

WIA Reauthorization

Opportunity to Rethink the Nation's Youth Delivery System

Working for Change Forum

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Background: the WIA promise

Initial intent of Youth Provisions of WIA

- Infuse youth development programming
- Provide longer term more intensive intervention
- Introduce more strategic and collaborative approaches
- Build youth service capacity in communities of high poverty

US Youth Delivery System: The Reality

- We don't have a comprehensive youth system
- With 500,000 youth dropping out annually, and 4 to 5 million already disconnected, and 26,000 gangs across the nation , only
 - 108,000 youth exited WIA in 2007
 - 28,000 were dropouts
 - 9% were offenders; 8% with limited English proficiency

WIA Reauthorization: the Need


We need a youth service delivery system that will:

- Work in tandem with secondary system to **keep high risk youth in school and on path to graduation**
- Work in concert with other youth serving systems – **provide transition support to vulnerable youth**
- **Recover and reconnect youth** who have dropped out of school
- Convene workforce, public education, labor, employers, and CBO's to **craft multiple pathways** to labor market success in the context of a 21st century economy

Recommendations for WIA Reauthorization

- **Preserve Youth Councils**
 - Strengthen their role as focal point for coordination
 - Provide incentive funding and support for innovative programming across systems – and building multiple pathways
 - Require strategic state and local youth plans that address the youth challenges and approach to solutions in their area

Recommendations: Continued

- Require greater **focus** in the formula funding on dropouts and youth in high risk categories – ie. Offenders, foster youth, homeless, etc.
- Currently in law 30%  50%
- Without specific mandates populations in high risk categories get left behind

Recommendations: Continued

- Remove the **onerous eligibility certification requirements** that impede youth participation and cross system interface
- Support development of **shared definitions and data**

Recommendations: Continued

- **Continue Targeted funding to high poverty communities via Youth Opportunity Grants**
- Research indicated that YO grants were successful:
 - **Increasing high school retention**
 - **Increasing postsecondary attendance in urban areas**
 - **Reducing number of disconnected youth**
 - **Increasing employment and earnings**

Recommendations: Continued

- Remove the **barriers in the Performance System** that works against serving youth in high risk situation
- Establish performance measures that recognize progress in attainment of secondary, post secondary, and labor market credentials.

Recommendations: Continued

- Establish a separate title for work experience and community service
 - Early work experience is critical to development of work ethic, work skills, and career exposure
 - Incorporate summer jobs, transitional jobs, service corps, and internships, and year round work experience

