

# **WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT 101**

A TOOLKIT FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

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The toolkit was authored by Sallie A. Glickman, with research and writing support from Tim Aldinger and Julian Roberts under contract to the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB).

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- Jonathan Davitte, National Association of Counties
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## Introduction

Workforce Investment Act 101 is a toolkit outlining the important and fundamental features of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998. It is designed to help elected officials understand the important role that WIA plays in elected officials' human capital and economic development efforts. The toolkit describes the intent of the legislation and its dynamics at the state and local levels as well as WIA's interplay with other human service and economic development systems.

### Sections

The toolkit is organized into five sections:

- **The Law** – This section describes WIA's original purpose, its titles, and the roles and responsibilities of elected officials at the state and local levels. This section also contains a **Relationship Map** providing an overview of key WIA stakeholders and the connection among the federal, state, and local levels of government and a **Funding Chart** depicting the flow of money from the federal to state to local levels.
- **Workforce Investment Boards** – This section outlines the role, function, and purpose of Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) at the state and local levels. The WIBs are highlighted as the voice of business and strategic conveners of key stakeholders in their states and local communities. This section includes charts showing the composition of State Workforce Investment Boards, Local Workforce Investment Boards, and Youth Councils.
- **WIA and Human Capital Development** – This section outlines the ways in which the system and programs authorized by WIA advance human capital development, and how the authority of elected officials can be used to link these efforts at the state and local levels.
- **WIA and Economic Development** – This section addresses how WIA can be leveraged in support of economic development, including the strategies that can be used to meet the workforce needs of individual businesses and industry sectors.
- **Future of WIA** – The final section provides information about the WIA appropriations and reauthorization.

With the exception of the Future of WIA, each section contains a summary with the following sub-sections:

- **The Basics** – describes the essential and salient information regarding the section's content.
- **Roles and Responsibilities** – outlines the various roles and responsibilities of state and local elected officials related to the section's content.
- **Policy Considerations** – outlines the key policy questions and considerations related to the section's content.

These summary sections are followed by an in-depth discussion section that includes resource links.

## **How to Use the Toolkit**

The toolkit is organized with a linear flow, starting with fundamentals (the law and workforce investment boards) and building toward more programmatic practices, concluding with “The Future of WIA” section. The summaries are followed by an in-depth discussion section that includes links to resources. At the same time, recognizing its utility as a resource guide, each section was written to stand on its own. Therefore, as appropriate, some content is repeated.

The toolkit is designed to serve as a reference for elected officials seeking clarity about the critical roles they play in implementing the Workforce Investment Act. Those elected officials or their designees who are inspired to know more are encouraged to connect to their respective intergovernmental organizations for additional insight and support regarding WIA and its implementation.

# The Law

## The Basics

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 authorizes the nation’s public workforce development system. WIA’s stated purpose is “to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States.”

### WIA has five titles:

- **Title I – Workforce Investment Systems** – authorizes state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs); establishes a formula by which funds for youth, adult, and dislocated workers programs flow from the federal level, through the states, and to the local level; establishes performance metrics; and authorizes the nation’s youth workforce development and one-stop career center systems.
- **Title II - Adult Education and Literacy** – authorizes the Adult Education and Literacy System, which is administered at the state level to provide resources to improve the literacy of the adult population.
- **Title III – Workforce Investment-Related Activities** – amends the Wagner-Peyser Act, which is administered at the state level to provide labor exchange services to job seekers.
- **Title IV – Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998** – amends the nation’s Rehabilitation Act, which is administered at the state level to primarily serve the career development needs of those living with disabilities.
- **Title V – General Provisions** – includes provisions for a state unified plan, which encourages joint planning and coordination among programs authorized in Titles I-IV of WIA as well as mentions 11 other programs that should be connected to the public workforce system.

WIA Title I is the primary focus of this toolkit because it authorizes the service delivery system and calls for coordination among all levels of government. When “WIA” is referred to in the public discourse, it is commonly understood that the reference is to [Title I](#). The other titles are typically referred to by the programs they authorize.

## Roles and Responsibilities

At every level, elected officials have the opportunity to set the policy direction for the funds that flow into states and local jurisdictions under WIA. The mandated roles of state and local elected officials under Title I are described below.

The **governor** is liable for the funds flowing into her/his state. To manage those funds, the governor designates a state department to receive and disperse the money. The governor also is responsible for appointing (and serving on) a state WIB. The state WIB is responsible for producing a State Plan, which

outlines the state's workforce delivery system and is submitted to the US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration for approval. The governor can opt to direct the state WIB to develop a Unified Plan, in accordance with WIA Title V (see above). The governor also has discretion over funding for statewide employment and training activities and for statewide response to layoffs, called Rapid Response (see the "Funding Chart" for the breakdown of funding for "statewide activities").

**State legislators** have less direct responsibility for WIA but still play an important role. Most states require that the legislature approve the receipt and distribution of federal funding. The legislature should also be aware of the state plan (or the unified plan, if one is developed), which is the operating blueprint for the state's workforce investment system. The plan may also include discretionary human capital programs that would be part of a governor's overall budget request. Also, state legislatures have a minimum of four representatives (two each from the State House and State Senate) that are appointed by the legislature to the state WIB.

The **chief elected official** (CEO) is designated in a local operating agreement that covers the local workforce investment area. The CEO plays a pivotal role in WIA, as the vast majority of the funds flow to the local level to be invested in alignment with a local plan. Like the governor, the CEO is liable for these funds, which can be administered either by local government or by a fiscal agent designated by the CEO. The CEO also appoints the local WIB, which is accountable to the CEO for planning and oversight of the public workforce services in the area. These services are delivered through WIB-certified one-stop centers and training vendors. The local plan is developed by the local WIB in collaboration with the CEO, who must approve the plan. This plan should be based on local labor market and workforce needs and aligned with local priorities, which would be defined by the CEO or board of local elected officials. Typically, the local WIB also develops a strategy, documented in the local plan, for connecting business with services available through the public workforce system.

## Policy Considerations

- The legislative intent for WIA was that it would serve as a nexus for the coordination of resources to close the gaps between the skills of the workforce and business's needs for workers. How are WIA funds, and the services supported with WIA funds in your jurisdiction (youth programs, one-stop center services), connected to other resources that support education, training, and the transition to or advancement in the labor force?
- WIA focuses a great deal on the balance and relationship among and between elected officials at the federal, state, and local levels of government. In your jurisdiction, how well articulated and mutually beneficial are your connections to the other levels of government?
- WIA provides for a series of constructs (state and local boards, a unified state plan, one-stop career centers and services - training and development for adults, dislocated workers, and youth) that can stand alone or be integrated into a broader strategy. Is WIA being implemented in your jurisdiction in ways that best support your priorities?

## The Law Discussion

### History

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 is part of a decades-long tradition of public support for workforce development in the US, and is also a product of the economic boom of the late 90s.

WIA has deep roots in America's history. It is legislation that evolved as the nation evolved and is dwarfed in both resources and familiarity compared to its predecessors. The nation's modern public workforce system goes back to 1962, when the Manpower Development & Training Act (MDTA) was passed as part of President Kennedy's agenda to combat unemployment. It was a modest program, aimed at retraining workers displaced by technology, inclusive of those who were currently employed but with a training allowance for unemployed participants.

In 1973, with the enactment of MDTA's successor - the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act (CETA)- the federal investment in workforce development earned its place in modern economic history. CETA was inspired by the Works Progress Administration program launched in the 1930s to help America recover from the Great Depression. CETA was ambitious and well-funded, with an annual appropriation in real dollars of well over 5 times the current federal investment in WIA. Its purpose was to train workers and provide them with jobs in the public service. The program offered work to low income and chronically unemployed populations, providing full time jobs for a period of 12 to 24 months in public agencies or private not-for-profit organizations. CETA's intent was to impart marketable skills through work that would allow participants move into unsubsidized jobs. CETA also provided for the popular Summer Youth Employment Program. It was also significant from another perspective; it was the first step in decentralizing control of what had always been federally controlled job training programs.

In 1983, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced CETA. While continuing the trend of devolution from the federal government started under CETA, the broad programmatic parameters under CETA become far more defined and regulated under JTPA. While local areas now had Private Industry Councils (PICs) to administer the funds at the local level, the flexibility associated with those funds diminished. Under JTPA, one extremely popular CETA program - subsidized employment - disappeared entirely.

Fifteen years after the launch of JTPA and several unsuccessful attempts at reform, WIA was enacted in a thriving economy with nearly full employment in the United States. Employers in traditional and emerging industry sectors were reporting acute skill and labor shortages. Unemployment was at a historic low. Two years earlier, Congress and the Clinton administration had enacted sweeping welfare reforms and the public assistance rolls in most places across the country had plunged. At the same time, technology and innovation were accelerating the pace of change in the workplace. The common wisdom was that America needed a way to get people to work quickly along with resources to get out-of-work individuals the real-time training they needed to keep pace with employers' needs.

WIA changed several of JTPA's structures and processes and explicitly outlined a service model where services to individuals are delivered in the context of the broader marketplace. WIA required the creation of a national network of one-stop centers to provide a sequence of services, emphasizing meeting employers' needs and quick progression to employment. The centers were expected to be funded by complicated agreements with organizations administering other related funding streams. Support for these centers - coupled with dramatic reductions in WIA funding over the years - has had a major impact on the availability of funds for services over the life of WIA. Another change was that Workforce Investment Boards replaced PICs, changing composition requirements and enhancing the responsibilities of these business-led boards. Lastly, WIA reflected a new understanding about youth development, influenced in part by controversial studies under JTPA. The result was far more emphasis on skill development rather than work experience for youth, effectively dismantling the nation's summer jobs program.

WIA, as a product of its time, includes provisions that may seem out of touch with the current economic climate. Nevertheless, even with relatively modest funding and rules that may seem restrictive, WIA provides resources and opportunities that can be central to state and local human capital and economic development agendas. This will be discussed in other sections of this toolkit.

### **More on the Law**

As noted in the summary section, WIA has five titles. Each is explained in more depth below.

**Title I – Workforce Investment Systems** – is the “core” of WIA. As envisioned by the law's authors and authorizers, it establishes the infrastructure through which all public funding related to workforce development would flow and be coordinated. Key provisions of Title I include:

- **Creation of state and local WIBs** – The law outlines, in great detail, the composition of state and local WIBs and the mechanism by which members from different categories are nominated for consideration. WIA has a great deal to say about the legal and leadership requirements of WIBs. Elected officials may also place additional responsibilities on their WIBs by charging them to go beyond the relatively narrow scope articulated in the law. Implicit in the establishment of state WIBs as appointments of governors and local WIBs as appointments of chief elected officials (CEOs) is the expectation that those same officials would play leading roles in setting the vision and context for how WIA is implemented in their respective jurisdictions. This topic is discussed further in the “Workforce Investment Boards” section of this toolkit.
- **Establishment of Local Workforce Investment Areas** – WIA requires the designation of local areas by state WIBs. WIA contains provisions for automatic designation, based, in some instances, on population, legacy, and performance history. The characteristics of the workforce area's population, as well as key figures such as the unemployment rate, drive the WIA formula distribution. Elected officials should have knowledge of the workings of the workforce investment area(s) in their respective jurisdictions. They should also be party to - or familiar with - the cooperative agreement designating the CEO and outlining other provisions in their local workforce investment areas.

