U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210

July 27, 2026

The Honorable Mike DeWine
Governor of Ohio
Riffe Center, 30th Floor
77 South High Street
Columbus, OH 43215

Dear Governor DeWine:

Thank you for your waiver request submission to the U.S. Department of Labor (Department) regarding certain statutory and regulatory provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the accompanying plan to improve the statewide workforce development system (enclosed). The waiver requests were received on April 29, 2026, as part of your recent WIOA State Plan modification submission. This letter provides the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) official response to your request and memorializes that Ohio will meet the outcomes and implement the measures identified in its plan to ensure accountability agreed to by Ohio and ETA. This action is taken under the Secretary of Labor'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).

<u>Requested Waiver</u>: Waiver of WIOA Section 129(a)(4) and 20 CFR 681.410 which require that local workforce development areas expend at least 75 percent of local area youth funds to provide services to out-of-school youth (OSY) and calculation of the local area expenditure for each local area.

<u>ETA Response</u>: ETA approves for Program Years (PYs) 2026 and 2027, which includes the entire time period for which states are authorized to spend each of those fund allotments, the State's request to waive the requirement that local areas expend 75 percent of local youth formula funds on OSY. The State may use both WIOA and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) funds to count towards the 75 percent expenditure requirement. ETA reviewed Ohio's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of the State to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. As a result of this waiver, ETA expects that the number of in-school youth (ISY) served will increase, and performance accountability outcomes for overall WIOA Youth (including both ISY and OSY) will remain steady or increase for the majority of the WIOA Youth performance indicators.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of 20 CFR 681.550 to allow WIOA individual training accounts (ITAs) for ISY.

ETA Response: ETA approves, for PYs 2026 and 2027, the State's request to waive the requirement limiting ITAs to only OSY, ages 16–24. In addition to these OSY, the State may use ITAs for ISY, ages 16–21. ETA reviewed Ohio's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of the State to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of WIOA Section 129(c)(4) and 20 CFR 681.590(b), to allow local workforce development areas to count both WIOA local youth formula funds and TANF funds toward the minimum 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience.

ETA Response: ETA approves for PYs 2026 and 2027, which includes the entire time period for which locals are authorized to spend each of those fund allotments, the State's request to allow local areas in the State to count both WIOA Youth and TANF expenditures toward the 20 percent expenditure requirement for paid or unpaid work experience for youth co-enrolled in those programs. ETA reviewed Ohio's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of the State to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. In addition to WIOA local youth program funds spent on paid and unpaid work experiences, including wages and staff costs for development and management of work experiences, local areas in Ohio may include TANF work experience expenditures in the calculation of the 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of the requirement that local youth programs provide each of the 14 youth programs elements required under WIOA Section 129(c)(2).

ETA Response: ETA approves, for PYs 2026 and 2027, the State's request to waive the requirement that local youth programs make available each of the 14 youth program elements listed in WIOA Section 129(c)(2) and 20 CFR 681.460. Under this approval, local areas are not required to make available all 14 program elements. ETA reviewed Ohio's request and plan and determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the State's ability to implement its plan to improve youth workforce development service delivery.

Ohio also requested to use work-flex, to which ETA is responding under separate cover.

The State is reminded that WIOA Title I waivers may not be used for any discriminatory purposes. All activities and waiver plan provisions must comply with Section 188 of WIOA, the implementing regulations at 29 CFR Part 38, and all applicable federal nondiscrimination laws.

The State must report its waiver outcomes and implementation of the approved waivers in the WIOA Annual Report. ETA will use this information to assess continued waiver approval and to identify promising practices that may be adopted more widely. ETA is available to provide technical assistance to you in support of your goals. If you have questions, feel free to contact my office at (202) 693-2772.

Sincerely,

Marek Laco
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosures

cc: Matt Damschroder, Director, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services
Pam Gerassimides, ETA Regional Administrator
Julie Baker, ETA Federal Project Officer