



**SOUTH FLORIDA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD
EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 9, 2025
8:15 A.M.**

ZOOM ONLY

The public may view the session online. **Registration is required:**
https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ISSH7LAzTdywsrtfD2Q3IA

AGENDA

1. Call to Order and Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes
 - A. August 14, 2025
4. Informational – America’s Talent Strategy – Building the Workforce for the Golden Age
5. Informational – South Dade Rual Workforce Advancement Initiative
6. Informational – Reach Act Program Year 24-25 Quarter 3 Update
7. Informational – FloridaCommerce Opportunity Zone Workgroup
8. Approval - US Department of Labor Approves 100% OJT Reimbursement

South Florida Workforce Investment Board dba CareerSource South Florida is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. All voice telephone numbers on this document may be reached by persons using TTY/TDD equipment via the Florida Relay Service at 711.

"Members of the public shall be given a reasonable opportunity to be heard on a specific agenda item, but must register with the agenda clerk prior to being heard."



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 2

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: PUBLIC COMMENT

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **INFORMATIONAL**

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

STRATEGIC GOAL: **STRONG WORKFORCE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **National leader in an ROI-focused enterprise**

BACKGROUND:

N/A

FUNDING: N/A

PERFORMANCE: N/A

NO ATTACHMENT



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 3

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **APPROVAL**

RECOMMENDATION: SFWIB staff recommends to the Executive Committee to approve minutes from the August 14, 2025 meeting, as set forth below.

STRATEGIC GOAL: **STRONG WORKFORCE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **Strengthen workforce system accountability**

BACKGROUND:

N/A

FUNDING: N/A

PERFORMANCE: N/A

ATTACHMENT



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM: 3A

AGENDA TOPIC: MEETING MINUTES

SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

DATE: August 14, 2025

LOCATION: CareerSource South Florida Headquarters
7300 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 500
Conference Room 2
Miami, FL 33126

ZOOM: https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_ISSH7LAzTdywsrtfD2Q3IA

1. **CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS:** Vice Chairman del Valle called to order the regular meeting of the SFWIB Executive Committee Meeting at 8:21AM on July 10, 2025.

ROLL CALL: 8 members; 5 required; 7 present: **Quorum established.**

SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT (VIA ZOOM)	SFWIB MEMBERS ABSENT/EXCUSED	SFWIB STAFF
Canales, Dequasia Chi, Joe del Valle, Juan-Carlos, Vice-Chairman Ferradaz, Gilda Mantilla, Rene	Gibson, Charles, Chair Loynaz, M.D., Oscar Scott, Jr., Kenneth	Beasley, Rick Bennett, Renee Morgan, Ebony Perrin, Yian (Zoom) Smith, Robert ADMINISTRATION/IT
OTHER ATTENDEES		

Agenda items are displayed in the order they were discussed.

2. Public Comment

Public comments should be two minutes or less.

Chairman Gibson opened the floor for comments from the public. No requests to speak were received by the Executive Office. None presented. Item closed.

3. Approval of Executive Committee Meeting Minutes – July 10, 2025

Vice Chairman del Valle presented the July 10, 2025 SFWIB Executive Committee Meeting minutes for review in advance of approval.

Motion for approval of the July 10, 2025 SFWIB Executive Committee Meeting minutes by Mr. Rene' Mantilla; Mr. Joe Chi seconded; **motion is passed without dissent.**

No further comments or suggestions were submitted by the members. Item closed.

4. Information – Opportunity Zones Residency- Based Eligibility Amendment

Vice Chairman del Valle introduced the item; Mr. Beasley advised that the current statutory language under WIOA Section 189(i)(4)(A) prevents the U.S. Secretary of Labor from waiving income eligibility requirements for WIOA Title I Youth (Section 129) and Adult (Section 134) programs.

He also informed the Committee that language has been submitted to Congressman Randy Fine and Senator Scott's office to include an amendment in the Labor, Health, and HHS Budget, rather than waiting for WIOA reauthorization. This strategy originated from a discussion with Secretary Scalia but was initially conceived by Secretary Acosta during Trump's first administration.

The proposal aims to assist approximately 1.3 million individuals nationwide by allowing them to access training and credentialing programs without the usual income verification hurdles. This change would particularly benefit working adults who are looking to upskill or reskill in rapidly changing job markets.

No further comments or suggestions were submitted from the members. Item closed.

5. Information – CareerSource Florida Economic Incentive Policy

Vice Chairman del Valle introduced the item; Mr. Beasley presented a policy proposal that will be submitted to the Florida Department of Commerce. This proposal aims to guide local workforce boards in allocating workforce funds for economic development, particularly in

opportunity zones. It also relates to the waiver for on-the-job training (OJT) initiatives, which can be used to encourage companies to relocate by offering OJT and other training programs. The goal is to create more jobs and help local workforce boards become more efficient and meet second and fourth quarter performance metrics.

Mr. Beasley reviewed the allowable incentive training models, suggested Local Operating Procedures (LOPs), employer commitments, funding/reimbursement, and monitoring and compliance.

Members of the Executive Committee that were present expressed their support for the policy. As a result, Mr. Beasley formally requested authorization to submit the proposed economic policy to the state for thorough review and consideration.

Motion to approve the CSSF's submission of the proposed economic policy to the Florida Department of Commerce for review and consideration. Additionally, **this motion authorizes** collaboration with Congressman Randy Fine and Senator Rick Scott to propose including language that supports waiving income eligibility requirements in identified Opportunity Zones for WIOA Title I Youth (Section 129) and Adult (Section 134) programs as an amendment to the Labor, Health, and HHS Budget put forth by Mr. Mantilla; Ms. Canales seconded; **motion is passed without dissent.**

No comments or suggestions were submitted from the members. Item closed.

6. Information – U.S. Department of Education and Labor Workforce Development

Vice Chairman del Valle introduced the item; Mr. Beasley introduced a new partnership between the US Department of Education and the U.S. Department of Labor to streamline and integrate the administration of key federal education and workforce programs.

No further comments or suggestions were submitted from the members. Item closed.

7. Approval – Modification of The City of Miami Gardens Summer Youth Program

Vice Chairman del Valle introduced the item; Mr. Beasley advised that the SFWIB approved \$100,00 in funding for the City of Miami Gardens, with a \$100,000 TANF match, to support summer employment opportunities for 75 youth. The City of Miami Gardens has since increased their commitment by \$50,000 and are requesting a matching increase from the board to expand the program to be applied retroactively. Increased funding supports up to 112 youth ages 15-18.

Motion to approve the acceptance of an additional \$50,000 in general funds from the City of Miami Gardens, the allocation of additional matching funds of up to \$50,000 in TANF funds, and the allocation of combined funds to Adult Mankind Organization (AMO) to administer



the program and manage recruitment, payroll, job placement, and training by Mr. Joe Chi; Mr. Rene' Mantilla seconded; **motion is passed without dissent.**

No further comments or suggestions were submitted by the members. Item closed.

8. Approval – Modification to the Mayor’s Office 2025 Internship Program

Vice Chairman del Valle introduced the item; Mr. Beasley reviewed the item which requests an additional \$2,000 for the Mayor’s Office 2025 Summer Internship Program.

Motion to approve an additional \$2,000 in WIOA Adult funds for the Mayor’s Office 2025 Internship program by Mr. Joe Chi; Ms. Dequasia Canales seconded; **motion is passed without dissent.**

No further comments or suggestions were submitted by the members. Item closed.

New Business

Upcoming South Florida Workforce Investment Board Meeting

Mr. Beasley advised that the August 21st Council and full board meetings will take place via Zoom this month.

With no further business presented to the Committee, the meeting adjourned at 9:01 am.

The next SFWIB Executive Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 11, 2025 at 8:15am.



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 4

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: AMERICA’S TALENT STRATEGY – BUILDING THE WORKFORCE FOR THE GOLDEN AGE

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **INFORMATIONAL**

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

STRATEGIC GOAL: **HIGH ROI THROUGH CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **Emphasize work-based learning and training**

BACKGROUND:

In August 2025, the Departments of Labor, Commerce, and Education formally released America’s Talent Strategy (also titled Equipping American Workers for the Golden Age)—laying out a federal blueprint for reindustrializing the nation, accelerating U.S. leadership in artificial intelligence, and reshaping workforce investment to be more demand-driven, efficient, and accountable.

