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# SEEKING A STATE WORKFORCE STRATEGY

In aggregate economic terms, New York State has grown and prospered over the last few years. The Empire State has added over 500,000 private sector jobs since 2011, reaching record highs for private sector employment, and the state-wide unemployment rate has fallen to 5.9 percent from 8 percent three years earlier.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, the state has empowered Regional Economic Development Councils and made available hundreds of millions of dollars to help them drive growth, declaring at every turn that New York State is “open for business.”

Unfortunately, this commitment to economic growth has not always translated into strong support for workforce development programs that can help ensure that all New Yorkers can share in prosperity. Our analysis of spending on a broad range of workforce services—adult education, job training and employment programs, and college access and related programs to help students connect with jobs and careers—finds that funding for these programs in New York State has fallen by five percent since 2009-2010, with the state spending approximately \$563 million on its major workforce-related services in the 2014-2015 enacted budget.

To be clear, deep cuts to federal programs are the cause of the overall decline. In fact, the state has made a modest increase in its own spending since 2009 for these programs, though the totals remain considerably lower than what New York spent a decade ago.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless, state leaders do bear responsibility for the decisions to cut investments in a number of key initiatives that help New Yorkers build skills, gain work experience and connect to career pathways to employment. Among the programs that have suffered are Career Pathways, which help low-skilled New Yorkers gain skills and experience toward securing long-term, career-track employment, and Summer Youth Employment, which provides invaluable early work experience for low-income teens and young adults.

These choices bear troubling consequences in a “knowledge economy” that increasingly rewards skills, credentials, and experience. Without a helping hand from the public sector, too many jobseekers and incumbent workers who don’t have strong educational attainment or strong professional networks will not be able to seize emerging opportunities or partake in the benefits of overall growth. Exacerbating the problem is the absence of any clear strategy to raise the skills of New York’s entire workforce—there should be no such thing as a “spare” New Yorker—an omission that stands in contrast to other states in similar political and economic circumstances.

The ongoing disconnection of workforce activities from economic development represents another significant problem. The ten Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs), created and championed by the governor as a key element of the state’s economic growth strategy, have not made significant investments in employment and training. In fact, our analysis found that despite a specific workforce focus within each local REDC plan in 2014, only about \$7.8 million—just over 1 percent of the \$709.2 million available through the REDC Consolidated Funding Applications (CFA)—is geared explicitly toward helping New Yorkers find jobs or access skills training.<sup>3</sup>

New York’s workforce system is a complicated entity that engages nearly a dozen state agencies and myriad funding streams originating at the federal and state levels, and operates on the ground in ten economic development regions, 33 designated workforce investment areas, community-based organizations, labor unions and 62 counties. This report lays out the state of New York’s aggregate expenditures on employment and training services, and tracks the change in funding levels in the enacted budgets from 2009-10 to 2014-15 (see p. 10). It also focuses on how the state needs to define, communicate, invest in, and implement a consistent strategy to increase its supply of skilled workers. This means investing in the full range of educational pathways and training mechanisms to boost the skills of all of its residents, to helping employers find the talent they need to prosper, and in instituting thoughtful policies that remove barriers to achieving a high quality, responsive workforce system.

Labor market trends suggest that policymakers should move quickly. Economists forecast that employment in New York State will continue to grow throughout the remainder of this decade: all told, the state is projected to add more than 840,000 jobs between 2010 and 2020. A significant share of those emerging jobs will require education beyond high school: as Governor Cuomo’s 2014 reelection campaign plan “Moving the New New York Forward” notes, economists forecast that by 2020, 69 percent of all jobs in the state will require postsecondary education.<sup>4WW</sup>

## Major Changes in NYS Workforce Expenditures, 2009-10 to 2014-15

Green indicates programs funded with federal dollars;  
Gray indicates programs funded with state dollars.

