



# Workforce Boards *In Action*

The National Association of Workforce Boards Publication for Leaders in Workforce Development

September 2006

## in this issue

- Letter from the Interim CEO
- How Have Funding Reductions Impacted Our System?
- Finger Lakes (NY) Region Gets WIRED for Innovation and Creativity
- Workforce Spotlight - Linda H. South, Director, Agency for Workforce Innovation (FL)
- SimNAWB Update
- Forum 2007 - New Vision for a New Economy: Workforce Leadership Matters!
- NAWB Offers Discounts on Training!

## How Have Funding Reductions Impacted Our System?



We have all been impacted in one way or another from reductions in workforce funding that have taken place over the years since the implementation of WIA. Local regions and state workforce agencies must serve more customers with fewer resources than ever before. This takes more creative and innovative approaches each

year.

Recently, we spoke with representatives from a regional workforce board, a rural workforce consortium, and a state workforce agency, to get their perspective on how the changes have affected their workforce community and what they are doing to address those changes. Here are their responses:

### What specific budget reductions have you faced over the past 5-10 years?

*Susan Kamas, Executive Director, Central Texas Workforce Boards*

"Our WIA funding has been level for the last seven years, although the demand for services has increased. We received the largest cuts when the law was changed and we transitioned from JTPA to WIA in July 1999. The new WIA was a "work first" program with emphasis on core and assisted core services. We were instructed to enroll customers in training

## Letter from the Interim CEO

The one constant at NAWB is change. While our overall mission and vision have remained the same, like any dynamic membership organization that wishes to remain relevant and viable, we adapt to meet the ever-changing needs and interests of our members. That is because, first and foremost, NAWB is a member-driven organization. Consequently, high-quality customer (member) service is "job one." We trust that our renewed commitment to customer service is reflected in everything we do.

Speaking of constant change, as many of you may be aware, former CEO Stephanie Powers has left NAWB to assume a new position elsewhere. I know that all of you join me in thanking Stephanie for her many valuable contributions to NAWB over the past four years,

last and then to use 'all other sources of funding' first before we used WIA."

*Charles Brown, Executive Director, NoRTEC Consortium*

"NoRTEC has endured about a 38% reduction in allocated funding over the past six years, from Program Year (PY) 01 to PY 06."

*Margaret Moree, Director of Workforce Development and Training, New York State Department of Labor*

"In our state, Wagner Peyser and WIA primarily support the One-Stop system in terms of staffing and resources."

"New York's WIA allocation for the past 5 years has been reduced by nearly \$40 million. While this is only a 14% reduction over those 5 years, it included a 20% drop between PY 01 and PY 02 and then another drop in PY 03. These significant drops point to the overall issue in terms of availability and quality of service. When year-to-year fluctuations occur in such dramatic fashion it's hard to ensure quality or availability. It is also impossible to plan appropriately for staffing. Although there has been an increase in PY 04 and PY 05, primarily in Dislocated Worker funding, a system isn't going to 'gear up' when the anticipated drop for PY 06 is equally significant."

"Wagner-Peyser has an equally complicated trajectory - all of it down. New York receives no state-level support for staffing or to offset the cost of negotiated merit level pay raises, fringe, etc. So the federal funds for Wagner-Peyser are where it's at for that program. The federal Wagner-Peyser appropriation for FTEs was reduced from 521.8 in PY 01 to 330 in PY 06."

"Based on a Senate Labor appropriations bill we would estimate a 6% reduction in New York's Wagner- Peyser allocation for PY 07, so the number of staff that can be supported will continue to dwindle. Many states use their Wagner-Peyser funds to offset the costs of technology, not for people. We do both. In New York, Wagner-Peyser underwrites services through people as well as services through technology (i.e., costs for all the licenses in the resource rooms in One-Stop Centers, etc.)."

### **How have these reductions impacted your workforce investment services?**

*Susan Kamas, Executive Director, Central Texas Workforce Boards*

"With the reductions, we have served fewer customers in WIA training BUT large numbers in core services, i.e. matching job seekers to jobs. In fact, we continue to experience large increases in both our job seeker and employer customers. Currently, we are at maximum service levels to continue to deliver quality services."

*Charles Brown, Executive Director, NoRTEC Consortium*

"Less funding makes it more difficult to support a viable infrastructure, and provides less money for variable expenses, like capacity building and participant training and support."

