

Addendum for IOWA

**Strategic Plan for the America Recovery
and Reinvestment Act Funds**

For

WAGNER – PEYSER

And

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT

PROGRAMS

July 1, 2009 through June 30, 2010

The extension of two previously granted waivers will be added to the modification of the State Plan for Workforce Development to address the use of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funds. These waivers have been previously approved and the purpose of this request is to extend the time of their effectiveness to June 30, 2010.

Waiver 1.

Delegation of WIB Responsibilities in Local Workforce Investment Area 11

A. Identify the statutory or regulatory requirements that are requested to be waived and the goals that the state intends to achieve as a result of the waiver.

The State of Iowa is requesting a waiver to 20 CFR Part 661.300(f) of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) regulations. This provision allows states that operate as a single local workforce investment area to use the State Workforce Investment Board to carry out the requirements of the local workforce investment board. While Iowa is not a single workforce service area, the intent of this waiver request is to permit the State Board to assume the responsibilities of the local workforce board in a specific region of the State.

Local Workforce Investment Area 11 in Iowa, commonly referred to as Region 11, consists of the counties of Boone, Dallas, Jasper, Madison, Marion, Polk, Story, and Warren. This workforce investment area constitutes the most populous region of the State and, as such, has an impact on Iowa WIA operations that extends far beyond the borders of the region. State performance achievement, effective use of a substantial percentage of State and federal resources, and even the perception of the employment and training system in Iowa are all substantially influenced by the activities and operation of WIA and related employment programs in Region 11.

The State of Iowa wants to establish Region 11 as a model of success for the employment and training system in Iowa. By providing the authority for the State Workforce Investment Board to act as the Regional WIB, direction and guidance for the system will be provided to both State and local service providers and agencies. In addition, engagement with a broader spectrum of State and local constituencies will dramatically expand the level of input and ownership in workforce programs. Rather than reducing the level of local control and authority, this action will actually expand regional control and authority under the direction of the Iowa Workforce Investment Board.

The current level of local control in Region 11 is insufficient. The region continues to suffer from the effects of a scandal that resulted in disallowed costs, the resignation and subsequent federal indictment of top officials of a service provider, and broad negative publicity. Resignations of many members of both the chief elected officials' board and the WIB also occurred. In addition, the members of the chief elected officials' board have voted to dissolve their agreement to carryout responsibilities under the WIA, and default that authority to the Governor, effective July 1, 2008

The State of Iowa requests this waiver to permit the State Workforce Investment Board to assume the responsibilities of the local workforce board in Region 11. Approval of this request will allow the same latitude and authority for this region as that granted to State Boards who serve this function for an entire State. That authority is essential at this point in time for this region. The State board will direct efforts to establish the principles of local input and direction to the workforce system in the region, and to regain the level of trust and confidence that residents of the region must have in that system.

The State board intends to significantly expand the level of local involvement with the employment and training system. That involvement will include continued access to members of the existing WIB in an advisory capacity. In addition, a number of other business-related and workforce development boards or committees will be solicited by the State board to advise and guide the one-stop system in central Iowa. Some of these groups have not previously been engaged with WIB activities, and include:

- The Greater Des Moines Partnership for Polk, Dallas, and Warren counties, represented exclusively by business.
- Central Iowa Works – a strategic intermediary of primarily business members whose purpose is to provide guidance to the education system and the workforce system, on the challenges they face with recruitment and retention issues. The members also establish the industries that will be priorities in the development of career pathways.
- The Regional Innovation Leadership team established by the Regional Innovation Grant (RIG) received in the wake of the Maytag plant closing.

The State Board intends that the approval of this waiver request will significantly improve the level of local involvement in the oversight and operation of the employment and training system of central Iowa, as envisioned by the principles and goals of the WIA.

B. Describe the actions that the State has undertaken to remove State statutory or regulatory barriers.

There are no state statutory or regulatory barriers to implementation of this waiver.

C. Describe the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted.

The goals of this waiver request are basic, yet essential:

- Streamlined administration of services;
- Increased level of input into the system from all constituencies;
- Provide sufficient time to receive technical assistance from the Department of Labor to develop a Regional Workforce Board that does not meet the statutory requirements under the Workforce Investment Act but will provide the functional oversight.
- Expanded capacity to align business needs with education and economic development activities;
- Increased efficiency in the regional workforce system;
- Enhanced and integrated services in the regional one-stop center;
- Increased numbers of participants served;
- Restoration of trust and confidence in the system by consumers.
- It is anticipated that the new oversight board will be in place by June 30, 2010.

D. Describe the individuals impacted by the waiver.

Job seekers, businesses, and the residents of Iowa Region 11 will be positively impacted by this waiver. The intent is to provide the most efficient and effective structure for workforce and economic development in the region. Service provision will be more closely coordinated to the extent that customers will not be aware of programs or funding sources for the services that they receive. In this way, services can be provided in innovative yet functional processes to better meet the needs of all interests. Program resources will be used in the most efficient manner in order to maximize the number of recipients of these services.

