



August 17, 2020

The Honorable JB Pritzker
Governor of Illinois
207 Statehouse
Springfield, IL 62706

Dear Governor Pritzker:

Thank you for your waiver requests 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 (copy enclosed). The waiver requests were received on May 18, 2020. This letter provides the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) official response to your requests and memorializes that Illinois will meet the outcomes and implement the measures identified in its plan to ensure accountability agreed to by Illinois 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: The State is requesting a waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) in order to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent to assist in its response to the impact of the pandemic.

ETA Response: ETA approves the State's waiver request through June 30, 2022, for the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Existing statutory authority permits the State and its local workforce areas to increase the reimbursement rate for OJT contracts up to 75 percent. The State may also reimburse up to 90 percent for OJT for businesses with 50 or fewer employees. ETA expects the utilization of OJT to increase in the State as a result of this waiver.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(5) and 20 CFR 680.195 to allow up to 20 percent of WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker local formula funds to be used for the provision of transitional jobs.

ETA Response: ETA approves the State's waiver request through June 30, 2022, for the WIOA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funding streams. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. To accurately report participants in receipt of transitional jobs, Illinois must record code value "6" in

Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) element 1205 “Work Experience,” and code value “1” in PIRL element 1211.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of Training and Employment Guidance Letter (TEGL) No. 12-19, Section 3, to permit the State to request subsequent funding increments for National Dislocated Workers Grants (DWG) grants when reaching 50 percent expenditure, rather than 70 percent, of the total DWG funds awarded to date.

ETA Response: This waiver is not needed; TEGL No. 12-19 allows flexibility as to when states can request funding increments. ETA will provide technical assistance regarding DWG drawdown strategies to encourage consistency of operations.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of WIOA Section 129(c)(4) and 20 CFR 681.590(a), which require local boards to spend a minimum of 20 percent of local area funds for the Title I Youth program to provide in-school and out-of-school youth with work experience activities described under WIOA Section 129(c)(2)(C).

ETA Response: ETA does not approve this waiver. ETA reviews states’ compliance with this requirement through quarterly financial reports, and states have two years to meet the statutory requirement for work experience expenditures. Illinois was on track to meet the 20 percent work experience expenditure requirement for both Program Years 2018 and 2019 based on reviews of financial reports submitted through Mar 31, 2020. As noted in Frequently Asked Questions published at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/coronavirus>, ETA will take into account the months that the COVID-19 pandemic impacted the ability of local areas to place youth in work experiences. ETA will also provide technical assistance on delivering and accounting for work experience.

Requested Waiver: Waiver to allow flexibility in the use of funds reserved by the Governor to provide statewide rapid response activities under WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A) to also provide statewide employment and training activities under WIOA Sections 134(a)(2)(B) and 134(a)(3), including disaster-relief employment to affected areas.

ETA Response: ETA approves, through June 30, 2022, the State’s request to use statewide funds for disaster-relief employment, as described in WIOA Section 170(d) and 20 CFR 687.100(b). ETA reviewed the State’s waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of Illinois to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Therefore, ETA approves this waiver under the following conditions:

- The Governor, or any federal agency, declares an emergency in the local area (or areas) where the State wishes to use statewide funds for the purpose of public service employment;
- WIOA-funded public service employment opportunities are short-term in nature;
- WIOA-funded public service employment opportunities increase the likelihood of participants entering unsubsidized employment; and
- The State collects and tracks use of funds under this waiver and complies with all WIOA-required performance and fiscal reporting.

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. The Department proposed additional flexibility in its budgets for Fiscal Years 2018 through 2021 to give governors more decision-making authority to meet the workforce needs of their states. If you have questions, feel free to contact my office at (202) 693-2772.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "John Pallasch". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a long, sweeping underline.

John Pallasch
Assistant Secretary for Employment and Training

Enclosure

cc: Erin Guthrie, Director, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director, Office of Employment and Training
Rose Zibert, Acting Chicago Regional Administrator, ETA
Arlene Charbonneau, Federal Project Officer, ETA



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
JB Pritzker, Governor

May 18, 2020

WIOA Waiver Coordinator
200 Constitution Ave, NW S-4203
Washington, DC 20001

ATTN: WIOA Waiver Coordinator

Under the Secretary of Labor's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of the WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Office of Employment and Training is requesting that the Secretary grant the following waiver requests including those to assist the state with the recovery efforts related to COVID-19 through the end of the 2020-2023 Unified State Plan:

- Waiver for Increase in OJT Reimbursement;
- Waiver for Increase in Transitional Jobs Threshold;
- Waiver for Reduction in DWG Incremental Funding Threshold;
- Waiver for Relief of Youth Work Experience Expenditure Requirement; and
- Waiver for WIOA RR Funding for Disaster Relief Employment.

The attached waiver plans provide further details on these requests in keeping with DOL guidelines in TEGL 08-18. If the waivers are granted, Illinois' WIOA Combined State Plan will be revised to incorporate the change.

No public comments were received.

We thank you for considering these requests. If you have any questions, please contact Lisa Jones at Lisa.D.Jones@illinois.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julio Rodriguez".

Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director
Office of Employment and Training

Attachment

cc: Erin Guthrie, Director Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
Christine Quinn, USDOL ETA Region V Administrator

Increase in OJT Reimbursement Request

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waiver Request Tool

Under the Secretary of Labor's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A State may request a waiver in its overall Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification. Or, if submitting separate from the State Plan submission, States may use this document as a tool to assist in developing and requesting a waiver. States may use their own format or form for a request, as long as elements required by WIOA and the regulations noted above are addressed. After reviewing a State's initial request, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) may ask the State for additional information if necessary, to complete its review.

