness of awarding grants by the elimination of multiple layers of administrative entities; Establish consistent eligibility standards across the state; and Improve accountability of workforce programs.

One of the main goals of this Combined Plan is to improve the efficiency and performance of Alaska's workforce system. Allowing the Alaska Workforce Investment Board (AWIB) to also carry out the roles of a local board for the state will streamline the governance structure at the state level by having one board overseeing the workforce investments across the state. The AWIB includes a diverse geographic representation, and members bring their local/regional perspectives to the table as they oversee workforce investments and advise the governor on workforce issues for the state. In response to a condition placed on the existing waiver arrived by ETA under WIOA Sec. 189(i)(3)(A)(i), the Governor has appointed to chief local elected officials from Alaskan communities to the AWIB to ensure a local perspective in board activities.

In 2003, ETA allowed the state to do away with the two previous local areas (Anchorage/Mat-Su and Balance of State). By allowing AWIB to act as the local board, the state will be able to continue to report as a single area (Local Area Reporting Number 2025).

Describes the actions that the State or local area as appropriate, has undertaken to remove State or local statutory or regulatory barriers;

The governor has designated Alaska as a statewide area and planning region for WIOA purposes. There are no state or local barriers to implementation of this waiver

3. Describes the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted;
The waiver will continue to streamline Alaska's governance structure and make it responsive to the uniqueness of the state's economy and geography, especially given current fiscal challenges.

The waiver will also streamline the process for awarding grants by eliminating multiple layers of administrative entities and processes. The AWIB, functioning as both the local and the state board, and housed under the Commissioner of Labor, will work closely with DOLWD in determining grant criteria, reviewing grant applications, and evaluating sub-recipients.

The waiver will allow DOLWD to continue implementing consistent standards across the state, instead of having multiple boards with a variety of eligibility and performance standards in different parts of the state.

The waiver will result in improved accountability of workforce investment programs, as one board will oversee all workforce programs for consistency in the evaluation and oversight process. DOLWD will be able to continue to report as a single area

4. Describes how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as: (A) supporting employer engagement; (B) connecting education and training strategies; (C) supporting work-based learning; (D) improving job and career results, and (E) other guidance issued by the Department. Most AWIB members are representatives of business and the private sector. Board members come from a variety of industries throughout the state and are committed to bringing the voice of employers to the table and reaching out to others to engage them in the workforce system. In addition, in response to feedback from ETA, two chief local elected officials have been appointed to the board. The AWIB will continue to focus not only on employer engagement but on connecting education and training strategies through building career pathways, supporting work-based learning, and improving career results for all job seekers and employers alike.
5. Describes the individuals affected by the waiver including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations or individuals with multiple barriers to employment; and

All WIOA-eligible participants, including disadvantaged populations and those with multiple barriers to employment, as well as employers, are positively impacted by this waiver. Participants and employers need not look to a different local area in the hopes of finding more resources, because the state functions and reports as a single statewide designation.

- Describes the processes used to: (A) Monitor the progress in implementing the waiver; (B) Provide notice to any local board affected by the waiver; (C) Provide any local board affected by the waiver an opportunity to comment on the request; (D) Ensure meaningful public comment, including comment by business and organized labor, on the waiver. (E) Collect and report information about waiver outcomes in the State's WIOA Annual Report. DOLWD solicited input on this waiver from local officials and employers across the state as a part of the plan development process. There were no local officials who requested designation as a local area, and DOLWD received no comments on the draft local area designation and waiver process.

The AWIB will continue to solicit feedback from local officials and employers in 2 ways: 1) outreach by individual AWIB members to their local officials; and 2) opportunities for input at each meeting, which are held at various locations around the state. The AWIB will be focusing on statewide strategies and their linkage to the state's regional economic and workforce development needs.

Policy and Procedure

The outline of the policy and procedure to request designation as a local area is: Policies. The chief elected official and local governing board from any unit of general local government or combination of units may submit a request for designation as a

workforce development area. The AWIB, in consultation with DOLWD staff, will review the request and recommend approval or denial to the governor.

Designation as a new local area will be based on the extent to which the proposed area demonstrates that it:

Is consistent with local labor market areas; and Has a common economic development area; and Has the federal and non-federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under the Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker formula programs under WIOA Title I-B; and Has the fiscal, administrative, and reporting capacity and systems in place to report on participant outcomes as required by WIOA and the Alaska WIOA Combined Plan. The governor may approve or deny the request for designation. In either case, DOLWD will notify the applicant in writing. If the request is denied, the written notification will include the reasons for the denial.

If the request for local area designation is denied, the applicant may appeal. Appeals must be made to the AWIB and must address each issue cited in the denial notification.

If a decision on the appeal is not made within 60 days or if the appeal to the AWIB does not result in designation of the local area, the applicant may request a review by the Secretary of Labor in accordance with 20 CFR Section 683.640 of the WIOA statute.

Procedures

A request for local area designation must be made on a form supplied by DOLWD. A completed and signed request must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. on May 1 of the year preceding the Program Year for which the request is being made.

Any local area wishing to appeal the decision by the governor must be made in accordance with the appeal procedures described in Policies Section above.

Incomplete or unsigned requests will be returned; review of the application will be delayed.

The governor will monitor the progress of this waiver by reviewing information provided by DOLWD and the AWIB on costs, processes for awarding grants, eligibility standards, and performance on accountability measures. This information will also be used to report about the waiver outcomes in the state's annual WIOA reports.