

WIOA Regional and Local Area Designation and Redesignation Listening Sessions

Overall Themes

The concentration of comments regarding local area options came from the two areas- Barren River and Bluegrass.

Local Area Option 1

The proponents of Local Area Option 1 state that existing local workforce investment area boundaries continue to make sense for providing workforce development services. The association with area development districts was discussed frequently. Local workforce investment boundaries should not be determined by fiscal integrity issues of a fiscal agent. Furthermore, proponents stated that by dividing the regions into additional local workforce investment areas would be contrary to the Workforce Innovation & Opportunity Act. There would be additional administrative costs to establishing two new local workforce investment areas which would result in a decrease in services. It was noted that the “heart” or “hub” of each local workforce investment area was being removed if Warren County (within the four county configuration) and Fayette County were permitted to establish their own local workforce investment areas. The remaining counties are contingent upon Warren and Fayette. The resignation of several business leaders from local workforce investment boards should signal that a change is needed. Feedback from business community indicates that the system is broken. Lastly, it was noted that previous attempts to provide county specific services (Mayor’s Training Center in Lexington) failed.

Local Area Option 2

The proponents of Local Area Option 2 have little trust and confidence in the existing structure and staff to accomplish the important tasks of workforce development. Feedback from the business community indicates that the system is broken and that workforce needs are not being met. If the system is to be employer led, then this issue must be addressed. There was general consensus that the status quo is no longer working and that the system must adapt and evolve. Proponents of Local Area Option 2 invited any other counties to join them.

*It is noted that while several commenters spoke in favor of Local Area Option 2 as it relates to Lexington, it was suggested that the new configuration include Fayette, Bourbon, Clark, Madison, Jessamine, Scott, Woodford and Franklin counties.

Regional Recommendation

Most commenters were not in favor of the proposed regional structure. Regardless of commenter or location, there was a lack of understanding regarding the regional concept. For many, the idea of a region remains synonymous with the local workforce investment area designation; thereby, rendering comments to not be germane regarding the proposed regional structure. It was suggested that there are not enough similarities between populations of local workforce investment areas to make combining the areas together logical. A concern that different local areas have different targeted industry sectors was mentioned. Additionally, it was suggested that each local workforce investment area be designated as its own region.