

SHELDON SILVER, SPEAKER

GREENING *the*
WORKFORCE



**LEGISLATIVE COMMISSION ON
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT &
CAREER EDUCATION**

SUMMER 2009

JOAN K. CHRISTENSEN, CHAIR

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SUMMER 2009 • JOAN K. CHRISTENSEN, CHAIR



*Assemblywoman
Joan K. Christensen*

Dear Friend:

As *Chair of the Legislative Commission on Skills Development & Career Education*,

I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you some important new developments taking place within our education and employment and training systems. Most of these changes have been made possible by federal stimulus

funds (*The American Recovery & Investment Act of 2009 - ARRA*) which New York is receiving and will continue to receive over the next two years.

As the nation and State look to economically recover from the current downturn, we are confronted with difficult choices. Presently, communities and their respective elected officials are confronted with declining revenues, increasing budget deficits, high energy costs, as well as high unemployment rates. In light of all these difficulties, I believe it is imperative that elected officials continue to seek and seize new opportunities that will strengthen our workforce and prepare workers for new and emerging industries that will better position us for the eventually economic recovery.

While I support the ideals of fiscal constraint in government, I strongly believe that as we move forward in this current economic climate it is essential that we make the necessary investments that will build the skills of our labor force. Based upon this premise, my colleagues and I voted to increase or maintain funding for a number of education, and employment and training programs (*i.e.*, *STEP & C-STEP*,

Consortium for Worker Education, BOCES, Liberty Partnership, Displaced Homemaker Program, etc...) in the **2009-10** enacted-budget.

On behalf of the State I have also encouraged our federal officials to increase federal funding of workforce development dollars. I was therefore encouraged this past February when the President and Congress passed a stimulus bill which contained significant funds for New York's educational and job training services, as well as critical funding for support services such child care, transportation service, and income support for New Yorkers who have lost their jobs due to no fault of their own.

I firmly believe that investing in workforce development and job training now is one of the smartest investments we can make for a stronger New York economy. Time and again, history has shown us that states that make the necessary investments in their labor force will continue to attract businesses and jobs to their community. My Assembly colleagues and I will continue to work hard with our colleges, businesses, labor unions, and other stakeholders to ensure that New York continues to have a highly-trained and skilled workforce.

As always, if you have any concerns or questions please feel free to contact my *district office* at (315) 449-9536 or the *Legislative Commission on Skills Development and Career Education* at (518) 455-4865.

*Joan K. Christensen, Chair
Commission on Skills Development & Career Education*

Green Collar Jobs Hearing at Capitol

On *June, 9 2009* Assemblywoman Joan Christensen working in collaboration with chairs from the *Assembly Committee on Labor*, the *Assembly Committee on Education*, the *Assembly Committee on Economic Development, Job Creation, Commerce, and Industry*, the *Assembly Committee on Small Business*, and the *Assembly Subcommittee on Emerging Workforce* hosted a green collar jobs public hearing in Albany, New York. Key stakeholders from colleges, businesses, labor unions, community-based organizations, and local government joined the Assemblywoman to discuss how government, industry, education and training institutions, and labor are working together to meet the needs of clean-tech industries.

The “green industry”, commonly referred to as the “green economy” or “clean-tech industry”, is a growing sector of businesses that contribute to a cleaner, more energy efficient environment. The clean-tech industry has rapidly grown into a multi-billion dollar market sector that has created jobs, commonly referred to as “green collar jobs”, in areas like construction and manufacturing. Green collar jobs are diverse, but in general these jobs range from:

- ❖ Building energy efficient schools, homes, and offices;
- ❖ Manufacturing and maintaining solar panel and wind turbines;
- ❖ Retrofitting homes for energy efficiency;



To the left – Willie L. Vice, Statewide Coordinator, ATAIN Project, University Center for Academic & Workforce Development, University at Albany. To the right Mike Fancher, Vice President of Business Development & Economic and Associate Professor of Nano-Economics at the College of Nanoscale Science & Engineering at the University of Albany.

- ❖ Making energy efficient hybrid vehicles; to,
- ❖ Environmental clean up and waterfront restoration

Many green collar jobs require similar skills to those in construction, plumbing, or building maintenance, but require some additional training. These jobs represent an important new category of workforce opportunity for local communities because green collar jobs are well paying quality jobs that can't be outsourced.

During the hearing the following key points were raised:

■ Training Local Workforce for Green Collar Jobs

The green industry in New York is expected to grow over the next decade. As the green industry continues to expand, there will be increased demand for green collar workers. Hearing attendees emphasized that it is therefore imperative for local communities to develop workforce development strategies and policies that will help workers receive the necessary training to access green collar jobs.

- ❖ *Mr. Drew Matonak, President of Hudson Valley Community College, noted how across the State, local community colleges are preparing and training workers in the latest technologies and careers.*
 - *Hudson Valley Community College is currently constructing a facility called **Training and Education Center for Semiconductors Manufacturing and Alternative and Renewable Technologies (TECSMART)** that will train clean-room technicians. The center will also train **350** individuals per year in expanding green industry fields such as photovoltaic/solar energy, geothermal energy, wind energy, and alternative fuels.*
- ❖ *In response to a question raised by Assemblywoman Christensen about the recruitment and training of local high school students for careers in clean-tech industries, community college representatives from Hudson Valley Community College indicated that they provide courses to approximately 30 regional high schools in order to foster career awareness in growth industries. The*

courses also better prepare students for the rigors of a post-secondary education.