E. Describe the process used to monitor the progress in implementing such a waiver, and the process by which notice and an opportunity to comment on such request has been provided to the local board.

The State Workforce Investment Board and Iowa Workforce Development will be monitoring the implementation of this waiver and assessing the achievement of the goals that it intends. Frequent and formal customer satisfaction surveys will be initiated to support the assessment process. As customers of the system, business, labor, and economic development interests will be asked for feedback on the effectiveness of the system. That feedback will significantly comprise the expanded level of regional input that the waiver envisions.

Compliance with all appropriate laws and regulations will be maintained through normal compliance and fiscal on-site monitoring reviews. Progress in program achievement will be tracked both in terms of process measures (numbers served, level of services provided, etc.) and outcome measures (federal performance goals).

A modification to the State Plan for Wagner-Peyser and Workforce Investment Act Programs, which includes the substance and intent of this waiver, was made available for comment. The content was made available on the Iowa Workforce Development website, and public notice was provided in the Des Moines Register newspaper. Formal written notice of the plan modification was also provided to business and labor organizations, state agencies, and the chief elected official and regional workforce investment board chairs.

Two comments were received on the proposed plan modification. One comment supported all of the proposals. The other comment, from a current WIB member, included the following statement: "I would urge that the local RWIB stay in place as an "Advisory Board" to the State RWIB for the reasons stated above for the betterment of the communities in Region 11 and most importantly the clients we serve." Accordingly, this waiver request indicates the intent to continue to solicit input from members of the existing WIB.

Waiver 2.

A. Identify the statutory or regulatory requirements that are requested to be waived and the goals that the state intends to achieve as a result of the waiver

Iowa is requesting an extension to the existing waiver to allow the transfer of 100% of funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams. This waiver will allow regional boards to respond to specific needs in their areas that may be created by significant numbers of worker dislocations, changes in the local economic environment, intent to increase services to specific populations, rescission of previously allocated funds, reduction in annual formula allocation or similar issues. This request is a waiver from the Workforce Investment Act Section 133(b)(4), and 20 CFR667.140.

Iowa is committed to customer service, and this waiver will provide the flexibility to meet customer needs as they arise. The waiver will support both federal and state goals to support the local direction for resource use, will continue to emphasize the training element of the WIA program, and will provide the flexibility of merged funding streams while maintaining core service delivery in the One-Stop Centers supported by Wagner-Peyser funding streams.

Regional Workforce Investment Boards must initiate any requests for the transfer of funds. State policies have been established to ensure that such transfers will not negatively impact performance achievement or the potential to acquire additional program resources, such as National Emergency Grants. In such cases, the state will have the authority to deny transfer requests.

B. Describe the actions that the State has undertaken to remove State statutory or regulatory barriers.

There are no state statutory or regulatory barriers to implementation of this waiver.

C. Describe the goals of the waiver and the expected programmatic outcomes if the request is granted

- Allow the maximum flexibility to ensure that all WIA eligible adults and dislocated workers may receive services.
- Allow the Regional Workforce Investment Boards to respond to significant worker dislocations. This applies specifically to dislocations that may be numerous in one region but more than one location, none of which have the same NAICS codes, but the number does not meet the 50 or more required for National Emergency Grants
- Response to rescissions mandated by Congress to allow the continuation of obligations made to current enrollments for the completion of necessary services or training plans.
- Response to congressional reductions in annual formula allocations. The ability to move funds will allow the Regional Workforce Investment Boards to meet the needs of the regional eligible populations seeking assistance under the WIA Program.

D. Describe the individuals impacted by the waiver

Allow the local RWIBs increased flexibility to transfer funds between the adult and dislocated worker programs will result in expanded services to businesses in the region and increased

employment and training opportunities. This would positively impact businesses and those individuals seeking employment and training services.

E. Describe the process used to monitor the progress in implementing such a waiver, and the process by which notice and an opportunity to comment on such request has been provided to the local board

The local Customer Service Provider will provide written notice to all RWIBs regarding any implementation of programmatic changes made possible due to the increased flexibility allowed by the waiver. The State Workforce Program Coordinators and Administrator for the Workforce Investment Act will monitor the expenditure levels of each local area to ensure they are consistent with the levels established by the fund transfer. Additionally, all funds transfers will be incorporated into the regional contract by the Financial Management Department at the State Level.

RWIBs requesting fund transfers between programs will be required to provide the following information to their designated Workforce Program Coordinator and Financial Management. The RWIB will be required to provide the following information:

- Effective date of the fund transfer;
- Amount of funds to be transferred;
- Local RWIB's assessment of conditions creating a need for the transfer; and
- How the transfer will meet contracted performance targets and critical workforce needs of the region.

Any questions or comments please contact the following:

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