



MEMBER UPDATE

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January 9, 2007

Congress Continues FY 2007 Funding at 2006 Levels

Before the last session came to a close, Congress passed a Continuing Resolution to extend funding at Fiscal Year (FY) 2006 levels through February 15, 2007. This includes funding for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Wagner-Peyser Act programs.

The 110th Congress convened on January 4, 2007 and elected its new leaders and approved rules for 2007-2008. The 435-member House now stands at 233 Democrats and 202 Republicans. The House elected Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA) as Speaker and Rep. John Boehner (R-OH) as Minority Leader. The Senate, comprised of 49 Democrats, 49 Republicans and 2 Independents voting with the Democrats, elected Sen. Harry Reid (D-NV) as Majority Leader and Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) as Minority Leader.

Congress is expected to approve a Continuing Resolution to extend the unresolved appropriations bills, including WIA and Wagner-Peyser funding, through the end of the FY 2007 ending on September 30, 2007 at the current FY 2006 levels. This appears to be the best outcome for the local workforce development system, since Fiscal Year 2006 funding levels are slightly higher than those proposed in the House and Senate Appropriations bills. Such action would also take the proposed rescission of WIA funding and a proposed change in the definition of administrative costs off the table.

The new Democratic Leadership announced its "100-Hour" agenda, which includes raising the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 an hour, enforcing a "pay-as-you-go" policy requiring new spending to be offset by budget cuts, lobbying reform, enacting the recommendations of the 9-11 Commission, lowering the interest rate on student loans, lowering the cost of drugs for Medicare patients, and advancing stem cell research. The agenda does not include WIA reauthorization.

The following Pennsylvania Congress members have been named to committees key to workforce development and TANF issues:

Senate Appropriations Committee – Sen. Arlen Specter (R-PA), former majority chair of the subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services and Education.

House Appropriations Committee – Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Montgomery, Philadelphia) and Rep. John Peterson (R-Cameron, Centre, Clarion, Clearfield, Clinton, Crawford, Elk, Forest, Jefferson, Lycoming, McKean, Mifflin, Potter, Tioga, Venango, Warren)

House Education and Labor Committee – Rep. Jason Altmire (D-Allegheny, Beaver, Butler, Lawrence, Mercer, Westmoreland) and Rep. Todd Platts (R-Adams, Cumberland, York)

House Ways and Means Committee – Rep. Allison Schwartz (D-Montgomery, Philadelphia) and Rep. Phil English (R-Armstrong, Butler, Crawford, Erie, Mercer Venango, Warren)

General Assembly Convenes Session, Names New Leadership

In a final ballot count that concluded on November 28th, the victory of Democrat Barbara McIlvaine Smith over Republican Shannon Royer in the 156th House District in Chester County shifted the majority party of the Pennsylvania House of Representatives from Republican to Democratic for the first time since 1994.

Last week, the highest ranking House Democrat, Rep. William DeWeese (D-Greene), surprised many by stepping down for consideration as Speaker and nominating Republican Dennis O'Brien (R-Philadelphia) in his stead. O'Brien was elected speaker over the incumbent Republican Speaker John Perzel (R-Philadelphia) by a vote of 105 to 97.

The remaining Leadership positions were determined as follows:

Democrats

Floor Leader – Rep. William DeWeese

Whip – Rep. Keith McCall (D-Carbon)

Caucus Chair – Rep. Mark Cohen (D-Philadelphia)

Caucus Secretary – Rep. Frank Dermody (D-Allegheny)

Appropriations Committee Chair – Rep. Dwight Evans (D-Philadelphia)

Caucus Administrator – Rep. Dan Surra (D-Clearfield & Elk)

Policy Committee Chair – Rep. Todd Eachus (D-Luzerne)

Republicans

Floor Leader – Rep. Sam Smith (R-Armstrong, Indiana & Jefferson)

Whip – Rep. David Argall (R-Schuylkill)

Caucus Chair – Rep. Sandra Major (R-Susquehanna, Wayne & Wyoming)

Caucus Secretary – Rep. Jerry Stern (R-Blair)

Appropriations Committee Chair – Rep. Mario Civera (R-Delaware)

Caucus Administrator – Rep. Merle Phillips (R-Northumberland & Snyder)

Policy Committee Chair – Rep. Mike Turzai (R-Allegheny)

USDOL Proposes WIA Regulatory Changes

In the December 20th *Federal Register*, the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL), Employment and Training Administration, advertised its intent to revise WIA regulations consistent with the department's policies. Comments must be submitted on or before February 20, 2007 by email (preferred) to: nprm.comments@dol.gov; by fax to (202) 693-2766; or in writing to: Maria Flynn, Administrator, Office of Policy Development and Research, Employment and Training Administration, U.S. Department of Labor, 200 Constitution Avenue, NW, Room N5641, Washington, DC 20210. (*Please be advised that mail may be delayed due security concerns.*) For further information, call Maria Flynn at (202) 693-3700.