To submit a waiver request, e-mail this completed form or State-developed document along with a cover letter to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov and the appropriate ETA regional office. ETA will also accept hard copy submissions.

Date: May 5, 2020

State: Illinois

Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Provide narrative for the following elements:

The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive

The state must clearly cite the statute and/or regulation(s) in its request and ensure that the citations refer to the specific elements the state wishes to waive.

Illinois currently has the authority under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)() to provide reimbursements to employers of on-the-job training programs up to 75 percent, and is seeking expansion of the authority to the current allowable employer reimbursement for the wage rate of an On-the-Job Training (OJT) participant for the extraordinary costs of providing training and additional supervision related to the OJT as described in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and further outlined at 20 CFR 680.720 (b).

Illinois is proposing a sliding reimbursement scale to the employer based on its size and capability. Under this waiver, employers with fifty (50) or less employees would be reimbursed up to ninety percent (90%), those with between 51 and 250 employees up to seventy-five (75%) reimbursement and all other employers up to the statutory limit of 50%. Further, Illinois will develop policy as documentation of the factors used when

Increase in OJT Reimbursement Request

deciding to increase the wage reimbursement level above 50 percent (50%) as required under WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i)(I) and 680.730.

This waiver is being requested to apply for all OJT contracts supported by WIOA formula funds, including Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth, as appropriate. Many small businesses are facing unprecedented demands to keep their doors open and avoid layoffs. Extra incentives such as the increased wage reimbursement is a tool to support a strengthened recovery strategy. Illinois needs to have the flexibility to provide an increased incentive to establish new on-the-job training opportunities during a time of uncertainty and recovery.

Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers

The state must provide a discussion of the steps it has taken to remove any potential obstacles in the waiver request as appropriate. Quite often, state or local policies do not present a conflict for the request, and a simple statement indicating that there are no state or local barriers is sufficient.

There are no State or Local barriers to implementing the provisions requested within this proposed waiver.

State strategic goal(s)

The state must precisely articulate the goals it seeks to achieve by requesting a waiver. The state must also discuss how these goals relate to its Unified or Combined State Plan.

This waiver is consistent with a national focus to develop the workforce system that is more responsive to the needs of business and individual customers and with Illinois' strategic direction, goals and priorities as outlined within its Unified State Plan, for which it is awaiting approval, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board's Strategic Plan, and the preliminary priorities of a new IWIB standing committee of business engagement. OJTs are a proven model for providing individual customers with information, instruction and training needed to meet the unique needs of businesses that has prepared them to be retained upon successful completion. It would allow for more flexibility for smaller businesses experiencing with limited resources. This is especially true during times of recovery following a disaster.

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The state must provide an estimate of how the waiver will improve outcomes or provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers or employers. States have the discretion to determine how to measure a waiver's success and the specific data sources it intends to use to evaluate its impact.

Increase in OJT Reimbursement Request

The state estimates that the waiver will improve outcomes and provide other tangible benefits in the following ways:

- Maximize the flexibility needed to impact local economic vitality and direct resource's where demand for services is greatest by assisting local areas in marketing the OJT as a vehicle to engage employers, particularly in targeted sectors, to hire and provide training to new workers.
- This flexibility will build the capacity and future viability of both the workforce and the industries themselves. Assist with the transformation of the current workforce system to a demand driven, sector-based and regionally driven talent development pipeline.
- Increase training for unemployed workers and hard-to-serve youth and adults.
- Equip individuals with relevant job training and transferable skills in high-skill, high-wage, high-demand occupation and industries.
- Increase business usage of the local workforce system by providing added incentives to hire and train new workers.
- Increase in the number of employers with fifty (50) or less employees taking advantage of OJT.

Alignment with Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- *Supporting employer engagement;*
- *Connecting education and training strategies;*
- *Supporting work-based learning;*
- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

This waiver aligns with not only the Department of Labor's priorities, but also with those of the State of Illinois. Within the Illinois WIOA Unified State Plan are examples of initiatives demonstrating the importance of work-based learning and how critical it is to meet the needs of businesses. Increasing the reimbursement rate up to 90% will encourage business participation and support the recovery as we come out of COVID-19.

Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver

States must describe the potential impact of a waiver on various system stakeholders, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations, persons with barriers to employment, or businesses.

Increase in OJT Reimbursement Request

The waiver would benefit employer and individual customers. It would be especially beneficial to the small businesses including new start-ups as a cost-effective incentive to utilizing the proven method of utilizing OJTs to hire and training new workers. It will allow Illinois business to quickly adapt to changing landscape by improving capacity and remain competitive that are designed to meet their specific goals. For individuals, such as dislocated workers transitioning to new occupations or industries, long-term unemployed attempting to return to the workforce and be introduced to new skills or entry-level workers such as youth will seeking to start careers in a weak economic climate. This waiver would expand the potential training options for WIOA-eligible job seekers and workers.

State plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

States must describe how they intend to oversee effective waiver implementation and any unique protocols that may be used in their waiver requests.

The state will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

State staff who administer programming will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Continuous Improvement Committee. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.

Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local workforce development boards

WIOA does not prescribe a specific amount of time for states to post a potential waiver for comment, but it does require the state to demonstrate a reasonable opportunity for public review and comment by all stakeholders, including businesses and organized labor. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received. The state must also provide affected local boards with notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver.

