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JOSH GREEN
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR



LESLIE WILKINS
CHAIRPERSON

ALLICYN C.H. TASAKA
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

STATE OF HAWAII
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
830 Punchbowl Street, Suite 417, Honolulu, Hawaii 96813
Phone: (808) 586-8630 Web: <http://labor.hawaii.gov/wdc/>

July 16, 2020

Annie Leonetti, Acting Regional Administrator
Employment and Training Administration
90 7th Street, Suite 17-300
San Francisco, CA 94103-1516

Dear Ms. Leonetti:

The Hawaii Workforce Development Council is requesting a waiver in accordance with WIOA Section 189(i)(3)(A) and 20 CFR 679.600.

The State of Hawaii is requesting a waiver for Program Year 2020 from the requirement that local programs provide each of the 14 youth program elements at WIOA §129(c)(2) as options available to youth participants are affected by the restrictions of the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This waiver would allow local areas to focus on the youth services that are the most needed and available.

In accordance with waiver request instructions, these documents have also been emailed to WIOA.Plan@dol.gov.

Your review and consideration of this waiver request are appreciated. Please contact me with any questions.

Sincerely,



Allicyn C. H. Tasaka
Executive Director

Attachment

C: Marian Esver, Federal Project Officer, Region 6, USDOL ETA

WIOA Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived–Youth Program Requirements

State of Hawaii

The State of Hawaii is seeking a waiver for Program Year 2020 from the requirement that local programs provide each of the 14 youth program elements at WIOA §129(c)(2) as options available to youth participants are affected by the restrictions of the public health emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. This waiver would allow local areas to focus on the youth services that are the most needed and available.

Background

All four counties of the State of Hawaii have been affected by the COVID-19 health emergency. Hawaii's unemployment rate declined to 13.9% at the end of June from a high of 23.8% in April. Jobs declined by 94,700 over-the-year. Maui Island has the highest unemployment rate in the state: 23.4% at the end of June, down from a high of 35.1% in May. By contrast, in 2019, Hawaii's unemployment rate was among the lowest in the nation at 2.7%.

The local areas of Kauai, Maui, and Hawaii Counties are island communities that already face a shortage of education and service providers. In fact, Kauai County only has a new Youth provider which started in May 2020 because Workforce Development Council (WDC) staff and Kauai County Workforce Development Board staff joined to cultivate a local non-profit by providing technical assistance. Kauai had been unable to find a provider for three program years and Requests for Proposals (RFP) and Requests for Information were unanswered. Maui County recently received only two proposals for their Youth RFP.

Isolated communities are also affected by the lack of cellular and broadband services, making on-line education sporadic or impossible.

The majority of schools in the state converted programs that were on-going in March 2020 to on-line courses. Both private and public providers plan to conduct programs in-person, on-line or a hybrid of the two. Some providers have closed their businesses because of limitations to maintaining social distancing. The timeline for opening services and programs is uncertain and services will most likely be more limited upon opening.

Actions Undertaken to Remove State of Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers

There are currently no state or local statutory barriers to implementing the requested waiver. The State of Hawaii regulations and policy statements are in compliance with current federal law.

Waiver Goals and Outcomes

Goals and outcomes related to this waiver request include:

- Allowing Youth Program service providers to focus on providing services that are most needed.
- Allow the providers to continue to serve participants by utilizing programs that are available in their local areas.
- Allow providers in local areas to provide limited services now and increase services as their local economies recover from the disaster.
- Allow Youth Program providers additional flexibility for program design.

Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

Individuals who access Youth services in Hawaii, local workforce development board staff, WIOA partner staff, American Job Center Hawaii staff, subcontracted service provider staff, and other youth service providers will benefit from this waiver.

Monitoring Progress and Implementation

Annual WIOA on-site programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of the impact of the waiver on local programs to ensure programmatic goals and outcomes are being met. WDC staff will also review the services available to Youth in the four local areas and will periodically examine the appropriateness and effectiveness of this waiver. This strategy ensures that the goals described above, as well as those outlined in the State's Unified State Plan, are consistent with established objectives of WIOA and federal and state regulations.

Notice to Local Boards and Public Comment

In accordance with the WIOA regulations at 20 CFR 676.135, Hawaii is submitting a modification to 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. This waiver request is currently posted on WDC's website for comment and review by required parties and the general public.

A copy of the request has been provided to all four local workforce development boards. Any comment received will be forwarded to the USDOL and included as a modification to the state's Unified State Plan. The impact of this waiver on the state's performance will be included in the state's WIOA Annual Report.