The proposed rulemaking would:

- 1) Eliminate the requirement that non-merit staff (union government employees) provide employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act within the WIA one-stop (PA CareerLink) system. Currently, core employment services are being provided by both merit and non-merit staff.
- 2) Reduce from two to one the required number of local WIB members from certain groups (labor, youth, community colleges, community-based organizations).
- 3) Require state WIBs to add a vocational rehabilitation director seat.
- 4) Give state WIBs responsibility for the development and issuance of one-stop *should this be capitalized?* (PA CareerLink) certifications. Currently, this responsibility rests with local WIBs.
- 5) Give governors greater authority to require local WIBs to take part in regional planning and allow regional planning to replace local planning upon agreement of the governor and all affected local chief elected officials.
- 6) No longer allow stand-alone employment services offices to qualify as one-stop centers and require that the customer employment services under the Wagner-Peyser Act to be fully integrated with one-stop (PA CareerLink) services.
- 7) Allow WIA program participants to move directly into education and training without necessarily requiring core or intensive services first.
- 8) Eliminate the 18-month time limit for state-approved training providers to remain on the eligibility list without reevaluation.
- 9) Allow Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) for youth ages 16 and 17 as well as those over 18.
- 10) Solicit comment on plans to redefine WIA administrative costs to shift more costs currently allowed as program costs to administrative costs subject to the 10% cap consistent with previous proposals. Although no specific amendment is proposed at this time, the department is seeking comments on the existing definition of administrative costs and the impact on program services.

The proposed rulemaking may be accessed at: www.regulations.gov/fdmspublic/component/main. The proposal and related documents are also available on the Pennsylvania Partners website at www.papartners.org.

New Minimum Wage Effective January 1

Pennsylvania's new minimum wage of \$6.25 an hour took effect on January 1, 2007. On July 1, 2007, the wage will increase to \$7.15 an hour. Employers with 10 or fewer full-time employees are subject to a different implementation schedule, with an increase to \$5.65 on January 1, 2007, to \$6.65 on July 1, 2007, and to \$7.15 on July 1, 2008. A training wage of \$5.15 per hour may be used for a 60-day training period for workers under 20 years of age.

For more information and a downloadable minimum wage poster, go to www.state.pa.us and enter the PA keyword: minimum wage.

Dedrick Says Farewell to State WIB

At the December 6 meeting of the State Workforce Investment Board, Executive Director Fred Dedrick announced his resignation to take a new position as Director of Technical Assistance for the PA Department of Labor and Industry to be closer to his home and family in the Philadelphia area. A new executive director will be made by appointment of the governor.

Lawrence Assumes Post at Penn State University

Mike Lawrence, deputy director for workforce development for the North Central Pennsylvania Regional Planning and Development Commission since 1987, has been appointed Director of Workforce Development Initiatives in the Office of Economic and Workforce Development of The Pennsylvania State University. He began his position on January 8th.

Lawrence is responsible for coordinating major statewide workforce development initiatives, establishing partnerships with other organizations, and seeking funding opportunities.

Mike was a founding member of Pennsylvania Partners when it began as an informal organization in 1984. Since the organization first incorporated in 1989 as the Pennsylvania Service Delivery Association, later becoming Pennsylvania Partners, Lawrence has served as co-chair, vice chair, executive committee member, government relations committee co-chair and board member.

Three Pennsylvania Community Colleges Receive Job Training Grants

USDOL recently awarded \$125 million in community-based job training grants to 72 community college partnerships for projects in industries ranging from healthcare and construction to advanced manufacturing and energy. The department received 429 applications in response to its July 3rd grant announcement.

Three Pennsylvania community college partnerships received grants in this round: Harrisburg Area Community College - \$2,007,740 for advanced manufacturing; Montgomery County Community College - \$1,371,264 million for automotive training; and Northampton County Area Community College - \$713,000 for biotechnology.

DPW Introduces 'BETP Institute'

The Bureau of Employment and Training Programs (BETP) of the state Department of Public Welfare is conducting a "BETP Institute" focused on the delivery of job placement services to clients and effective management and oversight strategies for these services at three regional locations in January and February 2007.

The sessions are intended for members of Local Management Committees, local Workforce Investment Area (LWIA) partners, Community Action Agencies, Community Connections Initiative Contractors and Refugee Service Providers, as well as CAO Executive Directors.

Jodie Sue Kelly of Cygnet Associates, a nationally recognized trainer, will present the training. She will apply her own practical case management and job development experiences to providing services to TANF clients. Kelly has conducted training at past Dislocated Worker Symposiums and other sessions sponsored by Pennsylvania Partners. Most recently, she worked on a demonstration project called Employment, Retention and Advancement in the United States and Great Britain.

Two different sessions will be offered:

Job Development: Convincing Employers to Hire the Hard to Serve – designed for staff of LWIAs and other organizations contracted by DPW to provide job search and job readiness assistance to TANF clients. BETP is requiring all staff involved in teaching job search and job readiness classes or providing job development services to attend.

