

OUT-OF-SCHOOL YOUTH DEFINITION
WAIVER CONTINUATION REQUEST

The Delaware Workforce Investment Board and the Delaware Department of Labor as the WIA Title I Grant Recipient Agency in Delaware requests a continuance of our waiver to allow youth who are enrolled in alternative school programs to count as Out-of-School Youth upon registration in the WIA Title IB program. Continuation of this waiver has the potential to increase the number of Youth that receive services from out-of-school contractors in Delaware thereby ensuring that the WIA youth funds are being used to maximize services for one category of youth identified in ETA's New Strategic Vision for Delivery of Youth Services. The continuation of the waiver will apply to Program Year 2009.

In keeping with the guidelines set forth at WIA Section 189(i)(4)(B) and 20 CFR Part 661.420(c), please accept the following as a request for the waiver.

1. Statutory or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived

WIA Section 101(33) and (39) define Out-of-School Youth and School Dropout. In the regulations at 20 CFR 664.310, it is stated that "a youth attending an alternative school at the time of registration is not a dropout. An individual who is out-of-school at the time of registration and subsequently placed in an alternative school, may be considered an out-of-school youth for purposes of the 30 percent expenditure requirement for out-of-school youth".

Delaware State law requires the public school system to serve all youth who have been expelled or suspended. These youth are automatically referred to alternative schools or programs. WIA youth programs are hindered by this requirement since the youth are referred to WIA youth programs after enrolling in the alternative schools or programs.

2. Goals the State, as a Single Service Area, Intends to Achieve and How These Goals Relate to the Strategic Plan Goals

The anticipated goal of this request is to increase the flexibility of contractors in enrolling youth who are already attending alternative schools or programs. These youth who have been expelled, suspended, or dropped out-of-school are already in an "at-risk" population and need workforce services. When they enroll in an alternative school, there often is little or no period when they are not enrolled in a school, even in cases of expulsion. This school replacement is done in an effort to give these youth "one last chance". Unfortunately, as a result, despite the fact that they have dropped out or been removed from school, there is no period when they are available for enrollment into out-of-school services. In many cases, it is the services that the out-of-school contractors provide that the clients need most in order to achieve their diploma/GED and to transition into work/postsecondary education in order to be able to compete and successfully participate in the economy of the 21st century.

The following is a description of how the State has been able to provide more services to youth in Alternative Schools through application of the Out-of-School waiver: Currently 38 students enrolled within an alternative school are being served in Delaware through this waiver. This waiver has allowed us to reach other students in need of these services with serious barriers to obtaining their high school diploma/GED and who are basic skills deficient. These students

require additional guidance and support with establishing a plan for future educational and employment goals.

3. Actions Taken to Remove State or Local Statutory or Regulatory Barriers

There is no State or local statutory or regulatory barrier to implementing, or continuing, the proposed waiver

4. Programmatic Outcomes Expected to be Achieved if the Request is Granted

The State is currently targeting 45% of our funds to out-of-school youth programs nearly all of whom are school dropouts. With this change, the number of out-of-school youth served is expected to increase. This will allow the State to position itself for the ETA New Strategic Vision for Delivery of Youth Services, which includes the critical strategy of focusing on serving youth served in alternative education programs.

The following is a description of how the current waiver has helped Delaware to serve more out-of-school youth and increase expenditures for out-of-school youth:

Out of school students within the alternative sites are conducive learners. The students are in a structured setting and able to receive extended school services and resources outside of the site. The contractors currently provide an onsite staff person at the alternative schools within Kent and Sussex County. A team approach to address the student's needs is discussed and a plan is created to identifying specific goals for students and staff. This type of onsite team work strengthens the services that are brought to the student.

Through this program it has been apparent that family members have become more involved within the students future plans since they realize that this may be the last chance for their child to be linked to available jobs or training once they have completed their diploma. We have found that this partnership with alternative schools in Delaware brings resources and a training program that would not ordinarily be available without this waiver to the out of school student in the alternative site's curriculum. Employability competency training as well as "linking" them with agencies or services needed to be successful upon completion of his/her diploma is provided. In some instances, because of the situation with the out of school student, additional alternative options for completing the diploma or earning a GED are decided upon. Out of school students who would benefit from work experience are provided opportunities for employment while attending the alternative site. In some cases, food, clothing and shelter are of primary importance to the student and their family; the onsite staff person (contractor) will assist the student and their family with linkages to agencies and community supports that will assist them in securing services to meet their individual needs. Once the primary needs are met, the out of school student can then focus on his/her education. Through these efforts the student is then able to improve and remove barriers that have restricted them in the past. The component of retention services within this program is very valuable since the individualization of the program is so necessary; the change from the training phase to retention seems

seamless. Students continue to receive the same services within both components since their needs far outreach the classroom. It is through the retention services that we see the student begin to move into a more confident mode of seeking services themselves since they now have the resources of how to research for a job or services and have been in contact with agencies within the community. Fear has been removed from the list of barriers that inhibit these students to be successful. This ensures that the students will sustain long term success.

The funding was previously allocated to serve 55% In-School Youth and 45% Out of School Youth. This waiver allows us to expand our services to a targeted group within the “neediest youth” population. In the current regulations 20 CFR 664-310 it states that a youth attending an alternative school at the time of registration is not a dropout and therefore does not satisfy the criteria for serving these you within the Out of School Youth Programs. Students enrolled into alternative schools are not automatically eligible to return to their home schools and admittance into another public school within any school district is prohibited without a school boards prior approval. This waiver allows our Out of School Youth programs to expend funds towards a population most “at risk” and in need of additional services towards achieving sustainable educational and employment goals.

5. Individuals Impacted by the Waiver

All youth will be impacted in a positive way from the waiver. Enabling contractors to expend their out-of-school funds on youth already enrolled in alternative schools is expected to increase the number of out-of-school youth served and may allow more in-school-youth to have access to WIA youth funds.

6. Process for Monitoring Implementation of the Waiver and the Process by which Notice and Opportunity to Comment on such Request has been Provided

The Delaware Workforce Investment Board/Department of Labor as the State dual administrative entity and overseer of WIA funds will monitor the use of funds by the contractors. The State’s current monitoring policy and procedures will be modified to ensure compliance with the intent of the waiver.

Information contained in the State’s management information system and financial management tracking system is reviewed and reported to the contractors on a regular basis.

Insert description of “the process by which notice and opportunity to comment on such request has been provided” after comment period has ended.