The strategy retains the five pillars originally envisioned (industry-driven strategies, worker mobility, integrated systems, accountability, flexibility/innovation), but now adds new specificity in several areas:

- A bold target to scale 1 million registered apprenticeships, with proposals to simplify program approval and reduce regulatory burdens.
- Funding mechanisms such as an Industry Skills Training Fund to support employer-led or sectoral training.
- Stronger emphasis on AI-powered tools (e.g. credential matching, job navigation) and embedding AI literacy as a cross-cutting competency.
- Plans to streamline program reporting, modernize workforce data systems, and adopt credential transparency tools.
- Proposals to consolidate or more tightly coordinate federal workforce, education, and economic development efforts—potentially via WIOA reauthorization or FY 2026 appropriation changes.

Implications for the Local Workforce Board:

Because much of the strategy's implementation depends on future legislative or regulatory action, the Board's role may initially be focused on pilot implementation, alignment, and early adoption. SFWIB staff will begin exploring an implementation framework to align our Board's priorities and investments with the updated strategy. Potential focus areas will include:

- Expanding employer-led training, sector partnerships, and apprenticeships in locally strategic industries (especially those impacted by AI).
- Partnering with employers to define "critical, hard-to-fill" roles, validate curricula, and design pathways tied to real employment outcomes.
- Participating in or deploying credential transparency or "credentials-of-value" tools.
- Building or upgrading data systems and longitudinal tracking to support retention, wage progression, and advancement metrics.
- Piloting AI-related reskilling, microcredentials, and modular learning models.
- Monitoring and influencing federal and state rulemaking, grant competitions, and legislative opportunities that align with the strategy.

FUNDING: N/A

PERFORMANCE: N/A

NO ATTACHMENT



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/09/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 5

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: SOUTH DADE RURAL WORKFORCE ADVANCMENT INITIATIVE

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **INFORMATIONAL**

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

STRATEGIC GOAL: **IMPROVE SERVICES FOR INDIVIDUALS W/ BARRIERS**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **Emphasize work-based learning and training**

BACKGROUND:

CareerSource South Florida (CSSF) has prepared a proposal for state general funding to launch the South Dade Rural Workforce Advancement Initiative, serving 125 residents in rural South Miami-Dade—prioritizing federally designated Opportunity Zones. The initiative connects participants to short-term training (6–12 weeks), registered apprenticeships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT), paired with supportive services and direct job placement into committed employer partners. The program is designed to operate independently of WIOA/TANF eligibility to maximize access for rural residents.

Program Objectives

- Promote economic mobility and workforce integration for rural South Dade residents.
- Incentivize employer hiring via OJT wage reimbursement.
- Strengthen pipelines in high-demand sectors and support OZ revitalization.

Target Geography & Populations

- Rural South Miami-Dade County; Opportunity Zone census tracts prioritized.
- Veterans and military families, low-income individuals, residents facing economic displacement.

Core Components

- Short-Term Training: Industry-recognized credentials (6–12 weeks).
- Apprenticeships: Earn-and-learn models with employer sponsorship and RTI.
- OJT: Wage reimbursement for employers training new hires on site.
- Supportive Services: Transportation, counseling, job-readiness.
- Job Placement: Direct link to committed employers.

Industry Focus (initial)

The following are the targeted industries of the South Dade Rural Advancement Initiative

- Construction
- Trade and Logistics
- Healthcare
- Agriculture
- Advanced Manufacturing.

Partnerships & Roles

- Participant Recruitment: Miami-Dade County Community & Human Services; South Dade Veteran Alliance.
- Employer Engagement: Miami-Dade Beacon Council; Economic Development Council of South Miami-Dade.

Budget (State General Funds)

- OJT & Short-Term Training: \$6,800 per participant \times 125 = \$850,000
- CSSF Indirect (33.28%): \$282,880
- Total Program Cost: \$1,132,880

Performance Targets

- 125 participants enrolled/served.
- 80% training/apprenticeship completion rate.
- 70% job placement within 90 days of completion.
- Sustained employer partnerships and improved conditions in targeted OZs.

Compliance & Accountability

- Standard documentation, employer agreements/training plans, fiscal reporting, and performance tracking.
- Internal monitoring to ensure integrity, transparency, and continuous improvement.

Next Steps: CSSF will continue partner alignment and readiness activities while seeking state funding consideration. No Board action is requested at this time.

FUNDING: General Funds

PERFORMANCE: N/A

ATTACHMENT

September 18, 2025

Dr. Erin Sampson
Director, Workforce Program Development
CareerSource Florida
2308 Killearn Center Blvd, Ste 101
Tallahassee, FL 32309

Subject: **Proposal Submission – South Dade Rural Workforce Advancement Initiative**

Dear Dr. Sampson,

I am pleased to submit for your review the enclosed proposal for the South Dade Rural Workforce Advancement Initiative, a targeted employment and Straining program designed to serve 125 residents in rural South Miami-Dade County. This initiative aligns with CareerSource South Florida's mission to expand access to workforce services and promote economic opportunities in underserved communities.

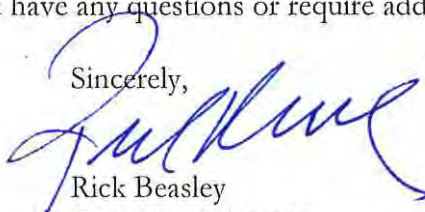
The program will leverage strategic partnerships with the Miami-Dade County Community and Human Services Department and the South Dade Veteran Alliance to recruit participants, while engaging employers through the Miami-Dade County Beacon Council and the Economic Development Council of South Miami-Dade. Through short-term training, apprenticeships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT), the initiative will create pathways to employment for residents in designated Opportunity Zones.

We respectfully request consideration for Florida state general funding to support this effort. The proposed budget reflects an average training cost of \$6,800 per participant, with an indirect cost rate of 33.28% applied to program administration.

We believe this initiative will deliver measurable impact and contribute meaningfully to the economic revitalization of South Dade's rural communities. Thank you for your continued leadership and support in advancing workforce development across our region.

Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,




Rick Beasley
Executive Director
South Florida Workforce Investment Board (SFWIB)
d/b/a CareerSource South Florida (CSSF)

info@careersourcesfl.com

7300 Corporate Center Drive, Suite 500
Miami, Florida 33126

p: 305-594-7615 | f: 305-470-5629



SOUTH DADE RURAL WORKFORCE ADVANCEMENT INITIATIVE

I. Executive Summary

CareerSource South Florida (CSSF) respectfully submits this proposal for state general funding to support the implementation of the South Dade Rural Workforce Advancement Initiative, a targeted employment and training program designed to serve 125 residents in rural South Miami-Dade County, specifically within designated Opportunity Zones. This initiative will address workforce gaps and economic disparities by connecting underserved residents to high-quality training, apprenticeships, and employment opportunities through strategic partnerships and employer incentives.

II. Program Purpose and Objectives

The primary purpose of this initiative is to promote economic mobility and workforce integration for residents of rural South Miami-Dade by:

- Delivering short-term occupational training, apprenticeships, and On-the-Job Training (OJT)
- Incentivizing employers to hire program participants
- Strengthening local workforce pipelines in high-demand industries
- Enhancing community revitalization efforts in Opportunity Zones

This program is designed to operate independently of WIOA and TANF eligibility requirements, ensuring broad access for rural residents who may not qualify under traditional federal programs.

III. Target Population and Geographic Scope

The program will serve **125 residents** residing in rural areas of South Miami-Dade County, with a focus on census tracts designated as **Opportunity Zones**. Target populations include:

- Veterans and military families
- Low-income individuals
- Residents impacted by economic hardship or displacement

IV. Strategic Partnerships

Participant Recruitment

CSSF will collaborate with:

- Miami-Dade County Community and Human Services Department
- South Dade Veteran Alliance

These partners will assist in identifying and enrolling eligible residents, conducting outreach, and providing wraparound support services.