Assemblywoman Christensen listening to testimony at the Green Collar Jobs Hearing at the Capitol on June 9, 2009.

■ Partnerships that are Helping to Create a Sustainable Green Economy

As the green industry takes root, cities across the country are implementing policies, forging partnerships, and making the necessary investments to create green jobs and train workers for jobs in the green economy. To ensure that New York remains at the forefront, Assemblywoman Christensen sought input from hearing attendees as to how the unique assets of New York, particularly the upstate region, can be best utilized to cultivate and grow a sustainable green economy. The general response from hearing participants was to continue forging partnerships amongst businesses, community colleges, labor unions, community-based organizations, high schools, and government.

❖ Working in collaboration with federal, State, and local agencies the New York **Center for Energy Efficiency and Building Science (CEEBS)** delivers energy efficiency and building science courses at a network of regional learning centers throughout the State. Currently, the CEEBS program has **7 energy-smart learning centers** across the State – the centers are located at:

- Hudson Valley Community College – Capital Region;
- Broome Community College – Binghamton;
- Erie Community College – Buffalo;
- The Association for Energy Affordability – Bronx;
- Bronx Community College – Bronx;

- Onondaga-Cortland-Madison BOCES – Syracuse; and,
 - The New York State Weatherization Directors Association – Syracuse.
- ❖ **SuperPower**, a high-tech company that produces high temperature superconductors for the energy industry, received a **\$5 million** State grant which enabled the company to form a partnership with **Schenectady County Community College and Union College**. This partnership has led to the development of a highly skilled new workforce in an emerging technology industry.
- At the hearing Trudy Lehner, a SuperPower representative, indicated that "... [the] partnership has been a major success, as it has provided SuperPower, and other businesses in the Capital Region, with tangible benefits that are necessary if they are to sustain and expand their operations in New York State, including, but not limited to the creation of a pipeline of skilled workers that fill critical jobs that these companies have."
 - Ms. Lehner further noted that, "[the] collaboration [with Schenectady County Community College and Union College] has really resulted in new academic programs, and new high tech facilities and equipment that provide great benefit to both academic institutions and to emerging businesses."



Assemblywoman Christensen discussing the need to develop more public-private partnerships that encourage academic achievement and skills training in high-demand green collar industries.

To close the hearing, Assemblywoman Christensen noted how such proceedings are important for the Legislature as they work to formulate policies that will grow New York's green economy. Assemblywoman Christensen thanked hearing participants for their testimony and insight.

President Obama Announces American Graduation Initiative

As the cost of education rapidly increases, many Americans are often unable to afford the cost of a post-secondary education. In an op-ed piece in the *Washington Post* President Obama discussed how “*in an economy where jobs requiring at least an associate’s degree are projected to grow twice as fast as jobs requiring no college experience, it’s never been more essential to continue education and training after high school.*”

In an effort to redress this problem, President Obama on **July 14, 2009**, announced his “**American Graduation Initiative**” at Macomb Community College in Michigan. Under the proposed initiative the President plans to invest **\$12 billion** over the next decade in community colleges and add **5 million** new graduates by **2020** – thereby doubling the current number of community college graduates in the workforce. One of the principal goals of the initiative is to increase both the affordability and accessibility of post-secondary education and training.

Though the President doesn’t specifically detail how the government will pay for the initiative, he has indicated that part of the cost will be underwritten by cutting waste out of the student loan program. To achieve fiscal savings that will finance the initiative, the President proposes to reform the current student loan program by replacing guaranteed loans with direct loans that are administered by private-sector companies, like **Sallie Mae** and **Accenture**. The loan companies will be selected through a competitive process and paid based upon performance. The administration anticipates that this reform measure will create a more reliable and efficient loan system that will save billions of dollars – savings that could be used to finance investments in community colleges. The **Congressional Budget Office** estimates that the President’s student loan reform measure would save **\$87 billion** over the decade.

Under the proposed initiative the administration hopes to build on the strengths of community colleges and usher in new innovations and reforms. More specifically, the President’s initiative proposes the following:

❖ **Increase Community College Graduates by 5 Million** – By increasing Pell Grant scholarship amounts by \$500 (*The American Recovery & Investment Act of 2009 increased Pell Grant awards*) and

increasing college tuition tax credits (*The Recovery Act created the American Opportunity Tax Credit for 4 years of college tuition*), the President hopes to graduate an additional 5 million community college graduates by 2020.

