

Dear Monique Melchor,

As you know, California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) recently issued an information notice ([WN21-12](#)) related to the state's Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Waiver for Out-of-School Youth Expenditure for Program Year 2021-2022. The newly approved WIOA waiver secured by California will provide local workforce development boards (WDBs) the option to reduce their required "out-of-school youth" (OSY) expenditures from 75% to 50%, contingent on the boards using the additional flexibility conferred by the waiver to target services toward youth connected with the foster, probation, and homeless youth systems (systems-involved youth) - a subset of opportunity youth - while they are still connected to school.

While we know that work2future has focused its youth resources on out of school youth, we hope that your workforce board will consider opting into the waiver and leveraging its flexibility to better support opportunity youth, who are systems-involved youth, in your service area and improve their long-term outcomes.

The WIOA program represents the federal government's largest funding source for workforce development services for youth and young adults, providing approximately \$120 million per year to California to prepare young people with employment barriers for the workforce. Unfortunately, despite being recognized in WIOA statute as target populations for programs and services, systems-involved youth currently represent only about 1 in 4 of the youth and young adults currently being served through the WIOA Youth Program in California; work2future serves even fewer with the last publicly available data indicating that 16% of work2future's youth service population fell into the above categories. As a consequence of not accessing workforce services, these young people experience extremely poor career and economic outcomes into adulthood.

This waiver provides WDBs a unique opportunity to support these systems-involved youth and young adults farther upstream to prevent future school and workforce disconnection, rather than responding reactively after disconnection has occurred.

Thank you for your consideration and for your service to our communities.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Joe', is written over the 'Sincerely,' text.

Chair, California Opportunity Youth Network

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