



## **Minnesota Workforce Council Association WIA Reauthorization Priorities**

*It is the mission of the Minnesota Workforce Council Association to provide Minnesota with a skilled and competitive workforce through engaged and proactive local elected officials, workforce boards, and staff.*

### **Support Strong Leadership Roles for Local Elected Officials and Local, Business Led Workforce Investment Boards as a Core Element of the Workforce Investment Act**

MWCA urges Congress to continue to advocate for a strong and well financed local Workforce Development System in which business led Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) and Local Elected Officials (LEOs) are responsible for implementing the workforce services in their communities. This model promotes the development of programs that are informed by in-depth knowledge of local business climate, the hiring and training needs of local and regional businesses, and the promotion of accountability as policies are designed to reflect local trends.

Whenever possible, funds should be allocated directly to local WIBs so that programs can be planned and integrated with existing services, streamlining processes and increasing efficiencies. We strongly oppose efforts to give greater control to the Department of Labor to develop services through national grants or to create federal Request for Proposals in which they designate where and how funds are used in a local area. We also oppose giving states increased authority to run local One-Stop Centers or increasing the state's role in staffing One-Stop Centers. The LEO/WIB partnership ensures that business, labor, economic development and education are all at the table when it comes to deciding who is served, who provides services and what workforce services are provided.

### **Support Local Designation of Workforce Service Areas, Which Address the Needs of Community Employers and Job Seekers**

MWCA strongly supports the authority of LEOs to determine their workforce service areas if they are single or combined areas which have a population of over 200,000. If greater population thresholds are included in new legislation, currently existing areas should be "grandfathered-in" if they have a history of both being fiscally responsible and meeting performance standards.

### **Support a System Which Provides Strong Universal Services to All Job Seekers, and Streamlines Specialized Services to Economically Disadvantaged Adults and Youth**

MWCA encourages Congress to allocate resources necessary to provide basic career and job placement services to all job seekers and higher level services to economically disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged youth.

The current Workforce Investment Act mandates the co-location of several programs to support a robust, locally-led, One-Stop system. Currently, no funding is allocated specifically to deliver

universal services to any job seeker that walks into a resource room; rather, funds are cobbled together from the administrative dollars of each of the programs located in the One-Stop. Providing funds to WIBs explicitly to support basic career and job placement services would ensure that a strong guidance system is available to all workers to continually plan and refine their careers.

Streamline existing funding for all high-level services under three well financed, flexible, and locally administered programs - for economically disadvantaged adults, dislocated workers and economically disadvantaged youth – would maximize the efficiency of service delivery to special needs populations.

### **Authorize Summer Employment Programs for Disadvantaged Youth**

Minnesota was a national leader in successfully implementing a summer youth program utilizing funds made available under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. At a time when the economy makes it particularly difficult for youth to find and secure employment, the restriction against stand-alone summer youth programs should be eliminated. Rather, adequate funding should be authorized to operate a substantial summer youth program which incorporates education, career guidance and work experience.

### **Create Anti-Recessionary Training and Job Creation Services for Periods of High Unemployment.**

MWCA encourages Congress to create programs and provide special allocations for the employment and training of adult and dislocated workers for times of unusually high unemployment. We recommend the institution of a job creation program modeled after the Minnesota Emergency Employment Development (MEED) initiative, implemented in Minnesota during the recession of the 1980s, or other strategies which are specifically designed to create jobs and prepare workers for the anticipated job shortages that will occur when the recession subsides.