❖ **Creates the “Community College Challenge Fund”** – Establishes new competitive **Community College Challenge grants** that would enable community colleges and states to launch programs to raise graduation rates and prepare students for the workplace or a 4 year school. Other potential programs under the grant could include: (i) partnerships with employers to ensure that curriculums remain up-to-date; (ii) improved academic or counseling services for students; and, (iii) . The administration proposes an investment of **\$9 billion** for the challenge grants program. Grant recipients that demonstrate improved educational and employment outcomes will continue to receive federal support and become models for widespread adoption. The President lists the following as examples of innovative reform:

- “*Build partnerships with businesses and the workforce investment system to create career pathways where workers can earn new credentials and promotions step-by-step, worksite education programs to build basic skills, and curriculum coordinated with internship and job placements;*”
- “*Expand course offerings and offer dual enrollment at high schools and universities, promote the transfer of credit among colleges, and align graduation and entrance requirements of high schools, community colleges, and four-year colleges and universities;*”
- “*Improve remedial and adult education programs, accelerating students’ progress and integrating developmental classes into academic and vocational classes; and,*”
- “*Offer ... [students] comprehensive personalized service to help them plan their career and stay in school.*”

❖ **Establishes a New Research Center** – The initiative calls for the development of a new research center that will develop and implement measures which will enhance and strengthen our community college system. The three main components within this proposal are as follows:

- **College Access and Completion Fund**

The new fund will be used to finance innovative strategies that promote college completion, increase college graduation rates and close achievement gaps at post-secondary institutions. Resources would also be provided to improve states' efforts to track student progress, completion, and success in the workplace. Post-secondary institutions could apply for funding to support existing programs with similar objectives.

- **Modernize Community College Facilities**

The president proposes **\$2.5 billion** for facilities improvement for our nations' community colleges. The administration anticipates that the **\$2.5 billion** will function as seed money that will ultimately generate another **\$10 billion** for capital projects. The resources could also be used to pay the interest on bonds or other debt, seed capital campaigns, or create state revolving loan funds.

- **Create a New Online Skills Laboratory**

The administration proposes **\$500 million** to

establish a national online skills laboratory to increase accessibility to education, particularly to rural areas and for working adults who need to fit their coursework around families and jobs. *“The laboratories will be developed by teams of experts in content knowledge, pedagogy, and technology and made available for modification, adaptation, and sharing.”*

- ◆ The **Departments of Defense, Labor, and Education** will collaboratively work together to create public domain online courses and instructional resources, such as online tutoring, that would be freely available to community colleges.

- ◆ The federal agencies listed above would also work to explore ways to award academic credit based upon achievement rather than class hours for online instructional courses.

Assemblywoman Christensen applauded the President's decision to invest in our community college system because she believes that community colleges are a critical component of our educational and workforce development system. The Assemblywoman noted that the President's initiative not only strengthens our community colleges, it will also help individuals build the skills needed for quality jobs.

NYATEP 2009 Spring Conference: “Timely, Targeted, Transparent – Investing in New York's Workforce”

On *May 18th* through *May 20th, 2009* the **Legislative Commission on Skills Development & Career Education** participated in a workforce conference sponsored by the **New York Association of Training & Employment Professionals (NYATEP)**, the **U.S. Department of Labor (US DOL)** and the **New York State Department of Labor (NY DOL)**. Workforce development practitioners from One-Stop Career Centers, local workforce investments boards (LWIBs), BOCES, Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC), community-based organizations, labor unions, Consortium for Worker Education (CWE), community colleges, and policy makers at the federal, State, and local

levels attended the conference to discuss:

- ❖ *Regional and local initiatives that are occurring as a result of increased federal workforce appropriation funding through **Workforce Investment Act (WIA)** and the **American Recovery & Investment Act of 2009 (ARRA)**;*
- ❖ *Latest workforce development actions being taken at the national and state level;*
- ❖ *Potential challenges and barriers in the workforce development system; and,*
- ❖ *Workforce development best practices.*

Federal Funding for Employment and Training Services: Workforce Investment Act (WIA) & The American Recovery & Investment Act of 2009 (ARRA)

FEDERAL WORKFORCE FUNDING

One of the central topics of discussion at the NYATEP conference was federal funding for employment and training services. Conference attendees discussed how under the current economic downturn workforce professionals have had to explore new opportunities to strengthen partnerships and invest in services to prepare workers for new and emerging opportunities as the economy recovers. During the conference the following points were discussed and explored:

❖ **A Weakened Workforce Development System** – A number of workforce professionals pointed out how years of federal under-funding by the previous federal administration coupled with the yearly rescission of federal workforce dollars has consequently resulted in the weakening of our workforce system. To illustrate this point some workforce professionals spoke about the following:

- Reduction in workforce staff to assist and adequately assess workforce needs of One-Stop customers; and,
- Reduction in employment and training services, training slots, and support services offered to One-Stop customers.

❖ **Investing & Strengthening Our Workforce Development System** – Conference attendees were encouraged by the new administration’s support of the workforce development system. Attendees discussed how the President and Congress had decided

to significantly increase federal appropriations for workforce development for *fiscal year 2009-10* in an effort to preserve and create jobs, promote the nation’s economic recovery, as well as provide expanded education and employment and training opportunities for the American workforce.

