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# Concerns and Recommendations on Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in Boston: Summary of the "Policy Roundtable: Local Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act and its Impact on Latinos and other Communities"

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# **Concerns and Recommendations on Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 in Boston**

## **Summary of the "Policy Roundtable: Local Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act and its Impact on Latinos and other Communities"**

*Prepared by  
Luz Rodriguez  
Kevin Whalen  
Mary Jo Marion  
Rita Lara  
Claudia Green*

for the Center for Community Economic Development  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
on behalf of the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services  
and the Boston Private Industry Council

December, 2000

## **Acknowledgements and Credits**

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A special thanks also to José Duran, Executive Director of the Hispanic Agency of Planning and Evaluation, and José Alicea, former Executive Director of Oficina Hispana de la Comunidad, for their willingness to give voice to the longstanding concerns of their constituents and the agencies that serve them.

Luz Rodriguez and Kevin Whalen of the Center to Support Immigrant Organizing conducted stakeholder interviews for the project, and helped to design and conduct the policy roundtable. Staff of the Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy, the CCED's founder and home, also contributed to this effort. They are Associate Director Mary Jo Marion, Executive Director Andrés Torres, Research Associates Rita Lara and Yolanda Gilibert, layout designer Jake Sterling, and CCED administrative assistant Jenepher Gooding. CCED Director Claudia Green coordinated the project.

## Introduction

The primary public funding vehicle for employment training and workforce education is in the midst of radical change. The transition from the Job Training Partnership Act of 1982 to the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) will have a dramatic impact on providers and clients alike. This impact is likely to be especially challenging for programs targeted to the hardest to serve populations. For example, many practitioners are worried that members of certain groups will be more likely to be “lost” and not receive needed services under the voucher system that will be the primary payment method under WIA. Linguistic minorities, a population requiring culturally competent, comprehensive services, are one diverse group that stands to fare poorly under WIA.

Key changes under WIA include coordination of employment services under One-Stop Career Centers, the use of individual training accounts as a means of increasing customer choice and program accountability, and a consolidation of federal programs and funding streams.

In anticipation of these changes, the City of Boston Office of Jobs and Community Services and the Boston Private Industry Council arranged for the Center for Community Economic Development of the University of Massachusetts Boston Coalition to conduct a series of research, planning and strategizing activities to further local understanding of the problem and develop proactive policy and practice responses. To do this, JCS, the PIC and the CCED agreed it would be useful to investigate the particular situation of Latinos in Boston, because:

- Latinos are the largest linguistic minority in Boston;
- Latinos represent an ethnic and linguistic minority population that is unemployed at a higher than average rate in the Boston area and for whom employment training, and ESOL and adult basic education training is often a prerequisite for access to employment; and
- Latinos are also underemployed and over-represented in occupations that pay less than self-sufficiency wages. Access to employment training that is closely connected to career ladder opportunities is essential for this population to achieve self-sufficiency wages.

Many of the same issues that challenge service providers offering employment training programs to Latinos under WIA are similar to those facing service providers serving other ethnic and linguistic minorities. What is learned about the needs, the service track record and the immediate concerns regarding service delivery under WIA may well be applied to other linguistic communities, as well as others who have multiple barriers to employment.

The CCED’s charge was to (1) obtain and analyze data on how Boston’s Latino population has fared under current service delivery systems (2) examine issues of capacity to serve this population within the provider community, (3) develop a body of research on best practices related to dealing with the impacts of WIA, (4) conduct a series of facilitated meetings with local community based organizations on effectively dealing with the impacts of WIA, and (5) provide a series of policy recommendations on serving the hardest to serve populations under WIA.

Specifically, the research component involved:

- Obtaining and analyzing administrative data on Latinos currently served under JTPA and other related adult training funds;
- Identifying local CBOs serving large numbers of Latinos;

- Conducting a series of interviews with these agencies and others including advocacy groups, staff of JCS and the PIC, Career Centers and labor organizations<sup>1</sup> to ascertain their familiarity with the new legislation, concerns regarding and implementation and capacity; and recommendations for policy and practice;
- Studying the WIA legislation in detail, with an eye to specific components of the legislation that might have a negative impact on Latinos and other hard to serve populations; and
- Identifying national models that demonstrate successful services to linguistic minorities (both unemployed and in low-wage entry-level jobs) and supportive policy strategies.