Employer Engagement

CSSF will engage employers through:

- Miami-Dade County Beacon Council
- Economic Development Council of South Miami-Dade

These organizations will facilitate employer participation, focusing on industries such as construction, logistics, healthcare, agriculture, and advanced manufacturing.

V. Program Components

Component	Description
Short-Term Training	Industry-recognized certifications delivered in 6–12 weeks
Apprenticeship Programs	Structured earn-and-learn models with employer sponsorship
On-the-Job Training (OJT)	Wage reimbursement to employers for training new hires on-site
Supportive Services	Transportation, career counseling, and job readiness support
Job Placement	Direct connection to employers committed to hiring program graduates

VI. Budget Summary

Item	Amount per Participant	Total for 125 Participants
OJT & Short-Term Training	\$6,800	\$850,000
CSSF Indirect Cost (33.28%)	—	\$282,880
Total Program Cost	—	\$1,132,880

VI. Program Outcomes

The South Dade Rural Workforce Advancement Initiative will achieve the following measurable outcomes:

- 125 residents enrolled and served
- 80% completion rate for training/apprenticeship programs
- 70% job placement rate within 90 days of program completion
- Sustained employer partnerships supporting long-term workforce development
- Improved economic conditions in targeted Opportunity Zones

VII. Compliance and Accountability

CSSF will ensure full compliance with Florida state general funding requirements, including:

- Documentation of participant enrollment and service delivery
- Execution of employer agreements and training plans
- Fiscal reporting and performance tracking
- Coordination with state and local oversight entities

CSSF will also implement internal monitoring protocols to ensure program integrity, transparency, and continuous improvement.

VIII. Conclusion

The South Dade Rural Workforce Advancement Initiative represents a strategic investment in the economic future of rural South Miami-Dade County. By leveraging local partnerships and employer incentives, CSSF will deliver impactful workforce solutions that promote equity, opportunity, and long-term prosperity.

We respectfully request funding consideration to implement this initiative and welcome the opportunity to discuss its alignment with Florida's workforce development priorities.



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 6

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: REACH ACT PROGRAM YEAR 24-25 QUARTER 3 UPDATE

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **INFORMATIONAL**

RECOMMENDATION: N/A

STRATEGIC GOAL: **STRONG WORKFORCE SYSTEM LEADERSHIP**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **Strengthen workforce system accountability**

BACKGROUND:

Florida's 2021 Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act established a standardized, statewide letter-grade system to assess local workforce development boards on access, alignment, and accountability. Grades are set annually by CareerSource Florida using criteria from the Governor's REACH Office, enabling boards to benchmark strengths and target performance gaps.

Q3 Result

SFWIB earned a 103.92 composite score (A+) for Program Year 2024–2025, Quarter 3, ranking as the only Local Workforce Development Board (LWDB) statewide to achieve an A+ this quarter.

Metric Performance (Highlights)

SFWIB met 100% of target on the following graded metrics:

- Metric 2 – Reduction in Public Assistance
- Metric 3 – Employment and Training Outcomes
- Metric 5 – Continued Repeat Business
- Metric 6 – Year-Over-Year Business Penetration
- Metric 7 – Completion-to-Funding Ratio

In addition, SFWIB achieved the Extra Credit metric: Serving Individuals on Public Assistance.

Continuous Improvement & Operational Focus

To sustain and extend this performance, staff are executing the following actions aligned with negotiated WIOA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Wagner-Peyser indicators:

1. Common Measures Tool – Consistent Use (Metric 3): Reinforce uniform application across AJCs to drive placement, retention, credential attainment, and median earnings outcomes.
2. EconoVue – Targeted Business Intelligence (Metrics 5 & 6): Expand utilization for prospecting, sector penetration, and account management to strengthen repeat business and broaden employer reach year-over-year.
3. Performance Governance: Ongoing monitoring at the executive and AJC-manager levels, with monthly variance reviews and corrective action plans where indicators fall short of trajectory.

Next Steps

- Maintain current interventions that are yielding above-target outcomes.
- Identify remaining metric(s) below 100% and implement targeted strategies to lift performance to goal.
- Report back to the Executive Committee next quarter with trend lines, variance analyses, and any recommended resource shifts to protect the A+ standing.

FUNDING: N/A

PERFORMANCE: N/A

ATTACHMENT

CareerSource South Florida

Program Year 2024-2025, Quarter 3

PY 2024-2025 Quarter 3(Q3) Performance Update				
Local Workforce Development Board	Quarter 1 (%)	Quarter 2 (%)	Quarter 3 (%)	Current Score
<u>CareerSource South Florida</u>	102.6	104.15	103.92	A+
<u>CareerSource Broward</u>	95.49	95.96	96.83	A
<u>CareerSource Southwest Florida</u>	95.66	94.96	95.79	A
<u>CareerSource Central Florida</u>	99.12	95.86	95.32	A
<u>CareerSource Tampa Bay</u>	92.81	93.54	93.67	A
<u>CareerSource Suncoast</u>	86.95	89.89	93.52	A
<u>CareerSource Research Coast</u>	87.18	89.15	93.18	A
<u>CareerSource Northeast Florida</u>	91.54	93.89	92.45	A-
<u>CareerSource Chipola</u>	90.21	87.66	92.1	A-
<u>CareerSource Capital Region</u>	86.94	87.06	89.69	B+
<u>CareerSource Pasco Hernando</u>	86.57	87.1	89.66	B+
<u>CareerSource Brevard Flagler Volusia</u>	88.66	89.14	89.16	B+
<u>CareerSource North Central Florida</u>	85.51	88.02	88.25	B+
<u>CareerSource Heartland</u>	86.27	89.36	88.16	B+
<u>CareerSource Escarosa</u>	88.46	87.16	87.65	B+
<u>CareerSource Okaloosa Walton</u>	85.46	87.35	87.23	B+
<u>CareerSource Citrus Levy Marion</u>	86.3	84.39	85.79	B
<u>CareerSource Palm Beach County</u>	85.55	85.09	85.12	B
<u>CareerSource North Florida</u>	86.63	86.97	84.57	B
<u>CareerSource Gulf Coast</u>	83.62	83.29	83.64	B
<u>CareerSource Polk</u>	81.85	81.67	81.53	B-

CareerSource South Florida

Program Year 2024-2025, Quarter 3

Metric	Metric Category	Weight	Numerator	Denominator	Rate (%)	YOY Rate Difference	Target (%)	Target Met ¹ (%)	Weighted Performance ² (%)
1. Participants with Increased Earnings	Employment and Training Services, Self-Sufficiency	0.25	6,137	12,364	49.64	-	50.00	99.28	24.8200
2. Reduction in Public Assistance	Employment and Training Services, Self-Sufficiency	0.25	4,803	9,176	52.34	-	50.00	100.00	25.0000
3. Employment and Training Outcomes	Employment and Training Services	0.20	18	18	100.00	-	100.00	100.00	20.0000
4. Participants in Work-Related Training	Training Services	0.10	5,084	22,352	22.75	-	25.00	91.00	9.1000
5. Continued Repeat Business	Business Services	0.05	14,990	27,461	54.59	-	35.00	100.00	5.0000
6. Year-Over-Year Business Penetration	Business Services	0.05	-	-	-	7.20	100.00	100.00	5.0000
PY 2021-2022 Business Penetration		-	17,463	78,424	22.27	-	-	-	-
PY 2022-2023 Business Penetration		-	23,643	80,222	29.47	-	-	-	-
7. Completion-to-Funding Ratio	Employment and Training Services	0.10	16.43	13.03	100.00	-	100.00	100.00	10.0000
Exiters: Local Board (N) / Statewide (D)		-	12,000	73,024	16.43	-	-	-	-
Budget: Local Board (N) / Statewide (D)		-	\$18,703,387	\$143,584,399	13.03	-	-	-	-
Extra Credit: Serving Individuals on Public Assistance	Employment and Training Services, Self-Sufficiency	Up to 0.05 points	15,723.50	25,413	61.87	-	-	-	5.00
								ANNUAL SCORE	103.92



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 7

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: STATE OF FLORIDA OPPORTUNITY ZONE WORKGROUP

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **INFORMATIONAL**

RECOMMENDATION: N / A

STRATEGIC GOAL: **BUILD DEMAND-DRIVEN SYSTEM W/ EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **Engage employers and seek continuous feedback**

BACKGROUND:

FloridaCommerce is convening a statewide Opportunity Zone (OZ) Policy Workgroup—alongside SelectFlorida, the Florida Chamber, CareerSource, FEDC, and the three RAOs—to translate the newly reauthorized OZ framework into actionable state and local strategies. The workgroup will: (1) unpack statutory changes, (2) gather public input, and (3) deliver policy and program recommendations for the Governor’s consideration. Priorities include elevating rural communities, targeting investments in census tracts with high child poverty, and aligning workforce education with job creation. Ms. Harriet Moore (FloridaCommerce) will coordinate an in-person kickoff meeting with a virtual option.