- Although the funding under WIA for **program year 2009** (PY 2009 - July 1st, 2009 to June 30th, 2010) for employment and training services is essentially flat, additional appropriations have been authorized for workforce development under the **American Recovery & Investment Act of 2009** (ARRA – Public Law 115-5).
- Under ARRA (commonly referred to as the “Recovery Act” or “Stimulus Bill”) Congress has authorized:
 - ◆ \$500 million for **WIA Adult** program and services;
 - ◆ \$1.25 billion for **WIA Dislocated Worker** program and services; and,
 - ◆ \$1.25 billion for **WIA Youth** programs and services.
- ARRA funds are intended to supplement WIA funding and to expand employment and training services offered through WIA One-Stop Career Centers.
- New York’s allocation of workforce development funds under WIA and ARRA are listed below for selected regions:

WIA: Federal Employment & Training Appropriations for Program Year 2009					
NY Youth Funding		NY Dislocated Worker Funding		NY Adult Funding	
\$55.6 million		\$63.5 million		\$54.9 million	
LWIA Total	\$47.3 million	LWIA Total	\$38.1 million	LWIA Total	\$46.6 million
Onondaga	\$1 million	Onondaga	\$860,167	Onondaga	\$877,068
Dutchess	\$447,793	Dutchess	\$461,054	Dutchess	\$336,868
Erie	\$2.6 million	Erie	\$2.2 million	Erie	\$2.4 million
New York City	\$25.1 million	New York City	\$15.8 million	New York City	\$26.5 million
Suffolk	\$2.1 million	Suffolk	\$2.7 million	Suffolk	\$2 million
Niagara	\$1 million	Niagara	\$860,167	Niagara	\$731,971

ARRA: Federal Employment & Training Appropriations*

NY Youth Funding		NY Dislocated Worker Funding		NY Adult Funding	
\$71.5 million		\$64.4 million		\$31.5 million	
LWIA Total	\$60.8 million	LWIA Total	\$39.8 million	LWIA Total	\$26.8 million
CNY Region	\$2.4 million	CNY Region	\$1.7 million	CNY Region	\$921,825
Onondaga	\$1.3 million	Onondaga	\$899,156	Onondaga	\$503,922
Capital Region	\$2.3 million	Capital Region	\$2.1 million	Capital Region	\$819,949
Finger Lakes	\$3.8 million	Finger Lakes	\$2.9 million	Finger Lakes	\$1.5 million
Hudson Valley	\$4.3 million	Hudson Valley	\$3.7 million	Hudson Valley	\$1.9 million
New York City	\$32.2 million	New York City	\$16.5 million	New York City	\$15.3 million
Western NY	\$5.3 million	Western NY	\$3.7 million	Western NY	\$2.2 million

*Note: ARRA appropriations will be available for expenditure from the date of enactment of the Recovery Act – February 17, 2009 to June 30, 2011. The expectation is that the bulk of the funds will be expended in the first year.

**Regions: (1) CNY – Cayuga/Cortland, Onondaga & Oswego; (2) Capital Region – Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Warren, Washington, Columbia & Greene; (3) Finger Lakes – GLOW, Monroe & Finger Lakes; (4) Hudson Valley – Dutchess, Orange, Rockland, Sullivan, Ulster, Putnam/Westchester Balance, & Yonkers; (5) Western NY – Allegany/Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, & Niagara.

DELIVERY OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING SERVICES

Another key topic of discussion at the NYATEP conference was the delivery of workforce development services under WIA and the Recovery Act. With a new administration and new federal guidelines (*under the reauthorized Trade Adjustment Assistance Act of 2009 and the Recovery Act of 2009*) a number of workforce professionals sought further guidance and clarity on how employment and training funds were to be expended. In addition, conference attendees also expressed the following concerns:

❖ **Providing Workforce Services Under WIA & the Recovery Act** – The expansion of employment and training services and the large investment of federal workforce development funds presents some new challenges for workforce professionals at the State and local levels as we move forward into PY 2009. Central areas of concerns for conferences participants were as follows:

- **Expanding Capacity** – The significant expansion of training provided to individuals is one of the principal goals for states and

LWIAs under the Recovery Act (*states and LWIAs are also expected to significantly expand critical support services that are often needed to access employment and training services*). Under the Recovery Act USDOL expects states and LWIAs to double the number of people trained, particularly low skilled and low-income individuals. To achieve this goal a number of LWIAs and One-Stop Career Centers will have to build-up their capacity in order to properly address the workforce needs of their respective areas.

- i. **Limited Staffing** – Under WIA, One-Stop Career Centers across the State are required to partner with State agencies and their respective local agencies (*i.e., DOL, SED, Social Services, etc...*) to deliver employment and training services within their community.¹ NY DOL cooperatively works with all LWIAs and co-locates DOL staff at One-Stop Career Centers to assist localities with the delivery employment and training services. As the demand for services has

¹ Note: Under WIA key One-Stop partners involved in providing public workforce development services are mandated to come together to plan and coordinate their services. Moreover, key One-Stop Career partners are expected to contribute to the costs and maintenance of the One-Stop system.

dramatically increased over the past year, the need for additional workforce professionals has become more acute.

- ◆ Some conference attendees pointed out that the Governor’s decision to institute an agency wide hiring freeze in an effort to achieve fiscal savings for the State has inadvertently impacted some local One-Stop Career Centers who rely on DOL staff to deliver employment and training services within their region.
- ◆ Although federal funds are available, the current hiring freeze has restricted NY DOL’s ability to hire additional staff to meet increased demand for employment and training services and/or replace individuals that have left due to retirement.
- ◆ The hiring freeze has also affected other State agencies (i.e., SED) that have partnered with NY DOL under WIA to delivery employment and training services.

