

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Nebraska Department of Labor
Office of Employment & Training

Interim Policy on Designation of Regions

Reference:

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Section 106; WIOA Notice of Proposed Rulemaking, 20 CFR §§679.200 and 679.210

Background:

In order for Nebraska to receive an allotment under Sec. 127(b) or 132(b) of WIOA, NDOL must identify regions in the state after consultation with local workforce development boards (local boards) and chief elected officials (CEOs) in the local areas, consistent with Sec. 106(b)(1)(B) of WIOA.¹

Nebraska's regional designation process was performed in accordance with Nebraska's policy on designation of regions. At the request of the Governor, NDOL evaluated labor market structure and distribution, designated economic development areas, distribution of educational and training resources, location of population centers, and workforce commuting patterns. The outcome of NDOL's evaluation revealed a substantive relationship between concentrations of economic activity and statewide workforce commuting patterns. Maps were generated by NDOL's Office of Labor Market Information illustrating this relationship.

Following this evaluation, NDOL consulted with local boards and CEOs on potential regional designations and provided a summary of its evaluation, including maps, for review and comment. Subsequent to the consultation, local area boards and CEOs recommended establishing workforce development regions based on the relationship between areas of economic concentration and workforce commuting patterns.

In December 2015, based on the recommendation of local area boards and CEOs, the Governor will designate an intrastate regional structure based on economic concentrations and workforce commuting patterns and notify all local areas and CEOs of the designations. Announcement of these regions is forthcoming.

Action:

After a 10-day review period, this policy will be considered final. Questions and comments should be submitted in writing to the WIOA Policy Mailbox: ndol.wioa_policy@nebraska.gov.

Policy:

Purpose of a Region

20 CFR § 679.200 describes the purpose of requiring states to identify regions is to align workforce development resources to regional economies to ensure coordinated and efficient services to both job seekers and employers. WIOA requires states to establish regions in order to ensure that training and employment services support economic growth and related

¹ WIOA Section 106(a)(1)

employment opportunities and are meeting the skill competency requirements of the regions. The development of comprehensive regional partnerships facilitates alignment of workforce development activities with regional economic development activities, and better supports the execution and implementation of sector strategies and career pathways. Regional cooperation may also lower costs and increase the effectiveness of service delivery to businesses that span more than one local workforce development area within a region and to job seekers through coordination of shared services, process, and operations.²

Identifying Regions

The Governor will identify regions after consultation with the local boards and CEOs in the local areas identifying which regions are:

1. comprised of 1 local area;
2. comprised of 2 or more local areas; and
3. interstate areas contained within 2 or more states, and consist of labor market areas, economic development areas, or other appropriate contiguous subareas of those states.³

The Governor will assign local areas to a region prior to submission of the state combined plan and develop a policy and process for identifying regions.⁴ This policy will include:

1. consultation with the local boards and chief local elected officials in the local areas; and
2. consideration of the extent to which the local areas in a proposed region:
 - a. share a single labor market;
 - b. share a common economic development area; and
 - c. possess the Federal and non-Federal resources, including appropriate education and training institutions, to administer activities under WIOA Subtitle B.⁵
3. In addition to the considerations described immediately above, other factors the Governor may also consider include:
 - a. population centers,
 - b. commuting patterns,
 - c. land ownership,
 - d. industrial composition,
 - e. location quotients,
 - f. labor force conditions,
 - g. geographic boundaries, and
 - h. additional factors as determined by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor.⁶

As mentioned above, announcement of these regions is forthcoming.

² 20 CFR § 679.200

³ WIOA Section 106(a)(1), 106(a)(2), 106(b)(1)(B)

⁴ 20 CFR § 679.210(a)

⁵ 20 CFR § 679.210(b)

⁶ 20 CFR § 679.210(c)

Planning Regions

A planning region is created when two or more local areas share a region.⁷ Local boards and CEOs in planning regions must engage in regional planning that results in:

1. preparation of a regional plan;
2. establishment of regional service strategies, including using cooperative service delivery agreements;
3. development and implementation of sector initiatives for in-demand industry sectors or occupation for the region;
4. collection and analysis of regional labor market data (together with NDOL);
5. establishment of administrative cost arrangements, including pooling funds for administrative costs for the regions;
6. coordination of transportation and other supportive services for the region;
7. coordination of services with regional economic development services and providers; and
8. establishment of an agreement on how the planning region will collectively negotiate and reach agreement with the Governor on local levels of performance for, and report on, performance accountability measures for local areas or the planning region.⁸

Regional Plans

Local boards and CEOs within a planning area must prepare, submit, and obtain approval of a single regional plan, including a description of the activities described immediately above. The regional plan must also incorporate local plans for each of the local areas in the planning region. Technical assistance and labor market data will be provided by NDOL upon request by the local areas to assist regional planning and subsequent service delivery efforts.⁹

Disclaimer:

This policy is based on NDOL's reading of the statute along with the Notice of Proposed Rulemaking released by USDOL. This policy may be subject to change as additional federal regulations and TEGLs are released. This policy is not intended to be permanent and should be viewed as a placeholder until final federal regulations are released in early 2016.

⁷ WIOA Section 106(a)(2)(B) and (C)

⁸ WIOA Section 106(c)(1)

⁹ WIOA Section 106(c)(2)