For Miami-Dade, this forum is an opportunity to (a) protect and refine local OZ designations during the 2026–2027 redesignation window, (b) steer capital toward inclusive growth in distressed neighborhoods, and (c) synchronize workforce funding (e.g., OJT) with OZ capital to accelerate placements and wage gains.

WHY NOW

- Federal reset & timelines. States begin new nominations/redesignations July 1, 2026; redesignations take effect January 1, 2027. The current OZ map remains valid through December 31, 2028, overlapping the first two years of OZ-2.
- Sharper targeting & transparency. OZ-2 lowers income thresholds, removes “contiguous tract” exceptions, adds reporting, and introduces rural incentives to better focus capital where need is greatest.

KEY OZ-2 PROVISIONS (IMPLICATIONS FOR STRATEGY)

- Designations & eligibility. Periodic, data-driven redesignations (every 10 years) with stricter criteria (e.g., median family income $\leq 70\%$ of area median) will likely reduce the number of qualifying zones—making early local prioritization essential.
- Tax architecture. Rolling 5-year deferral for invested gains; 10% basis step-up after 5 years; permanent exclusion of appreciation after 10+ years—designed to reward patient capital.
- Rural incentives. Enhanced benefits for rural places (<50,000 population): 30% basis step-up after 5 years (3 \times standard) and lower “substantial improvement” threshold (50% vs 100%), creating new opportunities to connect rural suppliers and talent pipelines to Miami-Dade growth nodes.
- Guardrails. Benefits limited to capital gains; no fund-of-funds; residential development excluded—tilting capital toward operating businesses and tangible property.

WORKGROUP CHARTER & DELIVERABLES

1. *Policy Translation & Guidance*
 - Interpret OZ-2 rules and produce a Florida playbook (designation strategy, capital stack exemplars, reporting templates).
2. *Redesignation Strategy (2026–2027)*
 - Recommend tract-level prioritization criteria (child-poverty clusters, job access, transit, brownfields, catalytic corridors) and a public-input plan.
3. *Capital + Workforce Alignment*
 - Bundle OZ capital with FloridaCommerce/SelectFlorida tools and CareerSource instruments (OJT, apprenticeships, supportive services) for employer expansion and inclusive hiring.
4. *Rural–Urban Linkages*
 - Use rural incentives to build supplier networks and talent pipelines into Miami-Dade projects, leveraging both rural and urban LWDB perspectives.
5. *Recommendations to the Governor*
 - Package statutory/administrative recommendations, implementation timelines, and metrics.

MIAMI-DADE PRIORITIES TO ADVANCE IN THE WORKGROUP

- Protect & optimize high-need tracts. Prepare evidence to retain or refine OZ designations in areas with persistent poverty and workforce potential.
- Project pipeline. Identify operating-business and tangible-property opportunities tied to priority industries (healthcare, logistics, infrastructure, advanced manufacturing, tech), ready to absorb investment under the 10-year horizon.
- Workforce integration. Pair OZ investments with CSSF tools (OJT waiver utilization, apprenticeships, retention services) to move residents into quality jobs and document outcomes for the new reporting regime.
- Rural partnerships. Co-develop rural supplier/apprenticeship bridges with RAOs and rural LWDBs to meet Miami-Dade firms’ demand while channeling rural incentives.

PROPOSED TIMELINE (HIGH LEVEL)

- Q4 2025: Kickoff; confirm charter, milestones, public-input roadmap.
- Q1–Q2 2026: Draft Florida playbook; identify candidate tracts & project pipeline; begin stakeholder listening sessions.
- July 1, 2026: Governor nominations window opens—submit initial recommendations.
- Jan 1, 2027: New designations effective; implementation guidance and capital-mobilization support.
- 2027–2028: Reporting, evaluation, and adjustments; overlap with legacy map through Dec 31, 2028.

REQUESTED ACTIONS

1. Confirm participation in the kickoff session (date/time to be coordinated by Harriet).
2. Designate a point of contact from each organization for technical workstreams (designation analytics, capital formation, workforce alignment, stakeholder engagement).
3. Submit initial inputs within 30 days of kickoff:
 - Priority tracts/corridors and rationale
 - Candidate business/real-asset projects (10-year hold potential)
 - Workforce programs and employer partners ready to scale under OZ-2
 - Rural collaboration opportunities with RAOs/LWDBs

FUNDING: N / A

PERFORMANCE: N/A

ATTACHMENT



Opportunity Zones

August 2025 Update

Division of Business Development

August 2025



FLORIDA OPPORTUNITY ZONES



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

Contents

- 1) Creation and Purpose of Opportunity Zones / TJCA (OZ-1)
- 2) OZ-Qualified Investments
- 3) 2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act / OBBBA (OZ-2)
- 4) OZ-2 Redesignations
- 5) Geographic Boundaries and Sunset Dates
- 6) OZ-2 Incentives for Rural Investments
- 7) Updated Tax Benefits
- 8) Transition and Timing
- 9) Restrictions and Limitations
- 10) Direct Comparisons



Creation (OZ-1)

Opportunity Zones were established under the Tax Credit and Jobs Act (TCJA) of 2017 (OZ-1) to incentivize private investment in economically distressed areas. Using U.S. Census Tracts as geographic borders, TCJA resulted in 8,764 OZs designated across the U.S. and 427 in Florida.

WHERE & WHAT IS AN OPPORTUNITY ZONE?

An Opportunity Zone is an economically distressed urban or rural community that has been identified by certain local, state, and federal qualifications.



**How do we fund
the revitalization of
economically-distressed
communities with
private capital?**

Opportunity Zones



Purpose

OZs stimulate economic growth by encouraging private investors to direct capital to areas of greatest need.

Private capital is used to address economic disparities, reduce unemployment, and promote sustainable development in distressed neighborhoods.

OZs foster investment, job creation, and community revitalization while tax advantages are used to make the program desirable to investors.

The result is an alignment of economic incentives to investors committing capital to qualifying projects in OZs with community needs to catalyze long-term growth.



Qualified Investments



Affordable
Housing



Market Rate
Housing



Mixed Use
Developments



Commercial
Real Estate
(Agricultural)



Industrial
Real Estate
(Infrastructure)



Venture
Investments



Growth
Investments

REAL ESTATE OZ
INVESTMENTS

OPERATING OZ
INVESTMENTS

QUALIFIED OPPORTUNITY ZONE INVESTMENTS

The OZ program incentivizes a diverse array of investments, from real estate to operating companies.



2025 One Big Beautiful Bill Act / OBBBA (OZ-2)

OZ-2 made important changes based on feedback from the TCJA.

OZ-2 tax incentives were made permanent to provide for long-term stability and predictability.

OZ-2 more precisely targets areas of greatest need, through updated redesignation criteria, geographic boundaries, and zone designations through lower income thresholds and the removal of certain exceptions.

OZ-2 expands the scope of eligible rural areas by providing enhanced incentives for rural investments.

The mechanics of tax benefits, including basis step-ups and deferral periods, were streamlined to enhance investor appeal.

Benefits restricted to capital gains keep the focus on gains-driven investments for long-term development.

New reporting requirements increase transparency and ensure that benefits will reach the most distressed communities.