❖ **Shift Towards Developing More Career Pathway² Training Opportunities** – One of the key strategic goals of the Recovery Act is to provide workforce funding that will accelerate “*transformational efforts*” that improve the effectiveness of the public workforce system as well as create seamless career pathways for individuals (US DOL TEGL 14-08 Page 3). Under the Recovery local One-Stop Career Centers will have sufficient funds for support services (i.e., child care, books and supplies, transportation assistance, etc…) and needs-based payments.

- Though conference attendees universally expressed support for developing more robust career pathways under the Recovery Act (which is short-term – funding expires June 30, 2011) there were some concerns about long-term funding commitment.

OTHER SIGNIFICANT TOPICS OF DISCUSSION

Conference attendees pointed out that as we move forward through this period of economic uncertainty there are a number of potential challenges and employment and training barriers that our workforce system must confront. Key areas of concerns are as follows:

❖ **Expanding Training Opportunities at Post-Secondary Institutions** – As LWIAs across the State work to significantly expand training opportunities some localities have had difficulty securing training courses at community colleges. Some conference attendants attributed this difficulty due to the fact that some community colleges only offer training classes on a semester basis.

- Though semester based-course offerings are effective and practical in an educational setting, it can be problematic in a workforce setting where individuals need to receive training quickly and at various times frames throughout the year (support services such as UI payments that permit some individuals to take training courses are limited and finite).

❖ **Limited Green Collar Jobs Training Programs** – As the green-technology industry grows and influences traditional occupations and industries, a number of communities across the State are moving to make the necessary investments to create green collar jobs, upgrade incumbent worker skills, as well as train emerging and dislocated workers for these new jobs. Some areas around the State however, are having difficulty securing training opportunities.

- Some conference attendees pointed out that the lack of or limited **Building Performance Institute (BPI)** accredited training programs (i.e., Building Analyst, Heating Professional, etc...) within their region is hindering their ability to provide new training opportunities in emerging green industries – particularly to low-income individuals.
 - ◆ Some conference attendees pointed out that some One-stop customers who lack transportation can’t access training programs that require personal transportation.

² **Career Pathways** – Refers to employment and training opportunities that enable individuals to obtain skills and credentials over time – through the completion of succession of different publicly funded education and training programs. The Recovery Act encourages states to develop more robust career pathways that will enable individuals to continue working while using their new skills to advance to better-paying positions within a specific industry or occupation.

❖ *Shift Away from Sequenced Service Delivery*

– Current WIA legislation promotes local areas to sequence employment and training services to One-Stop customers, the Recovery Act shifts away from the work-first service delivery model. Under the work-first model the principal goal of the One-Stops is to find employment rather than provide training opportunities for One-Stop customers – this practice is commonly referred to as “*tiered or sequenced service delivery*”³.

- *Commonly, before providing “intensive services”⁴ One-Stop Career Centers throughout the State make a determination whether or not an individual is able to obtain employment through “core services”⁵. However, the President and Congress through the Recovery Act provide new workforce development funding and guidelines in an effort to increase training opportunities for the American people.*

³ **Note:** Current WIA statutes attempt to promote system efficiency by establishing a hierarchy of 3 services – **core services** {lowest level of hierarchy}, **intensive services** {second level of hierarchy}, and **training services**. A definition of WIA core and intensive services is provided in the footnotes below on page 4. The third level of the hierarchy consists of generally longer-term skills building activities designed to provide participants with occupationally specific skills or credentials – training services include **on-the-job, classroom and occupational skills training**.

⁴ **WIA Intensive Services** – Traditional WIA intensive services at One-Stop Career Centers include but aren’t limited to the following services: (i) career counseling; (ii) referral to training; (iii) support services; and, (iv) development of an individual service strategy after comprehensive skills assessment is conducted.

⁵ **WIA Core Services** – Traditional WIA core services at One-Stop Career Centers include but aren’t limited to the following services: (i) outreach, intake, and orientation to job information; (ii) job search assistance ranging from creating or assistance changing a resume to on-line job search; (iii) job placement assistance; (iv) brief career counseling; and, (v) assistance filing unemployment claims.

Workforce Investment Act (WIA): Prospects for WIA Reauthorization & Funding

The reauthorization of WIA and Congressional funding for employment and training services was another key topic of discussion at the conference. The discussion on WIA reauthorization and funding was led by **John Colbert, of USA Works!** – a 501 (c)4 non-profit, advocacy organization whose principal goal is to obtain increased federal funding for local workforce investment areas.

BACKGROUND

In the past, the federal job training system was fragmented, consisting of overlapping programs. Then in 1998, the U.S. Congress passed the **Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA – P.L. -105-220)** seeking to create a system connecting employment, education, and training services to better match job seekers to labor market needs.

WIA has three funding sources for each of the act’s main client groups – **adults, youth, and dislocated workers**. WIA encourages collaboration and partnerships in making a wide array of services universally accessible to these three populations and allows states broad discretion in designing their workforce investment systems. WIA requires most federally funded employment and training services to be delivered through the One-Stop system. Fig-

ure 1 illustrates the funding stream system under WIA.

Once Congress appropriates WIA funds the amount of money that flows to states and localities depends on a specific formula that takes into account state unemployment data (results in year-to-year funding fluctuations). States and localities are required to manage their WIA programs, including spending on a program-year basis (July 1 to June 30), regardless of when funds are made available.