In accordance with the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Illinois submitted its Unified State Plan, which is subject to the requirements outlined in the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.130(d) for public review and comment. Accordingly, Illinois will post this waiver request on our website for comment and review by required parties and the public.

Increase in OJT Reimbursement Request

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners can comment during the public period, this includes participation in information webinars. Additionally, LWIB members/staff, WIOA partners, as well as other interested stakeholders take part in policy development.

Increase in Transitional Jobs Expenditure Threshold

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waiver Request Tool

Under the Secretary of Labor’s waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A State may request a waiver in its overall Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification. Or, if submitting separate from the State Plan submission, States may use this document as a tool to assist in developing and requesting a waiver. States may use their own format or form for a request, as long as elements required by WIOA and the regulations noted above are addressed. After reviewing a State’s initial request, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) may ask the State for additional information if necessary, to complete its review.

To submit a waiver request, e-mail this completed form or State-developed document along with a cover letter to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov and the appropriate ETA regional office. ETA will also accept hard copy submissions.

Date: May 5, 2020

State: Illinois

Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Provide narrative for the following elements:

The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive

The state must clearly cite the statute and/or regulation(s) in its request and ensure that the citations refer to the specific elements the state wishes to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s) so that local areas may use up to 20 percent of WIOA Title 1 Adult and Dislocated Worker formula funds for the provision of transitional jobs:

WIOA 134 (d)(5) which allows Local Boards to reserve up to 10% funds allocated to the local area involved, under section 133 (b), to provide transitional jobs.

20 CFR § 680.195 states “The local area may use up to 10 percent of their combined total of adult and dislocated worker allocations for transitional jobs as described in § 680.190. Transitional jobs must be combined with comprehensive career services (see § 680.150) and supportive services (see § 680.900).”

Increase in Transitional Jobs Expenditure Threshold

Background

Across the nation governors are issuing Executive Orders to combat the COVID-19 crisis. Illinois is no exception and has taken an aggressive approach to curbing the progression of the virus across the state to lessen health impacts and deaths across the state. However, the unfortunate repercussion caused business closures and employment loss statewide. Illinois must prioritize services to individuals most impacted by the crisis, including low wage and traditionally lower skilled individuals who have been let go or furloughed from their current employers.

Every tool to provide services must be available and additionally, the state will need maximum flexibility to provide those services. Transitional Jobs are an important employment strategy best used when there is higher than normal unemployment or during an economic shock, such as COVID-19, especially for hardest-hit chronically unemployed individuals. Transitional Jobs can provide employment, earned income, and connections to future unsubsidized employment to help stabilize individuals and families. Increasing the allowable amount local areas can allocate toward transitional jobs will support these efforts and offer maximum local flexibility to meet locally determined demand for using transitional jobs as an employment strategy. Transitional Jobs have proven to be successful in Illinois with WIOA required partners to serve TANF and SNAP participants under previous initiatives including Illinois *EPIC Program* and the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The *EPIC Program* was part of a larger national study to develop and test methods for employment & training programs and services that will increase the number of SNAP work registrants who obtain unsubsidized employment, increase the earned income of work registrants, and reduce the reliance of work registrants on public assistance. This waiver would provide additional flexibility to leverage funding locally for the most vulnerable individuals, including recently released incarcerated individuals. Furthermore, Illinois is concerned that there may be severe undercounting and transitional jobs could an important strategy in the reemployment toolbox.

Using a transitional job strategy will also help employers as they recover from the negative economic impact experienced because of the virus in two important ways. First, Transitional Jobs programs have shown to stimulate the local economy as participants tend to spend their earned income in the communities in which they live. Second, these programs have shown that they provide employers with candidates who are work ready, with in-demand skillsets, and help reduce turnover costs.

Approval of this waiver would contribute to the economic recovery and provide an essential avenue for participants that are traditionally long-term unemployed or underemployed with the support they need to secure employment.

Increase in Transitional Jobs Expenditure Threshold

Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers

The state must provide a discussion of the steps it has taken to remove any potential obstacles in the waiver request as appropriate. Quite often, state or local policies do not present a conflict for the request, and a simple statement indicating that there are no state or local barriers is sufficient.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law. In the past in Illinois, Transitional Jobs has not been fully utilized under WIOA; however, using lessons from sister agencies coupled with robust technical assistance, Illinois feels this is an employment strategy to offer local areas during this crisis. Illinois will support local areas' assessments of demand for transitional jobs. Illinois will provide robust technical assistance and professional development to local areas through existing infrastructure. For instance, Illinois already has a WIOA Wednesday webinar series and several slots could be dedicated to best practices for implementing a transitional jobs program, including performance measurement. This is a ready-made vehicle for offering rapid and high-quality technical assistance.

State strategic goal(s)

The state must precisely articulate the goals it seeks to achieve by requesting a waiver. The state must also discuss how these goals relate to its Unified or Combined State Plan.

In January 2019, two days after his inauguration, Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order #3 (EO 3) and directed the State to prioritize revitalizing economic growth and creating economic opportunity in communities across the state using a data-informed, demand-driven framework for improving the quality of the State's workforce. Building upon that direction, the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) guided the development of the WIOA Unified State Plan.