OZ-2 Redesignations



OZ-2 requires that beginning January 1, 2027, states must redesignate their OZs every 10 years with updated redesignation requirements which will likely reduce the number of qualifying zones. These include:

- Lowering the median family income threshold to 70% from 80%
- Removing the provision for contiguous non-low-income tracts, to better target benefits toward the most distressed areas
- Adding new criteria such as rural incentives and new reporting requirements

The periodic redesignation is intended to ensure that OZ designations are aligned with evolving community conditions and economic realities and continue this more targeted approach to community revitalization.



OZ-2 Geographic Boundaries and Sunset Dates

The current OZ map will remain in effect through the end of 2028, overlapping the new designations for two years.

New Governor OZ nominations and redesignations begin on July 1, 2026.

Redesignations take effect on January 1, 2027.

Sunset and timing requirements jumpstart the updated program.

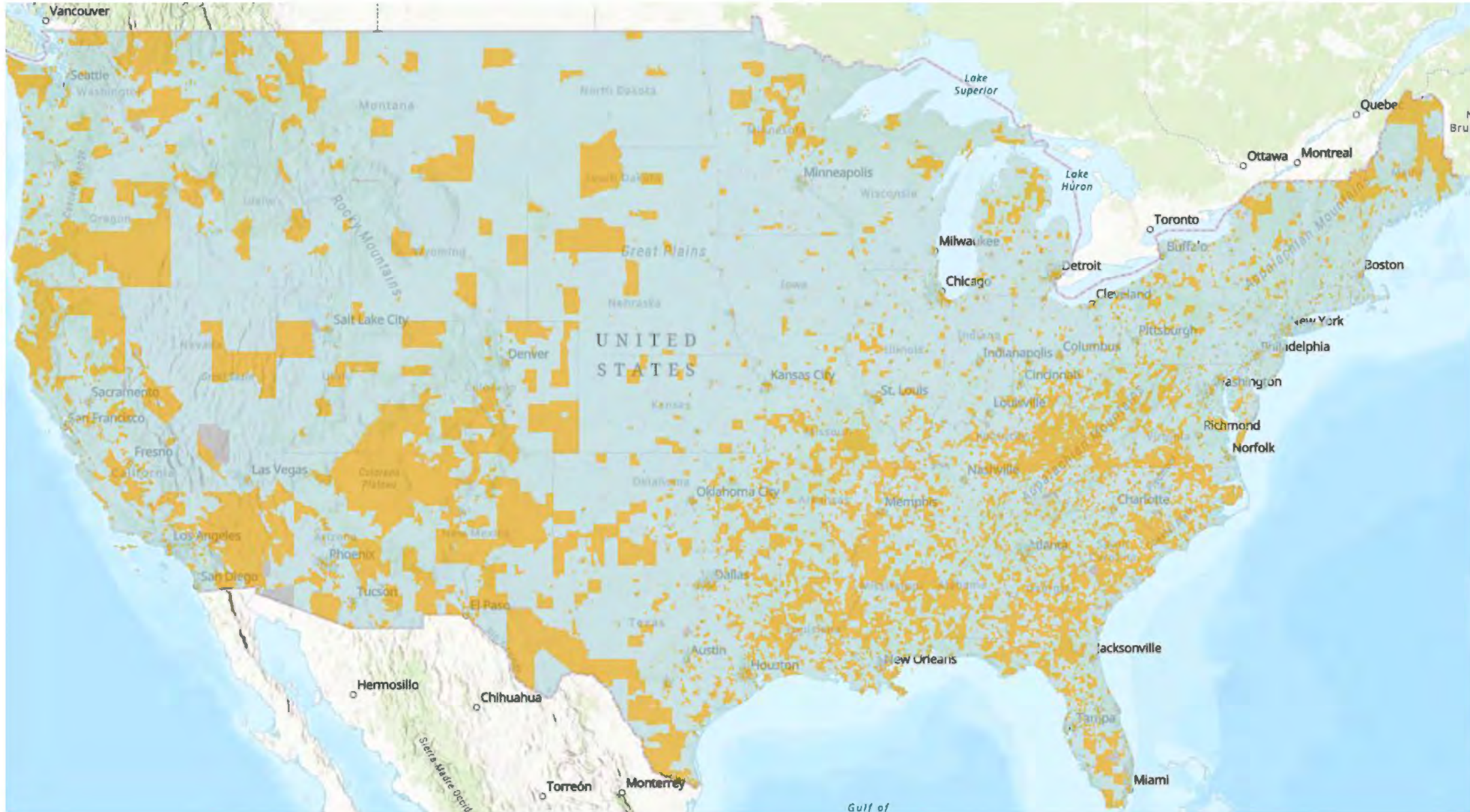
Boundary changes may redefine or remove some OZs.

The updates emphasize the focus on areas of greatest need.

OZ-2 creates a more dynamic and responsive zone designation process to better align investments with current community conditions and needs.



Eligible Opportunity Zones



This map depicts which census tracts will be eligible for nomination by governors and subsequent designation based on the criteria laid out in the legislation and according to the latest available data (currently the 2019-2023 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates). This map may contain errors or omissions and is for illustrative purposes only. Users should expect the U.S. Department of the Treasury to issue an authoritative eligibility map in advance of the next decennial determination period.

Orange OZ Eligible

Blue OZ Ineligible

Gray Insufficient Information



OZ-2 Incentives for Rural Investments



OZ-2 provides for new enhanced incentives for investments in rural communities, which are defined as places with populations less than 50,000. This targets benefits toward truly rural areas.

A 30% step-up in basis is offered for investments in rural areas maintained at least five years, which is 3X the step-up offered for other OZs.

OZ-2 reduces the substantial improvement threshold for qualified rural opportunity funds (QROFs), to 50% from 100%. This lowers the hurdle for investment in tangible property.

These incentives are designed to address economic disparities in rural areas.



OZ-2 Updated Tax Benefits

A rolling 5-year deferral period for initial capital gains invested replaces the 5 and 7-year basis step-ups of OZ-1.

Standard Qualified Opportunity Fund (QOF) investors receive a 10% basis step-up after 5 years.

Capital gains taxes are permanently eliminated on investments held 10 or more years.

This structure provides greater flexibility and incentives for long-term investments, encouraging investors to hold assets for extended periods.



OZ-2 allows a transition period between the sunset of OZ-1 rules at year-end 2026 and the full implementation of OZ-2 in 2027. This provides investors with strategic tax planning options.

They can choose to deploy gains prior to December 31, 2026, to leverage existing OZ-1 benefits, or they can wait until 2027 for the rolling 5-year deferral and tiered basis step-up features offered by OZ-2.

The added flexibility accommodates investor tax planning to help provide them with maximum benefits based on market conditions and timing and their own specific tax situation.

The provision balances program continuity with innovation.

Transition and Timing Options



Restrictions and Limitations

Despite the incentives they offer, both OZ-1 and OZ-2 come with certain restrictions.

Benefits are limited to capital gains and exclude ordinary income and other forms of investment capital, which constrains the scope of eligible investments.

OZ-2 prohibits fund-of-funds structures, which can limit smaller investor access to diversified OZ portfolios.

OZ-2 excludes incentives for residential development, which also excludes potential opportunities to align OZ investments with workforce housing needs.

The focus continues to be on operating businesses and tangible property but the percentage improvement provision can be a challenge for certain businesses as some sectors and project types may not qualify.

Limitations have been designed to direct capital toward specific types of projects, primarily those involving capital gains and the purchase of tangible property. However, they also restrict broader participation and diverse investment strategies.



Direct Comparison – OZ-1 and OZ-2



VS



Census Tracts and OZs

U.S. Census Tracts	2017 – OZ-1	2025 – OZ-2*
Total U.S. Tracts	73,057	84,414
OZ Eligible Tracts	42,176	33,750
Potential Nominations (25%)	10,544	8,438
Recommended	8,764	6,555
Certified as Qualified	8,764	6,555*
Florida Census Tracts	2017	2025*
All Florida Tracts	4,400	5,160
Eligible Tracts	1,708**	1,376
Potential Nominations (25%)	427	344
Recommended	427	344
Qualified and Designated	427	344***

*2025 data is projected by 3rd party sources.

**The figure above is a result of 427 being 25% of eligible tracts (which contrasts with the 1,200+ figure cited in the media.