- **Establishment of a One-Stop Center Delivery System** – One-stop centers are required in every local workforce investment area to coordinate services to primarily non-youth populations. One-stop centers were envisioned to coordinate and consolidate more than a dozen federally funded education and workforce programs and provide a set of core, basic services to the universe of job seekers and employers. While this directive is clear under WIA Title I, it is far less direct in the other titles of WIA and not required in the authorizing legislation of other named “partners.” This has not stopped some jurisdictions from carrying out both the letter and spirit of the law, using mechanisms such as state law to compel a broad range of programs to deliver services through local one-stop centers. In practice, requirements of other funding streams, existing leases, space requirements, and a host of other coordination challenges, often preclude the full coordination or alignment of services through the one-stops as envisioned in WIA. Nevertheless, the one-stops have emerged as vital in their communities, both serving as a regular conduit between job seekers and employers and as the vehicle for implementing new or temporary programmatic initiatives, such as the workforce programs under the 2009 American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA).
- **Establishment of a Youth Workforce Development System** – WIA, unlike its predecessors, focuses heavily on the developmental needs of youth as a requirement for investing the funds. Services to youth (defined as a young person ages fourteen to twenty-one) tend to be of relatively long duration (one year or more). Youth services are delivered through a competitively procured provider that establishes a longer-term relationship with the young person. These services are organized around delivery models that increase the young person’s long-term employability. (Although the youth summer jobs program was not explicitly abolished under WIA, the development requirements in effect made it impossible to run a stand-alone summer program under WIA.) WIA requires that a minimum of 30 percent of the allocation be used to serve out-of-school youth and also requires that all eligible youth be from extremely low-income families.
- **Authorization of Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker Programs** – WIA authorizes a series of programs for specific populations - three of which are at the center of the nation’s public workforce system:

  1. Adult programs targeted to individuals in need of workforce services under a priority of service that favors those with the lowest incomes;
  2. Dislocated worker programs focused on service to individuals who lose their jobs; and
  3. Youth programs, as described above.

Services funded through adult and dislocated worker funding streams are referred to in three levels:

1. Core services, which include basic workshops and access to electronic job search tools;
2. Intensive services, which include one-on-one counseling, assessment, and other staff-assisted help; and

3. Training services, which include skill development for occupations in strong and/or growing industries. WIA represented a move to a voucher system for training, which could be acquired in the open marketplace. This is in contrast with the JTPA model where classrooms were “bought” with public dollars and then filled with job seekers.

There is a parallel set of services for employers: core services, such as free job posting; intensive services, such as customized screening of candidates for open positions; and training, such as on-the-job or customized programs.

- **Establishment of the Funding Formula** – WIA funds are distributed to states by the U.S. Department of Labor and through states to local areas by a complex formula that includes factors such as unemployment, change in unemployment, and disadvantaged youth. More information about the formula can be found in the “Resources” section at the end of this discussion.
- **Establishment of Performance Metrics** – WIA has 17 performance measures established by the federal government.<sup>1</sup> State and local WIBs may create additional measures of success. Performance goals are negotiated between states and their respective Regional Offices of the US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration. States, in turn, negotiate performance goals with local WIBs.

Additionally, under Title I governors have access to 15 percent of the incoming WIA funding for her/his discretion based on the state’s priorities. These funds are often used to develop initiatives or projects that would not otherwise have been possible at a statewide level or to provide incentives for local areas to develop their goals and strategies in a particular way. The governor also has control over an additional 25 percent of the dislocated worker funding (Rapid Response Funding) to address acute layoffs or other industry transitions that affect the state’s economy.

**Title II – Adult Education and Literacy** – authorizes the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act and is administered by the United States Department of Education through grants to states. The stated purpose of the act is “to create a partnership among the federal government, states, and localities to provide, on a voluntary basis, adult education and literacy services, in order to:

1. Assist adults to become literate and obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for employment and self-sufficiency;
2. Assist adults who are parents to obtain the educational skills necessary to become full partners in the educational development of their children; and
3. Assist adults in the completion of a secondary school education.”

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<sup>1</sup> Subsequent to WIA’s passage, the US Department of Labor led a highly collaborative process to create a set of “common measures” for youth and adults/dislocated workers. The idea for these measures was that all workforce programs - regardless of who administers them - could report on the same set of metrics. While not required for use in WIA or in any other program, some States have requested, and have been granted, permission by the US Department of Labor to report on performance using the common measures, rather than the 17 measures in WIA.

To accomplish these ends, funds allocated under this title are focused on basic education services, including General Equivalency Diploma (GED) and English as a Second Language (ESL) programs. Programs funded under this system must be connected to the one-stop centers.

**Title III – Workforce Investment-Related Activities** – amends the Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933, and is administered through the US Department of Labor Employment & Training Administration. In general, Wagner-Peyser is a state administered labor-exchange program whose services were delivered through a network of unemployment offices until WIA. This title, in addition to reauthorizing this program, requires that services be delivered through the local one-stop centers. As a result of this requirement, and because it is administered by the same federal department as Title I, Wagner-Peyser is typically a major presence in local one-stop centers.

**Title IV – Rehabilitation Act Amendment of 1998** – amends the Rehabilitation Act, most significantly for the purposes of this toolkit, by inserting the following into the Act’s title: “to create linkage between State vocational rehabilitation programs and workforce investment activities carried out under Title I of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998.” The programs under this title are administered by the US Department of Education through states.

**Title V – General Provisions** – is the final title in WIA. In keeping with the spirit of coordination and cooperation under which WIA was written, this title encourages states to develop and submit a state unified plan that includes one or more of 15 federal programs listed in WIA.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The role of elected officials under WIA was heavily debated leading up to its enactment in 1998 (and continues in the public discourse related to reauthorization - see “The Future of WIA” section). The key players, as shown in the relationship map at the end of this section, are governors and those elected officials (typically mayors, county executives, or county commissioners) who are designated as the “Chief Elected Official” for a local area. Local areas can be a city (or a piece of a city, as in the case of Los Angeles), a county (or part of a county, with the major city serving as its own local area as in the case of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County in Pennsylvania), multiple counties, or a single state (as in the case of New Hampshire).

There are a handful of functions and responsibilities required of both governors and CEOs (in the case of a single state area, they are one and the same), including: appointing the WIB members, receiving the funds, and designating the entity in charge of administration. In the case of a state, the designated entity is always a state operating department. For a local area, it can be a unit of local government or a private organization. These actions are required in order for the money to flow from the federal government to states and from states to the local workforce investment areas.

The leadership role of elected officials is essential to maximizing WIA’s impact in state and local jurisdiction through collaboration with state and local WIBs, setting policy for the workforce system to achieve broader human capital and economic development goals.

## **Resources**

For the law itself:

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/plaintext.pdf>

WIA in plain English:

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/plaintext.pdf>

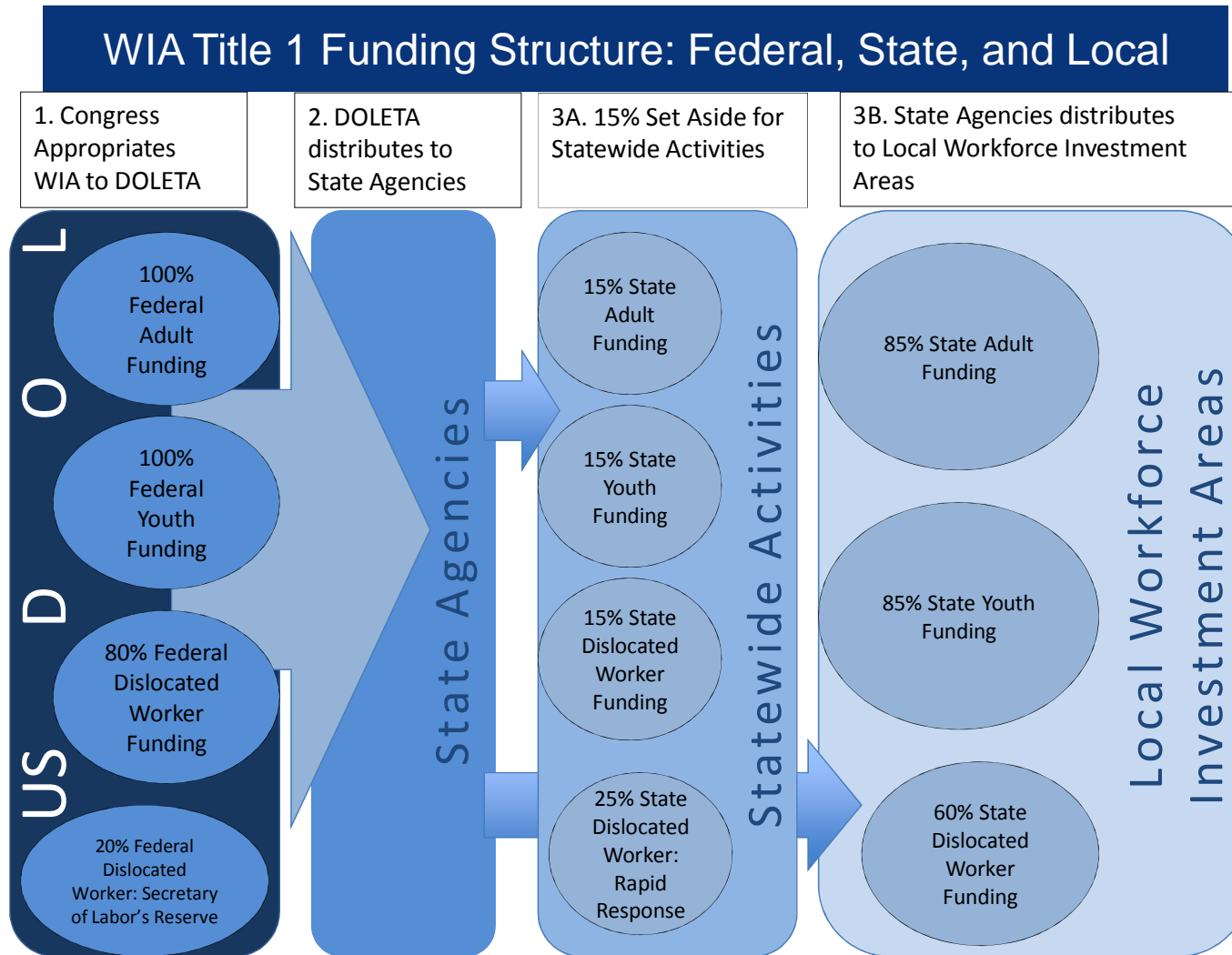
For information regarding formula funding:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL13-08a1.pdf>

