

California is slated to receive \$188.58 million from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 to employ young workers, through the Workforce Investment Act. This funding, which will flow through local workforce investment boards (WIBs), will support approximately 75,400 new youth jobs. The after-school field – with its 140,000 jobs statewide, high employee turnover rate and demand for young workers – is a very good fit to partner with local WIBs in order to help them spend the money wisely and quickly, as the law requires. After-school program providers and WIBs should act now to capitalize on the federal stimulus funding available for recruitment, training and partial wage subsidies for thousands of new after-school workers.

What After-School Providers Need to Know About Workforce Investment Boards

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) is the main source of federal funding to assist adults, dislocated workers and disadvantaged youth in finding job training and employment. The U.S. Department of Labor distributes WIA funding to states, which in turn distribute resources to local WIBs. WIBs operate centers that provide information and training for job seekers. With \$188.58 million in new funding for youth jobs to commit by mid-April 2009, WIBs in California are now urgently seeking partnerships with employers that can offer good employment opportunities to young people. Many WIBs are receiving twice their prior annual allocation, with a particular focus on developing summer programs to serve youth ages 14-24.

WIB training funds can be used to pay for recruitment, assessment, employer-customized training and, in some instances, wage subsidies (typically 50% of the first 90 days of wages) for after-school workers.¹ WIBs can also fund full salaries for youth doing summer internships. Youth can continue employment, with the WIB subsidizing wages, and then progress to regular employment. WIBs have specific objectives and resources for targeted age groups:

- ***For youth (14-18):*** Develop programs that combine education with some work experience or an internship. WIA funding will pay for training and internship wage subsidies.
- ***For young adults (18-24):*** Develop programs that combine training that leads to an industry-recognized certificate with job placement and continuing career advancement. WIA funding will pay for training and, in certain conditions, a wage subsidy for three months.
- ***For dislocated workers and adults:*** Develop programs that lead to high-wage jobs. WIA funding will pay for training and, in certain conditions, a 50% wage subsidy for three months.

What Workforce Investment Boards Need to Know About After-School Programs

The after-school field is the best kept secret in the world of workforce development. With close to 140,000 jobs in California – and nearly 80% of those positions being part-time – the after-school industry is constantly hiring new workers and offers a meaningful work experience to entry-level workers.

After-school programs have become an integral part of the education system, providing academic assistance and enrichment opportunities to youth and families in need. In this highly-demanding job, a new worker will learn many transferable job skills through supervising up to 20 school-age children:

¹ Requirements vary depending on the population served.

communicating with coworkers, supervisors, teachers, school administrators, and parents; developing lesson plans; offering homework assistance; working with a team; and general professionalism, including punctuality and appropriate dress.

WIBs can connect with local after-school providers to talk about moving job seekers into open positions, youth internships or job-shadowing positions, or to find ways to connect part-time employment in after-school to longer-term career pathways.

WIBs and After-School Program Providers Have Much to Gain from Partnerships

WIBs are actively seeking partnerships with employers that are willing to provide internships and/or continuing employment that create meaningful work and learning opportunities for job seekers. After-school program providers can benefit from connecting with a pool of motivated workers who have been provided with basic support and, in many cases, whose salaries are subsidized. There are a number of ways after-school programs and workforce development efforts can be linked successfully, and some models already exist. To read about the LA Scholars model, visit www.calsac.org and click on the "Projects/Workforce tab." To read about the Career Advancement Academy, visit <http://www.careerladdersproject.org/projects/career.php>.

- ***Summer internships leading to after-school employment:*** After-school employers can partner with other organizations, such as schools or community organizations, to create a summer internship that leads to continuing employment opportunities. Under this model, WIBs will pay for recruitment and training of potential candidates, followed by a fully-subsidized summer work experience with an after-school program provider. Program providers can then choose to hire qualified candidates. Some WIBs may be willing to provide a 50% wage subsidy for the first three months of employment.
- ***After-school-to-teaching career pathways:*** WIBs have shown interest in developing long-term career pathways to teaching through partnerships with after-school employers, community colleges and CSU campuses. In this model, students pursue a 4-5-year pathway to a teaching position while working in after-school programs. Eligible participants receive full financial aid and a salary. WIBs pay for recruitment, training, counseling and, in some cases, wage subsidies.
- ***Other training/employment models:*** After-school employers can work with local WIBs to create a customized training and employment model that meets the needs of both partners.

Long-Term Sustainability

There are many benefits from connecting after-school program providers with workforce investment efforts. The biggest benefit to after-school program providers is that partnerships with workforce investment boards have the potential for long-term sustainability. California has had a steady annual allocation of about \$400 million for youth employment funding through the WIA, and successful projects begun now have a good chance to be sustained through ongoing funding.

For information on creating partnerships between WIBs and after-school programs, please contact Samantha Dobbins Tran of Children Now at (916) 443-1582 or stran@childrennow.org. For a list of local workforce investment boards by after-school region, go to: www.childrennow.org/stimulus2009.