***19.4% reduction from 2017



Program Duration and Designation

<p>OZ-1 had a sunset date of December 31, 2026, creating uncertainty for long-term investments. States nominated QOZs based on 2010 census data, with no mechanism for updating or revising designations.</p>	<p>OZ-2 eliminates the sunset date, making the program permanent for tax years beginning after December 31, 2026. States are now required to nominate new zones every 10 years, starting July 1, 2026, ensuring that designations remain aligned with current economic conditions.</p>
---	--



Eligibility Criteria

OZ-1 required Qualifying QOZs to be designated by the U.S. Department of Treasury based on nominations by Governors, which were typically low-income census tracts and certain contiguous non-low-income areas.	OZ-2 narrows the eligibility criteria by requiring QOZs to have a median family income of 70% or less than the state or metro median (compared to 80% previously) or a poverty rate of at least 20% combined with income below 125% of the median. It also eliminates provision for the designation of contiguous tracts. This more restrictive criteria better targets areas of need and is expected to reduce the number of OZs by 20-30%.
---	--



Tax Benefits

Investors could defer taxes on capital gains by reinvesting them into Qualified Opportunity Funds (QOFs). The benefit was a 10% step-up in basis for investments held at least 5 years and a 15% step-up for investments held at least 7 years. Investors could exclude capital gains entirely for investments held at least 10 years.

OZ-2 eliminates the 7-year 15% basis step-up. It introduces a rolling 5-year deferral period for initial capital gains invested to replace the previous fixed deferral date. OZ-2 also allows for the exclusion of post-investment appreciation after a 10-year holding period.



Rural Area Investments

The original OZ program didn't specifically prioritize or incentivize investments in rural areas.

OZ-2 establishes a new category of Qualified Rural Opportunity Funds (QROFs) with enhanced incentives for rural areas, defined as populations under 50,000.

Investments in QROFs receive a 30% basis step-up after 5 years (3x the standard step-up) and a reduced "substantial improvement" requirement, which allows them to reinvest 50% of the adjusted basis of the property into improvements, compared to the 100% requirement for other OZs.

OZ-2's new focus on rural areas requires that one-third of the tracts designated by Governors must be rural.



Reporting Requirements

OZ-1 dropped reporting requirements during the original legislative process.

OZ-2 reintroduced and expanded original reporting requirements for Qualified Opportunity Funds (QOFs) and Qualified Opportunity Zone Businesses (QOZBs). QOFs must report detailed information, including total asset value, investment amounts, census tracts invested in, property details, and investor disposition data. Failure to comply with reporting requirements may result in penalties.



Summary

OZ-1 has attracted nearly \$100 billion to economically depressed areas. The hope is OZ-2 will attract even more. The above presentation has described the purpose, legislative update, structure, tax incentives, and limitations of the Opportunity Zone Program and its potential trajectory in the future.



Questions and Answers

Thank You. Contact us:

If you have questions or comments about this presentation, please contact us.



Florida Department of Commerce

Email: Benjamin.Latham@commerce.fl.gov

Office: Division of Economic Development





Opportunity Zones

August 2025 Update

Division of Business Development
August 2025



FLORIDA OPPORTUNITY ZONES



FLORIDA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY



SFWIB EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

DATE: 10/9/2025

AGENDA ITEM NUMBER: 8

AGENDA ITEM SUBJECT: WIOA OPPORTUNITY ZONE OJT WAIVER REQUEST

AGENDA ITEM TYPE: **APPROVAL**

RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends to the Executive Committee to approve the implementation of the federally approved WIOA Opportunity Zone On-the-Job Training Waiver, authorizing for up to 90% employer reimbursement region wide and up to 100% reimbursement for employers located in or employing residents of Opportunity Zones in Workforce Development Area 23, as set forth below.

STRATEGIC GOAL: **BUILD DEMAND-DRIVEN SYSTEM W/ EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT**

STRATEGIC PROJECT: **Engage employers and seek continuous feedback**

BACKGROUND:

In response to policy changes requested by the federal administration, staff developed a WIOA On-the-Job Training (OJT) waiver to expand work-based learning opportunities in Florida's Opportunity Zones—economically distressed communities designated for investment incentives.

Florida's waiver request, submitted on June 26, 2025, sought authority to increase OJT reimbursement levels beyond the statutory limit of 75 percent. On September 19, 2025, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA), issued its official response, conditionally approving Florida's waiver through June 30, 2027.

Waiver Authority & Scope:

- **Statewide:** Allows reimbursement of up to 90% of the extraordinary costs of training and supervision under OJT for all businesses statewide.
- **Opportunity Zones:** Allows reimbursement of up to 100% for all businesses located in or employing residents of designated Opportunity Zones.
- **Coverage:** Applies to WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds.
- **Conditions:** Florida must update its waiver plan to include projected outcomes (employment, retention, earnings, credential attainment) and report on outcomes in the WIOA Annual Report.

Implications for SFWIB (WDA 23):

This waiver provides the South Florida Workforce Investment Board with new flexibility to:

- Fully reimburse OJT costs for employers located in or employing residents of the 427 designated Opportunity Zones across Florida (including those in Miami-Dade County).
- Incentivize small and mid-size businesses to participate in OJT by offsetting hiring and training costs.
- Expand work-based learning opportunities for job seekers facing barriers to employment, increasing their long-term earning potential and job stability.
- Support statewide priorities to improve WIOA outcomes, strengthen the talent pipeline, and align with the federal administration's emphasis on work-based learning.
- Leverage OJT waivers to engage Registered Apprenticeships and support co-enrollment between WIOA and apprenticeship programs, as encouraged by ETA.

SFWIB staff will:

- Develop employer outreach and communication strategies to maximize use of the 100% OJT reimbursement in Opportunity Zones.
- Track outcomes for participants and businesses to meet ETA reporting requirements

The actual date of implementation will be determined once the State of Florida updates the request to include projected outcomes for WIOA participants and businesses served un the waiver.

FUNDING: Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

PERFORMANCE: N/A

ATTACHMENT

U.S. Department of Labor

Employment and Training Administration
200 Constitution Avenue, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20210



September 19, 2025

The Honorable Ron DeSantis
Governor of Florida
400 S. Monroe Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor DeSantis:

Thank you for your waiver request submission to the U.S. Department of Labor (Department) regarding certain statutory and regulatory provisions of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the accompanying plan to improve the statewide workforce development system (enclosed). The waiver request was received on June 26, 2025. This letter provides the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) official response to your request and memorializes that Florida will meet the outcomes and implement the measures identified in its plan to ensure accountability agreed to by Florida and ETA. This action is taken under the Secretary of Labor's authority to waive certain requirements of WIOA Title I, Subtitles A, B, and E, and Sections 8–10 of the Wagner-Peyser Act in WIOA Section 189(i).

Requested Waiver: The State is requesting a waiver of WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) in order to increase on-the-job training (OJT) employer reimbursement up to 90 percent for all businesses statewide and up to 100 percent for businesses located in or that employ current residents within areas designated as Opportunity Zones.

ETA Response: ETA conditionally approves the State's waiver request through June 30, 2027, for the WIOA Title I Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth formula funds, with the parameters below. ETA reviewed the State's waiver request and plan and has determined that the requirements requested to be waived impede the ability of the State to implement its plan to improve the workforce development system. Existing statutory authority permits the State to increase the reimbursement rate for employers' extraordinary costs of providing OJT to up to 75 percent of an OJT participant's wage rate. Under this waiver, the State may allow its local workforce development areas to reimburse businesses of any size up to 90 percent and up to 100 percent for all businesses located in or that employ current residents within designated Opportunity Zones. ETA expects the utilization of OJT to increase in the State as a result of this waiver. Prior to implementation of this waiver, Florida must update its waiver request to include projected outcomes (i.e., for the core indicators under WIOA or shorter-term state-defined indicators) for WIOA participants and businesses served under the waiver. ETA encourages Florida to utilize the flexibility afforded by this waiver to engage Registered Apprenticeships and increase co-enrollment between WIOA and apprenticeship opportunities.

The State must report its waiver outcomes and implementation of the approved waiver in the WIOA Annual Report. ETA will use this information to assess continued waiver approval and to identify promising practices that may be adopted more widely. ETA is available to provide technical assistance to you in support of your goals. If you have questions, feel free to contact my office at (202) 693-2772.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lori Frazier Bearden". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lori" being the most prominent.