As Congress moves ahead with WIA reauthorization, legislative leaders have sought input on how the delivery of employment and training services can be improved and strengthened under the current system.

FEDERAL ACTION

Though the President has publicly stated a desire to craft and pass bi-partisan WIA reauthorization legislation by the end of the year, the White House doesn’t currently have all the key people in place to negotiate and deal with WIA reauthorization at this time. Moreover, the Administration is still in the process of formulating a White House position with respect to key priorities and core principles that should guide WIA reauthorization.

General consensus of individuals in Washington, D.C. has been that the Administration and Congress will likely wait for data on expenditure of workforce Recovery Act funds before reauthorizing WIA. Some workforce advocates also believe that both the Administration and Congress will ultimately want to examine program performance data to determine what programs or components/philosophies (i.e., governance structure, enhanced emphasis on training etc...) need to be eliminated and or restructured.

KEY POLICY MAKERS

The key principals leading discussions on WIA reauthorization and funding are:

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA)
 Chair of Employment & Workplace Safety Subcommittee on Health, Education, Labor & Pensions

Senator Tom Harkins (D-IA)
 Chair of the Agriculture, Nutrition, & Forestry Committee

Senator Michael Enzi (R-WY)
 Ranking Minority Member of the Health, Education, Labor & Pension Committee

House Rep. George Miller (D-CA)
 Chair of the Education & Labor Committee

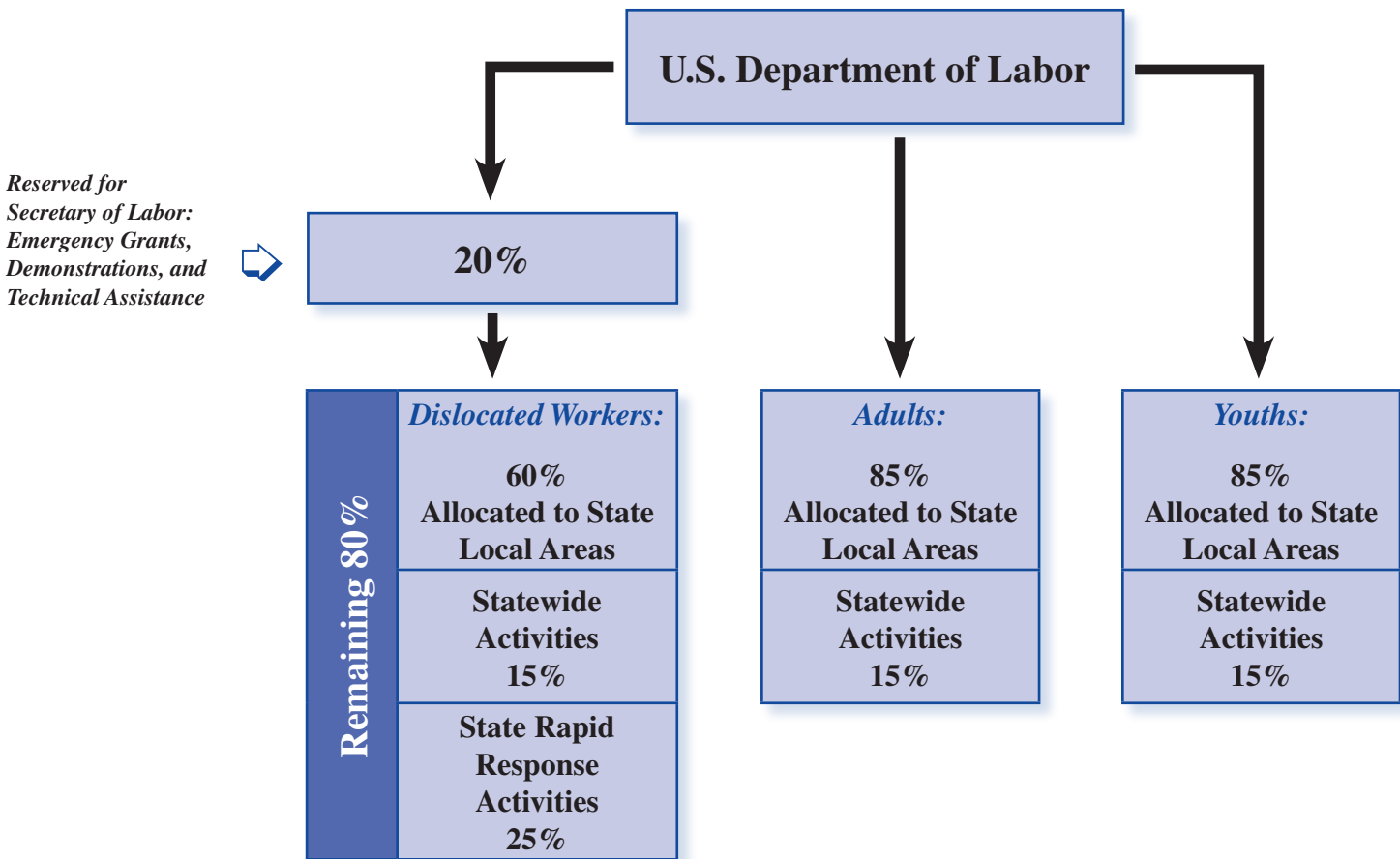
House Rep. Ruben Hinojosa (D-TX)
 Chair of the Education, Lifelong Learning, & Competitiveness Subcommittee

