

Priorities for Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)

110th Congress

Get WIA to Train More Workers for the 21st Century Economy

- **Remove Barriers to Training.** Remove federally defined “Sequence of Services,” so local WIA systems can offer services (core, intensive, training) in any order or combination, as required by the individual job-seeker and local market conditions.
- **Encourage Greater Training Investment.** Establish a required percentage (consistent with current averages) of allocated WIA formula dollars that must be spent by states and localities on worker services, with an emphasis on training. Allow a portion of that base percentage to be achieved by leveraging new public or private-sector dollars for a portion of that service provision.
- **Reject Federally Defined Vouchers.** Reject efforts to create a federally capped training account; allow local areas the flexibility to match training investment to the needs of local industries and workers.
- **Get Every Possible Worker a Skilled Credential that Can Land a Skilled Job.** Track over time the number of workers who receive, through WIA assistance (full or partial), a vocational degree, industry-certified credential, or other recognized set of skills equivalent to two years of training past high school. Set national goals in this area, to assess how well WIA is preparing the U.S. workforce for the 21st Century global economy.

Invest in Sectoral / Industry Partnerships and Workforce R&D

- **Create Hi-SPEED Partnerships.** Create a Congressionally authorized, monitored and separately funded program for “Hi-Growth Sectoral Partnerships for Employment and Economic Development” (Hi-SPEED) that that will help local industries grow and re-tool their workforces for the future. Ensure this investment stream is a permanent part of WIA, and is structured to complement existing WIA services and infrastructure.

Improve the Stability and Efficiency of Labor Exchange Infrastructure

- **Do not Block-Grant / Dismantle Employment Service (ES) Programs.** Reject efforts to dismantle the state-run Employment Services, which serve a vital labor exchange, eligibility assessment and core services function throughout the country.

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- **Establish a Separate Budget Line for One-Stop Infrastructure.** Establish an annually reauthorized funding stream, from within current WIA funding, specifically for One-Stop operations, WIB oversight, and provision of core services outside the ES. Make this funding stable, but also set it according to appropriate targets for spending, given the need to expand training investments.
- **Seek Coordination (vs. Integration) between ES and One-Stops.** Establish means whereby Employment Service and One-Stop services can be more easily coordinated at the local level, without attempting to eliminate either service.

Use Performance Measures (vs. Block-Granting) to Improve Program Coordination

- **Use the Right Common Measures.** Adopt common measures across federally funded programs with a workforce development goal. Measures should track placement, retention and earnings—but not in a way that encourages low-cost approaches (e.g., rejected “efficiency” measure) or discourages service to low-wage or hard-to-serve clients (e.g., average / median earnings vs. earnings gains).
- **Take into Account Local Market Conditions.** Allow local areas the flexibility to adjust negotiated performance levels according to changing local economic conditions.
- **Remove Disincentives for the Disadvantaged.** Allow performance incentives or waivers for local areas or providers that focus some of their attention on serving individuals with significant barriers to employment (defined as “special populations” in current law), so those local providers / areas will not be penalized for lower outcomes or higher costs associated with such efforts.

Allow Flexibility in Identifying WIA-qualified Education and Training Providers (ETP)

- **State Standards for ETP.** Allow states to establish their own “Eligible Training Provider” criteria, without relaxing the rigorous collection of outcome data to ensure workers are being adequately served by individual programs.
- **No Federally Defined Preferred Providers.** Reject efforts to federally designate a particular type of education / training provider as categorically better than another, or for special allowances for contracting, etc. Allow state and localities the flexibility to choose their training provider based on performance, not federal designation.

Ensure Public Review and Comment on WIA Plans

- **Public Review of Plans.** Require a public review, comment and response period for all state and local WIA plans before being submitted to designated agency.