*Margaret Moree, Director of Workforce Development and Training, New York State Department of Labor*

"Services continue to be pushed and direct service is becoming a luxury

and wishing her much good luck and success in her new endeavor. In the interim, the NAWB Board has appointed me as CEO, and has asked that I also continue serving as chief operating officer. Fortunately, Stephanie, the NAWB Board, the staff, and I have worked closely together over the past 20 months, so I can assure you that we have taken every step possible to ensure a smooth and seamless transition for everyone concerned.

Our staff realizes that we have a very big mission to perform on your behalf. Please know that each of us is fully dedicated to achieving excellence and to finding new ways to improve the quality and delivery of services to our members. So, over the next few months, you may again expect to see further changes--new products and services, a new and improved website, and more timely communications on new legislative developments, best practices, and industry trends.

However, the one thing that will not change is the high value we place on our members' loyal support for NAWB. We value your faith and trust in NAWB and, in exchange, pledge to do our best to increase the value proposition for our members.

Mark Schultz

good, not an expectation. Resource constraints have prompted a review of all processes and all investments to ensure we're meeting our core needs, and extras are a thing of the past. Offices are closing, meaning longer drives for customers in rural areas. Staffing has been reduced across the board in WIA and Wagner-Peyser programs, meaning less staff available for customers to see in a timely manner. We continue to push on quality and staff has responded admirably, but there may well be a tipping point on this aspect of customer service. Also, services we used to package and offer as part of a core function can no longer be supported, so fee-for-service plans are being implemented."

### **What are you doing to compensate for those reductions?**

*Susan Kamas, Executive Director, Central Texas Workforce Boards*

"To make up for shortages in funding, we utilize technology for more self-assisted services, so fewer staff are needed in the career centers. We partner with local community colleges and economic development organizations to continue to serve the ever-changing needs of the community."

According to the Central Texas Workforce Board Chair, Jim Granfor, "just an interesting thought on the fight for funding. We are currently providing the very best service ever delivered at the local level. That fact is affirmed regularly through customers and partners. Fortunately at Central Texas, we maintain strong support with Congress."

*Charles Brown, Executive Director, NoRTEC Consortium*

"We have gotten more aggressive in our pursuit of Governor's discretionary funds. More importantly we have reassessed our role, and decided we need to be of value to our local businesses. Over time we have developed a broad base of business services accompanied by a successful fee-for-service program. The more we pay attention to meeting the needs of our businesses, the more job placements we get and the more people we can train."

*Margaret Moree, Director of Workforce Development and Training, New York State Department of Labor*

"We continue to look for efficiencies in areas which will not impact direct service (i.e. lower IT costs, lower maintenance contract costs, aggregating to get better bulk purchase deals, etc.). We have had a lot of success in this area. For instance, we've moved all resource room computers that were hooked in through the state's IT network off-line to a Road Runner methodology. This saved over \$1 million."

"We've shifted training to webinar opportunities rather than regional and/or off-site to get broader impact and respect travel costs and limitations. We continue to review all administrative and infrastructure costs to economize where opportunities present (and they do). We are revisiting management structures across programs to eliminate duplication where it exists (this involves union conversations, etc.)"

"New York has moved to functional alignment. So, as we fully integrate this, we're hoping to free up resources from eliminated positions when folks retire and redirect those resources into direct service. We required the mandatory use of one case management system. Ultimately this will save local and state resources, such as duplicative costs for reporting, for

## Resources

[NAWB Home Page](#)

[Workforce3One](#)

[WIB Business Services Report](#)

[Workforce Solutions Forums](#)

## FYI...

[NAWB offers courses for State and Local Workforce Boards](#)

[Register now and receive an early bird discount on registration for Forum 2007, February 24 - February 27, 2007 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, D.C.!](#)

**Join our mailing list!**

translating data, for monitoring, etc. We are leveraging and assisting our locals with the pursuit of all grant opportunities.”

## Finger Lakes (NY) Region Gets WIRED for Innovation and Creativity

At a time when workforce funding is at a premium, the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) is leveraging its more than \$14 billion annual investment in workforce development to design innovative education and job training programs on a regional level.



While many regions have made considerable progress in integrating talent and skills development into their larger economic strategies, there are regions that need additional technical and financial assistance. In addition, economic regions no longer correspond to state, county, and local workforce investment areas or municipal boundaries. The USDOL Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) Initiative is focusing on labor market areas that comprise multiple jurisdictions within state or across state borders. It supports innovative approaches to education and workforce development that go beyond traditional strategies, preparing workers to compete and succeed both within the United States and globally. Through the WIRED Initiative, Governors have a unique opportunity to design and implement strategic approaches to regional economic development and job growth.