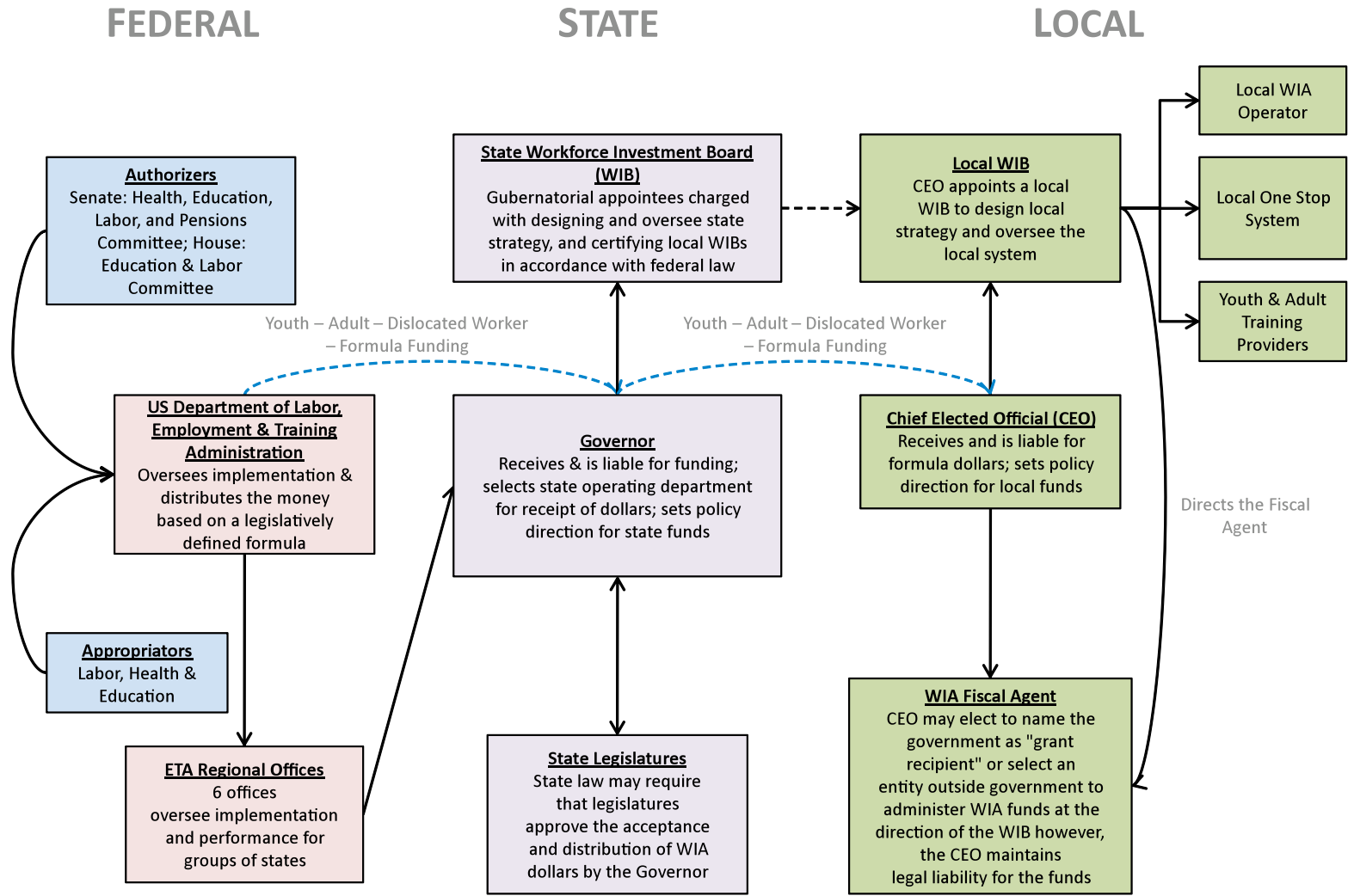
For information regarding performance measures:

<http://www.doleta.gov/performance/quickview/WIAPMeasures.cfm>

## Funding Chart



# Relationship Map



# Workforce Investment Boards

## The Basics

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) are the entities responsible for planning and implementing the provisions of Title I of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). There are two types of WIBs required under the law: state WIBs, appointed by governors, and local WIBs, appointed by the chief elected official (CEO).

### Legislated Functions

State WIBs are responsible for the development of a state WIA plan (or the unified plan, if the state opts to complete one) and for the “development and continuous improvement of the statewide system of activities” described in WIA Title I. They also are accountable for designating local workforce investment areas, monitoring WIA performance, distributing funds reserved for statewide activities, and other related activities.

Local WIBs have many functions under the law that mirror those of state WIBs: developing plans, selecting providers, overseeing service delivery, negotiating performance measures, and assisting the governor with the development of a statewide employment statistics system. This last function refers to a gubernatorial requirement outlined in WIA Title III, the Wagner-Peyser Act. Local WIBs have two additional legislated functions: “employer linkages,” which refers to coordinating WIA-funded activities with economic development strategies and “connecting, brokering, and coaching,” which refers to promoting the participation of private employers in the public workforce system.

### Leadership Functions

WIA’s aspiration for WIBs was that, alongside the legislated functions outlined above, they would emerge as leaders in informing human capital policy and service delivery beyond WIA in their respective jurisdictions. To this end, leadership functions include organizing and coordinating resources to shape policy (data analysis, gathering of intelligence, harnessing the WIB’s collective expertise, and innovative strategic planning) and advocating for practices to actualize that policy. Individually, this is demonstrated by WIB members acting as champions and ambassadors for their elected official’s human capital agendas. More than a decade into implementation, there is evidence many WIBs have embraced their leadership role, most notably in jurisdictions where the governor and/or chief elected official have been actively engaged in workforce issues.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Under WIA, **governors** are automatically designated as members of their state WIBs. The only members of state WIBs who are not gubernatorial appointees are the required two members from each chamber of the state legislature, appointed by the “appropriate presiding officer of each such chamber.” State

WIB members designated by the governor include executive-level business representatives,<sup>2</sup> who must be the majority, local chief elected officials, labor representatives who have been nominated by state labor federations, representatives of individuals and organizations involved with activities under WIA, appropriate state agency officials, and others. The governor also appoints the state board chair, who must come from among the business representatives on the state WIB.

**State legislators** have a voice on all state WIBs and come to their seats by a means independent of the governor. Therefore, they are unique among all appointees in that their constituency flows back through the legislature and, presumably, is connected to committees within those legislative bodies that oversee or connect to workforce investment activities.

At the local level, **CEOs** are responsible for appointing all members of the local WIBs under specific federal guidelines. Executive-level business representatives must be appointed by business organizations (such as a local or regional chamber of commerce) and must be the majority members of the local WIB. The local WIB membership also must include individuals representing education, organized labor, community based organizations, economic development, and the dozen one-stop career center partners listed in WIA. Fortunately, individuals can represent more than one category of membership. Like state WIBs, a business representative must chair local WIBs. However, in the case of local WIBs, that chairperson is elected by the membership.

Regarding local WIB appointments, the **CEO** also is required to “cooperate” with the local WIB chair on the appointment of a Youth Council, which is a required committee of every local WIB. The required membership of the Youth Council is also outlined in WIA. Youth Council members are charged to develop the strategy for youth workforce policy and make recommendations to the local WIB for the awarding of youth-related contracts.

Please see the charts at the end of this section for a more detailed view of WIB membership at the state and local levels, including the Youth Council.

## Policy Considerations

- WIBs can best serve elected officials when there is a clear, articulated vision for human capital and economic development that can be supported by WIBs and championed by its members. Is there an articulated vision within your jurisdiction? Has the WIB in your jurisdiction developed a clear plan for how it will implement that vision and report progress?
- In addition to serving as ambassadors to the broader community for the workforce investment agenda, WIB members can provide critical intelligence to inform workforce strategy and policy. Are the critical institutions represented on your WIB, and are the right people from those institutions on your WIB? Is the WIB staffed, supported, and organized to engage and motivate individuals of influence in the jurisdiction to serve on the WIB? Does the WIB regularly share

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<sup>2</sup> The language in WIA is “owners of businesses, chief executives or officers of businesses, and other business executive or employees with optimum policymaking or hiring authority.” In fact, all appointees from the various entities that are required representatives to both the state and local WIBs must have a high level of authority within that entity.

intelligence with elected officials and government to inform broader human capital and economic development policies?

- WIBs need a clear vision for their own work. Does your WIB have a clearly articulated set of goals and an action plan that line up with the needs in your jurisdiction?

## Workforce Investment Boards Discussion

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) were established in WIA as the mechanism to ensure that public investments in workforce development were aligned with business needs and responsive to human capital issues in communities they represent. The discussion below focuses on the requirements of state and local WIBs as well as some of the approaches they may take to fulfill their charge.

### Workforce Development before WIBs

It is helpful to understand the context under which WIBs were created. As described in “The Law Discussion” section, WIA is the most recent in a sequence of federal workforce development programs stretching back to the 1960s. These programs represent a continuum from total federal control to a balance of local, state, and federal control - with the majority of the resources available for investment at the local level. This trend started in earnest with the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), which established “State Job Training Coordinating Councils (SJTCC)” and, at the local level, “Private Industry Councils (PICs).” The SJTCCs were appointed by governors, and PICs were appointed by the chief elected officials (CEOs). JTPA was focused on a single funding stream, with no vision for coordination across multiple programs, and did not include the one-stop center system that is a core tenet of WIA. SJTCCs, therefore, tended to engage with only one state department, and PICs tended to focus inward on the administration of that single funding stream. More often than not, PICs served as the Board of Directors to the entity in the local area that was delivering JTPA services.

In some places, however, the PICs were more externally focused and used the collective power of the appointed members to identify economic trends, set the path for innovative strategies, and served as thought leaders for human capital development in their local areas. These PICs also tended to be very successful at raising and leveraging non-JTPA resources from foundations and other private sources. Congress was interested in seeing this model of strategic leadership at both the state and local levels become the standard under WIA. To do this, the law was very deliberate in setting membership requirements for WIBs and using language suggestive of this broader leadership role.

### Staffing

WIA is silent on staffing with regard to **state WIBs**. Generally, they are staffed in one of two ways: by an existing state department or as an independent state agency or office.

WIA is ambiguous on how **local WIBs** are staffed but clear on how they cannot. In a direct response to the predominate PIC model, local WIBs are prevented from being staffed by the same people who deliver WIA training services, although in some circumstances - such as in a rural area where there are no other service providers - this restriction can be waived by the governor. Beyond this, there is a range of workable staffing patterns. Below are three of the more popular staffing arrangement in use by local WIBs:

- The WIB is staffed by a local government agency.

- The WIB is staffed by an independent entity outside of government that has been explicitly created for this purpose. Such organizations are typically organized as a 501c3 not-for-profit so they can compete for and receive grant money from a range of sources.
- The WIB is staffed by an organization that has a mission in alignment with the WIB but has other responsibilities as well, such as a regional planning organization.

## Functions

State and local WIBs have two types of functions under WIA, described for clarity's sake as legislated responsibilities and leadership responsibilities.

Legislated responsibilities tend to be process oriented and typically tie back to a product or service of some kind. So it is relatively straightforward to assess whether a WIB has met its legal obligations. For state WIBs, the checklist includes the completion and acceptance by the US Department of Labor of the state plan; designation of local areas, certification of local WIBs, and review of local plans; distribution of funds that come into the state under WIA; and the development of a statewide employment statistics program. A local WIB is functioning at its basic acceptable level if plans are developed and filed, one-stops are operating, money is flowing and WIA is being implemented in accordance with the various rules and regulations.