Concerns about how WIA will affect Latinos and other communities of color run deep. Importantly, however, research for this project confirmed that some of the Latino agencies in Boston have already begun to wean their programs from federal funding due to the difficulties they faced meeting the comprehensive education and training needs of their constituents under that scenario. Thus the current policy discussion becomes only moderately relevant to their daily operations. Leaders of these agencies did participate in this project, however, in order to help document what they see as a critical disjuncture between actual need and the existing training system, and to promote a process of oversight and reform.

The research served as a foundation for a half-day policy roundtable entitled, “Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act and its Impact on Latinos and other Communities.” The agenda for the policy roundtable is included in the appendix. Participants included an expanded circle of the stakeholders included in the first phase: staff from Latino-serving organizations, PIC and JCS staff, career center staff, and labor organizations.

The findings were presented as a starting place for the group to further develop a set of policy recommendations to the local Workforce Investment Board regarding implementation of the Workforce Investment Act. The preliminary set of concerns and recommendations for WIA implementation were circulated and used as the point of departure for later small group discussions. Comments by two Latino community leaders supplemented and underlined these findings. In addition, an analysis of how the local job training system has served Latinos and other minorities to over the last three years, as well as some examples from outside Boston provided a useful backdrop to the discussions. Three examples from outside Boston were also presented, including a statewide organization, a local coalition and a community college, all of which have developed strong, programs and systems to serve Latinos both within and outside of the public funding structure. All three cases are included in the appendix of this report. They prompted new thinking and discussion during the small group sessions, and indeed led to some of the specific recommendations developed by roundtable participants.

Following is a summary of the concerns raised through the initial stakeholder interviews, and then further addressed by those attending the policy roundtable.

A final word – This project is important because of its specific goal – to consider the impact of WIA specifically on Latinos, a community that has a tremendous amount at stake in local, state and federal workforce development policy. It does, however, parallel other concurrent advocacy efforts at the state

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<sup>1</sup> A research team interviewed Latino community leaders, and staff of community-based organizations that provide employment training services and/or advocacy to Boston’s Latino communities, local public funders, labor organizations associated with workforce training in Boston as well as two of Boston’s three One-Stop Career Centers. In total, thirteen interviews were conducted.

and local level. We encourage dialogue among participants of all these efforts, and the inclusion of as broad based coalitions as possible.

NOTES: The recommendations of those individuals who were interviewed are noted as "Recommendations;" those of the Roundtable as a whole are noted as "Additional Recommendations." Comments of actual presenters are identified with their names. Others are integrated into the general recommendations sections.

## Concerns and Recommendations

José Duran, Executive Director of the Hispanic Office of Planning and Evaluation in Boston framed the challenges and threats facing community based organizations (CBOs) trying to serve the Latino community under the Workforce Investment Act. Duran said that CBOs need to assess their goals:

*“Do we want just job placement, a short term ‘take a job, any job’ as a goal, or the more profound goal to invest in the long term economic self sufficiency of workers? Under the limited goal, as with welfare-to-work programs, people will only have jobs temporarily; without a comprehensive commitment to long-term employment they will re-surface in poverty.*

*“Our experience is that it requires a long time to go from poverty to work. The WIA employment and training system, like others, does not lend itself to this goal.”*

*~José Duran, Executive Director of H.O.P.E.*

Regarding the capacity of training providers, Duran raised several concerns that were echoed throughout the interviews and roundtable: WIA does not lend itself to “capacity building” of CBOs or marginalized communities. Smaller CBOs are least equipped to move large numbers of people into the world of work. The WIA funding system further de-stabilizes CBOs based on financial risk: “It is like putting a “bounty” on participation,” he said. CBO’s should not have to compete with each other regarding job placement successes. This is part of the federal devolution on jobs training.