In February of this year, the Finger Lakes Partnership in New York was awarded a \$15 million grant under the WIRED program. Under the program’s guidelines, funding will be used to support the development of a regional, integrated approach to workforce, economic development, and education initiatives. The award was one of thirteen given by USDOL and funding will be provided to the Finger Lakes region in the amount of \$5 million annually, over a period of three years.

The WIRED grant will provide funding to support the Finger Lakes Partnership’s ability to: 1) energize the region’s entrepreneurial economy; 2) catalyze regional innovation; 3) empower workers to succeed in the global economy; and, 4) build a collaborative regional education, workforce, and economic development system.

The Finger Lakes region was once among America’s most innovative and entrepreneurial. However, the decline of its large manufacturers in the last two decades is now evidenced by increasing poverty and unemployment, decreasing wages, low graduation rates, and sluggish job creation. The area has responded by cultivating technology development organizations and funding services and facilities to support entrepreneurs and the growth of smaller innovative companies.

Notwithstanding, economic analysis indicates an absence of collaboration and sharing of best practices among regional stakeholders. This has created a barrier for transforming the Finger Lakes region into an innovative and entrepreneurial economy. A report by the U. S. Council on

Competitiveness for two local organizations stated: "Greater Rochester has the assets necessary to develop a strong entrepreneurial economy. Indeed, the Rochester area surpasses most regions in the U.S. on many dimensions relevant to supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. However, to date, the region has not become an entrepreneurial success story – a fundamental challenge is cultural – the region lacks a strong entrepreneurial environment."

The 21 members of the Finger Lakes Partnership, who represent critical leadership throughout the Finger Lakes region, have strongly endorsed the WIRED initiative and are poised to be agents for change in the region. Public- and private-sector leaders for this project include Greater Rochester Enterprise, High Tech Rochester, Infotonics Technology Center, Rochester Business Alliance, and the Cornell Agriculture and Food Tech Park. The academic community is represented by the region's leading universities, the University of Rochester and Rochester Institute of Technology, and three community colleges, Finger Lakes, Monroe, and Genesee. Government partners include the City of Rochester, the County of Monroe, Empire State Development, and Genesee/Finger Lakes Regional Planning Council, which represents the region's nine counties (Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming and Yates) and is the planning entity for the federally-designated Economic Development District. The investment community is an important partner as well, represented by the Rochester Angel Network and The Trillium Group, a local venture capital firm. Philanthropic support for regional job creation is being provided by the Rochester Area Community Foundation.

The Partnership is counting on leveraging additional resources to get the job done. For example, the workforce investment boards representing all nine counties will connect the initiatives to job seekers, employers, and the education systems. According to Matthew Hurlbutt, Managing Director for the Finger Lakes WIRED project, "each partner brings significant assets to the table. For example, the local workforce boards will leverage existing staff and infrastructure to support the effort while technology incubators and participating colleges and universities will bring research and other capacity that will be used for training, research, and other economic development activities. Together the Finger Lakes partners will leverage over \$22 million during the course of this project."

This combined funding will catalyze this region, resulting in a true integration of powerful resources. The result? Transforming the Finger Lakes economy from a period of slow decline to one of national leadership in regional innovation and entrepreneurship.

**Workforce Spotlight - Linda H. South, Director, Agency for Workforce Innovation (FL)**

Linda South is the newly-appointed Director for the Agency for Workforce Innovation in Florida. Previously she served as chair and then executive director of the Brevard Workforce Development Board on the east coast of Florida. Utilizing her private-sector, entrepreneurial background, Ms. South implemented fee-for-service activities in Brevard, including the formation of the Dynamic Works Institute, an entity specializing in on-line training of workforce professionals. Also, during her tenure in Brevard, she placed a major focus on looking for "other people's money" (OPM) to support training and services funded by her workforce board.

Ms. South is utilizing the very same philosophy on the state level. With Florida's having faced a reduction in full-service One-Stops from 149 to 100 over the past three years, she says that "regions are having to make difficult choices under these circumstances and are having to close One-Stops and reduce workforce services. It is critical now more than ever to find different ways to do business in our industry."

To that end, Ms. South is striving to fund projects that require matching funds. As she sees it, "local regions must serve as catalysts to engage employers and job seekers to bring other funds to the table."

She adds that "private OPM leverages public funding and vice versa. The partnership between the private and public sectors makes these investments go twice as far for the betterment of our communities."