Increase	
Workforce Investment Act Title II	+ \$10.3m
UI Occupational Training Fund	+ \$5m
AFL-CIO Workforce Development Institute	+ \$4.8m
Office for New Americans	+ \$3.4m
Health Workforce Retraining	+ \$16.4m
Next Generation NY Job Linkage	+ \$5m
Early College and P-Tech Expansion	+ \$4.5m
STEP/CSTEP Programs	+ \$5.3m
Decrease	
Workforce Investment Act Title I	- \$16.56m
Workforce Investment Act Administration	- \$5.99m
TANF Workforce Training Programs	- \$46.94m
Displaced Homemaker	- \$3.97m
Summer Youth Employment	- \$7.5m
Career Pathways	- \$9m

Source: 2009-10 and 2014-15 New York State Enacted Budgets

The state's 10 Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) have not made significant investments in employment and training. Only 1 percent of the \$709 million available through the REDC in 2014 is geared explicitly toward helping New Yorkers find jobs or access skills training.

Too many New Yorkers now in the workforce lack the educational credentials to compete for those positions, particularly in communities that have never recovered from the disappearance of manufacturing jobs, or economic decline over the past 50 years.

The plateauing of educational attainment might help explain why average wages in New York actually have declined in real terms over the past few years. In 2009, the average working New Yorker earned \$866.43 per week, equivalent to \$946.27 in 2013 dollars. But average weekly wages in 2013 were only \$940.32, meaning that workers' real purchasing power fell even as job growth accelerated.<sup>5</sup> The New York State Department of Labor (NYSDOL) has found a very significant "wage premium" for state residents who hold higher education degrees versus those with only a high school degree or equivalency (\$60,500 compared to \$27,200).<sup>6</sup> Additionally, those with more education fare better in economic

downturns, have increased family stability, and health outcomes, among other benefits.<sup>7</sup>

With the recent passage of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), and examples of local innovation in training and employment services from Long Island to the Finger Lakes, the moment is ripe for Albany to think more holistically about statewide workforce policies, pipelines, and investments. Competitor states such as California, Massachusetts and Minnesota have made clear policy choices and substantial investments in training, to the benefit of both workers and employers within those states. New York would be wise to review what those states have done and consider similar action.

This report calls for state leaders to make a strong new commitment to helping New York's workers and businesses add the skills they need, with a compelling strategy and smart investments to sustain and accelerate prosperity in the Empire State. In developing a statewide workforce strategy that effectively serves employers and jobseekers, New York policymakers must provide leadership to:

- 1) Thoughtfully connect workforce investments to the initiatives and priorities of statewide, regional, and local economic development;
- 2) Focus policy and emphasis on the full pipeline of workers—including not only the K-12 system and college, but also adult basic education and incumbent worker training; and
- 3) Fund the system at a level that demonstrates its priority status as a component of economic development.