### Part 1: Training Programs

#### **I. Access: Immigrants and other populations with needs for intensive employment training and support may not access WIA resources.**

- A. Concern:** Because training providers’ future WIA certification will be determined by successful rates of job placement of individuals who graduate from their training programs, there is a built-in self-interest for training providers to shepherd individuals with strong employment skills into their programs. Also, WIA calls for “universal access” to employment resources by workers, yet provides fewer funds for training resources. Many fear that immigrants and other workers with fewer job-readiness skills will receive fewer resources than they did under JTPA.

**Recommendation:** The City of Boston should establish priorities that give training providers greater incentives to work with lower income residents and individuals with multiple barriers to employment. The Private Industry Council Board has already prioritized populations below 150% of federal poverty guidelines for training and intensive services; it could promulgate regulations that further encourage groups to serve those with the greatest need (populations at 50-75% of federal poverty guidelines, or those identified as most lacking job-readiness skills, etc.).



**Additional Recommendations:**

- Training programs should be reimbursed for successful referrals to other programs.
- Performance measures that won't penalize the City.
- Pool the risk of successful placements for performance-based contracts: The City or another intermediary should assume the risk, not the individual job training program.  
*Note: There was not consensus on this issue. Debate focused on the extent to which training programs should be held accountable.*
- The City should clarify its guidelines on how the hardest-to-serve will be served and identify benchmarks or guidelines for success, without encouraging competition between ethnic groups (e.g. African American vs. Latino).

**B. Concern: Clients in need of intensive services may not access training programs because too much time may pass between career center intake and enrollment in a training program.**

**Recommendation:** The City of Boston should promulgate regulations to ensure swift assessment, referrals and granting of ITAs for those who need intensive and training services.

**C. Concern: While regulations call for public assistance recipients and other low-income individuals to receive priority for services under WIA, the state has not made clear that the hardest to serve, including those with limited English skills, should be given priority for both intensive services and training programs. Furthermore, Boston's plan does not address the needs of individuals whose barriers to employment - such as low literacy, limited English skills, physical disabilities, child care needs - may be so severe that a mere short-term job training program would be insufficient.**

**Recommendations:**

- The City of Boston should provide resources for comprehensive education and training programs, social services and supportive services (e.g. childcare, transportation and income support) to help the hardest-to-serve populations become economically self-sufficient.
- Through agreements with the Department of Education and otherwise, the City should look for innovative ways to fund those community-based organizations that provide integrated language and vocational training.
- Career Centers should have multilingual and multicultural staff to ensure that immigrant populations access employment resources.

SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION ON A GROUP CONTRACT UNDER SECTION 2: CAREER CENTERS)



**Additional Recommendations:**

- The Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services should work with the Job Training Alliance, the Boston Workforce Development Coalition and other networks to disseminate information about WIA and other job training issues to community based organizations and the communities they serve.
- The Career Centers should do mass outreach to hardest-to-serve populations via television and radio advertisements, community events, etc.
- The WIB should establish a clearinghouse for employment opportunities.
- CBO's and OSCC's should develop partnerships across agencies and with colleges.

**II. Capacity and Planning: Because training providers will be reimbursed per individual voucher, and not given contracts to create and implement training programs, they will not be able to plan their training programs adequately.**

**Recommendation:** The City should provide support for technical assistance for training programs to move from contracted services to ITA reimbursement.

**Additional Recommendations:** There was consensus that because WIA is vastly underfunded and insufficient, other funding sources for job training should be pursued. Suggestions included:

- The City should create a revolving loan fund for CBOs to handle cash flow and other financial problems.
- The Department of Transitional Assistance should increase its training voucher funding.
- Stakeholders should organize to get the State to put more resources into employment training.
- EDIC should issue a Request for Proposals for CBOs that integrates the different job placement systems.
- Training providers and intermediaries should form alliances with the private sector to increase employment and training opportunities.
- Raise the level of awareness among CBOs about other job training funding streams (state, federal, private).
- Coordinate state incumbent worker monies with WIA programs.
- The MA Department of Education should study what has worked over time in ABE programs to develop job skills, and publish outcomes data on these programs.

**III. Standards****Recommendations:**

- Employment for trainees should be full-time, permanent, and related to the training program.
- Wages should be enough to ensure economic self-sufficiency, and jobs should offer good benefits and room for job growth. (See also Section 3, Concern 2).
- Training quality standards should be established for training programs.