Leadership responsibilities, on the other hand, are more complicated to assess. To fulfill these responsibilities in the spirit of WIA, WIBs typically engage in "systems" thinking, which goes beyond considering the investment of a single funding stream to planning for how multiple funding sources and partners can work together to address a common set of issues. Below are some descriptions of several leadership responsibilities:

- **Governing the public workforce system** – This is the primary function of the WIB. At its most basic level, a WIB would "govern" WIA Title I according to performance metrics set in federal law. There is an expectation under the law, however, that both state and local WIBs will also connect WIA to other systems (e.g. education and economic development) as well as augment the basic performance requirements with others that support the agenda in their jurisdiction. State and local WIBs might look to expand their reach beyond WIA Title I - thereby expanding the definition of the "public workforce system" in their respective jurisdictions. WIA Title V provides for a unified plan, which is a vehicle for achieving this objective at the state level.
- **Defining the issues and setting strategy** – WIA provides for a set of tools: one-stop career centers, training, and youth development. But what problems are those tools aiming to solve? Do employers need assistance tapping into underutilized labor pools (which was the case in many jurisdictions when the law passed in 1998)? Is there chronic unemployment, even among more skilled, experienced and educated workers (which is the case in many places today)? Is the issue literacy in the age of technology and the rise of the knowledge worker? Is it high-school dropouts? Is it the alignment of training and education programs to the needs of employers? State WIBs often invest their energy in addressing one or two issues of statewide importance, while local WIBs might address a wider range of problems specific to the

jurisdiction, while still in service to the statewide strategy. The state and local WIBs should be working with the governor or chief elected official, respectively, to continually assess, define, and prioritize the issues in the jurisdiction - and implement strategies to address them.

- **Establishing partnerships** – In this area, state WIBs and local WIBs have different challenges. State WIBs are in strong positions to establish the partnerships essential to realize the full intent of WIA because those partners are typically under the direct control of the governor. To be most effective, state WIBs also should have strong and mutually beneficial relationships with local WIBs, since the locals are key conduits to implementing a statewide agenda. Local WIBs have some additional imperatives. For example, in today’s complex economy, the responsibility for developing a jurisdiction’s human capital strategy involves more than the local WIB. Therefore, the local WIB typically works to develop collaborative partnerships with governments within their jurisdictions as well as a range of other stakeholders, for example, education, literacy, organized labor, economic development, transportation, housing, and the other sectors. To add another layer of complexity, some workforce issues and opportunities extend beyond the jurisdictional boundaries of the local WIB. In response, many states and the federal government have encouraged and funded “regional” workforce efforts that involve multiple WIBs and sometimes cross state lines.
- **Leveraging resources** – It is unlikely that WIA alone can fully support any comprehensive workforce strategy in a jurisdiction. For one, relative to the need, there simply is not enough funding. Second, WIA is performance-based and carries with it restrictions on use that sometimes means those funds are not the best match for strategies that are untested. Therefore, in order to implement their strategies, WIBs often need to secure other public and private resources. Foundations and government have been the two major sources of additional workforce funding. One way that many states have been successful in bringing in additional resources has been to organize statewide grant applications involving some or all of the local WIBs.

### **How WIBs Work**

All WIBs, state or local, are stewards of public resources. Therefore, one responsibility they have in common is assuring that public investments in workforce development are spent wisely to maximize return on investment. Reporting requirements, planning functions, and lines of accountability for this function are well defined in WIA. However, beyond this, there is a great diversity in the way WIBs work and develop their particular areas of expertise.

State WIBs, as suggested above, have the overarching challenge of designing a workforce investment system for their states - which likely have a mix of urban, suburban, and rural areas and a wide diversity of workforce needs. Local WIBs may or may not have a similar diversity within their geographic boundary but likely have more commonalities than a state might. But, at both the state and local levels, WIBs face a set of strategic questions they are charged to address.

Because of their size and the complexity of their responsibilities, most WIBs operate through some type of committee structure. It is not unusual for those committees, as with the local Youth Councils, to be vehicles for engaging others in addition to WIB members in the work. Beyond the local WIB requirement for a Youth Council, there is no set committee structure for state or local WIBs. Most tend to have an executive committee and other standing or ad hoc committees reflective of their priorities.

State and local WIBs often develop expertise in one or more of the following areas:

- **Labor Market Analyst, Advisor and Communicator** – WIBs help local officials and other key stakeholders manage risk with regard to their investments in human capital and economic development initiatives. Because of their legislative responsibilities, WIBs have access to a great deal of real-time data from their connections with employers and the information collected through the one-stop system. This is a high value asset, as much labor market data are several quarters old, at a minimum. Therefore, many WIBs have expanded their capacity in this area and have become sources for accurate and timely data and research pertinent to the jurisdiction’s key stakeholders and institutions. At the state level, an operating department handles this activity on behalf of the governor and the state WIB. At the local level, the staff of the local WIB handles this function.
- **Advocate** – The WIB might focus on being a strong voice at every level for the public workforce system, working to educate appropriators, authorizers, potential customers, and others about how the public workforce system adds value to the quality of life and economic competitiveness of the state or local jurisdiction.
- **Connector** – The WIB might be the convener of employers with similar hiring needs in order to collect the labor market intelligence necessary to inform the WIB’s work. More broadly, the WIB may also facilitate the connection among the employers in a particular sector with workforce development and education partners to craft and implement a strategy for meeting specific human capital needs in that industry. This role is typically referred to as an “intermediary” function. In the case where intermediaries already exist (an employer association, union, educational institution, and others can play this role), the WIB may be the common point of connection for these sector-specific activities. For example, state WIBs might take the lead, organizing industry clusters with state-level groups, facilitating local WIB efforts. Or local WIBs might do this work, either driven by state level guidance or their own data. WIBs can also act as a geographic connector, reaching out across jurisdictions as appropriate given the issue at hand. For state WIBs, being a connector might mean partnering with counterparts in other states with similar issues. For local WIBs, this may mean organizing a regional collaborative within or beyond state boundaries. From a “systems” thinking perspective, state and local WIBs might also facilitate connections between and among all the various workforce development stakeholders, and between the workforce system and other systems (such as education, justice, aging, human services, and economic development).
- **Innovator** – As thought leaders actively engaged in strategy, state or local WIBs often identify or develop new programs or ideas they would like to try - similar to the “research and

development” function that keeps all disciplines moving forward. Sometimes these innovations are new programmatic approaches that can be supported by WIA funding streams. Other times, the innovation may be outside the parameters currently allowed by WIA, leading the WIB to pursue grants or other funding to implement these new ideas. The WIB itself may be the sole party to the innovation, a lead partner, or a supporting player. Regardless of the role they play, they must be involved in fostering innovation to advance the field of workforce development.

### **Elements of Success**

The individualized nature of state and local WIBs makes generalizations about success factors difficult. Nevertheless, there are a few conditions that optimize the potential for WIBs to be successful:

- **Context** – State and local WIBs that operate under an articulated vision that is broadly communicated by the governor or the chief elected official have far more impact than those that do not. This vision could be defined by the elected official and embraced by the jurisdiction’s WIB, or developed by the WIB and embraced by the elected official. In either scenario, WIBs can help translate the interests, concerns, and expectations of elected officials for their workforce system into policy objectives and implementation strategies that both support and advance that vision.
- **Composition** – Complying with WIB membership requirements, particularly at the local level, can be quite complex. WIBs that include individuals, who are representative of “driver” industry sectors in the jurisdiction, seen as leaders in their respective fields, influential in the jurisdiction, and engaged in the WIB’s work will be more effective than WIBs composed of individuals who do not reflect these characteristics.
- **Authority** – Many WIBs have been given - or have negotiated - responsibilities for funding streams beyond WIA Title I. For example, some state WIBs, in partnership with their governors and state legislatures, have given local WIBs more responsibility for administering a wide range of workforce-related programs in their local area, including those in WIA (literacy, Wagner-Peyser) and those mentioned in the law (such as Temporary Assistance to Needy Families, known more commonly as “TANF”). There are chief elected officials who have given their local WIBs similar opportunities with programs under local jurisdiction. Much can be accomplished even without the significant transfer of administrative authority. For example, a state might use the unified plan as a vehicle to establish a broader sphere of influence for WIBs. Examples of strategies for expanding authority include requiring non-WIA Title I funding streams to write their plans in alignment with the relevant WIB plan and/or requiring their plans to be approved by the local (or state) WIB. WIBs with broader authority are better positioned to gain the support of and investment in their strategy than WIBs that only have control over WIA Title I.

State and local WIBs have an important strategic role to play in developing the workforce and economy of their respective states and communities. Governors and local elected officials who appoint WIB members share a responsibility in ensuring they have selected the best members possible.

## **Resources**

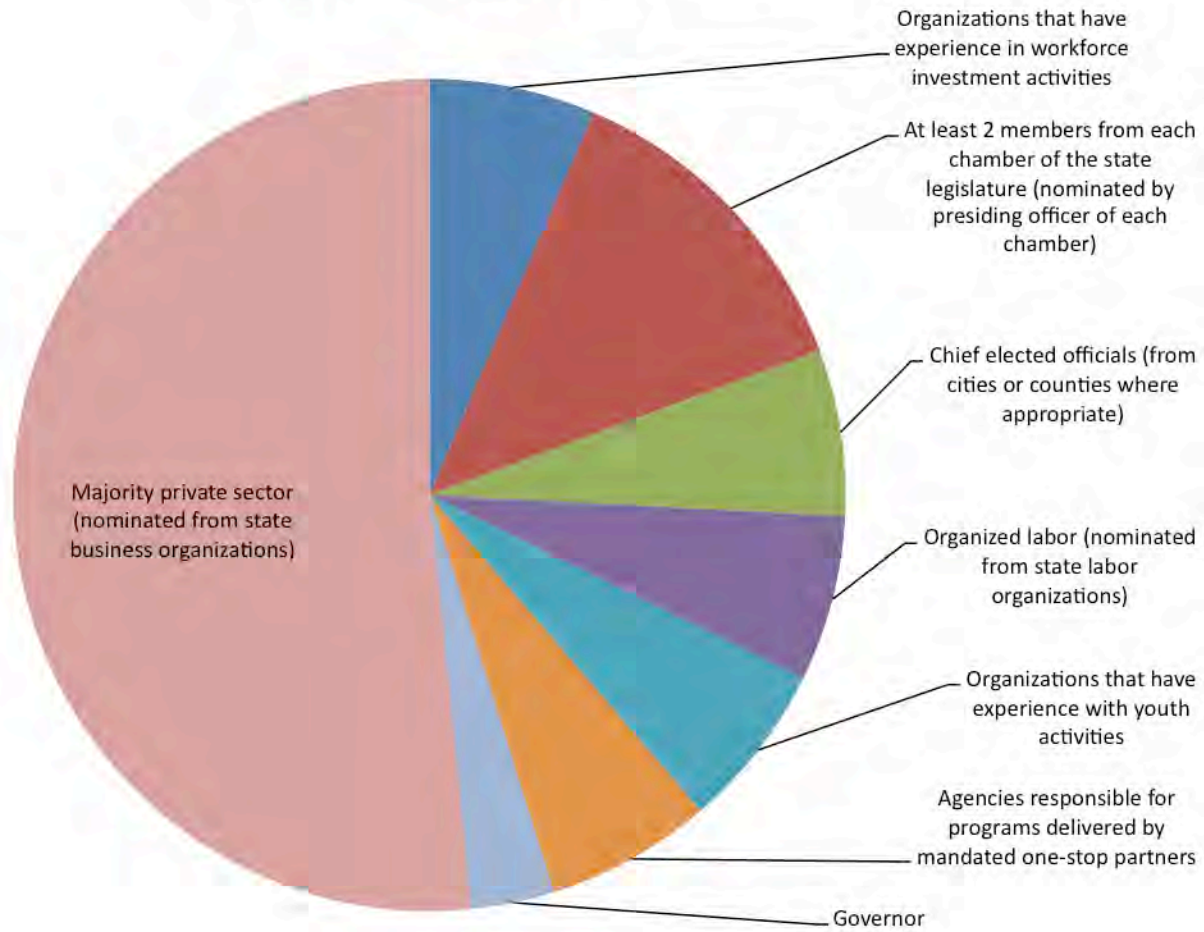
Additional information about and to assist Workforce Investment Boards is available from the National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) at [www.nawb.org](http://www.nawb.org). Specifically, NAWB's publication Building Better Workforce Boards can be accessed via the following link:

<http://www.nawb.org/PRODUCTSERVICES/InformationPublications/tabid/95/%5Cportals%5C0%5CPublications%5Cpub-1-2002.pdf>

## Workforce Investment Board Charts

### State WIB Membership

The following categories of membership must be represented on the State WIB.

