

## Reinventing the Workforce System



*The Illinois Workforce Partnership membership includes representatives of Illinois's 26 Local Workforce Investment Boards and organizations that administer the Workforce Investment Act Title I program. The recommendations provided below have been endorsed by the IWP and provide a practical approach for improving the quality and effectiveness of employment and training service that builds on successes of the current system, addresses inefficiencies, and focuses on increasing direct services to customers.*

**Administrative efficiencies/cost saving measures can be achieved by streamlining processes and programs, eliminating unnecessary bureaucratic redundancies and waste, and aligning program delivery. These cost saving initiatives will increase the funds available for services provided directly to customers.**

- Recognizing that WIA, Wagner Peyser, Trade Adjustment Assistance training, Veterans Employment and Training, and Unemployment Insurance provide similar services to both businesses and job seeker, provide a consolidated grant to states with funds formula allocated to local areas and administered through local Workforce Investment Boards
- Provide funds currently authorized for discretionary grants and demonstration programs to local system with flexibility to implement and sustain innovative program strategies.
- Provide the majority of funds currently retained by USDOL for National Emergency Grants to the local delivery system for the provision of retraining and services to dislocated workers (formula allocated).
- Reduce duplicative State and USDOL oversight and technical assistance functions.
- Eliminate complex administrative and reporting requirements that divert resources to program administration

**The State Workforce Investment Board's primary function should be the coordination of state resources and programs that contribute to the development of a skilled workforce, with private sector leadership and majority membership with representation from local WIB's.**

**Local Workforce Investment Boards (LWIBs) in cooperation with local Chief Elected Officials (CEOs) should continue to provide leadership and oversight to the workforce system within their communities. They are positioned to drive coordination/consolidation of programs and insure that the investment of public resources addresses employer needs, supports economic development, and prepares individuals for high demand jobs.**

- Provide LWIBs-CEOs with the authority to oversee use of funds and alignment of consolidated programs.
- Provide LWIBs-CEOs with authority to be innovative in addressing local workforce needs, improving service delivery, and engaging employers in workforce preparation.
- Incentivize LWIBs to collaborate with partners and neighboring Boards to undertake initiatives that address/benefit the regional economy.
- In cooperation with post-secondary education and employers, charge LWIBs with facilitating the expansion of program offerings that prepare job seeker/worker customers for employment in currently available high demand jobs and development of strategies to address long term occupational skill shortages in targeted local industries.
- Provide states with responsibility for maintaining statewide inventory of training providers; provide LWIBs flexibility in determining which training providers will be available for occupational training in local area based on completer cost, trainee employment outcomes, and local labor market data.
- Maintain majority representation of business on the LWIB; encourage increased representation of economic development entities.
- Maintain Youth Council as a separate entity to oversee funds available for youth programs and services.
- Maintain separation of Board oversight and delivery of services.

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**Programs should be administered at the local level to assure that employer needs are addressed, workforce activities are linked to economic development activities, and job seeker/worker customers receive services and training that result in employment. Federal legislation should establish the framework for program design and delivery and standard requirements related to eligibility, allowable programs/services, reporting, and performance standards but otherwise allow flexibility in how programs are designed to address local needs and encourage local innovation.**

- Specify all administrative and program requirements in the Act so as to limit USDOL and state issued regulations, policies, and procedural directives.
- Maintain one-stop center delivery system that provides multiple points of access for business and job seeker customers within local areas; establish separate infrastructure funding stream.
- Expand mandatory one-stop system partners to include Temporary Assistance to Needy Families and Community Colleges; recognize that physical co-location of partners is not necessary but instead require presence through electronic connectivity.
- Rather than a compliance document, the local plan should be a strategic document focusing on processes related to providing services to employers and job seekers, connecting with economic development, working regionally to more efficiently utilize and leverage funds, and implementing continuous improvement strategies.
- Allocate funds for adults and youth; provide some local flexibility in determining how adult funds are “split” to address needs of economically disadvantaged versus dislocated worker customers.
- Increase emphasis on post-secondary education that results in the attainment of industry recognized certificates, associate’s degrees and bachelor degrees.
- Provide local access to national and state databases that support the identification of job seeker/workers in need of services.
- Maintain continuum of services available to economically disadvantaged adults and dislocated workers (core, intensive, training) but not sequential, tiered delivery structure; provide flexibility in use of funds for paid internships, on-the-job training and work experience to increase likelihood of customer’s employment in chosen/demand sector.
- Maintain current services available to out-of-school and in-school youth; include emphasis on use of funds for provision of occupational skills and credentials, workforce readiness National Career Readiness Credential Plus, and work experience including a stand-alone summer program; expand in-school youth eligibility criteria to include receipt of free or reduced lunches.  
Recognizing the importance of addressing the needs of business customers, establish business services as a separate category of services.
- Include incumbent worker training that improves the competitiveness of business and workers.

**Accountability and transparency are important elements of any publically funded program and should provide the public and Congress with a clear understanding of how funds are being used and the information needed to evaluate the cost benefit of the public investment. Any collection of program performance information should be determined on a “what we need to know” basis.**

- Establish reporting requirements that address true effectiveness of programs and quantify the return on investment of public resources.
- Identify program performance indicators that can be easily understood and universally applied to all employment and job training related programs.
- Establish common definitions for all employment, education and job training programs (e.g., entered employment, job retention) thereby allowing consistent comparison and evaluation of performance across programs and cross matching of data.