



Legislative Priorities

— 2018 —



NASWA's advocacy agenda supports the states' efforts for ensuring the workforce system meets employers' needs for a qualified workforce and promotes high-quality employment and careers for workers.

Key Fiscal Issues

• **Ensure Sufficient, Flexible Workforce Development Investment**

Provide No Less than FY 2017 Funding Levels for WIOA and Wagner-Peyser Workforce and Training Programs.

Now is the time to invest, not divest, in the success of the public workforce system. States are in the midst of implementing the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) with collaboration and innovation, including demand-driven training, apprenticeships, and career pathways, which will close skills gaps for employers and help workers increase their earnings.

- However, these successful results are in jeopardy due to continued reduced investment. WIOA formula programs alone were cut by \$585 million, in actual dollars, since 2001 (a 20% reduction).
- Workforce agencies today are faced with persistent long-term unemployment and any further reductions will detrimentally impact our ability to assist both jobseekers and employers under the enhanced programmatic services mandated by WIOA.

Maintain Investment for Governors' Statewide Needs at 15%.

Both the WIOA mandate and the current House and Senate bills include states receiving 15% of WIOA formula investment, which is essential to ensuring states have the capacity to implement innovative programs to meet statewide and regional employer demands for a high-quality workforce.

Increase Flexibility and Programmatic Alignment for Maximum Utilization of Investment.

Provide states enhanced flexibility between funding streams and support coordination among the federal/state programs to accelerate jobseekers' hiring, drive innovative solutions, address employer needs, and coordinate service delivery, while maximizing the return on taxpayer dollars.

WIOA employment & training programs assisted 7.3 million individuals over the last program year, and Employment Services (Wagner-Peyser) programs assisted an additional 14.1 million jobseekers.

In 2016, 64% of WIOA participants gained employment, including 77% of adult participants and 82% of dislocated workers who received training services. In addition, the Employment Services programs placed 62% of jobseekers in employment with 84% staying in those positions 6+ months.

• **Reform Unemployment Insurance (UI)**

Help States Improve the Integrity of the Unemployment Insurance Program.

- Encourage further investment in integrity activities by permitting states to use up to 5% of recovered claimant overpayments and additional employer contributions collected to fight fraud.
- Invest in the Unemployment Insurance Integrity Center at a minimum of \$6 million annually to continue efforts toward eliminating UI fraud.

Support Unemployment Insurance Programming

Investment in UI administration is at a 30-year low, and serious disruption in the delivery of UI benefits is at risk in the next economic downturn.

- Increase the annual state UI Administrative base allocation by a minimum of 25%, while holding the Average Weekly Insured Unemployment (AWIU) base workload constant, to meet employer and claimant expectations for acceptable customer service.
- Provide a minimum investment level of no less than \$300 million/year to modernize antiquated state UI IT systems and maintain current systems.
- Adjust the set aside for UI Contingency investment to \$28 million annually (inflation adjustment).
- Amend federal law to provide a workable extended unemployment insurance program, which would improve the safety net and reduce improper payments during the next recession.



- **Expand Support for Reemployment Services and Apprenticeships**

Invest in Reemployment Services Programming at No Less than \$185 million.

Reemployment services have a proven track record of accelerating UI beneficiaries' return to work, with the additional benefit of reducing the duration of unemployment insurance payments. States should be provided additional flexibility with this investment to enhance coordination between unemployment insurance programs and other workforce programs to expedite jobseekers' hiring.

- Core components of reemployment services include job search tools, early intervention services, career guidance, job referrals, and training for UI claimants while solving employer needs.

Align Apprenticeships with Workforce Development and Invest No Less than \$100 Million.

States, their workforce agencies, and their public and private partners are expanding the use of innovative apprenticeship programming to train workers in a host of demand industries to better meet employer needs. Ongoing federal apprenticeship grants are a core component of this effort. New federal investments should align with existing efforts to foster a coherent system with minimal duplication at the federal, state, and local level.

Key Authorizing Issues

- **Improve the Disabled Veterans Outreach Program (DVOP)**

Expand Categories for Significant Barriers to Employment (SBE) to Allow DVOP Specialists to Improve Service to Veterans and Eligible Spouses.

The State Agencies, or equivalent, should be given the latitude to assess the needs of the Veterans in specified areas of their state and to serve the Veterans most in need who may not be within the SBE categories. By adjusting the SBE category addressing disabled veteran eligibility to include all Veterans with disabilities, regardless of when the disability occurred, or whether the Veteran is receiving VA compensation; and adding an additional category that provides states the flexibility in defining a state-unique SBE, will improve services to all veterans.

- **Ensure Successful WIOA Implementation**

Promote the Successful Collaboration of Education, Vocational Rehabilitation and Human Services Programs to WIOA.

NASWA encourages Congress to continue its strong engagement with the federal agencies of jurisdiction in WIOA implementation. This will ensure coordinated alignment between the workforce development programs and a range of partner programs, including career and technical education, higher education, adult basic education, vocational rehabilitation, TANF and other human service programs, that lead to better employment and career advancement outcomes.

Eliminate Impediments to Real-time, Integrated State Data Sharing.

NASWA supports high-quality program and labor market information, a powerful public labor exchange, utilization of workforce technologies, integrating cross-agency data, and opportunities for state workforce agencies to be learning organizations engaging in data analysis and program evaluation to provide better data-driven outcomes for employers and workers.

Currently, dedicated or sufficient funding is not available for these important activities. States will continue to be challenged in providing high-quality data and integrated services for employers and job seekers.

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About NASWA

The National Association of State Workforce Agencies (NASWA) is the national organization representing all 50 state workforce agencies, D.C. and U.S. territories. These agencies deliver training, employment, career, and business services, in addition to administering the unemployment insurance, veteran reemployment, and labor market information programs. NASWA provides policy expertise, shares promising state practices, and promotes state innovation and leadership in workforce development.

NASWA's Board of Directors and membership adopted the association's federal legislative priorities, which shape advocacy efforts on behalf of state workforce agencies.

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