

State of Florida
Workforce Investment Act
Waiver Request:
PROHIBITION ON USE OF YOUTH WIA DOLLARS
TO FUND INDIVIDUAL TRAINING ACCOUNTS FOR OLDER YOUTH

Workforce Florida, Inc., (State Board) and the Agency for Workforce Innovation (administrative entity for the Workforce Investment Act, WIA) is requesting continuation of a waiver from Title 20 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Section 664.510, under the provisions established in Section 189(i)(4)(B) of WIA. Section 664 prohibits the use of Individual Training Accounts (ITA's) for Youth participation, except in the case where they are determined eligible and are co-enrolled either as an Adult or Dislocated Worker.

The intent of this request is to allow Regional Workforce Boards (RWBs) to appropriately use ITAs for Youth participants, based on a valid needs assessment of interests, skills and aptitudes. Under the current regulation, older youth (ages 18 and over) may at the same time, be enrolled as adults and use ITAs as "adults". Also, there is no specified age for the Dislocated Worker program, which could mean that youth under the age of 18, could also meet the Dislocated Worker eligibility requirements, be co-enrolled and receive ITAs. Under the current regulations, expenditures for ITAs are charged to the Adult or Dislocated Worker funding streams, rather than to the Youth funding stream. This co-enrollment requirement is a duplicative and unnecessary process which does not allow RWBs to charge the cost of the ITA back to the Youth account, but draws down on 'limited' adult funds. The current regulation also does not allow some of those expenditures to be appropriately counted towards the 30 percent out-of-school expenditure requirement.

This waiver would allow older out-of-school youth to select approved ITA programs from Florida's Eligible Training Provider list, while retaining their youth classification. Training costs can be charged as out-of-school Youth expenditures, thereby, eliminating the need to track such expenditures across different funding streams as it is done presently.

Given that the Department of Labor has already approved similar waivers for the states of California, Texas, Georgia, Kentucky, etc., the State is requesting that its waiver request be continued.

A. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived

Title 20 CFR 664.510, Section 189(i)(4)(B) of WIA which prohibits the use of ITAs for youth unless they are found eligible for and co-enrolled in either the adult or dislocated worker program.

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

A waiver will maximize the service delivery capacity of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Youth programs within the One-Stop Career Center delivery system by allowing youth, who are employment-focused rather than academically inclined, to have the same

access as Adults and Dislocated Workers to the advantages of ITAs. Presently, the co-enrollment of youth in the adult programs is burdensome and contributes to unnecessary and duplicative paperwork, not to mention the additional tracking and reporting burden on activities, expenditures and outcomes for the RWBs.

By providing a waiver to allow the use of ITAs for youth (without the need for co-enrollment), in which assessment has determined that an ITA is the appropriate and best strategy for the youth, would allow the youth to be treated equally with an adult who has similar training needs. Being allowed to charge the ITA cost to the Youth program, instead of the Adult or Dislocated Worker program, would reduce the dependence on 'limited' adult funds and would contribute to the ability of RWBs to meet their 30 percent out-of-school expenditure requirements.

The Goals and Programmatic Outcomes to be achieved by the waiver are:

Goal I: Afford older youth the same opportunity as adults to make informed decisions about their future employment and career goals through an appropriate training strategy if their assessment concludes that employment is their logical choice.

Outcome I: A large percentage of older and out-of-school youth either want to train for an occupation or obtain employment due to financial needs. With a waiver, older youth can pursue their occupational goals without the additional barrier of having to meet adult or dislocated worker eligibility requirements.

Goal II: Eliminate duplicative paperwork for enrolling older youth into the adult programs. Without the waiver, each of Florida's 24 Regional Workforce Boards and their respective One-Stop system operators must verify that older youth are co-enrolled as adults in order to access ITAs. Co-enrollment services have little purpose other than to provide documentation and justification for accessing ITAs for youth.

Outcome II: Granting the waiver will decrease state and local paperwork, reduce the need for extra staff needed to track and report co-enrollments, and free up youth case staff to continue working with the older youth instead of transferring the case to an Adult case manager. Training providers would also be benefited because they would no longer have to follow two separate processes to provide services to Adult/Dislocated Worker and Older Worker/Youth.

Goal III: Allow RWBs to improve their expenditures on out-of-school youth and meet the federal mandate to expend 30 percent of youth funds for this population.

Outcome III: With the ITA costs being directly charged to the Youth program instead of Adult or Dislocated Worker program; youth expenditure levels will improve and possibly contribute to RWBs meeting their 30 percent of out-of-school expenditure requirements. It would ensure that local boards have flexibility to deliver services based on individual needs of participants as intended under WIA.

C. State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers

There is no state or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing the proposed waiver.

D. Description of Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

This waiver will directly impact older WIA eligible youth allowing them to benefit from an ITA. These customers would now directly receive the types of services afforded adult and dislocated workers that most closely and quickly meet their needs without unnecessary paperwork or tracking.

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

This request was developed as a result of concerns expressed by local areas. As with all major workforce policies and procedures, the State has solicited dialogue and input from Regional Workforce Boards and staff concerning local impact of this request. Their responses were overwhelming in support of this request.

Workforce Florida Inc., and the Agency for Workforce Innovation, as the State administrator and overseer of WIA funds, will monitor the use of funds by the Regional Workforce Boards. The State's current monitoring policy and procedures will be modified to ensure compliance with the intent of this waiver.