One of the tenants of the Governor's Executive Order is serving underrepresented persons in disenfranchised communities. Often these individuals face multiple challenges to self-sustaining employment. Ramping up transitional job programs will support the Governor's goals and will assist Illinois in achieving the following goals related to the Unified State Plan:

1. Prepare Illinois' workers for a career, not just their next job: Regardless of background, life circumstances, or education level, Illinois workers can be prepared for high-demand careers by developing core academic, technical, and essential employability skills throughout their lifetimes.
2. Connect job seekers with employers: Assist Illinois businesses to find the productive workers they need, through more efficient training and better services for job seekers and employers.

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

Increase in Transitional Jobs Expenditure Threshold

The state must provide an estimate of how the waiver will improve outcomes or provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers or employers. States have the discretion to determine how to measure a waiver's success and the specific data sources it intends to use to evaluate its impact.

The state estimates that the waiver will improve outcomes and provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers and employers in the following ways:

1. Increase in number of employers that use transitional jobs as a tool to find skilled workers.
2. Increase in number of participants using transitional jobs program as tool to gain employment and address barriers to employment.
3. Increase in the number of local workforce innovation boards using transitional jobs as a strategy to serve Adults with barriers to employment.
4. Sustained expenses for transitional jobs.

Alignment with Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- *Supporting employer engagement;*
- *Connecting education and training strategies;*
- *Supporting work-based learning;*
- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

This waiver aligns with not only the Department of Labor's priorities, but also with those of the State of Illinois. Within the Unified State Plan are examples of initiatives proving the importance of addressing employment barriers of our hardest to serve populations, while addressing the need for a pipeline of skilled workers for businesses. Specifically, increasing the funding toward transitional jobs supports DOL's priority for work-based learning and employer engagement strategies. Transitional jobs are a career service/work-based learning opportunity that can increase business usage of the workforce system by providing incentives to hire and train new workers. In addition, Illinois' use of transitional jobs will support improved job and career results by providing individuals with work experience as well as the opportunity to develop essential workplace skills within the context of an employee-employer relationship.

Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver

States must describe the potential impact of a waiver on various system stakeholders, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations, persons with barriers to employment, or businesses.

The waiver will positively impact both employers and jobseekers. For employers this waiver will provide an incentive to hire and train new workers, who have recently proven

Increase in Transitional Jobs Expenditure Threshold

their hard and soft skills through the transitional job. Jobseekers who experience chronic unemployment will have greater access to employment opportunities and have the supports needed to stay employed after successfully completing a transitional job

State plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

States must describe how they intend to oversee effective waiver implementation and any unique protocols that may be used in their waiver requests.

The State will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

1. State staff who administer WIOA programming will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee.
2. Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.
3. Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local workforce development boards

WIOA does not prescribe a specific amount of time for states to post a potential waiver for comment, but it does require the state to demonstrate a reasonable opportunity for public review and comment by all stakeholders, including businesses and organized labor. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received. The state must also provide affected local boards with notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver.

In accordance with the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Illinois submitted its Unified State Plan, which is subject to the requirements outlined in the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.130(d) for public review and comment. Accordingly, Illinois

Increase in Transitional Jobs Expenditure Threshold

will post this waiver request on our website for comment and review by required parties and the public.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners can comment during the public period, this includes participation in information webinars. Additionally, LWIB members/staff, WIOA partners, as well as other interested stakeholders take part in policy development.

Reduction in DWG Incremental Funding Request Threshold

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waiver Request Tool

Under the Secretary of Labor's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A State may request a waiver in its overall Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification. Or, if submitting separate from the State Plan submission, States may use this document as a tool to assist in developing and requesting a waiver. States may use their own format or form for a request, as long as elements required by WIOA and the regulations noted above are addressed. After reviewing a State's initial request, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) may ask the State for additional information if necessary, to complete its review.

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Date: May 5, 2020

State: Illinois

Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Provide narrative for the following elements:

The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive

The state must clearly cite the statute and/or regulation(s) in its request and ensure that the citations refer to the specific elements the state wishes to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s) so that the State may request subsequent funding increments for National Dislocated Workers Grants (DWG) grants when reaching 50% expenditure, rather than 70%, of the total DWG funds awarded to date:

TEGL 12-19, Section 3; Incremental Funding which requires that DWG Grantees expend 70 percent of the total DWG funds awarded to date before they may submit a modification request for subsequent funding increments.

Background

Reduction in DWG Incremental Funding Request Threshold

The State has operated DWG/NEG projects in disaster situations where the requirement to wait until expenditures reach 70% was harmful to project operations because of funds nearly running out and the uncertainty as to when additional fund would be awarded to the State. This resulted in the uncertainty of Project Operators' ability to continue worksite operations and keeping workers on payroll. Although no workers were laid off when this situation occurred, Project Operators and worksites had to plan for and provide layoff notices to workers while informing every one of the pending additional funding request and the State's belief that the additional project funds would soon be awarded; nonetheless, there was uncertainty and no ability to guarantee additional funding.

Once disaster worksites are operational and fully staffed, grant expenditures grow quickly and grow steadily. The State's need for additional funds can effectively be demonstrated when reaching 50% expenditures rather than waiting until reaching the 70% level to demonstrate need. At the 50% expenditure point in the project, the project and its worksites are well established with expenditures (mostly wages and benefits) increasing steadily and rapidly. Submitting a modification request at 70% expenditures means that expenditures could likely be at the 90% - 95% level by the time an official grant modification is awarded to the State, followed by the additional time it takes to process and execute subgrant modifications making funds available at the local level for Project Operators.