Lori Frazier Bearden
Acting Assistant Secretary

Enclosures

cc: J. Alex Kelly, Secretary, FloridaCommerce
Karmyn Hill, Bureau Chief, One-Stop and Program Support, FloridaCommerce
Renata Adjibodou, Atlanta Regional Administrator, ETA
Latanya Lowery, Federal Project Officer, ETA

State of Florida Waiver Request Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Increasing On-the-Job Training Reimbursement Limits for Businesses in Opportunity Zones

Statutory and/or Regulatory Requirements to be Waived

The State of Florida is requesting a waiver from the requirements outlined in WIOA Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) and 20 CFR 680.720(b) that states “employers may be reimbursed up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an OJT participant, and up to 75 percent using the criteria in § 680.730, for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to OJT.”

For Program Years 2025 and 2026, Florida requests to increase on-the-job training (OJT) wage reimbursements up to 90 percent statewide and up to 100 percent for OJT opportunities with businesses located in areas designated as Opportunity Zones or residents within an Opportunity Zone. According to the [Training and Employment Notice 24-25](#), released on May 5, 2025, nine jurisdictions – California, Colorado, Illinois, Maryland, Missouri, Nevada, Puerto Rico, Rhode Island, Wisconsin – are already approved for OJT wage reimbursements up to 90 percent statewide.

Opportunity Zones represent economically distressed census tracts identified by state governors and certified by the U.S. Department of the Treasury. Nationally, there are 8,764 Opportunity Zones, which are in all 50 states, five territories and the District of Columbia. These communities have historically faced significant barriers to economic growth and have often been overlooked for investment and job creation. As well, these areas continue to face chronic underinvestment and disproportionately high barriers to employment. In Florida, there are a total of 427 Qualified Opportunity Zones, covering every county in the state. These Opportunity Zones equate to 40,292 business establishments, representing 936,691 jobs statewide.

Over the last four years, Florida has seen a decline in businesses taking advantage of OJTs as a tool to hire and train talent, while offsetting costs associated with onboarding and training new staff. As seen in the chart below, the decline is slightly more than 50 percent for the number of participants served. Additionally, there was a 75 percent decline in the number of positions created through OJT. Furthermore, the number of local workforce development boards that employ OJT as a work-based training encountered fluctuations over this period, resulting in a slight decline, even while using OJT as a means to support the training costs associated with apprenticeship’s “earn and learn” model.

Program Year(s)	Participants Served	Employers Served	Job Orders Created	Positions Created	LWDB Usage
2021	566	221	221	1423	18/24 (75%)
2022	462	158	158	277	20/24 (83%)
2023	439	238	238	372	19/24 (79%)
2024	277	241	241	350	15/21 (71%)*

*Florida consolidated its workforce development boards from 24 to 21 effective July 1, 2024.

Actions the State Has Undertaken to Remove State or Local Barriers

There are no state, local, statutory, or regulatory barriers to implementing the waiver.

Strategic Goals of the Waiver

The strategic goals associated with this waiver are to:

1. Provide a targeted incentive to employers in Opportunity Zones to drive job creation and improve access to work-based learning opportunities for job seekers in need.
2. Address the talent pipeline shortages faced by many employers in Opportunity Zones by ensuring participants have the skills and preparation needed to enter the workforce and be contributing members of the local and State economy.
3. Attract additional private investment in Opportunity Zones.
4. Expand access to work-based learning in Opportunity Zones, particularly those individuals residing within the Opportunity Zone with limited experience or credentials, to gain access to hands-on training and career pathways, improving their long-term earning potential and job stability.
5. Accelerate hiring and job placements, reduce unemployment durations and increase workforce participation in Opportunity Zones.
6. Improve WIOA performance outcomes statewide.

Alignment with U.S. Department of Labor/Employment and Training Administration Policy Priorities

WIOA places an emphasis and priority on work-based learning opportunities, and this waiver will enable Florida to create more of these opportunities with businesses in the state so workers can advance. USDOL's Fiscal Year 2022-26 Strategic Plan established ETA's Performance Goal 1.1 to "create customer-focused workforce solutions that serve all workers, including underserved communities." Approval of this waiver allows Florida to support businesses in building or rebuilding their workforce through work-based learning opportunities and target businesses in Opportunity Zones for OJT to participate in the workforce system, and thus increase opportunities for jobseekers to access high quality training and employment.

This waiver will meet the following ETA strategies outlined in goal 1.1:

1. Preparing America's workers for the jobs of the 21st century by investing in high-quality workforce training programs and expanding access to underserved communities; and,
2. Strengthening training and employment services by supporting the workforce system to provide critical employment and training services in a rapidly changing environment.

The flexibility to provide an increased wage reimbursement for OJTs ensures that scarce workforce dollars are allocated to strengthen the local talent pipeline, especially in communities with the greatest barriers to employment and economic growth. Employers operating in distressed areas often cite training costs as a deterrent to hiring. Offering an increased reimbursement mitigates that disincentive and strengthens public-private collaboration in workforce development. The waiver enables scalable, employer-driven training approaches that are essential for building pipelines in in-demand industries, especially for youth, dislocated workers, and individuals with limited formal education. By targeting OJT reimbursements to employers in Opportunity Zones, this waiver helps ensure a higher return on investment through improved employment outcomes and stronger community economic resilience.

Projected Programmatic Outcomes Resulting from Implementation of the Waiver

The State expects to achieve the following goals and programmatic outcomes as a result of this waiver:

1. Increased number of OJT placements for businesses, particularly in Opportunity Zones.

2. Increased employment retention rates in the 2nd and 4th quarters after exit.
3. Increased number of unique employer work sites using OJT.

Description of Individuals, Groups, or Populations Impacted by the Waiver

1. Employers.
2. Small and mid-size businesses in Opportunity Zones.
3. WIOA participants (Adult, Dislocated Workers, Youth).
4. The State's career centers and the one-stop delivery system.

The Process to Monitor the Waived Activities and Collect Waiver Outcome Information

Annual WIOA on-site and remote programmatic reviews will include an evaluation of how the waiver is being utilized locally and the success of achieving the stated goals and outcomes. Local workforce development boards will also be responsible for assessing the use and effectiveness of the waiver. Local areas will also be required to report on implementation and performance as a result of the waiver in their local and regional plans.

Most Recent Data Available Regarding the Results and Outcomes Observed Through the Implementation of the Existing Waiver

The State of Florida does not have an OJT waiver in place at present.

Opportunity for Local Workforce Development Board and Public Comment on the Waiver

Workforce development stakeholders, including LWDBs, businesses, and Chief Local Elected Officials, were notified of the State's waiver request through an email alert and post on CareerSource Florida's website. This included instructions on how to submit comments. In addition, both the public and stakeholders had access to the waiver request on CareerSource Florida's website, CareerSourceFlorida.com, in the WIOA combined plan. The public comment period was open for 30 calendar days.

TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT NOTICE	NO. 25-24
	DATE May 6, 2025

TO: STATE WORKFORCE AGENCIES
STATE WORKFORCE LIAISONS
STATE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND STAFF
LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND STAFF

FROM: LORI FRAZIER BEARDEN 
Acting Assistant Secretary

SUBJECT: Leveraging Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Waivers to Increase Labor Force Participation and Worker Productivity

1. **Purpose.** To encourage state and local Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) title I grantees to leverage waivers that may increase labor force participation and enhance worker productivity in response to the Presidential Memorandum of January 20, 2025, titled, “Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis.”
2. **Action Requested.** All state and local grantees are encouraged to request waivers as necessary, such as those outlined in this Training and Employment Notice (TEN), to ensure WIOA funds are being used effectively to increase labor force participation by drawing discouraged workers into the labor force, and to upskill the workforce to enhance worker productivity.
3. **Summary and Background.**
 - Summary – This TEN shares information about four WIOA waiver options that grantees may use to help improve labor force participation rates and productivity to increase the prosperity of the American worker.
 - Background – President Trump issued the Presidential Memorandum on January 20, 2025, which is available at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/2025/01/delivering-emergency-price-relief-for-american-families-and-defeating-the-cost-of-living-crisis/>.¹ All federal agencies are taking steps to implement this memo, which calls upon the Federal Government to create employment opportunities for American workers, including drawing discouraged workers into the labor force, with the goal of lowering America’s cost of living.