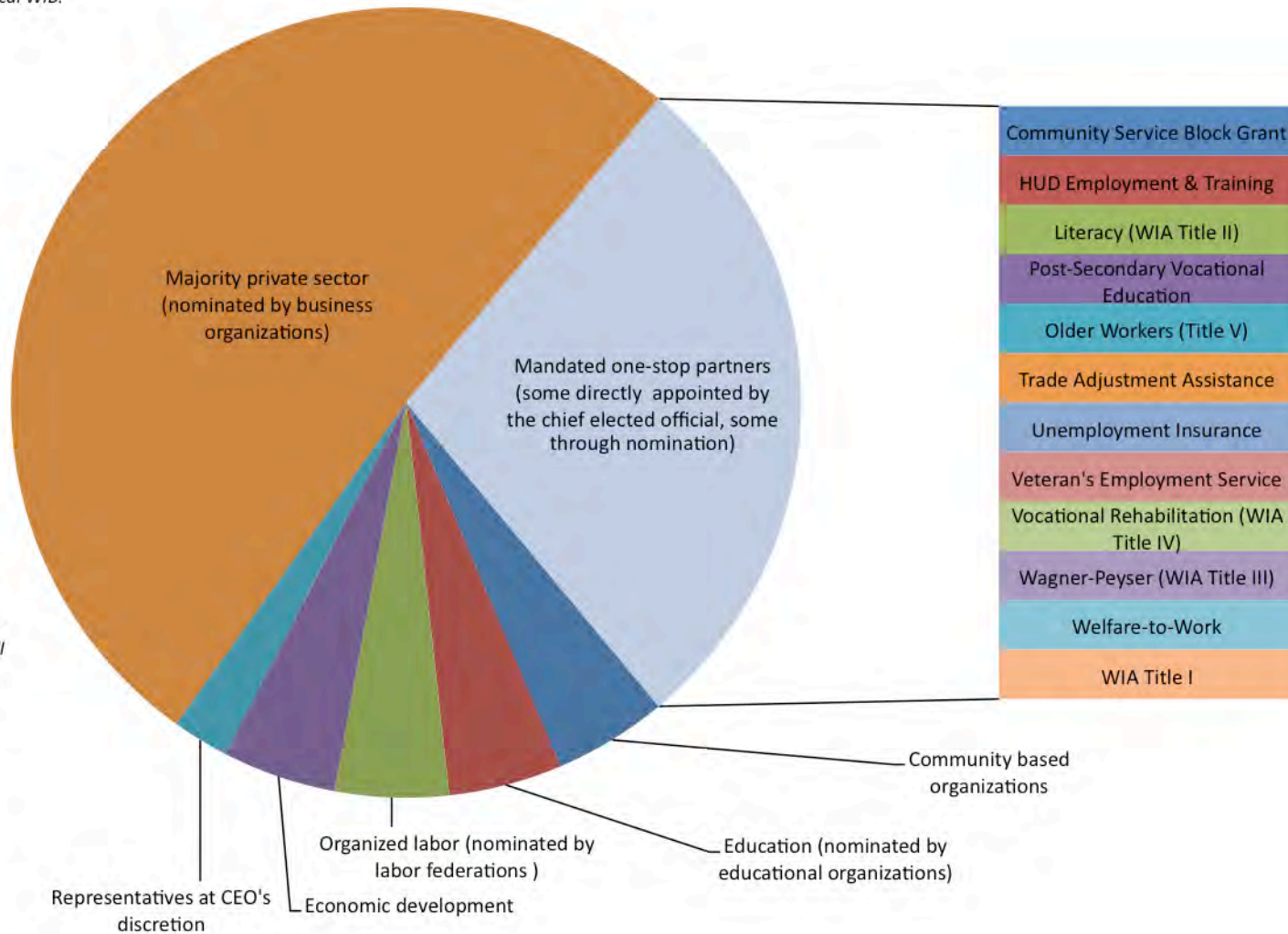


\* The members of the board should represent diverse regions in the state, including urban, rural, and suburban areas.

\*\* WIA requires that members who represent organizations, agencies, or other entities be individuals with optimum policymaking authority.

# Local WIB Membership

The following categories of membership must be represented on the Local WIB.



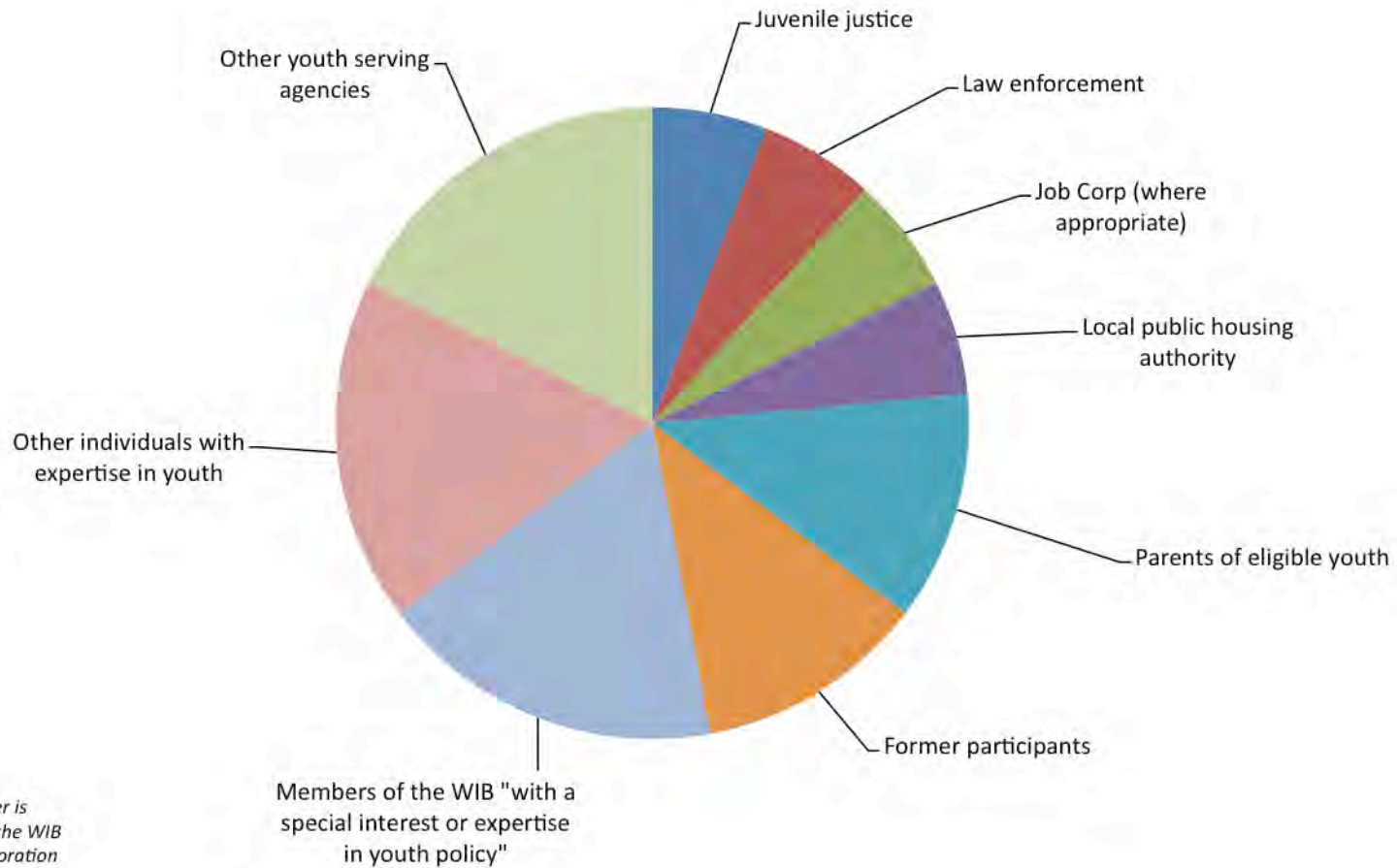
\* Each member is appointed by the chief elected official.

\*\* Non-private sector representatives can fill multiple categories .

\*\*\* WIA requires that members who represent organizations, agencies, or other entities be individuals with optimum policymaking authority.

# Youth Council Membership

The following categories of membership must be represented on the Youth Council.



\* Each member is appointed by the WIB chair in collaboration with the chief elected official.

# WIA and Human Capital Development

## The Basics

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 authorizes funding and establishes a governance process to develop the workforce in alignment with business needs and economic development priorities. This section provides an overview of the WIA programs and services, describing how WIA can be used to develop human capital and thereby invest in the “supply” of workers. “WIA and Economic Development,” which follows this section, provides a snapshot of tools to serve business and industry, describing how WIA can be used to address the “demand” for workers. Despite this separation of topics, WIA is considered “demand-driven” legislation, which means that all services to individuals are meant to be aligned with validated employer needs.

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) have legislative responsibility for implementing WIA and governing the public workforce system. At the same time, liability for the funds allocated under WIA Title I lies with the governors and chief elected officials (CEOs) who appoint those WIBs. WIA Title I authorizes three primary funding streams and defines the methods by which those funding streams are translated into programs accessible by individual customers. The three funding streams are: Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth.

WIA creates one-stop career centers as the mechanism by which adults (individuals 18 years or older) or dislocated workers (adults who are laid off and homemakers returning to the workforce) access services. These centers also serve as the hub for services funded by other related funding streams, with the intention that all job seekers (as well as employers) can go to one place to access a full range of workforce-related services.<sup>3</sup> By facilitating this type of coordination, Congressional intent was to reduce, to the greatest extent possible, duplication of effort by aligning and sharing functions. Each workforce area must have at least one one-stop center.

WIA directs services to be provided in three sequential levels in the one-stop centers: core, intensive, and training. Training services are typically delivered through a voucher system, called Individual Training Accounts (or ITAs) in WIA. The law also allows for training strategies that are more directly tied to businesses; these are called On-the-Job Training (OJT) and Customized Job Training (CJT).