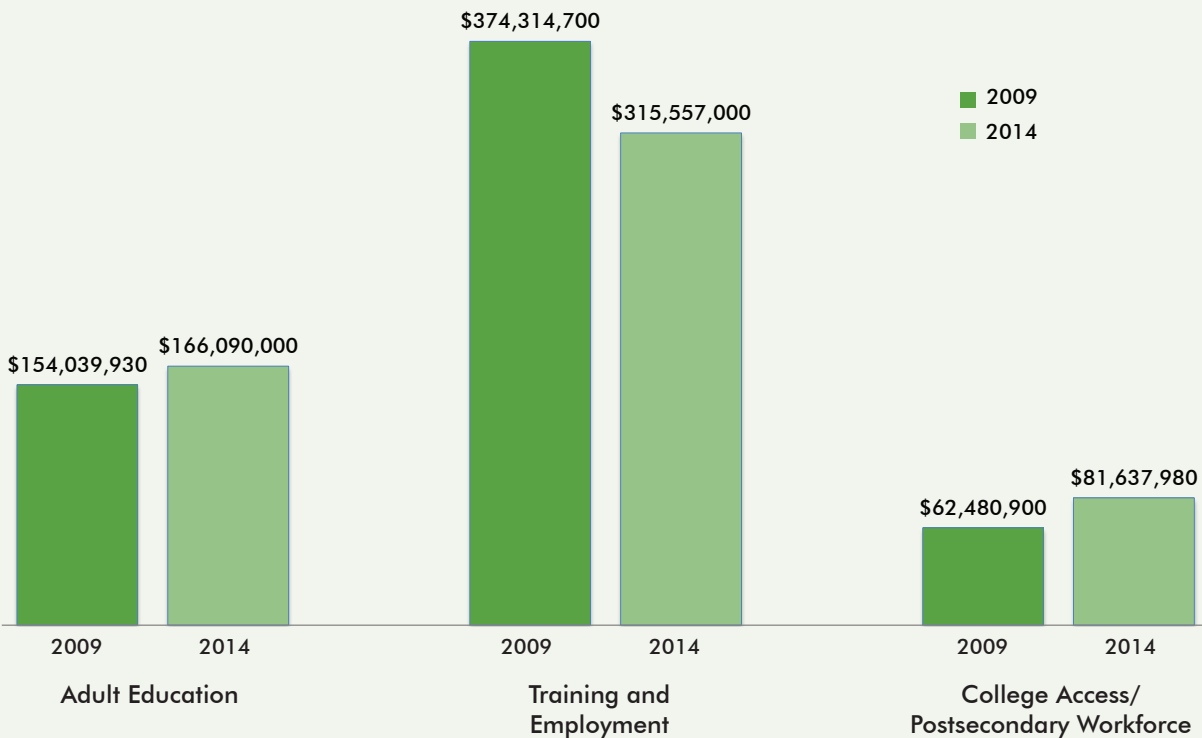
# STATE FUNDING FOR WORKFORCE PROGRAMS

Too Little Investment, Too Little Focus

Our analysis of the 2014-2015 enacted budget found approximately \$563 million in federal and state resources for adult education, employment and training, postsecondary transition, and workforce services. This excludes standard resources to support the operations of K-12 education or the state's two university systems, and funding to support individuals with disabilities access and enter into to employment (see p. 9). The majority of the funds specific to job training and employment, about \$307 million, flow from federal allocations; our estimate of state investments is \$256 million. This analysis utilizes the Enacted Budget for the selected years as the point of reference.

While the total of nearly \$563 million sounds substantial, it does not go very far compared against the universe of need in a labor market that rewards knowledge and demonstrable skills. Divided evenly across unemployed New Yorkers not receiving unemployment insurance and the one-third of working New Yorkers whose employment status and earning power suggest they would benefit from additional skills training or related services, the total would come to about \$160 per person,<sup>8</sup>—equivalent to about 2.6 percent of one year's tuition at the State University of New York for a resident of the state, with nothing left over for hundreds of thousands of others who are working but earning less than a living wage. (See

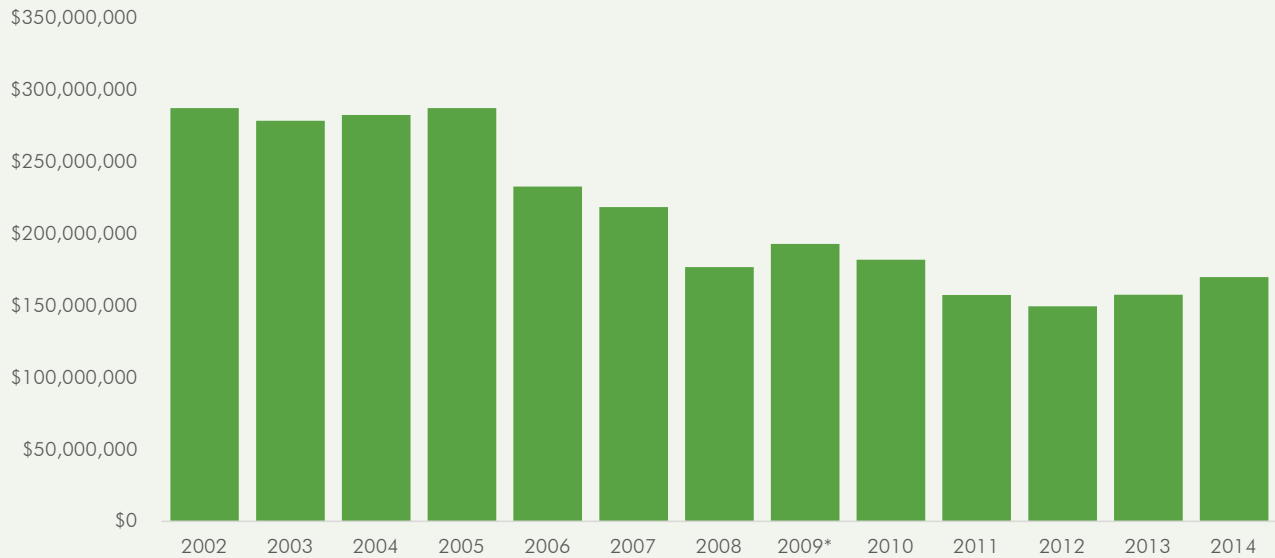
### Total Spending Breakdown by Subcategory, 2009 vs. 2014