House Rep. Howard McKeon (R-CA)
 Ranking Member of Education and Labor Committee

Secretary Hilda Solis
 U.S. Department of Labor Secretary

Jane Oates
 Deputy Assistant USDOL Office of Employment & Training Administration

Figure 1: WIA Funding Stream



WIA REAUTHORIZATION: CONGRESSIONAL ACTION & PRIORITIES

In November 2008, the *Senate Health, Education, Labor & Pension Committee* had preliminary discussions with advocacy groups and key stakeholders in the workforce development community to identify key priorities for WIA reauthorization. In the House, the House Education and Labor

Committee has held three hearing to explore new workforce development innovations and best practices under WIA.

As discussions for WIA reauthorization progress, both Senate and House leadership have identified key priorities and challenges for WIA reauthorization.

WIA REAUTHORIZATION: SENATE AND HOUSE PRIORITIES	
KEY PRIORITIES & ISSUES	CONGRESSIONAL ACTION
<i>Bipartisanship Support</i>	<p>Senate leadership wants to craft legislation that will garner bipartisan support in order to prevent a filibuster.</p> <p>Some Washington insiders believe that the Senate Majority doesn't want a protracted battle over WIA reauthorization that will require a heavy expenditure of political capital. It is anticipated that a lot of resources and energy will be expended on passage of a healthcare reform bill.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Position – The Senate wants to introduce a bill by early summer. • House Position – Crafting a bipartisanship bill is less of a priority in the House due to their larger majority.
<i>Governance Structure</i>	<p>There are some concerns regarding the ability of state {SWIBs} and local boards {LWIBs} to function efficiently and effectively under existing WIA board membership requirements⁶.</p> <p>Proponents for governance restructuring contend that the large size of state and LWIBs has seriously constrained some board's ability to perform their duties.</p> <p>In an effort to give states and local areas the opportunity to reorganize their Boards to a more manageable and productive size, Congress has considered streamlining WIA board membership requirements – <i>new regulations would only require a minimum of one representative from each membership group.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New York – The New York State Workforce Investment Board has more than 26 members and some local boards around the State have 30 or more board members. • Senate Position – Senate leadership has indicated that it will likely retain the current governance structure. • House Position – The House is considering various options for restructuring WIA's current governance structure. Those policies range from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Reducing the size of state and local workforce boards; to,</i> ◆ <i>Providing WIA state and local boards' greater flexibility to undertake more extensive policy-making activities.</i>

⁶ **WIA Board Membership Requirements** – Under WIA guidelines, states are required to have a State Workforce Board (SWIB) with a minimum of two representatives from each of the following membership groups: (i) business; (ii) labor; (iii) educational institutions; (iv) youth stakeholder that works with youth; and, (v) community-based organizations. The State WIB is responsible for designing a statewide plan and establishing program policy. WIA services are administered by **Local Workforce Investment Areas (LWIAs)** – Currently, New York has 33 LWIAs. The *Chief Elected Official (CEO)* of each LWIA appoints a Local WIB with a local membership similar to the State WIB. The Local WIBs are responsible for developing and submitting local area plans to the State WIB, appointing local One-Stop operators, and selecting eligible organizations to provide services to youths, adults and dislocated workers.

WIA REAUTHORIZATION: SENATE AND HOUSE PRIORITIES

KEY PRIORITIES & ISSUES	CONGRESSIONAL ACTION
<p><i>No Faith-Based Requirements</i></p>	<p>Under the previous administration some members of Congress attempted to insert a faith-based provision in WIA reauthorization bill language. The proposed provision would have allowed <i>faith-based community-based organizations</i> that receive federal funds to selectively hire staff.</p> <p>Consequently, such a provision would allow faith-based community organizations to take into account a potential applicant’s faith when hiring staff.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Position – Senate leadership has indicated that a faith-based requirement will not be included in the Senate bill. • House Position – House leadership has publicly stated that a faith-based requirement is a non-starter and will not be included in the House bill.
<p><i>Merit Staffing Requirement</i></p>	<p>Under Wagner-Peyser states are required to use merit staff employees (<i>civil service employees</i>) to deliver employment and training services funded by the Wagner-Peyser Act.</p> <p>The previous administration attempted and failed to pass legislation that would have repealed state merit staff requirements – due primarily to strong Congressional opposition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>The previous administration also attempted to circumnavigate Wagner-Peyser merit staff requirements by bloc-granting state employment & training funds,</i> ◆ <i>There are some Congressional members as well as state Governors who support the elimination of merit staffing requirement provisions.</i> <p>Labor unions and a number of workforce advocacy groups want the inclusion of strong merit staff requirement provisions in the Senate and House WIA reauthorization bills (<i>under current WIA law there is no merit staff provision</i>) in order to protect against future attempts to circumnavigate the law through the budgetary process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Position – Senate would like to draft a bipartisan bill that addresses both the concerns of opponents and proponents. In the event that a compromise can’t be reached the Senate has indicated that the Senate bill will probably not include a merit staff requirement provision – thereby maintaining the status quo. • House Position – The House leadership generally supports a merit staffing requirement, however, there has been no specific commitment to a merit staffing provision in the House bill. ◆ <i>There has been some discussion to follow the model established under the Trade Adjustment & Assistance Act of 2009 – the proposal would give individual states the option to select whether or not to institute a merit staff system for Wagner-Peyser employment services.</i>

