

## WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

**ACTION ITEM #1.2**

**SUBMITTAL DATE:** February 15, 2012

**SUBJECT:** Workforce Investment Board Legislative and Policy Platform

**RECOMMENDATION:** That the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) approve their Legislative and Policy Platform

**BACKGROUND:**

One of the goals of the WIB is to educate political leaders at all levels about the importance of workforce development and its positive local impact. To accomplish this goal, WIB members participated in a series of work sessions to develop a Legislative and Policy platform. This Platform will be used to shape positions and provide comments on legislation at the state and federal level. The final version of the Platform is as follows:

### **RIVERSIDE COUNTY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY PLATFORM**

#### **Final Review Draft – 1.17.12**

At a time of increasing demand for qualified workers and high unemployment, stronger linkage at the local level between workforce development, education, and economic development efforts is much needed. While employers struggle to fill some jobs with qualified workers, millions of unemployed Americans are struggling to support themselves and their families. In today's economy, jobs not only need to be created, but efforts must be made to ensure that workers have the necessary education and skills to compete for jobs. This would result in more effective workers and more competitive American businesses. The Riverside County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has called for greater connectivity between workforce development, education, and economic development to more efficiently connect people to jobs and improve regional competitiveness. Building a stronger education pipeline of skilled workers requires seamless connections between the components of the system and with the skill demands of the workplace of the future.

We face a churning economy and even in this economic downturn skill shortages continue in many industries. The increasing diversity of the workforce creates new challenges and opportunities to create a workforce system focused on innovation and skills development. The Riverside Workforce Investment Board has developed the following principles to direct its advocacy and policy priorities.

In addition, the WIB believes that efforts to reauthorize the Workforce Investment Act should build on the lessons learned over the past 10 years of implementation, build on best practices, make improvements and push the system toward innovation. Reauthorization should focus on problems with the statute that stand in the way of successful implementation; encourage the building of a comprehensive, high quality workforce investment system; encourage innovation in serving workers and in providing enhanced services to businesses; facilitate a continuum of services between education, workforce services and training; and expand the resources that are available for further education and training.

## Key Principles

The WIB has developed the following policy priorities based on six simple principles. These principles drive our local strategic thinking and need support through a strengthened federal workforce system.

- **Future Oriented.** A national workforce development system must be forward thinking and responsive to future economic demands. A system that is demand-driven is driven from the front by customer's demand. Instead of pushing jobseekers out to the end customer (businesses), jobseekers are pulled into the labor market based on the economic demand into the future.
- **Dignity of Workers.** A workforce development system should promote a system that supports economic initiative, productive work, sustainable wages and benefits, and decent working conditions.
- **Regional Collaboration.** Regional collaboration must be fostered to create a viable workforce development system that links education, the business community, economic development, and workforce development. WIBs should be positioned as the regional convener to foster such collaborations.
- **Provide Access.** The workforce development system should encourage, facilitate and operate multiple pathways to success. Key obstacles to developing a skilled workforce are cost, access, and completion. The development of multiple pathways to postsecondary credentials for a diversity of workers is critical to ensuring our nation can compete in the global marketplace.
- **Accountability thru ROI.** A national system should focus on the return on investment it provides to businesses and to the community. While it is important to measure performance in the short term it is also important to measure longer term results, stewardship of federal dollars, and the success of the federal workforce system, which should be articulated through the development of ROI measures.
- **Employer Engagement.** Workforce development must be positioned legislatively as a viable partner with economic development, industry, and employers. Working with the economic development system, the workforce system should be positioned to be ahead of the needs for a ready and skilled workforce by exchanging workforce and economic intelligence and by being in a position to align education and training to create a steady supply chain of competitive workers.
- **Sustainable Public Funding.** To create an effective and efficient workforce development system requires sustainable public funding. Investments must be made in both the delivery of services and the development of the infrastructure to deliver quality to businesses and jobseekers. Investments in building common technology systems and maintaining a locally based infrastructure is crucial to doing business into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and beyond.

## Policy Priorities for a Federal Workforce Investment System

### Governance

- **Regionalization.** Provide incentives for working collaboratively across workforce areas. For the most part, regional lines should be drawn based on existing MSA's and/or commuter

patterns; provide incentives for regionalization through the governors set aside funds (e.g., regional initiatives may have access to funds that other boards do not) rather than consolidating existing boards; allow local areas to have more flexibility in the composition of local workforce boards and if mandatory partners do not actively participate on the boards, allow the local area to remove them from the board; maintain the majority business focus and business led; ensure that boards have responsibility for oversight of workforce issues in the area and not just WIA programs.

