

Talking Points

- ✚ The House of Representatives recent move to zero WIA funding for state and local programs would result in the demise of the nation's workforce system at a time when Illinoisans need it most. A recently defeated Senate proposal cut funding by 60%, which based on the current year's appropriation of \$138 million, would have resulted in a loss of \$75 million to the State of Illinois.
- ✚ In addition, funding that is retained at the state level (15% innovation funds) is a target in the President's 2012 budget and proposes a 50% reduction; redirecting this portion to U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) for their discretionary use. If successful, these cuts will effectively halt Illinois' track record at shoring up high-growth sectors that lead to good, new jobs for our citizens. Based on current funding levels this would result in Illinois losing approximately \$11 million.
- ✚ Illinois has invested almost \$7 million of 15% innovation funds to expand access to workforce services resulting in the portal being available to over 2 million visitors and registered users. The registered users represent 177,000 jobseekers, 4,000 workforce professionals, and 1,200 businesses. Approximately 1,000 non-traditional partners such as chambers of commerce, libraries, churches, and community organizations provide access to Illinois workNet services. A reduction of the 15% innovation funds will abolish online access to workforce services in Illinois.
- ✚ Last year 173,000 Illinois citizens received services through WIA, which prepares workers for the jobs in today's economy. Workforce Investment Act Title I funding needs to be restored to ensure Illinois citizens have the access they need to employment and training services offered through the 113 physical Illinois workNet Centers throughout the state.
- ✚ We must increase the skill level of our workforce and link training programs directly with jobs in key sectors such as agriculture, healthcare, and information technology. This will ensure regional economic growth that moves us toward recovery and enhances our competitiveness.
- ✚ Deficit reductions are necessary, but job growth and a strong workforce system is crucial in this process. With this in mind, WIA funding for 2011 is essential and no further reductions can occur in the upcoming 2012 budget. This funding will support putting people to work, thus directly increasing the number of citizens contributing to the overall tax base.