

**Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Reauthorization
Recommendations of the Georgia Workforce Leadership Association
Revisions Approved July 28, 2007**

These recommendations are consistent with those of the Local Workforce Coalition (LWC), comprised of the National Association of Counties, U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Association of Workforce Boards, National Workforce Association and USA Works. The LWC document, “Recommendations from the Local Workforce Coalition: Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act,” may be consulted for a more detailed discussion of the points we raise below.

Governance

- Local Workforce Investment Areas that have performed successfully should be maintained. Changes should promote a strong, locally-based, business-led workforce investment system.
- Incentives and assistance for local areas to work regionally should be included in new legislation.
- The authority of local elected officials and local Workforce Investment Boards should be maintained, especially in regard to the One-Stop delivery system and decisions on the use of funds at the local level.
- The role of local boards as conveners of key stakeholders for workforce development and brokers of training and related services should be reinforced.
- State waiver authority should not be expanded, particularly if it would lessen the authority, flexibility and stability of local workforce investment systems. Standards for granting waivers should include the degree to which they promote the seven key principles of WIA, such as “establishing a stronger role for Local Boards and the private sector.”

Funding and Costs

- Funding streams should not be consolidated.
- Current obligation and expenditure requirements should be retained.
- The current function-based definition and limitation on Administrative costs should not be changed. Any proposed change should be evaluated from the standpoint of its effect on the survival of local workforce development systems.

One-Stops

- A separate fund for one-stop infrastructure costs should be established that does not adversely affect current WIA appropriations; or a fund could be established as a state set-aside with contributions from mandatory partners, distributed by formula to local areas.

Training

- More flexibility should be given to local workforce investment boards in deciding on the delivery of training services, whether through the current ITA system, through Personal Reemployment Accounts, incumbent worker, customized, On-the-Job or other means.
- Increased flexibility should be granted with the objective of ensuring informed customer choice and high quality training that is responsive to labor market demands.

Performance Measures

- Simple efficiency measures such as “cost per participant” should be avoided since they encourage briefer interventions and “creaming.” “Return on investment” type measures should be considered instead.
- A regression model for setting standards should be required to encourage services for the hardest to serve.
- Local boards should have the authority to certify skill attainment, especially for On-the-Job Training.

Youth

- The \$1 billion currently provided for Youth formula funding for in-school and out-of-school youth should be protected.
- Separate authority and funding for National programs should be provided, including YouthBuild, so as not to rob the Youth formula program of funds to support them.
- Innovative services for both in-school and out-of-school youth should continue to be allowed, with maximum flexibility for local decision-making on services and funding.
- Permissible sources of eligibility documentation for Youth program participation should be expanded, such as the use of Free and Reduced Lunch eligibility.

Preservation of Training Related Services

Funds for supportive services, assessment, case management, counseling, placement and follow-up should be preserved and recognized as vitally important in assisting trainees to succeed in training and to attain their career goals. Coordinated assistance from other agencies and programs is already utilized by local support systems but is wholly insufficient to meet trainees’ needs.

State Board Responsibilities

Responsibilities of the State Board should be expanded to include;
In consultation with Local Workforce Investment Boards, development and review of statewide policies for the One-Stop Career Center system, including:

- Strategies to support and promote the workforce development efforts of local boards,
- Strategies for effective interagency coordination of One-Stop partners at the State and Federal level.

Inter-fund Transfers

If funds are not consolidated, there should be increased flexibility at the local level in transferring funds between Adult and Dislocated Worker funding streams. The unpredictability of lay-off events and need for quick action justifies this flexibility, while knowledge of these needs is a local workforce board specialty.

Local Board Involvement in Federal and State Initiatives

Provisions should be included that ensure Local Board involvement in Federal and State workforce development initiatives occurring in local areas. Examples of these initiatives include pilot, demonstration and other such activities having local scope and focus. Too often in the past, these initiatives have contributed to fragmented and uncoordinated workforce development activities, a problem frequently cited as weakness in the current system. Local Workforce Investment Board oversight is the best insurance that funds will be used to advance workforce development in local labor markets.