- **Oversight.** Strengthen the role of the local boards to convene and connect economic development, education, and workforce development. Ensure local boards continue to provide oversight to the operating side of the system.
- **Local Flexibility** - Retain local flexibility and promote cross-sector collaboration between workforce investment boards, businesses, labor, service providers, school districts, secondary education, county/city and state institutions.

### Structure

- **One-Stops.** Maintain the infrastructure of single access point to partner services and **universal access to core services.** Do not require that all services (including core services) be targeted to only those who are eligible for services based on income. Mandate co-location in full service one stops of the mandatory partners.
- **Serving Businesses.** Recognize the importance of business to the nation's workforce development system by establishing strategies and initiatives that ensure the involvement of business leaders; and provide relevant services to employers. Increased linkages between workforce, education, and economic development programs should be developed; and innovative strategies such as the utilization of business intermediaries, industry sector initiatives, and **incumbent worker training programs** (through on the job training and customized training) must be encouraged to meet employers' needs.
- **Sequence of Services.** Relax requirements around the sequence of core, intensive, and training services, providing greater flexibility to move customers through the various components of the system. Focus on promoting a system that allows the local area to assess a customer's needs and to match a customer with the appropriate sequence of services from where they are to help them meet their employment goals.
- **Youth Councils.** Maintain Youth Councils. Youth Councils have the potential to develop a comprehensive youth development system in local communities. This series of partnerships or connections among organizations to plan and deliver services based on youth development principles to all young people in the community has many advantages, including: reducing duplication of effort, leveraging community resources more effectively, providing a continuum of support to all youth, and building community-wide commitment to youth as valuable cultural and economic resources. Without a separate and distinct focus on youth, it is unlikely that many WIBs, with their focus on adults and one stops, will spend the time required to build such a system.

## Accountability Measures

- Establish performance standards that: measure customer satisfaction; measure the attainment of skills as defined by business; measure services provided to businesses; encourage and provide credit for the brokering of training services (paid for with resources other than WIA title I); capture the provision of core services; maintain a cost efficiency measure that accounts for multiple years of service for providing intensive and training services; create a measure of the return on investment of dollars spent to dollars contributed to the economy.
- Establish a Performance Measurement System that takes into account the challenges associated with serving the hardest to serve populations and other local environmental factors.

## Eligibility

- Streamline the eligibility determination process and align eligibility with other programs that would allow automatic eligibility for WIA enrollment if an individual had already been determined eligible for other means tested programs such as the school lunch program. While we support serving individuals up to the age of 24 (see below), increasing the age limit increases the potential pool of those needing service. Without additional sustained resources to meet increased demand for services, keep the current eligibility for youth ages 14 through 21.
- With additional resources, create a new category of eligibility for Transitional Youth. This category of youth, ages 22 to 24, should receive service offerings at appropriate levels of intensity and support to assist them as they transition from being youth to becoming young adults. The service mix required for this age group is a combination of supports found in the current youth system while focusing on more mature methods of job search assistance and occupational skills development.
- Combine the Adult and Dislocated Worker, considering all as adults with eligibility focused on long-term unemployed and/or those who have been dislocated.

## Funding & Formula

- Establish funding formulae that maintain or increase local area funding to ensure that local programs can deliver the full complement of services to businesses and jobseekers.
- Establish more specific requirements for partners to fund the one-stop infrastructure and/or create a separate funding stream in the law for funding the one-stop infrastructure.

- **Out-of-School/In-School Funding Requirements**

Establish the requirement that, *at minimum*, 50 percent of youth formula funds should be spent on out-of-school youth who are 16-21 without a secondary credential, and other high risk categories. Provide the opportunity for waivers to local workforce boards that can demonstrate the need to serve more than 50 percent in-school youth.

- **Summer Employment, Work Experience and Service**

Allow up to 30% of formula funds to be used to for paid work experience opportunities, summer employment opportunities, and/or service activities.

## Innovation

- **Offer Multiple Pathways to Secondary and Access to Postsecondary Credentials and Certifications.** Promote innovation and expand upon what works to offer and expand pathways to secondary and postsecondary credentials, industry recognized certifications, and employment.
  
- **Funds for Technology Solutions.** Provide and promote funding to build cross system technology solutions for ease of access to labor market data and to enhance efficient and effective integrated operations across programs and agencies.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE  Date: February 15, 2012 Approval: Yes/No	BOARD OF SUPERVISORS CONCURRENCE  Required: Yes/No
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