The State requests that Illinois be allowed to submit a DWG grant modification request to DOL when total expenditures reach 50% rather than 70% so that project operations can continue uninterrupted without work stoppages or the threat of work stoppages, and that Project Operators, worksites, and workers can continue with disaster efforts without interruption or delay.

Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers

The state must provide a discussion of the steps it has taken to remove any potential obstacles in the waiver request as appropriate. Quite often, state or local policies do not present a conflict for the request, and a simple statement indicating that there are no state or local barriers is sufficient.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law and TEGL 12-19 operating guidance.

State strategic goal(s)

The state must precisely articulate the goals it seeks to achieve by requesting a waiver. The state must also discuss how these goals relate to its Unified or Combined State Plan.

Reduction in DWG Incremental Funding Request Threshold

Illinois' request will allow the State to progress unimpeded in achieving DWG project goals related to expenditures, participant enrollment, and the delivery of comprehensive project services, removing barriers associated with delayed modification requests. This waiver request is consistent with a national focus to develop a workforce system that is more responsive to the needs of customers and with Illinois' strategic direction, goals and priorities as outlined in the Unified State Plan.

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The state must provide an estimate of how the waiver will improve outcomes or provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers or employers. States have the discretion to determine how to measure a waiver's success and the specific data sources it intends to use to evaluate its impact.

The State will improve outcomes related to DWG project expenditures, participant enrollment, and service delivery. Certainty of project funding resulting from an earlier grant modification request will benefit disaster relief workers, worksites, Project Operators, local communities, and the State.

Alignment with Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- *Supporting employer engagement;*
- *Connecting education and training strategies;*
- *Supporting work-based learning;*
- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

The waiver aligns with the Department of Labor's priorities as well as the State's priorities to maximize positive outcomes for participants that will occur with uninterrupted project services and certainty of service continuation and adequate project funding. Uninterrupted funding will support and improve job and career results and work-based learning opportunities and will support local communities with continuity of services.

Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver

States must describe the potential impact of a waiver on various system stakeholders, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations, persons with barriers to employment, or businesses.

The waiver will positively impact DWG project participants, disaster worksites and employers, local communities, Project Operators, and the State.

Reduction in DWG Incremental Funding Request Threshold

State plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

States must describe how they intend to oversee effective waiver implementation and any unique protocols that may be used in their waiver requests.

The State will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

1. State staff will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee.
2. Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.
3. Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local workforce development boards

WIOA does not prescribe a specific amount of time for states to post a potential waiver for comment, but it does require the state to demonstrate a reasonable opportunity for public review and comment by all stakeholders, including businesses and organized labor. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received. The state must also provide affected local boards with notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver.

Following the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.130(d) related to public review and comment of the Unified State Plan, Illinois posted this request on our website for comment and review by required parties and the public.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners and other interested stakeholders participate in policy development. Additionally, LWIBs receive the opportunity to participate in the public comment period that includes informational webinars.

Relief of Youth Work Experience Expenditure Requirement

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waiver Request Tool

Under the Secretary of Labor’s waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A State may request a waiver in its overall Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification. Or, if submitting separate from the State Plan submission, States may use this document as a tool to assist in developing and requesting a waiver. States may use their own format or form for a request, as long as elements required by WIOA and the regulations noted above are addressed. After reviewing a State’s initial request, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) may ask the State for additional information if necessary, to complete its review.

To submit a waiver request, e-mail this completed form or State-developed document along with a cover letter to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov and the appropriate ETA regional office. ETA will also accept hard copy submissions.

Date: May 5, 2020

State: Illinois

Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Provide narrative for the following elements:

The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive

The state must clearly cite the statute and/or regulation(s) in its request and ensure that the citations refer to the specific elements the state wishes to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver from the following Section(s) so that Local Boards can be relieved of the requirement to expend 20 percent of WIOA Title 1 Youth formula funds for the provision of work experience activities for Program Year (PY) 2019:

WIOA 129 (c)(4) which requires Local Boards to spend a minimum of 20 percent of local area funds for the Title I Youth program to provide in-school youth and out-of-school youth with work experience activities described under 129 (c)(2)(C).

20 CFR § 681.590 (a) states “Local youth programs must expend not less than 20 percent of the funds allocated to them to provide ISY and OSY with paid and unpaid work experiences that fall under the categories listed in § 681.460(a)(3) and further defined in § 681.600.”

Relief of Youth Work Experience Expenditure Requirement

Background

Across the Nation Governors are issuing Executive Orders (EO) to combat the COVID-19 crisis. Illinois is no exception and has taken an aggressive approach to curbing the progression of the virus across the state to lessen health impacts and deaths across the state.

On March 20, 2020 Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order 2020-10 (Stay at Home Order) that among other things ordered Illinoisans to stay at home or at their place of residence except as allowed in the EO. Additionally, the EO directed non-essential business to cease operations encouraging them to continue operations consisting exclusively of employees or contractors performing activities at their own residences (i.e., working from home). The EO originally was slated to expire on April 7, 2020 but has since been extended to April 30, 2020. There is strong indication that the order may be extended again given the degree of the crisis.

Due to the COVID-19 health emergency, many employers have faced tough decisions to lay-off staff or discontinue internships, job shadowing, and/or on-the-job training opportunities. Additionally, the academic component required to be part of the work experience may be interrupted if provide by the worksite employer or provided in an alternative manner that may not be easily accessible due to educational institutions resorting to remote learning during this time.

Approval of this waiver would hold Local Boards harmless from this expenditure requirement for PY 2019 given the interruption of work experience activities for participants during the pandemic.

Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers

The state must provide a discussion of the steps it has taken to remove any potential obstacles in the waiver request as appropriate. Quite often, state or local policies do not present a conflict for the request, and a simple statement indicating that there are no state or local barriers is sufficient.

There are currently no state or local statutory or regulatory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. State of Illinois regulations and policy align with current federal law.

State strategic goal(s)

The state must precisely articulate the goals it seeks to achieve by requesting a waiver. The state must also discuss how these goals relate to its Unified or Combined State Plan.

Illinois' request is being made to provide flexibility in providing services to in-school and out-of-school youth during this uncertain time. The benefits of approval of this waiver include holding Local Boards harmless from facing sanctions that may be imposed due to the disruption of planned work experience expenditures.

Relief of Youth Work Experience Expenditure Requirement

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The state must provide an estimate of how the waiver will improve outcomes or provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers or employers. States have the discretion to determine how to measure a waiver's success and the specific data sources it intends to use to evaluate its impact.

Approval of the waiver request will allow the State to not penalize Local Boards that fail to meet the 20% expenditure requirement for in-school youth and out-of-school youth for PY 2019 due to the disruption of services caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Alignment with Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- *Supporting employer engagement;*
- *Connecting education and training strategies;*
- *Supporting work-based learning;*
- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

The Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration released the *ETA Coronavirus (COVID-19) FAQs* to help state and local workforce leaders, and other stakeholders and partners to assist the public workforce system during this crisis.

One of the questions posed in the FAQ relates to if states or local areas should suspend all youth and adult work experience during this crisis or determine the best course of action depending on the youth/adult and employer situations?

The Department's response was "States and local areas should follow CDC and state and local government guidance in making determinations related to whether youth and adults should still be participating on work experiences, and should consider the environment in which the work is being conducted, and the chance for virus transmission. ETA understands that many activities including work experience may be suspended or impacted."

The State believes providing relief of the 20% expenditure requirement will assist local areas in a time when many employers are required to close or stop non-vital functions such as work experiences.

Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver

States must describe the potential impact of a waiver on various system stakeholders, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations, persons with barriers to employment, or businesses.

The waiver would benefit Local Boards and youth providers. It will allow relief for Local Boards and subsequently youth providers in meeting the 20% work experience expenditure requirement.

Relief of Youth Work Experience Expenditure Requirement

State plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

States must describe how they intend to oversee effective waiver implementation and any unique protocols that may be used in their waiver requests.

The State will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

1. State staff will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee.
2. Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.
3. Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified Plan and the IWIB Strategic Plan, are consistent with established objectives of the WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local workforce development boards

WIOA does not prescribe a specific amount of time for states to post a potential waiver for comment, but it does require the state to demonstrate a reasonable opportunity for public review and comment by all stakeholders, including businesses and organized labor. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received. The state must also provide affected local boards with notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver.

Following the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Illinois submitted its Unified State Plan, which is subject to the requirements outlined in the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.130(d) for public review and comment. Accordingly, Illinois will post this waiver request on our website for comment and review by required parties and the public.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners can comment during the public period, this includes participation in information webinars. Additionally, LWIB members/staff, WIOA partners, as well as other interested stakeholders take part in policy development.

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waiver Request Tool

Under the Secretary of Labor's waiver authority outlined in Section 189(i)(3)(A) of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and 20 CFR and 679.600, the Secretary may waive certain provisions of WIOA Title I Subtitle A, B, and E and provisions found in Sections 8-10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act. WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(B) and 20 CFR 679.620 identify elements that must be included in a waiver request. A State may request a waiver in its overall Unified or Combined State Plan submission or modification. Or, if submitting separate from the State Plan submission, States may use this document as a tool to assist in developing and requesting a waiver. States may use their own format or form for a request, as long as elements required by WIOA and the regulations noted above are addressed. After reviewing a State's initial request, the Employment and Training Administration (ETA) may ask the State for additional information if necessary, to complete its review.

To submit a waiver request, e-mail this completed form or State-developed document along with a cover letter to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov and the appropriate ETA regional office. ETA will also accept hard copy submissions.

Date: May 5, 2020

State: Illinois

Agency: Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Provide narrative for the following elements:

The statutory and/or regulatory requirements the state would like to waive

The state must clearly cite the statute and/or regulation(s) in its request and ensure that the citations refer to the specific elements the state wishes to waive.

The State of Illinois is seeking a waiver allowance of WIOA Section 134(a)(2)(A), (2)(B), and (3) to add flexibility in the use of the funds reserved by the Governor.

Specifically, the State of Illinois is requesting from Employment and Training Administration (ETA) a waiver of to allow flexibility in the use of the funds reserved by the Governor for use to provide statewide rapid response activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(A)), and for use to provide statewide employment and training activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(B) and (3)) in order to provide comprehensive Disaster Recovery assistance to affected areas as described in WIOA 170(d) and 20 CFR 687.100(b). The state may continue to apply for applicable grants as they may be made available.