## **Part 2: One-Stop Career Centers**

- I. Outreach, Assessment and Referrals: Career centers may not have resources to do the necessary outreach, assessment, referrals and other support for immigrant workers and others who need intensive services.**

### **Recommendations:**

- EDIC should set up a direct contract with a network of training providers that are skilled in outreach, assessment, case management, education and job-training in immigrant and other populations that career centers will find difficult to serve. This network would fulfill the responsibilities of career centers within designated hard-to-serve populations.<sup>2</sup>
- Career Centers should build strong relationships with local training providers that are familiar with the employment needs of immigrants and other hard-to-serve populations. Career centers should conduct trainings for staff at community-based organizations and set up networks of referrals.
- Career centers should investigate establishing more satellite offices in communities that are hardest to reach.
- Career Centers should track all adults who seek services by race, ethnicity, language, income levels, and other characteristics. Career Centers should record the types of service rendered for each client. They should collect this data to help assess and improve outreach and services to hard-to-serve populations over time.

**Further Discussion:** During the small group sessions, there was discussion, though not consensus, *how* outreach to immigrant communities and others should occur, and *who* should do it. The following questions were at issue:

- Do OSCCs have the resources to work with a network of CBOs?
- Are we asking a neighborhood-based Job Net to take over the work of OSCCs?
- Strategic question over how OSCCs can reach communities of color, including immigrants: Tinker with the OSCC model itself to provide better services or build up the relationships and channels to communities that best reach and serve some populations of color? Some participants believe that OSCCs have already been doing some work to build these relationships with CBOs and communities of color, including employing bi-lingual staff.
- Would satellite offices further dilute limited WIA resources?

### **Additional Recommendations:**

- OSCCs should use Community Access television to publicize their services.
- CBOs could improve their contacts and work with OSCCs, as well.
- CBOs and others should use expanded data collection systems to document unmet needs.

- II. Pre-Employment Services: Many immigrants and other hard-to-serve populations need pre-employment education (e.g. English as a Second Language, literacy, General Equivalency Diplomas) before they can develop adequate employment skills.**

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<sup>2</sup> The Chicago Workforce Board, for example, has designated “affiliate” sites to the One-Stop Career Centers.

**Recommendations:**

- The City of Boston and the State of Massachusetts should provide greater resources for adult basic education services.
- Career centers should compile and provide a list of all Boston ABE programs to training providers. *Note: Participants noted that OSCCs already do provide ABE lists and referrals.*
- Career Center front-line staff should be trained in assessing the education needs of immigrant and other hard-to-serve populations and making proper referrals.

**Additional Recommendations:** Despite ABE and ESOL resources available through the state DOE, federal CDBG programs, the City of Boston and the Boston Foundation, there is still not enough to meet the need. The bottom line is, more funds are still needed.

- Better integrate and promote dialogue and referrals between the parallel state-funded ABE system and city-funded employment training system.
- CBOs and community colleges have been pitted against each other; there is no rational public system.
- Funding providers, service providers and the OSCCs need to collaborate in a seamless web around the needs of many who participate in childcare trainings are immigrant women with intensive literacy and ESL needs.
- The union should be to provide programs and bridge them to educational and training resources.
- Support and use post-placement services to support workers with limited English once they are on the job.
- Maximize resources for building relationships among training programs and education programs.
- Businesses in system should help make it work since they benefit by receiving trained workers.
- Produce a “best practices” list for Boston and formalize the network of groups working in education and training.

## Part 3: General Policies

- I. **Self-Sufficiency Standards: There is a need to ensure that job placement wage requirements allow workers to earn family self-sufficiency incomes and benefits.**

### **Recommendations:**

- The PIC has already set the placement wage requirement as an earning gain of \$3,700 over six months. It should further ensure that placement wages meet living wage standards.
- The City should determine criteria for successful job placements that include livable wages, full-time and permanent work, adequate benefits and room for job growth.