¹ Also available in the Federal Register at: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/28/2025-01904/delivering-emergency-price-relief-for-american-families-and-defeating-the-cost-of-living-crisis> and <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-28/pdf/2025-01904.pdf>.

WIOA section 189(i) provides states the opportunity to request waivers of some statutory or regulatory requirements for Secretary of Labor approval. A full description of what does and does not fall under that waiver authority can be found in WIOA Section 189(i)(3) and at [20 CFR 679.610](#) and [20 CFR 679.620](#). State and local areas have used WIOA waivers to respond creatively to economic pressures and business needs in their communities. Waivers modify a state's Unified or Combined State Plan and, therefore, are generally approved for the length of the approved State Plan (four years). Youth waivers and some disaster related business capitalization waivers, however, are tied to the length of funding and are approved for two-year increments.

This TEN provides examples of ways in which states can leverage the waiver authority to increase labor force participation and employment opportunities for American workers, but this is not an exhaustive list of waiver authority. More information about waivers can be found at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/wioa/waivers>.

4. **Leveraging WIOA Waivers to Enhance Labor Force Participation and Worker Productivity.** WIOA is intended to help American workers receive the training and career services necessary to take advantage of employment opportunities in their communities. Section 134 of WIOA allows states and local areas to fund a variety of training approaches, including several types of work-based training. Some states use waivers to provide even more flexibility within the allowable training opportunities. Following are some waiver options states can use to engage discouraged workers and assist in their re-entering the workforce. Waivers may also support employers in delivering training and upskilling to close skills gaps that improve worker productivity and generally enhance employment opportunities for Americans.

- ***Increasing On-the-Job Training (OJT) reimbursement for Local Workforce Development Boards (Local Boards).***

OJT is a work-based learning strategy that helps individuals to build or update their skills or establish themselves in emerging, high-demand fields. It also incentivizes businesses to hire individuals and invest in their skill development by providing wage reimbursement to program participants. OJT programs can be particularly successful for individuals who are unable or unlikely to obtain employment without retraining; individuals who are low income, receiving unemployment insurance or public assistance, or need to earn a wage while learning occupational skills; and individuals who can learn the skills necessary for the occupation more easily and thoroughly on the job. OJT may also be a good option for currently employed individuals who are not earning a family-sustaining wage.

Under Section 134(c)(3)(H)(i) of WIOA and the implementing regulation at [20 CFR 680.720](#), a Local Board may reimburse an employer up to 50 percent of the wage rate of an OJT participant for the extraordinary costs of providing the training and additional supervision related to the training. In limited circumstances, the reimbursement may be up to 75 percent of the wage rate of the participant. The Secretary has the authority to waive this provision, and has previously approved waivers to allow up to 90 percent of OJT employer reimbursement for businesses with less than 50 employees. This allows for

more small businesses to take advantage of OJT reimbursement while training new employees in their communities, bringing new opportunities to previously discouraged workers.

As of March 2025, nine states have taken advantage of this waiver.

- ***Increasing Transitional Jobs.***

Transitional jobs are a type of service that Local Boards may provide to help discouraged workers to re-enter the labor force. Transitional jobs are time-limited and wage-paid work experiences that are subsidized up to 100 percent by WIOA funding. Transitional jobs are particularly useful for discouraged workers who are chronically unemployed, may not have robust work experience, have large gaps in their employment history, or experience other barriers to employment. Transitional jobs provide an individual with work experience, generally for a fixed time period, during which the worker develops on-the-job skills while receiving a wage and supportive services. Transitional jobs also assist employers, particularly small businesses, who may be experiencing worker shortages or need to hire additional staff to rebuild their business operations after experiencing economic impacts, by reimbursing a greater portion of their training and wage costs.

Under Section 134(d)(5) of WIOA and its implementing regulation at [20 CFR 680.195](#), a Local Board may use up to 10 percent of its combined total of Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations for these transitional jobs. The Secretary has the authority to waive this provision, and has previously approved an increase in allowable use of funds for transitional jobs up to 50 percent of Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations. This waiver allows states to fund more transitional jobs, which can be used as tools to re-engage workers in the American economy.

As of March 2025, only one state has ever taken advantage of this waiver.

- ***Increase Funds Available for Incumbent Worker Training (IWT)***

States interested in helping lower costs by increasing a worker's wage through career advancement may choose to leverage IWT. IWT consists of work-based training designed to ensure that workers of a company can acquire the skills necessary to retain employment and advance within the company, or to acquire the skills necessary to avert a layoff, while remaining employed. IWT can also be used for underemployed workers, or workers who would prefer full-time work but are working part-time for economic reasons. For instance, IWT training may focus on increasing skills for frontline workers in an effort to advance those workers to more skilled positions with the same employer or industry sector, leading to an increase in earnings through more work hours or an increase in pay.

Under WIOA Section 134(d)(4) and the implementing regulation at [20 CFR 680.800\(a\)](#), a Local Board may reserve up to 20 percent of their combined total of Adult and Dislocated Worker allocations funds for IWT. The Secretary has authority to waive this provision, and has previously approved an increase of the allowable threshold available for IWT from 20 to 50 percent.

By increasing allowable funding from 20 to 50 percent, a Local Board can invest in its existing businesses and workforce, assisting businesses to upskill workers, which increases retention and worker productivity.

As of March 2025, three states have taken advantage of this waiver.

- ***Increasing Work Experience Opportunities for In-School Youth (ISY)***

Work Experiences are a planned, structured learning experience that takes place in the workplace for a limited period of time. In the WIOA Youth program, there are a variety of work experiences including: summer employment opportunities and other employment opportunities throughout the school year; pre-apprenticeship programs and Registered Apprenticeship programs; internships; job shadowing; and OJT.

Under Section 129(a)(4) of WIOA and the implementing regulation at 20 CFR 681.410, local areas must spend not less than 75 percent of local area WIOA Youth funds on out-of-school youth (OSY). The Secretary has authority to waive this provision, and has previously approved waivers to reduce the OSY expenditure requirement from 75 percent to 50 percent. By reducing the OSY expenditure minimum to 50 percent, Local Boards can spend up to 50 percent of WIOA Youth funds on ISY, thereby providing additional work experience opportunities for ISY, including pre-apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship programs. Evidence shows that work experience and work-based learning interventions improve several outcomes related to success in the labor market including short-term annual earnings, long-term annual earnings, short-term employment, and long-term employment.² By increasing opportunities for ISY to participate in work experience, WIOA Youth programs can help set them up for short- and long-term success in the labor market.

As of March 2025, 28 states have taken advantage of this waiver and the majority of states requesting this waiver report using it primarily to expand work experience opportunities for ISY.

5. **Inquiries.** For further information, please contact the appropriate Regional Office.

6. **References.**

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Sec. 189(i), 29 U.S.C. § 3249
- WIOA Regulations at 20 CFR parts 679, 680, and 681
- Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 08-18, *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I and Wagner-Peyser Act Waiver Requirements and Request Process*, December 19, 2018, available at

² Pathways to Work Evidence Clearinghouse prepared for the Office of Planning, Research, and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services; and available at: https://pathwaystowork.acf.gov/pathways_publications/work-experience-and-work-based-learning

<https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-guidance-letter-no-08-18>.

- Training and Employment Guidance Letter No. 19-16, *Guidance on Services provided through the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and the Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Services (ES), as amended by title III of WIOA, and for implementation of the WIOA Final Rules*, March 1, 2017, available at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/training-and-employment-guidance-letter-no-19-16>.
- Presidential Memorandum, “Delivering Emergency Price Relief for American Families and Defeating the Cost-of-Living Crisis,” January 20, 2025, available at <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/01/28/2025-01904/delivering-emergency-price-relief-for-american-families-and-defeating-the-cost-of-living-crisis> and <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2025-01-28/pdf/2025-01904.pdf>.

7. **Attachment(s)**. N/A