WIA also outlines provisions for youth programs, specifying that at least 30 percent of the local youth allocation must be used for young people who have dropped out of high school or who have “received a secondary school diploma or its equivalent but are basic skills deficient, unemployed, or underemployed.” Employment services to youth may be delivered through the one-stop career centers. However, youth workforce development services are typically delivered through contracted programs. WIA Youth funds can also be used to align or augment high school reform efforts. Youth Councils, which are required committees of the local WIBs, are responsible for developing the plan for youth workforce

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<sup>3</sup> WIA calls out 12 “mandated one-stop partners” (see “The Board” for a list). In order for a facility to be considered a “one-stop” the services must be “made available” through the center.

development in the jurisdiction and recommending service providers. All actions of the Youth Council must be recommended to and approved by the WIB.

## Roles and Responsibilities

At the state level, **governors** have several direct administrative responsibilities outlined in the law, with the understanding that a designated cabinet department will carry them out. They also have the charge to appoint most members of the state WIB, which is the vehicle for setting the policy and guiding statewide WIA implementation. Governors control 15 percent of the WIA funds (plus “Rapid Response” funding to address major layoffs) that come to the state for their own discretionary use based on the most pressing workforce needs. Governors also have it within their control to align a wide range of funding streams with WIA, helping to establish a core delivery system for workforce development and related programs. For example, governors can choose to develop a state unified plan, encompassing multiple funding streams under their purview. In addition, they can go beyond joint planning and mandate that one-stop centers be the only point of delivery for workforce-related programs under direct control of the state. Finally, governors can, in concert with **state legislators**, reorganize state departments so workforce-related programs are administered under the same cabinet secretary.

At the local level, **CEOs** have the responsibility for appointing the local WIBs. While they do not have as much control over the alignment of resources as governors, CEOs and all other local elected officials likely have the opportunity to facilitate the connection of WIA programs with high schools and post-secondary institutions, public housing agencies, human service agencies, and other people-serving entities or organizations.

All elected officials can promote the services available in the one-stop centers and through local youth programs to ensure the highest possible utilization among both job seekers and employers.

## Policy Considerations

- WIA can be a vehicle for coordination between and among programs that provide various services in support of human capital development and the attachment to the labor force – skills training, literacy and basic education, post-secondary education, vocational rehabilitation, assessment, and much more. Within your sphere of control or influence, what actions can you take to foster and enhance coordination within your jurisdiction?
- WIBs are directly responsible for implementing and overseeing WIA at the state and local levels. Does the WIB in your jurisdiction have the right leadership, member expertise, and staff support to carry out this responsibility in alignment with your vision for human capital development?
- Local Youth Councils are charged with designing a strategy to serve young people that aligns with and augments other youth-serving systems, such as high schools and postsecondary institutions, juvenile justice, human services, and more. Is the Youth Council in your jurisdiction connected to and actively collaborating with these other systems? Have you identified key skill and educational issues that are facing youth in your jurisdiction?

- WIA funds can address the gaps between the skills and, to a lesser extent, the education of the labor force and the needs of businesses. Have these gaps been identified in your jurisdiction, and is your WIB and its Youth Council implementing a strategy to address them?

## **WIA and Human Capital Development Discussion**

Knowledge, skills and abilities of the available workforce (human capital) that align with the demand for talent are key attributes of a healthy economy. In the United States, our rapidly transitioning economy - accelerated by the pace of technological advancement - has affected this balance dramatically. Often highly experienced and educated adults are finding their skills outdated. Others who had been successful in the economy of the past are finding that the bar on basic skills has risen, requiring advanced problem solving, technology, writing, and literacy skills for even entry-level jobs. For young people in an increasingly challenging labor market, the opportunity for early work experience - which shaped and developed generations of workers - is disappearing. And with the country's most educated generation exiting the labor market altogether, there are projected shortages of graduates at all levels: high school, college, and beyond. Finally, governors and other elected officials likely have plans that put a finer point on these more general challenges, and therefore should define the specific human capital challenge to the WIBs and workforce systems in the respective jurisdictions.

WIA provides tools and infrastructure to address some of those issues through the WIBs, Youth Councils, and one-stops. However, it is important to acknowledge that WIA was enacted in the context of extreme labor shortages that resulted from a full employment economy. Employers were clamoring for workers, and as a result, companies were often willing to hire individuals without the technical competencies required, providing training as part of the job. At the same time, WIA recognized there were areas across the country where the unemployment rate remained relatively high as well as segments of the population that were chronically unemployed. Therefore, it is useful to understand that WIA was designed to serve all job seekers, with the expectation that additional (intensive and training) supports would be available to those adults, dislocated workers, and youth populations that had significant barriers to employment.

### **One-Stop Centers**

WIA codified one-stop career centers in public law. These centers (known as "one-stops") had been piloted in nearly every state in the years leading up to the enactment of WIA, supported by grants distributed by the United States Department of Labor. One-stops were named appropriately, as they were envisioned to be places where individuals and employers seeking workforce services could go. For individuals, this meant that all services and programs necessary to support their entry into the labor force would be available, including services and programs targeted to specific populations (e.g., veterans, individuals with disabilities, and non-English speakers). For employers who were struggling to find workers, the one-stops would be a place for them to access labor pools that were less visible or under-represented in the mainstream workforce. And, in the one-stops, all services would be delivered under the umbrella of the center itself. Distinctions with regard to how services were funded or administered would be invisible to customers.

There was a highly innovative aspect to the design of one-stops (at least by 1998 standards). It was expected that the vast majority of job seekers and employers would have their workforce needs met online. This was before the private marketplace for job matching exploded. Nevertheless, the one-

stops continue to have two distinct advantages in that marketplace. The first is that online services to both employers and job seekers are free. The second is that services of staff are free as well; these are individuals who are trained to interpret labor market information for customers, assist with job and financial aid applications, pre-screen candidates for employers, and generally serve as the human point of contact in the increasingly electronically-based (and impersonal) job search and matching processes.

WIA outlines a “sequence of service” in one-stops that starts at core services, graduates to intensive services, and culminates with training services. For job seekers, the sequence goes as follows:

1. Core services typically involve the use of a resource center/computer lab and attendance at job-seeking workshops. These services are available to all who enter.
2. If job seekers are unable to find a job through the resource center, they may be eligible for intensive services, which include assessment, individual job counseling, and other one-on-one support.
3. If it is determined that individuals require skill or educational enhancement to secure employment, they may access training services. WIA specifically authorizes the use of vouchers, referred to as individual training accounts (ITAs). ITAs can be used to “purchase” training from vendors on an approved list managed statewide by the governor with assistance from the local WIBs.

Additional items of note regarding individual training include:

- In the absence of sufficient funds to meet the demand for training, WIA includes the requirement for local WIBs to establish a “priority of service” policy for training, with legislated preference for individuals receiving public assistance.
- WIA funds are to be used as “funding of last resort.” This means that all individuals who seek WIA-subsidized training must apply for PELL Grants (assuming PELL can be used for tuition in the program they select) and other public funds for which they may be eligible.
- Training must be “in demand” as demonstrated by data available for the local labor market. Because these data often lag by over a year, WIBs are responsible for using other methods to provide real-time information on employment needs and trends. These include collecting and analyzing data from the one-stop and any other workforce-related programs in the jurisdiction, understanding and accounting for economic development priorities and new business opportunities, working closely with employers in key industry sectors, and other methods to enhance the data commonly available.

Job seekers who receive training services may receive placement services from the training provider or return to the one-stop for placement.

There are also levels of services for employers that mirror those for individuals. However, employers are not required to go through these levels in sequence:

1. Core services consist of employers using the online one-stop system to post open positions and access resumes.

2. Intensive (staff-assisted) services include working with an individual staff member who learns about the company's hiring needs (and, in more recent times, likely has at least some knowledge of the industry or occupation at hand) to facilitate matching the right candidates to the available jobs.
3. Training services are designed and delivered when there is a gap between the available workers and the needs of employer and may include the development and delivery of a customized training program or on-the-job training. In these cases, WIA funds match employer contributions to subsidize the program.

One-stop centers are funded collectively by the programs that offer services at the centers. The vehicle for this collective funding is a memorandum of understanding, which typically allocates costs based on the number of staff and space used. While this varies slightly by jurisdiction, most one-stop infrastructure costs are supported by WIA Title I Adult and Dislocated Worker funds and Wagner-Peyser (WIA Title III). Many other programs are available at or accessible through all one-stops. However, these programs tend to have less staff in the centers and therefore do not contribute monetarily to the infrastructure of the centers at nearly the level as WIA and Wagner-Peyser. To put this in context, WIA and Wagner-Peyser - despite declining resources - also are among the most robustly funded programs of the dozen mandated one-stop partners.

While it is important to bring WIA into the 21st century, one-stops and the funding streams authorized in WIA Title I nevertheless continue to be vital to the nation's workforce development efforts. Millions of Americans and companies avail themselves of core services each year, with a significant number graduating to intensive services and accessing training. More importantly, these centers were the front line for delivering workforce services under the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) and for the ongoing service to many of the 15 million unemployed adults at all education and experience levels during the Great Recession.

### **Youth Workforce Development**

Youth in need of employment can be served in one-stops. However, WIA has provisions for youth investments that allow for - and encourage - the development of supportive, high touch programs. This is reasonable, given that the explicit priority is to serve youth who are most in need. This includes youth at risk of disconnecting from work and school - including those involved in the juvenile justice system, in foster care, or who are pregnant or parenting - as well as high school dropouts. All youth must be individually certified as living in poverty or come from very low-income families. WIA also requires that at least 30 percent of the youth allocation to a local jurisdiction be invested in youth who are out of school.

The design of the strategy for serving youth rests with local Youth Councils, which are required committees of local WIBs, appointed by the local WIB chair in collaboration with the CEO. As a committee of the WIB, all actions by the Youth Councils must be formally approved by the WIB.

In recognition of the challenges the targeted young people face, WIA includes ten elements for youth programs:

1. Tutoring, study skills training, and instruction leading to completion of secondary school, including dropout prevention strategies;
2. Alternative secondary school services;
3. Summer employment opportunities that are linked to academic and occupational learning;
4. Paid and unpaid work experiences, including internships and job shadowing;
5. Occupational skills training;
6. Leadership development opportunities, which may include community service and peer-centered activities encouraging responsibility and other positive social behaviors during non-school hours;
7. Supportive services;
8. Adult mentoring for the period of participation and a subsequent period, for a total of not less than 12 months;
9. Follow-up services for not less than 12 months after the completion of participation; and
10. Comprehensive guidance and counseling, which may include drug and alcohol abuse counseling and referral.

While all programs do not need to encompass all the elements, this list conveys the legislative intent that youth programs be robust and comprehensive. It also presents the opportunity to re-engage youth in the educational and economic mainstream.

WIA requires a competitive procurement process to select youth service providers. The Youth Council typically manages this process, reviews submissions and advances their funding recommendations to the WIB. The Youth Council monitors the implementation of youth programs on behalf of the WIB and submits strategy revisions for WIB consideration as necessary.