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

Additionally, this waiver requests approval to exclude individuals from the calculation of state and local performance measures found in WIOA §§ 116(b) and (c). Specifically, the exclusion request is for participants who receive only disaster relief employment and no other allowable career and training services through the grant or through co-enrollment in another WIOA core or partner program. This request is consistent with the performance allowance in TEGL 12-19. The state understands that it must include these participants in various reports and the state's annual Participant Individual Record Layout (PIRL) submissions, using the "Special Project ID field. In addition, Illinois will segregate the *Disaster Recovery* projects from other Statewide Rapid Response grants. The services to the participants will be limited to the time that this needed to respond and recover from the disaster. (add the time frame – governor declared emergency and recovery period)

Under this waiver allowance, permitted WIOA statewide fund use includes, but is not limited to:

- Expedient allocation of funds to a local workforce innovation board, or local board, so they may respond quickly to a disaster, emergency, or other qualifying event as described at 20 CFR 687.100(b). Only those events, and cascading events caused by a qualifying event, that have been declared as an emergency or disaster by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), by the chief official of a Federal Agency with jurisdiction over the Federal response to a disaster with potential significant loss of employment, or the Governor of Illinois qualify for the use of WIOA statewide funds.
- To alleviate the effects that a qualifying event causes within affected local area(s), and/or planning regions, WIOA statewide funds will allow comprehensive disaster relief employment and employment and training activities, and the provision of needed humanitarian resources and services, including other services or resources deemed necessary as described at 20 CFR 687.180(b)(1).
- An individual's disaster relief employment is limited to 12 months or 2080 hours for work related to recovery from a single emergency or disaster. OET may extend an individual's disaster relief employment for up to an additional 12 months or 2080 hours if requested and sufficiently justified by the local board.
- Supportive services may be provided to enable individuals to participate in disaster relief employment and employment and training activities, including such costs as transportation, childcare, and personal safety equipment and clothing consistent with local policies.
- Individuals shall be eligible to be offered disaster relief employment and employment and training services if such individual is a dislocated worker; is a long-term unemployed individual as defined by the State; is temporarily or permanently laid off as a consequence of the emergency or disaster; or in the case of an individual who is self-employed, becomes unemployed or significantly

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

underemployed as a result of the emergency or disaster.

Actions the state has undertaken to remove state or local statutory or regulatory barriers

The state must provide a discussion of the steps it has taken to remove any potential obstacles in the waiver request as appropriate. Quite often, state or local policies do not present a conflict for the request, and a simple statement indicating that there are no state or local barriers is sufficient.

The state established the Illinois Emergency Management Agency (IEMA) to act as the lead agency in the event of an emergency and/or disaster when a county is declared a disaster area by the Governor. Within all Illinois local workforce innovation areas, or local areas, there are responsible entities marshalled by local government, or its agents, should a qualifying event occur. The state works in concert with these entities to provide resources and expertise.

Illinois's WIOA Unified State Plan articulates many of the WIOA-related statewide activities it does, or can do, when facing a qualifying event. For example, the Office of Employment and Training is responsible for applying and administering applicable National Dislocated Worker Grants (NDWG), consistent with WIOA Sec. 170 and its corresponding regulatory requirements. These grants are helpful once allocated, but in the time between the event and allocation, aid is urgently needed and there is much work to be done. If months pass before the NDWG allocation occurs, damage can be exacerbated, and work is not completed. The state is mindful of this time gap and strives to apply as soon as the state is eligible for NDWG funding assistance, as appropriate. The efficient use of time right after a qualifying event occurs is a critical variable in how well recovery is measured. This is a serious barrier the state wants to reduce.

The State of Illinois' waiver request to allow flexibility in the use of the funds reserved by the Governor for use to provide statewide rapid response activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(A)), and for use to provide statewide employment and training activities (i.e. WIOA section 134(a)(2)(B) and (3)) in order to provide comprehensive Disaster Recovery assistance to affected areas as described in WIOA 170(d) and 20 CFR 687.100(b) was approved in 2019; however, the approval did not address the State's request regarding the performance requirements for individuals that are only provided with disaster recovery employment.

State strategic goal(s)

The state must precisely articulate the goals it seeks to achieve by requesting a waiver. The state must also discuss how these goals relate to its Unified or Combined State Plan.

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

This waiver will allow the State of Illinois' to efficiently and effectively respond to disasters by aligning the program requirements of a disaster recovery project regardless if they are funded with WIOA Statewide Rapid Response funds or the National Dislocated Worker Grant Program.

The objective of improved outcomes, varied as they may be, is best served when available funding is put to quick and effective use for all parties involved. Illinois' WIOA Unified State Plan articulates that the Governor's WIOA statewide funds will generally be used to promote a vision of jobs that pay, schools that teach, and government that works. To that end, in the case of a qualifying event, the state intends to use WIOA statewide funds so that relevant workforce development responses are provided in a timely manner. WIOA statewide funds may be provided to local areas deemed in need of financial resources as a result of being affected by a qualifying event.

The use of WIOA statewide funds associated with this waiver supports the state's goal of local WIOA-based programs and activities that better serve targeted groups of workforce development system customers. The use of WIOA statewide funds offers greater flexibility so that the state and local governing entities can expand their ability to coordinate resources, services and activities for individual, workers and employers affected by the qualifying emergency and/or disaster event. The state will use WIOA statewide funds to ensure that critical, time-sensitive work can be performed, and the potential participant pool is widened. The waiver flexibility permits local areas the latitude to marshal available labor, conduct appropriate training, enable required resources to be requisitioned quickly, and provide immediate and comprehensive disaster recovery assistance, including efforts to minimize further disaster impacts.

Projected programmatic outcomes resulting from implementation of the waiver

The state must provide an estimate of how the waiver will improve outcomes or provide other tangible benefits for jobseekers or employers. States have the discretion to determine how to measure a waiver's success and the specific data sources it intends to use to evaluate its impact.