WIA REAUTHORIZATION: SENATE AND HOUSE PRIORITIES

KEY PRIORITIES & ISSUES	CONGRESSIONAL ACTION
<p><i>Increase Access to Training</i></p>	<p>A number of workforce advocates have pointed out that under WIA a smaller percentage of participants are receiving training than under its previous predecessor program, the <i>Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA)</i>.</p> <p>Workforce advocates have attributed this decrease in training to a wide range of mandated activities (<i>such as tiered or sequenced employment and training service</i>) that must be provided with WIA funding – <i>i.e., administration, programs costs such as job search assistance, case management and supportive services, etc...</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Position – Though Senate has generally supported the idea of increased access to training no specific proposals have been put forth. • House Position – House leadership has indicated support for a proposal that would require 60% of WIA funds to be allocated to training.
<p><i>Improve WIA Performance Data Reporting System</i></p>	<p>Most policy makers and workforce advocates have noted their dissatisfaction with the performance measures and data collected under the current system. Proponents for reform have specifically pointed the following areas of concern:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Data is Not Comprehensive – <i>States aren't required to report all participants. Consequently, workforce advocates point-out that the data provided doesn't provide a complete picture of the system's outcomes.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Current Law – <i>Under current law states are required to only report on WIA participants who receive "intensive services" or "intensive training services".</i> ◆ No Measure Assesses Overall One-Stop Performance – <i>Proponents for WIA reform further point out that a significant amount of spending is invested in the One-Stop delivery infrastructure, yet no performance measures attempt to quantify the outcomes or effectiveness of this spending</i> <p>To address these concerns some workforce advocacy groups have suggested the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ <i>Require the adoption of sensible common measures across the federally funded programs with a workforce development goal; and,</i> ◆ <i>Require the adoption of sensible common measures across the federally funded programs with a workforce development goal; and,</i> ◆ <i>Require WIA track its contributions (full or partial WIA assistance) to workers earning a skilled credential that lands them a skilled job over time – setting national goals will help assess how well WIA is preparing the U.S. workforce for the 21st global economy.</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate Position – Senate has yet to publicly state a position on this issue. • House Position – House has yet to publicly state a position on this issue.
<p><i>Sequence of Services</i></p>	<p>WIA "<i>sequencing of service</i>" requirements have been cited as one of the key contributing factors that have played a major role in the decline of training. Under such requirements, WIA participants must be unable to obtain or retain employment after core services before they can engage in intensive services before they can receive training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Senate & House Position – Though the Senate and House have yet to publicly state a position on this issue, both the Senate and the House supported provisions in the Recovery Act that shift employment and training service delivery away from the sequencing of service model established under WIA.

Syracuse Youthbuild Program Receives Critical Federal Grant

In June 2009 *Jubilee Homes of Syracuse*, a private not-for profit community-based organization that builds affordable housing for the City's southwest neighborhood, received a **\$450,000** federal grant from the *U.S. Department of Labor (U.S. DOL)*. Department of Labor officials indicated that the **\$450,000** grant is the first installment of 2 year grant of **\$720,000**. According to U.S. DOL information Jubilee Homes was among 183 community-based groups that won a total of **\$114 million** in *Youthbuild* federal grants.

Founded in 1990 *Youthbuild USA* is a national non-profit organization that works with a nationwide network of more than 200 local programs. Youthbuild programs help young adults to obtain their GED or high school diploma while learning job skills by building affordable housing for homeless and low-income people. Strong emphasis is placed on leadership development and community service.

Assemblywoman Christensen applauded Jubilee Homes for securing the federal grant because the money will allow Jubilee Homes to resume it's local Youthbuild Program, which had been suspended due to lack of funding.

With the new federal funds, Jubilee Homes plans to hire a program coordinator, a lead construction trainer, as well as two part-time construction trainers who will help instruct program participants. Additionally, Jubilee Homes plans on recruiting about 20 youths (*between the ages of 16 to 24*) to enter the program in September. A second group of 20 students will be recruited into the program in September 2010. The Jubilee Homes Youthbuild program will provide 8

months of instructional classroom and occupational training to out-of-school youths who have not obtained their G.E.D. or completed high school.

Assemblyman Christensen acknowledged the pivotal role that Jubilee Homes and it's Youthbuild program are making in the lives of our youth. The Assemblywoman noted how the program not only provides local youth marketable and career-specific technical skills, but also provides essential soft skills such as leadership, problem solving, interpersonal communication skills, and responsible work habits prior to entering the workforce.

For more information about the Jubilee Youthbuild Program contact:

Jubilee Homes of Syracuse, Inc.
901 Tallman Street
Syracuse, NY 13204-4021

Phone: 315-428-0070 • Fax: 315-428-046
E-mail: Jubileehomes@jubilee-homes.org

To find out additional information or locations of other Youthbuild Programs in your area visit the Youthbuild U.S.A. Web site at:

<http://www.youthbuild.org/site/c.htIRI3PIKoG/b.1223921/k.BD3C/Home.htm>

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