### **Additional Recommendations:**

- Provide training for employers regarding support for individuals placed in work sites.
- Develop point/reward system for training performance. Wages should be counted as just one piece. The system could be tied to incentives and/or reimbursement.
- Reward ancillary services.
- Use Massachusetts Family Economic Self-Sufficiency<sup>3</sup> standards over time.
- Target partnerships with employers that pay living wages and provide support services.
- Move toward sectorally focused training system.
- Target cultural/racism barriers in workplace.

- II. **Tracking and Evaluation: The City may not be able to document and ensure that, over time, WIA resources are successfully reaching, training and placing hard-to-serve populations in economically self-sufficient jobs.**

**Recommendation:** The City should set up a wage and benefit tracking system for the first 18 months of employment for WIA clients. Wages, benefits and job growth should be tracked to ensure that job-training resources are helping families become economically self-sufficient. The City should collect data on each client's

- income at initial intake;
- race/ethnicity;
- history of public assistance;
- language skills; and
- educational background.

In doing so, the City would have compiled data to help measure WIA's success in hard-to-serve populations, and be able to amend policies as necessary over time.

### **Additional Recommendations:**

- Add gender to tracking list.
- Analyze data to correlate educational attainment/race and ethnicity/age.

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<sup>3</sup> The Women's Educational and Industrial Union and Wider Opportunity for Women have developed family self-sufficiency standards, by region and family size, for Massachusetts. The standards take into account unsubsidized housing, transportation, child care, food and other basic living expenses. (Dr. Diana Pearce and Jennifer Brooks with Laura Russell, "The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Massachusetts," Wash, DC: Wider Opportunity for Women, 1998).

- Determine effective lobbying strategy on this issue that would center on a proposal from the PIC/WIB.

**III. Planning: WIA will go into effect July 1, 2000 and concrete policies for Boston have yet to be announced. Since groups have only anticipated policies, priorities, goals, etc. they have only been able to develop tentative plans, even though the WIA start-date is only two weeks away.**

**Recommendations:**

- The City of Boston should adopt interim policies for July – December 2000, which would be assessed by training providers, career centers, job-training advocates, and policy makers together at meetings in July 2000, September 2000, November 2000, and January 2001. The City will revise policies as necessary, based on feedback from WIA stakeholders.
- The City of Boston should adopt a plan for clients themselves to evaluate Boston's WIA policies. Immigrant and other hard-to-serve clients should participate in an assessment of Boston policies and have input in recommending revisions where necessary.

**Additional Recommendations:**

- Use a survey to conduct participant evaluation.

**IV. WIB Representation: The structure of the existing PIC board does not have broad representation from groups representing immigrants and other hard-to-serve populations, and there is no assurance that this will improve when it is converted to a Workforce Investment Board.**

**Recommendations:**

- The City of Boston should make the Workforce Investment Board more representative of populations that need the most support in accessing employment.

**Additional Recommendations:**

- Involve community-based, grassroots leaders in policy circles/discussions
- Improve/increase community-based voices, especially Latino and other voices of color, in Advisory processes (through coalitions or individual groups directly
- Involve labor to greater extent as well (WIBS, committees, etc.). This would also strengthen community voice.

**V. Program Survival: Intense competition for a limited number (360) of Individual Training Account (ITA) vouchers will ultimately eliminate Boston's smaller training programs, potentially including those of African-American, Latino, Asian American and other immigrant-based groups, and lead to fewer choices for workers.**

**Recommendations:**

The City of Boston should make the Workforce Investment Board more representative of populations that need the most support in accessing employment.



(SEE ALSO RECOMMENDATION ON A GROUP CONTRACT UNDER SECTION 2 CAREER CENTERS)

### **Additional Recommendations**

- Develop partnerships across agencies and with colleges
- Raise level of awareness about other funding streams (state, federal, private)
- Coordinate state incumbent worker \$ with WIA goals.

### **Next steps**

Roundtable participants were largely in agreement that one committee should be formed to work on WIA implementation. The committee should be as broad and diverse as possible, relying in part on already existing networks in the job training and job placement arena: the Job Training Alliance, Boston Workforce Development Coalition, WETAC, ABE providers, job training providers, etc. A conscious effort should be made to bring to the table diverse groups to build a politically powerful coalition, including organizations based in communities of color and geared toward various industries. One of the first tasks the group could do is map actual and potential job training resources outside of WIA, in order to develop political strategies to increase job training and education services without diminishing WIA resources further. This group should meet on an ongoing basis to review, evaluate and amend WIA policies and practices throughout the year and beyond.