The state estimates that the waiver will improve outcomes and provide other tangible benefits in the following ways:

- Increase statewide and local area workforce development response times to a qualifying event;
- Increase public safety and help support humanitarian activities;
- Availability of disaster relief employment will provide grant participants with access to employment and training activities;
- Increasing of eligible grant participant's employment and training activities will lead towards a higher probability of securing unsubsidized employment; and

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

- Alleviation of some of the time-sensitive variables arising from a qualifying event affecting an employer and lessening the severity of possible layoffs or business closings.

Alignment with Department of Labor's policy priorities

Describe how the waiver will align with the Department's policy priorities, such as:

- *Supporting employer engagement;*
- *Connecting education and training strategies;*
- *Supporting work-based learning;*
- *Improving job and career results; and*
- *Other priorities as articulated in guidance.*

This waiver aligns with not only the Department of Labor's priorities, but also with those of the State of Illinois. Within the Illinois Unified Plan are examples of initiatives demonstrating the importance of ensuring career and work readiness at all levels. This will allow the state to temporarily expand service capacity at the local level through time-limited funding assistance in response to significant disasters.

Expanding the ability for the state to provide disaster related employment opportunities through statewide funding allows participants to develop skills that will better prepare them to obtain permanent employment.

Individuals, groups, or populations affected by the waiver

States must describe the potential impact of a waiver on various system stakeholders, including how the waiver will impact services for disadvantaged populations, persons with barriers to employment, or businesses.

The waiver will positively impact:

- All eligible participants as identified at WIOA section 170 and 20 CFR 687.170 which include dislocated workers, long-term unemployed individuals as defined by the State, temporarily or permanently laid off workers as a consequence of the emergency or disaster, or in the case of an individual who is self-employed, becomes unemployed or significantly underemployed as a result of the emergency or disaster; and
- Non-WIOA eligible recipients include affected businesses and employers, residents and other individuals that benefit from the qualifying event clean-up, restoration and humanitarian activities, and resources provided.

State plans for monitoring waiver implementation, including collection of waiver outcome information

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

States must describe how they intend to oversee effective waiver implementation and any unique protocols that may be used in their waiver requests.

The state will use the following approach for monitoring progress in implementation:

OET workforce development leadership will determine if the qualifying event requires the use of WIOA statewide funds and will approve parameters for the project, be the operational lead, and be tasked with WIOA fund administration and project management or activities. Applicable federal, state and local laws, regulations, policies and procedures will be used to ensure fiscal accountability. Unless otherwise authorized in this waiver, the financial and administrative rules contained in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act; Final Rule (i.e. 20 CFR 683) will apply.

At a minimum, the funding recipient will supply the OET with the following information for review:

- Completed Request for Funds form with local board signatory authorizing request;
- Official declaration documenting the emergency and/or disaster event;
- Narrative will include, at a minimum, summary of the event, preliminary assessment of the clean-up, humanitarian needs of the affected areas, and will demonstrate whether there is a sufficient population of eligible individuals to conduct the planned work;
- Budget and budget justification; and
- Completed worksite summary.

The OET will receive monthly project status reports and will host teleconferences with project stakeholders as necessary to monitor project status. At a minimum, funding recipients will provide the OET with the following information for review:

- Revised narrative and associated attachments when a modification is required;
- Monthly Financial Status Reports;
- Monthly project status report of project activities; and
- Data entry for all participant service in Illinois Workforce Development System (IWDS).

Only local boards will be the recipient of WIOA statewide funding for qualifying events. If a qualifying event occurs in a local area, the state requires the respective local board to collaborate with local governments and other recognized entities to determine whether workforce development-oriented services and activities are warranted. Local boards may work with their respective local area fiscal agents to complete and submit the funding

Section 134(a) Statewide Funds for Qualifying Events

request to OET. Local boards will work with one-stop operator(s) to communicate the funding parameters to workforce development system partners and other service providers. Participant activity is to be recorded in the state system of record, the IWDS. All funds obligated will be accounted for in the financial management system, the GRS. Case management and related source documentation associated with the emergency and/or disaster must include the qualifying event as a point of reference.

State staff who administer programming will provide ongoing technical assistance and oversight as it relates to the appropriateness and the effectiveness of this waiver. This information will be submitted regularly to the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) Continuous Improvement Committee.

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact the waivers have on programmatic goals and outcomes.

Additionally, the IWIB Continuous Improvement Committee will have the responsibility of ensuring the specific goals and outcomes achieved by the waiver are realized. Furthermore, the information gathered from the waiver will inform new or changes to policy as well as provide best practices.

Assurance of state posting of the request for public comment and notification to affected local workforce development boards

WIOA does not prescribe a specific amount of time for states to post a potential waiver for comment, but it does require the state to demonstrate a reasonable opportunity for public review and comment by all stakeholders, including businesses and organized labor. Submit any comments or concerns collected in this manner and the outcome of the state's review of the public comments received. The state must also provide affected local boards with notice and opportunity to comment on the proposed waiver.

Following the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Illinois submitted its Unified State Plan, which is subject to the requirements outlined in the WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR 676.130(d) for public review and comment. Accordingly, Illinois will post this waiver request on our website for comment and review by required parties and the public.

Local Boards via Board members and/or Board staff as well as WIOA partners can comment during the public period, this includes participation in information webinars. Additionally, LWIB members/staff, WIOA partners, as well as other interested stakeholders take part in policy development.