



**POLICY
NUMBER
124**

Administrative Policy

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| Title: | Statewide Standardization of Tools and Services |
| Program: | N/A |
| Effective: | December 22, 2023 |

I. PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to local workforce development boards (LWDBs) on the requirement for the statewide use of state-procured tools and services and the framework for decision-making. This policy also outlines the process by which LWDBs may request to waive the requirement for use of state-procured tools and services based on local variances.

II. BACKGROUND

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)(Pub. L. 113-128) is designed to help job seekers succeed in the labor market by providing access to employment, education, training, and support services, and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy.

In 2021, the Florida Legislature passed, and the Governor signed into law, the Reimagining Education and Career Help (REACH) Act. In 2023, as part of its action on the [Reimagining Florida's Workforce System: A Three Pillar Plan for Transformation](#), the state workforce development board (state board) directed CareerSource Florida and the Florida Department of Commerce (FloridaCommerce), in collaboration with the Governor's REACH Office and LWDBs, to develop a plan for specific system-wide improvements for consistency, improved customer experience, and efficiencies including, but not limited to, technology, administration, fiscal, procurement/contracts, and programmatic policies.

The REACH Act directs the state board to minimize duplication and maximize efficient use of resources directed to training and business services. Recent legislative changes to the REACH Act require the state board to implement consistent procurement policies and procedures and leverage buying power to achieve cost savings. The state board, CareerSource Florida, and FloridaCommerce will pursue opportunities to standardize the customer

experience across the CareerSource Florida network. Standardization of the customer experience includes, but is not limited to:

- (1) Developing required processes that ensure a unified customer experience.
- (2) Defining required elements of the customer experience that must be met by each LWDB, in consultation with local boards.
- (3) Implementing standard forms, contracts, and agreements to ensure partners can work with multiple LWDBs consistently and efficiently.
- (4) State-negotiated pricing for tools and services that meet the specific functional requirements established through this policy.
- (5) State-level procurement of tools that must be used by all LWDBs.

III. AUTHORITY

[Public Law 113-128, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act \(2014\),](#)

[Chapter 2021 – 164, Laws of Florida, the Reimagining Education and Career Help Act](#)

[Chapter 2023 – 81, Laws of Florida, the Reimagining Education and Career Help Act](#)

[Chapter 445, Florida Statutes](#)

[Reimagining Florida’s Workforce System: A Three Pillar Plan for Transformation](#)

[Statewide Standardization of Tools and Services Strategic Policy](#)

IV. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Tools and services negotiated and acquired at the state level must be used by all LWDBs that have an identified need for the specific purpose the tools and services have been acquired to fulfill. As such, LWDBs are prohibited from using funds subgranted by FloridaCommerce for the purchase of tools and services that are duplicative of state-procured resources without an approved waiver request.

LWDBs that have existing contracts with vendors for tools and services may continue to use the contracted resources until the current contracts end. LWDBs must not renew contracts for products and tools that have been acquired at the state level for statewide use without an approved waiver.

A. Establish Statewide Common Need(s)

Statewide standardization of tools and services begins with the identification of an issue or common need for the procurement or development of tools and services. The Governor, Legislature, state board, CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, workforce system partners, LWDBs or regional planning areas (planning regions) may identify the need for a tool and/or service to be acquired at the state level. Further, changes in federal or state

law, regulations, rules, policies, guidance, strategies, and processes may also require tools and services to be acquired at the state level for statewide implementation.

At the state level, a variety of steps may occur to establish the need for a particular standardized tool or service:

- (1) Solicit information on potential tools and services from appropriate stakeholders and interested parties.
- (2) Consult with stakeholders to determine whether there is a statewide need for specific tools and services.

LWDBs or regional planning areas may also submit a request for a tool or service to be acquired at the state level. The request must be made to FloridaCommerce and must clearly identify the tool or service being requested and the specific purpose it serves, including a compelling business case that justifies the need and describes the business need/issue the tool or service will help resolve. Additionally, the request must state the scope of the product or tool and clearly outline any identified duplication, lack of standardization, and the necessary business functions the proposed product or tool serves. Such requests must be submitted via email to FloridaCommerce at LWDBGovernance@commerce.fl.gov. Upon receipt and review of a request containing the above listed information, FloridaCommerce, in consultation with CareerSource Florida, will determine whether to approve the request for the tool or service to be acquired at the state level.