### **Responses by EDIC and PIC**

Jack Clark, Deputy Director for Planning for the Office of Jobs and Community Services, and Dennis Rogers, Career Center Project Manager of the Boston Private Industry Council, each shared closing remarks. Jack Clark said that one standing committee should be formed, and combine forces with groups now doing the work to avoid duplication. He suggested the Boston Workforce Development Coalition, the Job Training Alliance and the Management Task Force as coalitions with which this dialogue can continue.

He also said that while the City's policy are "final," not interim, they are always subject to review. The City welcomes input by stakeholders in assessing and revising WIA policies and practices.

Given the limitations of WIA, Clark said, we need to expand the breadth of analysis of job training resources. We need to work with the State DPH, DTA, Vocational Rehabilitation programs, etc. to seek further training program resources. There is, for instance, \$18 million/year paid by employment taxes – these monies could go to further job training programs. Similarly we should be integrating the discussions regarding job training with the Boston Empowerment Zone which has training dollars and is overseen by CBO's and other community representatives.

Dennis Rogers said that "WIA doesn't raise any new or unique issues; they all existed before WIA in JTPA and other programs. Funding has always been inadequate; there have always been placement rates for training programs; the City always received federal monies only if it succeeded in meeting the federal placement goals each year. Now, however, it is crystal clear that WIA is woefully inadequate."



***We need to figure out how to work together, not fight over a shrinking pie. We need to make the pie bigger, better coordinate the use of resources, and seek additional ones. As WIA evolves, we need real two-way partnerships. We need to be able to use and share the resources of various groups in the education and job training spheres.***

***- Dennis Rogers, Boston Private Industry Council***

Rogers also said that EDIC should focus resources on career centers and help career centers do a better job at reaching the hardest-to-serve populations. It should not seek contracts outside of the career centers. Career Centers, he said, cannot do adequate assessment of workers who speak very little English; that is the role of CBO's based in immigrant communities. If Career Centers could do this work, they would threaten the need for the CBOs. We need to figure out a balance of roles among the different groups. Further, we should organize for more ESL, ABE funding and resources to support the educational needs of hard-to-serve workers.

## **Appendices**

- I. Participating Organizations and Individuals**
- II. June 13 Roundtable Agenda**
- III. National Practices Examples**

## **Appendix I: Participating Organizations and Individuals**

Action for Boston Community Development  
American Red Cross  
The Boston Foundation  
Boston Housing Authority  
Boston Private Industry Council  
Boston Workforce Development Coalition  
Cambridge Office of Workforce Development  
Career Link  
Child Care Resource Center  
City of Boston Mayor's Office for Jobs and Community Services  
Continuing Education Institute  
Corporation for Business, Work and Learning  
El Centro del Cardenal  
Harbor Cove  
Hispanic Office for Planning and Evaluation  
Hyams Foundation  
International Institute of Boston  
Jamaica Plain Neighborhood Development Corporation  
Jewish Vocational Services  
La Alianza Hispana  
Labor Resource Center, UMass Boston  
Judith Lorei, Consultant  
Massachusetts AFL-CIO  
Mass. Law Reform Institute  
Massachusetts Department of Revenue  
Mauricio Gastón Institute for Latino Community Development and Public Policy  
Henkels McCoy  
Oekos Foundation  
Oficina Hispana de la Comunidad  
Older Workers In a Changing Job Market  
Representative Liz Malia's Office  
Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts  
Veterans Benefits Clearinghouse, Inc.  
Women's Educational and Industrial Union  
The Workplace  
WorkSource  
Work Pathways/ABCD  
YMCA Training, Inc.