### **Summer Youth Employment Program**

Summer Youth Employment Program for youth from low-income families had a dedicated funding stream under the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA), the predecessor legislation to WIA. Fourteen and 15 year olds engaged in six-week “classroom experiences,” and older youth had had jobs. It was popular with youth, who earned money and - at least for the older ones - began to build a work history. Employers - particularly government and non-profit organizations - liked it too, as they had a subsidized workforce at exactly the time when school was out and services at recreation centers, community-based organizations, and other places were in the highest demand. Community leaders, parents, and elected officials saw the value in the program as well; it kept teenagers with little else to do off the streets and out of trouble. But from the perspective of the WIA authorizers, and supported by research, a summer job experience alone would be unlikely to transform the life of a high-risk young person.

Therefore, consistent with the intent of WIA, the youth funding streams that were designated under JTPA for “year round programs” and “summer programs” were combined. It was not that a local jurisdiction could not run a summer program. But, to align with the spirit of the legislation and achieve WIA performance requirements, such programs would likely only be funded by WIA if they were a component of longer, more comprehensive programs. These programs would be more expensive to operate, which would result in service to far fewer young people and the end of the distinctive Summer Youth Employment Program.

This scenario came to pass, and from 1999 until 2008, there were few large-scale summer employment programs in operation. Then in February 2009, the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act (ARRA) passed with \$1.2 billion in youth funds - and the directive from the federal government to spend most of the money for a summer program that year. The nation’s WIBs and Youth Councils mobilized in a few short months to provide summer job opportunities to over 300,000 young people.

Since that time, the Administration, members of Congress, elected officials, and stakeholders from across the country have advocated for additional funding for the summer youth employment program. Funding for a summer youth employment programs is also supported by the intergovernmental organizations that represent elected officials in discussions about WIA reauthorization (see the “Future of WIA” section).

### **Leveraging Public and Private Dollars for Workforce Programs**

WIBs, in partnership with elected officials, are increasingly making a compelling case for the investment of public and private dollars into the workforce system as well as into workforce strategies that connect back to that system (such as sector partnerships, which are discussed in the “WIA and Economic Development” section).

In many places, WIBs and Youth Councils lead the effort to compete for grants, solicit funding from foundations and corporations, and raise money from local government. They negotiate partnerships with programs that have an interest in or connection to workforce development but may not be explicitly named in WIA. They get creative, translating and packaging labor market information or other products to corporations, learning providers, or others who might be interested in the data. Some generate “program income” by offering high-touch employer services for a fee or running events and conferences to raise funds that can be used more flexibly.

Elected officials have played an important role in the development of these new sources of funding, starting with appointing WIBs that are effective ambassadors for the public workforce system. In addition, elected officials across the country have successfully used their influence to encourage support in all forms for the workforce system and its strategies, for example, by promoting the use of the one-stop centers, raising funds, and subsidizing internships for youth.

## **Resources**

The United States Department of Labor's resource page on WIA:

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/>

The National Association of Workforce Investment Boards has compiled a series of promising practices for the delivery of WIA programs, which can be found at:

<http://www.nawb.org/Default.aspx?tabid=186>

Information on ARRA investments in WIA:

<http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=18884>

Training and Employment Guidance Letter 13-09 "Contacting Strategies that Serve the Youth Most in Need:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL13-09.pdf>

Data and articles on youth employment compiled by the National Youth Employment Coalition:

<http://www.nyec.org/>

# WIA and Economic Development

## The Basics

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was intended to build a highly skilled workforce that addresses the needs of employers. As such, it was envisioned to be an asset to support the overall economic development strategy of a state or local jurisdiction.

There are many ways that WIA can be utilized to serve this intent:

- At the transactional level, one-stop career centers are charged with facilitating the connection between employers who need workers with qualified applicants, reducing hiring costs for businesses.
- Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) can generate real-time information on human capital assets and gaps using a combination of data from the one-stop career centers, WIB members and partners, job postings, and other sources. This information can be shared with the general public and individuals who are seeking training using public dollars so they can make informed choices. These data also can be used to ensure youth programs are responsive to longer-term labor market and employment trends.
- WIA funds can be used to support training that specifically addresses the needs of an employer or group of employers as long as employers also invest in the training and ensure certain performance requirements are met.
- WIA dollars can be used to facilitate the entrance or growth of a business in the jurisdiction. Governors in particular have used WIA funds to provide training and other human capital-related incentives to businesses, delivered by and through the public workforce system. There are also examples at the local level where workforce services have been used as leverage in the attraction and retention of businesses.
- WIBs can be leaders in the development of sector strategies that target specific industries that are particularly promising in a local area.

## Roles and Responsibilities

Governors and chief elected officials (CEOs) set the vision for state and local economic development plans. WIBs provide intelligence about the labor market, including supply demographics and training capacity, and are the vehicle for facilitating the delivery of services in alignment with the plan. Therefore, elected officials should play a central role in influencing the way WIA funds are invested to support economic development priorities and appoint strong members to the WIBs so that the vision can be realized.

At the state level, **governors** are urged to consider human capital development in their plan for economic development. The National Governors Association has compiled a list of best practices in this area, with a prevailing theme of leveraging state WIA dollars with other state funds to support sector-

based collaborations in various forms.<sup>4</sup> **State legislators** also have a role to play, should they choose, in using tools such as hearings, legislation, and the appropriations process to signal their vision for these dollars and the connection between economic and workforce development. Additionally, state legislators are an important voice on state WIBs. For example, economic incentive packages for businesses looking to bring jobs to a state might include concierge-type services from the public workforce system or direct training grants to develop a specifically skilled workforce.

At the local level, **CEOs** have myriad opportunities to leverage WIA to achieve economic development goals. Since most local workforce investment areas cover territory governed by multiple elected officials, elected officials are encouraged to collaborate with their peers to create a comprehensive economic development plan for their jurisdictions. WIBs can inform these comprehensive plans by providing critical labor market information and advising on the current capacity of the workforce system to meet the workforce skill needs of new or growing businesses, and by investing in human capital development strategies that align with economic development goals. Elected officials can also promote the public workforce system to the pool of potential job seekers and employers who are hiring to maximize the impact of services in the jurisdiction.

It should be noted that local WIBs have the express requirement to forge “employer linkages,” with the specific charge to “coordinate the workforce investment activities authorized under this subtitle and carried out in the local area with economic development strategies and develop other employer linkages with such activities.”

## Policy Considerations

- To best leverage WIA as a tool for economic development, it is useful to craft an economic development strategy that includes human capital development as an essential element. How clear is the economic development strategy in your state or jurisdiction with regard to human capital and business issues? Should you and your WIB, in collaboration with other elected officials, revisit that plan?
- At the local level, WIBs are given a great deal of responsibility for implementing WIA in alignment with the local economic development strategy. For governors, does your state WIB have policies in place that encourage local WIBs to embrace and excel in this area? For CEOs, is the local WIB fulfilling its charge in support of the local economic development strategy?

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<sup>4</sup> State Sector Strategies: Regional Solutions to Worker and Employer Needs, 2006. <http://www.nga.org/Files/pdf/06STATESECREG.PDF>

## **WIA and Economic Development Discussion**

The Workforce Investment Act was passed in 1998 when the economy was experiencing unprecedented growth and often economic development efforts were less strategic and more opportunistic. However, as the economy slowed, economic development became, by necessity, a more deliberate venture. Elected officials began assessing the types of new jobs that could be attracted or grown from the existing local business stock, based on the infrastructure and competitive assets of their jurisdictions. They also started looking at how WIA, with its focus on workforce development, could be leveraged with other funds that support infrastructure development and tax incentives to create more competitive business retention and attraction packages.

At the same time, elected officials, WIBs, and other workforce development thought leaders - including those in the foundation, non-profit, and association worlds - began exploring (and funding) innovative strategies using WIA as a tool to serve economic development.

### **The Traditional Link between Workforce and Economic Development**

There are countless examples of how elected officials have used WIA funds to help close an economic development deal: either by providing a direct training grant or by promoting the one-stop system as an efficient way to access the local talent pool. Elected officials might consider assessing the impact of the WIB and the broader public workforce system in their jurisdictions by asking for examples of how businesses have been helped to grow or hire new workers.

Second, WIBs generate a prodigious amount of real time information about the supply of workers, their skills, and the needs of businesses from the one-stop system and through other work with employers. These data inform elected officials in the jurisdiction regarding economic development efforts and define key industry sectors (see below for more explanation).

Third, WIBs act as the connector among and between actors in the human capital development arena. WIBs raise and leverage resources to support human capital development strategies that directly address economic development imperatives.

Finally, WIBs themselves should serve as ambassadors to new and existing businesses in the jurisdiction. Business executives who serve on WIBs are well positioned to promote the economic development strategies supported by the public workforce system, as well as to enhance those strategies through their own knowledge of industry trends and needs.

### **Innovative Workforce Strategies to Support Economic Development**

As suggested above, over the life of WIA, there have been several new approaches developed in workforce investment that serve to inform and support economic development priorities. They include sector strategies, sector partnerships, regional collaborations, and support for small businesses and entrepreneurs.

#### **1. Sector Strategies**

The sector approach identifies critical industries, rather than single employers, and works to identify and address their workforce needs. These sectors, which would be articulated by the state or local WIB, are most often identified because they currently have a competitive advantage in the jurisdiction or have been identified as a priority industry in an economic development plan. Typically, the development of a sector strategy involves convening employers, educators or training providers, and others as appropriate to identify workforce needs and an approach to addressing them. Examples of sector strategies include creating a customized program that serves multiple employers or developing expertise in the one-stop centers to serve specific industry sectors. In fact, this latter approach is considered a relatively standard approach today. For example, WIBs often have at least some of its employer services representatives with deep expertise in one or two of the jurisdiction's leading industry sectors, and/or target a portion of their youth programs to skill development in high-demand or emerging sectors.

2. Sector Partnerships (also known as “Workforce Partnerships” or “Industry Partnerships”)

Sector partnerships represent the convergence of sector strategies with the concept of “workforce intermediaries,” which take many forms but are essentially organizations that act as agents on behalf of a specific industry or occupation. Whereas a sector strategy would likely involve the convening of an ad hoc group for a set period of time (perhaps until a strategy is developed, implemented, measured, and refined), a sector partnership has an infrastructure and more permanent objectives in service to enhancing the competitiveness of the sector in a geographic area. This is an increasingly popular approach. Such partnerships have been organized by many local WIBs and several states across the country. However, these partnerships are not an explicit strategy in WIA, making funding and coordination challenging.

3. Regional Collaborations

Labor markets, industry clusters, and political jurisdictions rarely align. WIBs are often left with a series of challenges, such as working with businesses that draw their workforce from multiple jurisdictions and working with industry sectors that sprawl far and wide. To further complicate matters, companies and industries can cross jurisdictional boundaries at random. So while one industry sector might cluster in an area that includes the workforce area(s) in one direction, another industry sector might cluster in an area that includes the workforce area(s) in another direction. To address this issue, WIBs have developed robust collaborations to advance industry-specific work at a regional level. In addition, the federal government and many states are increasingly providing grant support to collaboratives of local WIBs.

