

## U.S. Department of Labor

Assistant Secretary for  
Employment and Training  
Washington, D.C. 20210



June 23, 2026

The Honorable Dan McKee  
Governor of Rhode Island  
82 Smith Street  
Providence, RI 02903

Dear Governor McKee:

Thank you for your waiver request submission to the U.S. Department of Labor 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 request was received on April 27, 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 Rhode Island will meet the outcomes and implement the measures identified in its plan to ensure accountability agreed to by Rhode Island 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).

Requested Waiver: Waiver of the requirements outlined in WIOA Section 107(b) to allow a state workforce development board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of a local board.

ETA Response: ETA approves, through June 30, 2028, Rhode Island's request for a waiver to allow the state board to carry out the roles of the Greater Rhode Island (GRI) Local Workforce Development Board. ETA reviewed Rhode Island'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. Given the challenges the State and local area have in mounting a fully compliant local-led board at this time, ETA agrees that the state board is in a better position to ensure effective service delivery in the GRI Local Workforce Development Board local area. Under this waiver, the Governor may designate the state board to carry out the roles and responsibilities of the local board in the State. In implementing this waiver, the State must:

- Continue to include local input into its activities; and
- Allocate funding to the local area for which the state board is carrying out local board functions.

Requested Waiver: Waiver of WIOA Section 134(d)(2) and 20 CFR 680.910 to allow to use supportive services for participants within 12 months of exit for employment retention.

ETA Response: ETA approves, through June 30, 2028, the State's request to waive the requirement that prohibits the use of Adult and Dislocated Worker funds to be used during the 12 months of exit for employment retention. With this waiver, the State can provide targeted supportive services to participants who have exited and are recipients of public assistance, to temporarily replace benefits as the exited participant secures higher earnings through employment.

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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Henry Mack". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Henry Mack, Ed.D.  
Assistant Secretary

Enclosures

cc: Pauline Abetti, Assistant Director, Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training  
Danielle Worthen-Ramos, Acting Boston Regional Administrator, ETA  
Larica Kintchen, Federal Project Officer, ETA