Job Development Overview for LMC and Management Staff – designed for LMC members and management staff responsible for the supervision of job search and job development activities.

To register for one of these sessions, email your reservation to Dean Marino at dmarino@inspiritec.org. For more details on these sessions, go to the Pennsylvania Partners website at www.papartners.org. Questions about the training should be referred to your BETP advisor at (717) 787-4048.

USDOL to Conduct Fiscal Conferences at Three Locations

USDOL's Employment and Training Administration (ETA) is presenting a series of technical assistance and training conferences for WIA fiscal, administrative and program staff. The sessions will focus on fiscal and administrative issues affecting the ETA grants management process.

The training will be held at three locations, with Chicago being the closest geographically for Pennsylvania:

April 2-5, 2007

Westin Chicago North Shore (16 Miles from O'Hare Airport)

601 North Milwaukee Avenue
Wheeling, IL 60090
(847) 777-6500

January 29-February 1, 2007

Atlanta, GA – Sheraton Midtown Atlanta (13 miles from Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta Airport)

188 14th Street NE
Atlanta, GA 30361
(404) 892-6000

February 20-23

Phoenix, AZ – Phoenix Marriott Mesa (12 miles from Phoenix Sky Harbor Airport)

200 North Centennial Way
Mesa, AZ 85201
(480) 898-8300

Register for one of these sessions at www.branchassoc.com/conference. Space is limited. A draft agenda and description of the topics can be viewed at: www.doleta.gov/regions/reg02/fiscal.cfm. For more information, call ETA's Region 2 office in Philadelphia at (215) 861-5200.

Meet with Congress Members at NAWB Forum

The National Association of Workforce Boards (NAWB) will conduct its annual Forum on February 24-27, 2007 at the Renaissance Hotel in Washington, DC. The event attracts over 2,000 workforce investment and business leaders from across the country.

Once again, Pennsylvania Partners will set up several meetings with key members of the Pennsylvania Congressional delegation and/or their staff representatives on Monday, February 26. If you are planning to attend this conference and are interested in participating in these meetings, please email Linda Blake at lblake@papartners.org or call (717) 612-1590.

For full conference details or to register online, visit: www.nawb.org/forum.

Plan Now to Attend the Pennsylvania Partners Conference

Registration will soon open for the Pennsylvania Partners 23rd Annual Employment, Training and Education Conference, which will be held May 9-11, 2007, at the Hershey Lodge and Convention Center. More than 1,400 workforce development professionals are expected to attend. The conference will feature over 80 workshops, policy updates by state and federal government leaders, awards, and many opportunities to connect with other workforce development professionals from throughout the state.

Rooms may be reserved now at the Hershey Lodge at the conference rate of \$135 per night (single or double) by calling 1(800)-HERSHEY or (717) 533-3311. Please check our website at www.papartners.org for conference updates.

There is still time to submit a proposal to conduct a workshop or roundtable discussion. The deadline to submit proposals has been extended to January 12, 2007. The Training and Staff Development Technical Workgroup will meet on January 24, 2007 to review all workshop proposals and select those to be offered at the conference. For a copy of the workshop proposal form, visit www.papartners.org.

With the start of the New Year, members are asked take this opportunity to share with their colleagues and workforce professionals the benefits of attending the conference and to encourage their local business partners to participate as exhibitors, advertisers and sponsors. This year's exhibit hall will feature a "Workforce Street Fair" theme, complete with popcorn, cotton candy, snow cones and related themed activities. For more information on exhibit and sponsorship opportunities, email Lori Zelesko at lzelesko@papartners.org, or call (717) 612-1590.

Upcoming Events

Common Measures (final session) – Training on January 9-10, 2007 in Philadelphia.

Pennsylvania Partners Executive Committee Meeting – Conference Call on January 18, 2007 at 9:30 a.m. RSVP to Tracy Telesha at ttelesha@papartners.org.

Pennsylvania Partners Board Meeting – Conference Call on January 18, 2007 at 11 a.m. RSVP to Tracy Telesha at ttelesha@papartners.org.

PA Association of Workforce Investment Boards – Meeting of workforce investment board executive directors on January 25, 2007 at 11 a.m. (box lunch provided) in Room 305 of the South Central WIB. RSVP to Linda Blake at lblake@papartners.org.

Pa CareerLink Administrators Forum – Training on January 30-February 1, 2007 at the Nittany Lion Inn in State College. Registration is now open at www.papartners.org. Restricted to PA CareerLink Administrators.

Dislocated Worker Symposium – Scheduled February 27-March 1, 2007 at The Penn Stater in State College. Registration will open soon.

PA CareerLink Symposium – Eastern PA session to be held on March 26-27, 2007 at the Best Western Lehigh Valley in Bethlehem; Western PA session to be held on March 29-30, 2007 at the Ramada Conference Center in Altoona.