4. Support for Small and Emerging Businesses

For many reasons, small businesses and emerging companies often get missed in broader economic development and workforce efforts. These businesses may very well be in a sector of focus in the jurisdiction, but the likelihood these businesses will have time to engage in those activities is low. However, many jurisdictions understand the important role these companies play in the economy. For example, the Small Business Administration notes that small

businesses pay 44 percent of total US private payroll and have generated 65 percent of new jobs over the last 17 years.<sup>5</sup> Increasingly one-stop career centers are reaching out to these businesses to market their services, and WIBs are partnering with the organizations that represent and support them. Additionally, some states and local areas are making choices to offer entrepreneurship training to spur the development of new small businesses, an area of particular interest in light of the relatively cadre of highly skilled individuals who lost jobs in the Great Recession.

## Resources

The US Department of Labor's description of how WIA serves businesses:

<http://www.doleta.gov/business/pws.cfm>

The State Sector Strategies Toolkit, developed by the National Governors Association State Sector Strategy Learning Network in conjunction with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and the National Network of Sector Partners:

<http://sectorstrategies.org/toolkit/>

A fact sheet on the SECTORS Act, written by the National Skills Coalition:

[http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/federal-policies/sector-partnerships/sectors-documents/nsc\\_sectors\\_packet\\_2010-02.pdf](http://www.nationalskillscoalition.org/federal-policies/sector-partnerships/sectors-documents/nsc_sectors_packet_2010-02.pdf)

The National Fund for Workforce Solutions, which was established by a group of nine national foundations to support the development of workforce (sector) partnerships across the country:

<http://www.nfwsolutions.org/>

Facts about small business from the Small Business Administration:

<http://www.sba.gov/advo/stats/sbfaq.pdf>

A study sponsored by the US Department of Labor on the role WIA and WIBs can play in support of entrepreneurship and small business:

[http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText\\_Documents/Think%20Entrepreneurs%20A%20Call%20to%20Action%20-%20Integrating%20Entrepreneurship%20into%20the%20Public%20Workforce%20System%20Throughout%20America.pdf](http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/Think%20Entrepreneurs%20A%20Call%20to%20Action%20-%20Integrating%20Entrepreneurship%20into%20the%20Public%20Workforce%20System%20Throughout%20America.pdf)

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.sba.gov/advo/stats/sbfaq.pdf>

## Future of WIA

### Context

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) - signed into law by then-President Clinton in 1998 - was due for reauthorization in 2003. However, unlike many statutes, WIA does not “expire.” As long as Congress continues to appropriate funding, current law stands. Nevertheless, since 2003 Congress has attempted to gain passage of a revised Act on several occasions. And today, on the heels of the Great Recession, there are renewed calls for an update of WIA.

There are two major advantages to reauthorization. One, as implied above and discussed throughout other sections of this toolkit, states and localities would benefit from legislation that is better aligned with current human capital and economic development opportunities and challenges.

Second, using history as a guide, there is ample evidence to suggest that the act of reauthorization itself would better connect the current Congress to the legislation, which in turn could help on the annual appropriations front. In Fiscal Year 2000, the first year of WIA funding, the annual appropriation for WIA Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth programs was \$3.5B, a \$300M increase over the prior year funding under the Job Training Partnership Act. As depicted in the table to the right, what followed was a general trend of increases until FY2003 (when discussion of WIA reauthorization started, and then stalled in Congress). In FY2009, WIA was funded at \$3.25B. In 2009 dollars, the value of the WIA appropriation has decreased nearly 28 percent, from a value of nearly \$4.5B in 2000 to just under \$3.3B in 2009.

WIA Appropriations: FY2000 - FY2009  
in thousands



Source: US Department of Labor;  
Real Dollars calculated using the Inflation Calculator.

### Principles of Reauthorization

Given the long history of WIA reauthorization efforts, it is not surprising that intergovernmental organizations have developed a series of principles for consideration in any updated bill. Below are a list of such principles that have each been articulated by the majority of these organizations (see “Resources” for links to the specific WIA reauthorization policy position of each intergovernmental organization):

- **Performance measures** – Establish national common measures across multiple funding streams to foster increased coordination among and between related public programs and services.
- **Workforce Investment Boards** – Ease mandated membership requirements to empower governors, chief elected officials, and the boards themselves to appropriately reflect the interests of the jurisdiction.
- **Training** – Increase access to training by eliminating the prescribed sequence of services (core, then intensive, then training), allowing for the delivery of class-size training programs in addition to the current voucher system, and modifying certain requirements to facilitate WIA funding for mainstream education programs such as those delivered by the nation’s community colleges.
- **Investment in Innovation** – Recognize and provide incentives for state and local innovations, including comprehensive system building; anticipating and addressing emerging education and training needs; and establishing new public-private partnerships that address statewide, regional, or local workforce challenges.
- **Youth services** – Provide for greater flexibility to align WIA-funded youth services with state and local priorities, including high school reform efforts; allow proxies for eligibility determination, such as residing in high-poverty areas or attending a school where more than 70 percent of the population receive free/reduced lunch.

The specific changes supported in these five major areas vary by intergovernmental organization and, as noted above, not all organizations have established policy in all areas.

Further, most intergovernmental organizations have additional items they would like to see addressed in a reauthorized WIA. Below are examples of some of these topic areas:

- Regional coordination and collaboration;
- Incentives for public-private partnerships;
- Governance (maintain the balance between the federal, state, and local levels or shift that balance);
- Alignment with both secondary and post-secondary educational institutions;
- Funding arrangements for one-stop career centers;
- WIA funding formula, particularly looking at factors used in calculating the distribution of youth funds;
- The WIA accounting and reporting structure, to more accurately reflect the activity in the field; and
- Overall flexibility in the use of WIA funding, particularly when it comes to working directly with businesses of all sizes who have specific workforce needs.

Although there are variances in priorities and interest areas among the intergovernmental organizations, those same groups share a long history of collaboration. Therefore, there is shared

optimism that Congress, with input from these groups, will craft bipartisan reauthorization legislation to improve and strengthen the Workforce Investment Act.

### **Funding**

As documented above, WIA has seen a reduction in funding since its passage in both Actual Dollars (-\$288 million or -8 percent) and Real Dollars (-\$1.2 billion or -28 percent). It is useful to put this in context: WIA programs are funded at just over \$3.2 billion annually, translating to roughly .3 percent of the federal discretionary budget of about \$1.1 trillion. The appropriation is just about 1.8 percent of the approximately \$175 billion allocated to fund programs in the budget category of Labor, Health & Human Services, and Education.

Despite these relatively small amounts, even level appropriations year to year are considered a victory in a deficit-laden budget climate. While reauthorization continues to be an area of focus, it is generally held among stakeholders that a better-funded WIA, for all its room for improvement, would benefit all constituents.

### **The State of WIA Reauthorization and Funding**

As of this writing (November 2010), the future of WIA reauthorization and appropriations are uncertain.

The 2010 elections are resulting in changes in Congressional Committee leadership - particularly in the House of Representatives. As a result, the House Education and Labor Committee, which has purview over WIA reauthorization, will likely include many new members who may not be as familiar with the history of legislative efforts as their predecessors. In addition, as is often the case, there are other pieces of legislation up for reauthorization that both expire and have greater visibility than WIA. In the 111th Congress, this will include the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. However, the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions (HELP) Committee, which has purview over WIA reauthorization in the Senate, does appear to be poised to float draft legislation in early 2011. This would, at a minimum, elevate the discourse in Congress on reauthorization and provide a context for familiarizing members with the workforce system in their home jurisdictions.

On the funding front, WIA programs are at risk, along with all domestic spending in these difficult economic times.

### **Advocating for WIA Reauthorization and Funding**

As noted above, the intergovernmental organizations representing elected officials, as well the organization representing WIBs, are active in the WIA reauthorization and funding arenas. Some of these groups have special committees on WIA and WIA-related issues, and all engage with one another on this topic. Elected officials are encouraged to look to their specific intergovernmental organization for guidance on how they can engage best on WIA issues. Such actions may include speaking with your Congressional delegation, inviting them to see your workforce system in action, writing letters, testifying before Congress, and other traditional advocacy activities. Whatever the course recommended by the respective intergovernmental organization, all elected officials are encouraged to familiarize themselves

with the WIB and workforce system in their jurisdiction and refer constituents look for jobs and businesses in need of workers to their nearest one-stop center.

## **Resources**

The following are links to the policy positions on reauthorization for the following intergovernmental organizations:

National Association of Counties:

[http://www.naco.org/legislation/policies/Documents/Labor%20and%20Employment/LE\\_WIA.pdf](http://www.naco.org/legislation/policies/Documents/Labor%20and%20Employment/LE_WIA.pdf)

National Association of State Workforce Agencies:

<http://www.workforceatm.org/sections/pdf/2010/WIANASWAPRINCIPLESMarch%202010.pdf>

National Association of Workforce Boards:

<http://www.nawb.org/>

National Conference of State Legislators:

<http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=16771>

National Governors Association:

<http://www.nga.org/portal/site/nga/menuitem.8358ec82f5b198d18a278110501010a0/?vgnnextoid=2a9a9e2f1b091010VgnVCM1000001a01010aRCRD>

National League of Cities:

<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/1DA4AAB1355F451394C0E726FC378C28/Issue%20Paper%20-%20Economic%20Recovery%20Job%20Creation%20FINAL.pdf>

United States Conference of Mayors:

[http://usmayors.org/workforce/documents/2010-5-4Legislation\\_Recommendations.pdf](http://usmayors.org/workforce/documents/2010-5-4Legislation_Recommendations.pdf)

# Compiled Resource List

## The Law

For the law itself:

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/plaintext.pdf>

WIA in plain English:

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/plaintext.pdf>

For information regarding formula funding:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL13-08a1.pdf>

For information regarding performance measures:

<http://www.doleta.gov/performance/quickview/WIAPMeasures.cfm>

## Workforce Investment Boards

National Association of Workforce Boards document on building better WIBs:

<http://www.nawb.org/PRODUCTSSERVICES/InformationPublications/tabid/95/%5Cportals%5C0%5CPublications%5Cpub-1-2002.pdf>

## WIA and Human Capital Development

The United States Department of Labor's resource page on WIA:

<http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/>

The National Association of Workforce Investment Boards has compiled a series of promising practices for the delivery of WIA programs, which can be found at:

<http://www.nawb.org/Default.aspx?tabid=186>

Information on ARRA investments in WIA:

<http://www.ncsl.org/?tabid=18884>

Training and Employment Guidance Letter 13-09 "Contacting Strategies that Serve the Youth Most in Need:

<http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL/TEGL13-09.pdf>

Data and articles on youth employment compiled by the National Youth Employment Coalition:

[www.nyec.org](http://www.nyec.org)

## WIA and Economic Development

The US Department of Labor's description of how WIA serves businesses:

<http://www.doleta.gov/business/pws.cfm>

The State Sector Strategies Toolkit, developed by the National Governors Association State Sector Strategy Learning Network in conjunction with the Corporation for a Skilled Workforce and the National

Network of Sector Partners:

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A fact sheet on the SECTORS Act, written by the National Skills Coalition:

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### **Future of WIA**

National Association of Counties:

[http://www.naco.org/legislation/policies/Documents/Labor%20and%20Employment/LE\\_WIA.pdf](http://www.naco.org/legislation/policies/Documents/Labor%20and%20Employment/LE_WIA.pdf)

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National League of Cities:

<http://www.nlc.org/ASSETS/1DA4AAB1355F451394C0E726FC378C28/Issue%20Paper%20-%20Economic%20Recovery%20Job%20Creation%20FINAL.pdf>

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