



Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Policy
Employment System Administration and Policy

Washington envisions a nationally recognized fully integrated One-Stop system with enhanced customer access to program services, improved long-term employment outcomes for job seekers and consistent, high quality services to business customers. In order to achieve this vision, Employment System Administration and Policy sets a common direction and standards for Washington's WorkSource system through the development of WorkSource system policies, information memoranda, and technical assistance.

Policy Number: 5615
To: Washington WorkSource System
Effective Date: July 1, 2015

Subject: Regions Designation and Planning

1. Purpose:

To communicate state policy for designation of regions and development of regional plans under Title I of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA).

2. Background:

WIOA directs the identification and establishment of workforce regions by March 2016 as part of the submitted State Plan and also as a condition for receiving state allotments for the WIOA Title I youth, adult and dislocated worker programs. The proposed rules offer that the purpose of regions is to align workforce development activities and resources to regional economies and economic development activities to ensure coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers.

3. Policy:

A. Region Designation

- i. The State, in consultation with Local Workforce Development Board (LWDBs) and local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs), will identify and designate regions that are:
 - a. Consistent with labor market areas in the state;
 - b. Consistent with regional economic development areas in the state; and
 - c. Have the federal and non-federal resources necessary to effectively administer activities under Title I of this Act, including appropriate education and training providers.

The Governor may consider additional factors in identifying regions, such as population centers, commuting patterns, industrial composition, location quotients, geographic boundaries, or other factors identified by the Secretary of Labor, as per proposed 20 CFR 679.210. The Governor may also consider information elicited through consultation with local boards and chief elected officials.

- ii. The State must identify which regions consist of:
 - a. One local area representing a region;
 - b. Two or more geographically contiguous local areas within the state representing a region; or
 - c. Two or more geographically contiguous local areas residing in 2 or more states.
- iii. Local areas cannot be sub-divided in a manner whereby part of the area is in one region and another part is in another region.
- iv. Designation of regions does not replace, eliminate, or re-draw local area boundaries unless local CEOs request redesignation as new local areas by the Governor (see [WIOA Title I Policy 5609 – Local Workforce Development Area Designation](#)).
- v. Participation in a region does not diminish the authority of LWDBs or local CEOs.
- vi. The State supports and encourages collaboration between any local areas and regions within the state or across state boundaries to achieve mutual workforce development goals.
- vii. The State will work with LWDBs to address issues that limit the ability of in-state and cross-state regions to fulfill their responsibilities for joint planning and implementation and work with administrations in adjoining states to remove obstacles to cross-state region planning and implementation.

B. Regional Planning

- i. Following designation of regions, LWDBs and local CEOs must engage in a regional planning process to prepare, submit, and obtain approval of a single regional plan that incorporates local plans for each of the local areas in the region.
- ii. The regional plan must address the following:
 - a. Regional service strategies, including use of cooperative service delivery agreements;
 - b. Development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupations within the region;
 - c. Collection and analysis of regional labor market data (in conjunction with the State);
 - d. Administrative cost arrangements, including pooling of funds, as appropriate;
 - e. Coordination of transportation and other support services, as appropriate;
 - f. Coordination of regional economic development services and providers;

- g. Establishment of an agreement for how the region will negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, the performance accountability measures described in WIOA Section 116(c) for local areas or the planning region.
- iii. The State recognizes that it will take time for regions to develop the alignment envisioned by WIOA and will provide opportunities for phasing various aspects of the regional plan, where possible.
- iv. The State will provide technical assistance and labor market data, as requested by regions, to assist with regional planning and subsequent service delivery efforts.
- v. The State will ask regions to identify performance, fiscal, or planning challenges in order to ensure that local and regional planning areas are aligned to support improved service delivery, improved training and employment outcomes, better meet employer needs, and greater effectiveness and efficiency in achieving these outcomes.

C. Region Designation and Plan Process

- i. Using the factors identified in this policy, the State Workforce Development Board (SWDB) will publish a recommendation for workforce regions.
- ii. LWDBs, local CEOs, and other stakeholders will have 30 days to provide public comment on the SWDB's region recommendation.
- iii. Upon completion of the public comment period, the SWDB, taking into consideration the public comment received, will recommend regions to the Governor for approval.
- iv. The Governor will have 15 days to affirm or reject the SWDB's region recommendations.
- v. Regions, once designated, will be identified in the WIOA State Plan.
- vi. Regions will develop and submit regional plans as described in Section B as per State planning guidance.

4. Definitions:

Labor Market Area: An economically integrated geographic area within which individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence. Such an area shall be identified in accordance with criteria used by the Bureau of Labor Statistics of the Department of Labor in defining such areas or similar criteria established by a Governor (WIOA Section 3(30)).

5. References:

- Public Law 113-128, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act of 2014, Sections 106(a) and 106(c)
- Proposed 20 CFR 679.200-210 and 20 CFR 679.510-560
- [Training and Employment Guidance Letter \(TEGL\) 27-14](#)

6. Supersedes:

None.

7. Website:

http://www.wa.gov/esd/1stop/policies/wioa_title1.htm

8. Action:

Local Workforce Development Boards and their contractors, as well as Employment Security Regional Directors, should distribute this policy broadly throughout the system to ensure that WorkSource System staff are familiar with its content and requirements.

9. Attachments:

None.

Direct Inquiries To:

*Employment System Administration and Policy Unit
Employment System Policy and Integrity Operations Division
Employment Security Department
P.O. Box 9046
Olympia WA 98506-9046
(360) 902-9666
SystemPolicy@esd.wa.gov*