## SimNAWB Update

The Northern Indiana WIB has been awarded a \$57,000 grant by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in support of the SimNAWB project. The goal of this program is to eliminate barriers to technology use for job seekers and small businesses. Through SimNAWB, workforce boards and One-Stops are able to provide end-users as well as their own staffs with access to a complete set of software and services for storing and sharing computer files, managing personal information, e-mail and instant messaging, remote printing, and backing up and retrieving files. The service is delivered across the Internet and works like a utility, giving instant access to information and files anywhere, at anytime. This initiative is in keeping with NAWB's core mission to help local workforce investment boards across the country build their capacity to be active leaders of workforce innovations and services in their communities. The USDA grant will be used to bring technology to rural small businesses in Northern Indiana.



## Forum 2007 - New Vision for a New Economy: Workforce Leadership Matters!

NAWB's annual Forum is the premier workforce conference, providing opportunities to link with over 2,000 business leaders and workforce professionals worldwide. Forum 2007 will be held February 24 - 27, 2007, at The Renaissance Hotel, Washington, D.C.

This year's theme will be *New Vision for a New Economy: Workforce Leadership Matters!* Much attention will be given to building partnerships between workforce and economic development; the role of the workforce board as a catalyst for change; sector strategies or targeted approaches to critical industries; keys to One-Stop success; and, how WIB members can make an impact on their communities.

In addition, we will offer special programs on the future American workforce, how to transform globalization challenges into opportunities, regionalism and the future of the workforce system, how to prepare your community for base realignment and closure, how WIBs are managing the budget crunch, and the latest developments at the Labor Department and on Capitol Hill.

A new feature this year will be our "Best Practices Bazaar," a peer-to-peer learning opportunity for WIBs to share best practices with one another. We also will be introducing labs and clinics to augment our traditional workshops.

Stay tuned for more details on Forum 2007.

### **[NAWB Offers Discounts on Training!](#)**

NAWB has developed state-of-the-art content training content for your board members and staff. Following are the courses currently offered (Click on the title to see a brochure that describes the content.)

#### [Building Partnerships: Workforce and Economic Development](#)

Introductory course that builds awareness about economic development concepts, activities, and resources, and provides insights into partnering with economic development entities on workforce issues. Regular price: \$6,500 (plus travel) for the Full Day.

#### [Becoming a Catalyst for Change: The Role of a Workforce Board](#)

Highlights a process for WIBs to build on the workforce system's resources, authority, and expertise to become a change agent, one that is focused on community and economic well-being, while implementing a demand-driven strategy. Regular price: \$3,500 (plus travel) for the Half Day.

[Your Blueprint for One-Stop Success](#) Provides examples of promising practices and proven approaches, along with an interactive discussion with experts who have worked with many workforce boards and One-Stops to develop quality systems. Regular price: \$6,500 (plus travel) for the Full Day.

[Sector Strategies: Targeted Approaches to Critical Industries](#) Introduces the concept of sector strategies and covers the key components necessary to develop an industry-driven strategy, including research, partnerships, actual sector initiatives, and sustainability. Regular price: \$6,500 (plus travel) for the Full Day.

NAWB members who purchase a full-day or half-day on-site training between now and October 15, 2006, are eligible to receive a 20% discount.

### **Online! WIB Members In Action: Making an Impact in the Community**

Basic orientation to the workforce system, characteristics of an effective Board, the responsibilities of a Board member, and an introduction to making a WIB an effective force in the community. Created in partnership with the Dynamic Works Institute, the training is on-line, interactive, and includes video and audio, real-world resources and four (4) webinar/conference calls.

In October 2006, annual subscriptions for all WIB Board members and key staff will be available for a price of \$1,200. 15% Early Bird (before 1/1/07) discount for annual subscription price of \$1,020.

If you are interested or just want to learn more, please contact NAWB's Patrick Cassidy. (email: [cassidy@nawb.org](mailto:cassidy@nawb.org), voice: 703.778.7900 x116, cell: 443.824.4833)

email: [sewells@nawb.org](mailto:sewells@nawb.org)  
phone: 703-778-7900  
web: <http://www.nawb.org>

#### [Forward email](#)

#### **SafeUnsubscribe®**

This email was sent to [sewells@nawb.org](mailto:sewells@nawb.org), by [sewells@nawb.org](mailto:sewells@nawb.org)  
[Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Powered by



National Association of Workforce Boards | 4350 North Fairfax Drive, Suite 220 | Arlington | VA | 22203