## **Appendix II: June 13 Roundtable Goals and Agenda**

### *Policy Roundtable*

### **Local Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act and its Impact on Latinos and other Communities**

June 13, 2000: 8:30 – 12:00

Women's Educational and Industrial Union

356 Boylston Street

### ***Goals of Session***

- To surface and give voice to local concerns about providing services to Latinos and other most in need under the Workforce Investment Act
- To present findings of preliminary local interviews, analysis of prior system-wide service delivery, and successful policy approaches
- To alert practitioners and policy makers to local concerns
- To strategize and develop a set of policy recommendations
- To understand the City's and PIC's flexibility on implementing recommendations
- To promote implementation of recommendations both specific to WIA and that complement WIA to support training to communities most in need

### ***Agenda***

- Refreshments and Sign-in
- Welcome and Introductions (*Claudia Green, Director, CCED; Clara Garcia, Women's Educational and Industrial Union*)
- CCED presentation
  - Past system performance (*Claudia Green*)
  - Interview findings (*Kevin Whalen and Luz Rodriguez*)
  - Successful policy approaches (*Mary Jo Marion, Associate Director, Gastón Institute*)
- Special Respondents (*Jose Alicea, Executive Director, Oficina Hispana de la Comunidad; José Durán, Executive Director, Hispanic Office for Planning and Evaluation*)
- General Comments
- Break
- Small Groups
- Report Back
- PIC/EDIC: Final comments and follow-up plan (*Jack Clark, Deputy Director for Planning, JCS/EDIC and Dennis Rogers, Career Center Project Manager, Boston Private Industry Council*)

**Lessons from the Field: A Report from Other States on  
Activities and Programs Designed to Better Serve Latinos**

*Prepared by Mary Jo Marion for the*

**Policy Roundtable:  
Local Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act  
and its Impact on Latinos and other Communities**

by the Center for Community Economic Development  
University of Massachusetts Boston  
on behalf of the Mayor's Office of Jobs and Community Services  
and the Boston Private Industry Council

June 13, 2000

## Community Colleges

The Milwaukee Area Technical College (MATC) has a 65,000-member student body, 8% of which is Latino. The college as a whole reports a 96% placement rate. Skills training and basic education are a vital part of the college; some 20% of the MATC's full time employees are funded through these activities. The college is a mandated state partner in WIA, serving as the intermediary for adult education and family literacy funding.

### **Accomplishments/Tips**

- **In Wisconsin all basic education offered in any state-funded agencies, including colleges and community agencies MUST be free of charge for residents.** In some cases MATC even offers stipends to students taking basic education as part of a skills program. MATC also operates adult high schools.
- **MATC has negotiated to have its learning labs placed in all the area One-Stops.** Services from the lab will still be considered eligible under WIA as they have been deemed post-employment activities. MATC secured funding for the labs from unused TANF monies. These learning labs offer instructional and computer generated job specific trainings in Spanish and English as well as assessment measures. This lab supplements the one-stops limited job matching and résumé building functions and computer equipment.
- **It is key to have a community college with committed Latino faculty and administrators who can plan and deliver culturally and linguistically sensitive training programs AND work with CBOs.** MATC convenes a consortium of small, medium, and large training providers to discuss relevant issues. It also has agreements and subcontracts with many of these groups.
- **MATC houses some of its programs in the CBOs and sometimes jointly funds positions with the CBOs.**
- **The college makes pro-active and concerted efforts to provide services to the hard-to-serve.** For example, they offer pre-assessment placement courses for incoming students who have failed the state mandated entrance exam.
- **Latino CBOs in Milwaukee are looking to expand the employment and training services they offer by moving beyond recruitment, and basic education provision by working with employers to offer work-based learning model for LEP workers.**
- **MATC believes that ITAs are not feasible given the variety of programs they offer and the number of people served. They intend to limit ITA use to one or two certificate programs and to negotiate bi-lateral contracts with the WIB on the two discretionary areas allowed under WIA -- dislocated workers and incumbent workers.**



