



AUG 30 2017

The Honorable Paul LePage
Governor of Maine
1 State House Station
Augusta, Maine 04333

Dear Governor LePage:

Thank you for your July 11, 2017 (copy enclosed) letter in which you requested to merge Maine's existing local workforce development areas into a single-local area encompassing the entire State. This letter constitutes the Employment and Training Administration's (ETA) response to your request.

ETA recognizes Maine's outreach to rural areas of the State as well as the challenges associated with serving rural communities. Unfortunately, we are unable to approve your request. WIOA Sec. 189(i)(3)(A)(i) explicitly prohibits the Secretary from waiving any statutory or regulatory requirements relating to the establishment and function of local areas and/or the allocation of funds to local areas. Additionally, 20 CFR 679.270(a) provides that only "[the] Governor of any State that was a single-State local area under the WIA as in effect on July 1, 2013 may designate the State as a single-State local area under WIOA." There are currently no statutory or regulatory procedures for a State with multiple local workforce development areas to become a single-area State.

If you have additional questions, please contact Holly O'Brien, Regional Administrator, at (617) 788-0170 or OBrien.Holly@dol.gov.

Sincerely,

Byron Zuidema
Deputy Assistant Secretary

Enclosure

cc:

John Butera, Commissioner, Maine Department of Labor
Holly O'Brien, Regional Administrator, ETA Boston Regional Office
Jeremy Dondlinger, Federal Project Officer, ETA Boston Regional Office



OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
200 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20210
202-693-1400

July 11, 2017

The Honorable R. Alexander Acosta, Secretary of Labor
U.S. Department Of Labor
200 Constitution Ave. NW
Washington DC 20210

RECEIVED
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF LABOR
JUL 13 2017

Dear Secretary Acosta,

I am writing to request that, for the purposes of the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act program, Maine be granted single State local area designation.

The current configuration of Maine's workforce development system was established in 1998 under the Workforce Investment Act. With no experience administering or delivering this new program, Maine made decisions about local areas and boards that seemed correct at the time. In hindsight, we now realize we should have chosen differently and been designated as a single State local area, like the other states of similar population size.

Because the federal funding formula requires we allocate the funds by population, we hurt our ability to target investment in the rural areas that need help the most and have the least access to more diverse education and training programs as well as a strong technology infrastructure. There is currently a geographic mismatch: industries in decline are disproportionately in rural regions while industries that are growing are disproportionately in cities.

Adjusting the footprint of Maine's workforce development system to a single State local area will allow more funding to be utilized for skills training for citizens, versus being used for program administration by multiple pass-thru organizations.

Flexibility is needed to respond to our economic and workforce changes. The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act's grandfathering of antiquated structure has made it exceptionally difficult to respond to the specific needs of our state.

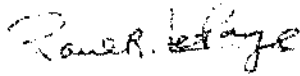


Upon approval of this request we will work to establish local volunteer workforce Boards around the state to provide local information and input regarding workforce needs in the area.

We are excited about the possibilities for a revitalized workforce development system given the flexibility to organize in a way that is most effective and efficient for Maine today, and not held hostage by decisions that were made almost twenty years ago. We will cut layers of administration and put more money where it matters, giving our citizens the skills they need to compete.

If you have any questions or would like to discuss this further, please contact me or my Commissioner of Labor, John Butera, at (207) 621-5095. We appreciate your consideration of this request and look forward to a positive response.

Sincerely,



Paul R. LePage
Governor

Cc: Vice President Michael Pence
John Butera, Commissioner of Labor