B. Needs Plan Development

Statewide acquisition or development of tools and services that serve a common need will include a plan developed by CareerSource Florida and FloridaCommerce, in consultation with LWDBs. The plan will identify how the tool or service ensures standardization, enhances customer service, and/or efficiency.

The plan will address, at a minimum, the following considerations:

- (1) Process to be enhanced or common need to be satisfied.
- (2) How tools and services address and resolve a common need.
- (3) Tool and/or service options that will be developed or sought, for evaluation
- (4) Improved functionality sought and associated business case.
- (5) Level of standardization to be achieved by resolving common need.
- (6) Available performance data and data gaps relevant to the area of need.
- (7) Modernization of delivery to be achieved by the recommended approach.
- (8) Time to implement standardized resource across designated geographic scope.
- (9) Performance indicators affected by implementation of recommended approach.
- (10) Cost savings comparison to current method, tool or service if there is one.

Additional considerations may include:

- (1) Challenges and likely consequences of (not) implementing tools and services.
- (2) Time needed to acquire tools and services and prepare them for use.
- (3) Resources needed for training staff to implement designated tools and services.
- (4) Time needed to train businesses and job seekers to use the tools and services.
- (5) Availability of performance data to demonstrate efficiency/benefit to be gained.
- (6) Advantages and challenges anticipated in aligning identified resource(s) with existing business models and strategic plans.

C. Tool and Service Evaluation and Recommendation

Evaluation and selection of a requested/proposed tool or service will include representatives from CareerSource Florida, FloridaCommerce, and LWDBs. Tools and services may be evaluated through surveys, product demonstrations, trial periods, etc. Once potential tools and services are determined, FloridaCommerce, in consultation with CareerSource Florida, will determine the plan and process for the resources to be acquired at the state level.

FloridaCommerce and CareerSource Florida, in consultation with the LWDBs, will re-evaluate the tools and services negotiated and acquired at the state level within six months of each contract's expiration date using the considerations outlined in **Section IV. B. Needs Plan Development** of this policy as a baseline to ensure that the tools and services met, and are likely to continue to meet, the identified common needs. Should it be determined that the tools and services did not meet the identified common needs as initially established, FloridaCommerce and CareerSource Florida will work with the appropriate stakeholders to consult on alternative tools and services for negotiation or acquisition by the state. Tools and services that are deemed to meet the common needs may be renewed for continued statewide use.

D. Waiver Request Review Process

Where tools and services are acquired or developed for implementation statewide, LWDBs seeking to opt-out of statewide implementation may request a waiver from FloridaCommerce for the lesser of two years or until the current contract expires.

LWDBs that seek a waiver must submit a Standardization of Tools and Services Waiver Request (Attachment A) to FloridaCommerce via email at LWDBGovernance@commerce.fl.gov. The waiver request must include the following:

- (1) Description of existing and alternative tools and services in use, the function(s) performed by the resource(s), and the business/customer groups served by them.
- (2) Description of how existing tools, services, or items impact local and/or statewide performance measurement and management.
- (3) Assumptions and constraints associated with implementing acquired or developed statewide tool(s).
- (4) Description of how existing resources differ in specific, key respects from state-provided resource(s) and why those in use or desired are (un)necessary.

- (5) Anticipated cost savings, economies of scale, or other fiscal and/or functional efficiencies including estimated local/statewide return on investment.

FloridaCommerce, in consultation with CareerSource Florida, will review waiver requests for completeness and determine whether to approve the LWDB's request. FloridaCommerce will notify the LWDB of the outcome of the waiver review process within 30 days from the date the waiver request was received.

V. ATTACHMENTS

[Attachment A - Standardization of Tools and Services Request Form](#)

VI. RESOURCES

[Florida Workforce System Transformation Plan](#)