## Red Flags

- **Because of the ITA funding scheme, MATC will only entertain the use of ITAs for certificate programs it is certain will result in placement for the hard-to-serve.** They are unwilling to risk putting hard-to-serve populations in complex, i.e. technical programs if the funding is dependant on placement. Unfortunately, the certificate programs they are willing to consider tend to be the lower skilled dead-end job positions. Latinos and others with ITA could be relegated to taking hotel maintenance training programs and the like.
- **The WIB is trying to become both a funder and a service provider by offering its own programs.** This is in direct violation of regulations stating all training services must be run through the one-stops. For example, the WIB tried to pull JTPA out of the One-Stops and run it through their offices.
- **The academic/research role of MATC could become compromised as it becomes more part of the employment and training system.** For example, the college is being forced to demand that it and it alone control the faculty and trainers for its programs.
- **Relations with communities of color.** While the MATC tries to build ties with local communities, it is nevertheless clear that the number of community-controlled program is dwindling and that those controlled by the MATC and three mega-providers is growing. **Some community activists question the wisdom of programs serving their communities that are in no way accountable to residents.**

## Coalitions

In 1994 some fifty organizations joined forces in the Chicago area with the purpose of advocating for more equitable job training services for Latino workers. The Adult Education and Workforce Development Coalition included thirty Latino community-based agencies, the National Council of La Raza, the University of Illinois, and the Hartman Alliance.

### **Accomplishments/Tips**

- Similar to Boston, Chicago is a city of neighborhoods. The Coalition and others were able to strengthen the principal that **One-Stop Career Centers should be are neighborhood-based** and add to the core of community-building actors.
- To strengthen the relationship between One-Stops and the neighborhoods they serve, the Coalition was able to convince local officials to **mandate that one-stops establish community advisory groups comprised of residents, local businesses, and CBOs**. The advisory groups advise the One-Stops on how best to reach and serve workers as well as establishing a working relationship with one-stops so that its very presence further community-building goals.
- The coalition worked to **place community residents on local workforce investment board**. They deemed this accomplishment essential to not only promoting more equitable service but also to enhancing communications between policy makers and the community.

### **Red Flags**

- Similar to Boston, **the number of Latino community-based agencies providing employment and training services has dropped as a result of blockgranting**. Coalition members see their roles as being activists for Latino workers in the absence of providers.
- **As the coalition began to concentrate on mobilization and monitoring efforts funders from various local foundations pulled out** because of reluctance to fund organizing efforts. Funders seemed only willing to fund traditional public policy research and analysis in the employment and training arena.
- The Coalition sees mobilization as a non-negotiable for the simple reason that **as decisions shift to the state and local levels, the Latino community is not at the decision making tables. Absent mobilization, it will likely remain that way.**

## **Statewide Agencies**

Founded in 1965 as part of the Latino civil rights movement, United Migrant Opportunity Services (UMOS) is a statewide organization that provides comprehensive employment and training and other human services to migrant and seasonal farmworkers and other residents of Minnesota and Wisconsin. UMOS serves some 2000 people each year; the points considered below are reflective of activities in Minnesota.

### **Accomplishments/Tips**

- **UMOS has determined that the new system is too cumbersome and unrewarding. For example, UMOS could get at most 50 to 100 thousand per state under the proposed system and be subject to a tremendous amount of reporting. They prefer to compete for bilateral agreements with the federal DOL where last year they secured \$3 million in total contracts for Wisconsin alone.**
- **In addition to federal sources of funding, UMOS works directly with employers, bypassing the WIB and state authorities to provide them with: (1) customized training for their LEP workers; (2) employee match services; and (3) efforts to promote Latinos to supervisory positions so as to meet the LEP workers halfway.**
- **UMOS carries out its programming without regard to WIA limitations as it has developed a diverse funding base mostly from federal DOL dollars.**
- **UMOS has learned that an agency must have the political muscle to cut deals at the state, federal, and local levels in order to serve its constituency. It is in the enviable position where WIA will not make or break its ability to serve.**
- **UMOS has leveraged its early years of political mobilization into real programmatic muscle; this in a state with relatively low levels of Latinos.**
- **Because of its roots UMOS retains a comprehensive training philosophy with empowerment as well as skills training goals. This is coupled with a strong record of meeting the needs of employers and becoming embedded as a player at the political level.**

## **Red Flags**

- Smaller CBOs see UMOS as too large and as having sucked all the oxygen from the training arena and becoming too cozy with political powers.
- Some community colleges see UMOS has a community agency that has gone astray and ventured into purely capitalist activities.
- To the extent that employment and training has dominated UMOS activities other human services have been neglected, i.e. health, housing, etc.