



NATIONAL COALITION *for* HOMELESS VETERANS

Workforce Reinvestment Act: Innovative Collaborations between Workforce Boards and Employers Helped Meet Local Needs

Government Accountability Office (GAO) | [Full Report](#)

Quick Takeaways:

- Six factors that contribute most to collaboration are: focusing on urgent needs, leadership, leveraging resources, employer-responsive services, minimizing administrative burden, and demonstrating results.
- Challenges associated with collaboration stem from: 1) employers having limited interaction with and knowledge of local workforce boards, and 2) workforce boards lacking the time and resources necessary to reach out to employers.
- Workforce-related initiatives should look to fund their projects using multiple sources. Of the 14 initiatives examined in this report, all relied on funding from more than one provider.
- The GAO report recommended that DOL provide a better way of finding information on resources and funding opportunities for local organizations with workforce initiatives. Since the writing of this report, Labor's workforce systems website, www.Workforce3one.org, looks to have been updated to offer a repository of information on workforce-related issues.

Introduction

GAO reviewed 14 local workforce initiatives to determine:

1. Challenges to collaboration
2. Factors facilitating effective collaborations among workforce boards, employers, and jobseekers
3. DOL's role in supporting local collaborative efforts

Challenges to Collaboration

The GAO report also mentioned some of the challenges associated with collaboration, among them:

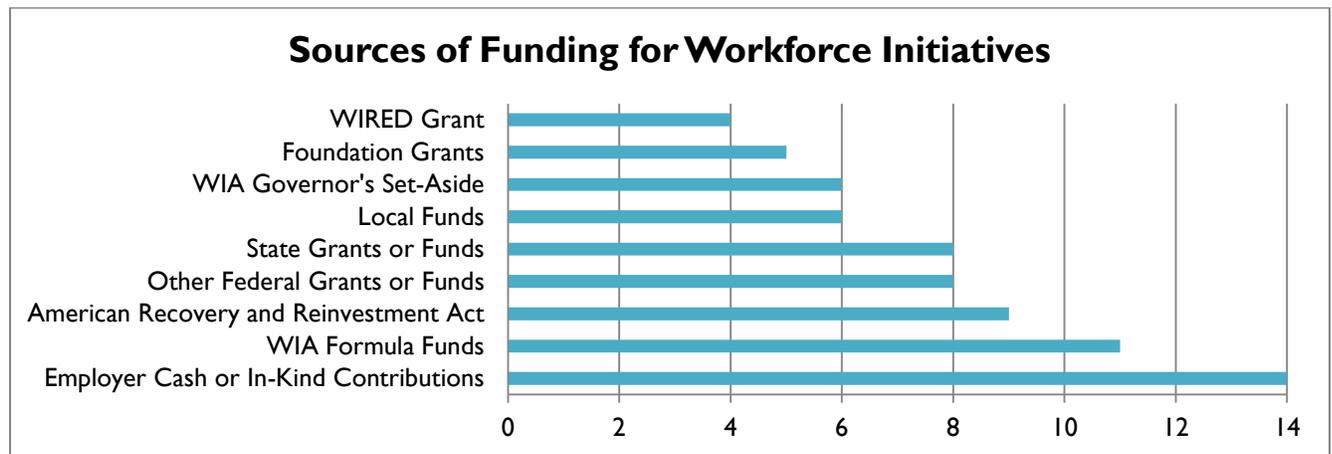
- Employers having little knowledge or limited interaction with the workforce system
- Employers only using the 1,800 local American Job Centers (AJCs) to fill their needs for low-skilled workers
- Staff of AJCs not having the time or resources to devote to building relationships with employers

Six Factors Contributing to Collaboration among Workforce Boards, Employers, and Others

<p>Focusing on Urgent Needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Addressing similar needs for multiple employers across a sector • Working together to define a scope of problem • Finding common ground to develop solutions 	<p>Leadership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involving leaders with authority or persuasive ability • Using a neutral convener to build trust 	<p>Leveraging Resources</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using resources such as grants to attract additional support • Finding ways to build on limited WIA funds • Attracting employer contributions and in-kind support
<p>Employer-Responsive Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employing staff with industry knowledge • Tailoring services to address employers' specific needs • Making training services more relevant and useful to employers • Serving a diverse mix of jobseekers and workers to address employers' needs 	<p>Minimizing Administrative Burden</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Streamlining data collection methods • Having a single point of contact or program manager • Limiting length, frequency, or focus of meetings 	<p>Demonstrating Results</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increasing supply of skilled workers • Helping employers address recruitment and turnover • Increasing skills for jobseekers and workers • Placing jobseekers in jobs • Increasing employer involvement in workforce system • Achieving cost savings or efficiency improvements

Multiple Sources of Funding

As can be seen in the figure below, all of the initiatives included in the GAO report relied on multiple sources of funding. All 14 initiatives received funding from some form of employer contribution, while only 5 received funding from foundations. Appendix II of the full GAO report profiled each initiative and listed the general funding sources for each.



The Role of the DOL in Collaborative Workforce Efforts

In order to address the challenges facing workforce initiatives and to improve the ability of local organizations to leverage available resources, the DOL has made efforts to compile and disseminate information on these issues, mainly through their www.Workforce3one.org website. Labor has conducted webinars on available resources, partnered with other federal agencies to support local initiatives, and offered guidance to boards so they may increase credential attainment among workforce program participants. In conjunction with the Commerce Department and Small Business

Administration, Labor funded the Jobs and Innovation Accelerator Challenge – a discretionary \$37 million grant program – to encourage collaboration and leverage funds. The ability to make the most of funding was highlighted by the GAO, as well as the necessity of leveraging multiple sources of funding.

The table below shows the 14 initiatives studied by the GAO for this report, the location of their workforce boards, and what urgent employer needs were addressed.

Initiative name	Location	Sector focus	Needs addressed
ManufacturingWorks	Chicago, Illinois	Manufacturing	Critical skill needs
Health Careers Collaborative of Greater Cincinnati	Cincinnati, Ohio	Health care	Critical skill needs, turnover
Entrepreneurship Quests	Gainesville, Florida	No single sector	Need for additional jobs
Advanced Manufacturing Training Initiative	Golden, Colorado	Manufacturing	Soft skills
Piedmont Triad Global Logistics Workforce Initiative	Greensboro, North Carolina	Transportation, distribution, and logistics	Critical skill needs
Center of Excellence in Production Agriculture	Lancaster, Pennsylvania	Agriculture	Critical skill needs
Career Pathways	Madison, Wisconsin	Multiple	Critical skill needs
Pre-employment Healthcare Academy	Rochester, Minnesota	Health care (long-term care)	Turnover, soft skills
Technical Employment Training	San Bernardino, California	Manufacturing	Critical skill needs
Manufacturing Sector Layoff Aversion and Business Assistance Initiative	San Bernardino, California	Manufacturing	Imminent threat of layoffs
Health Care Sector Panel	Seattle, Washington	Health care	Critical skill needs
Michigan Academy for Green Mobility Alliance	Taylor, Michigan	Manufacturing	Need for upgraded skills to keep pace with technological change
NoVaHealthForce	Vienna, Virginia	Health care	Critical skill needs
Composites Kansas WIRED Initiative	Wichita, Kansas	Manufacturing (aviation)	Need for upgraded skills to keep pace with technological change