Source: 2009-10 and 2014-15 New York State Enacted Budgets



### Federal WIA allocations to NYS by Year (2014 Dollars)



Note: The federal WIA allocation increases in 2009 were due to the stimulus, and in 2013 and 2014 the result of the short-term increases in unemployment that affected the overall formula allocations; and short-term Congressional actions to refund the government.  
 Source: State Statutory Formula Funding, USDOL Employment & Training Administration (<http://www.doleta.gov/budget/>).

full funding table on p. 10)

To be sure, state leaders aren't solely responsible for the challenges in this area of policy. The funding decrease over the last five years is the result of long-term and severe federal disinvestment in programs that help individuals connect to employment opportunities and add education and skills to advance in their careers. In total, the federal contribution to workforce programs in the Empire State fell by more than \$70 million over the five-year period in question. State spending actually rose by about \$43 million over the same span.

We broke down spending into three broad subcategories: adult education; training and employment programs; and college access and postsecondary workforce programs. As the graph on page 6 illustrate, the entirety of the federal cuts came in the training and employment category: reductions to Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) programs comprised the vast majority of the decrease. The bulk of the state increase

came in training/employment and college access/postsecondary workforce services.

The reductions over time to WIA, the single largest resource focused on helping individuals to access employment and job training services, have been particularly damaging. As the table on the next page shows, New York State's allocation last year is more than 40 percent less in constant dollars than what the state received in 2002.

But there is more to the story than the federal government leaving a funding void that has gone unfilled. While Congress made the decision to cut overall funding, state leaders chose what programs actually saw reductions. This is where New York's absence of a coherent workforce development strategy has particularly hurt. The state has cut funding for promising programs such as Career Pathways, a joint initiative of the State Department of Labor and Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance that offers training, placement and support services to connect hard-to-serve jobseekers to career-track work. Summer Youth Employment programs through which teens and

young adults acquire potentially invaluable work experience, also have seen deep cuts in the last five years. Additionally, federal funding for adult education and English language instruction has declined since 2002, and nationally the funding only reaches about 3 percent of those in need—one in six American adults have low literacy. In New York State, funding for adult basic education has remained flat.<sup>10</sup> On balance, these decisions suggest that state leaders have not focused on

building a strong pipeline outside of the K-12 and college systems.

As noted above, over the last five years the state has increased support for some programs and providers and launched some new initiatives. But it is difficult to discern a larger strategy or philosophy behind these choices, and even harder to glean information on how specifically they are being used or how well they're working. For example, about two-thirds of the state's \$22.5

Federal WIA allocations to NYS by Category**					
Year	Youth	Adult	Dislocated Worker	Total	Total in 2014 \$
2002	\$78,384,460	\$72,212,326	\$67,071,084	\$217,667,870	\$287,081,378
2003	\$66,245,602	\$64,530,126	\$85,269,181	\$216,044,909	\$278,325,318
2004	\$69,091,107	\$65,964,964	\$88,300,491	\$223,356,562	\$282,436,372
2005	\$71,302,645	\$68,378,648	\$94,737,004	\$234,418,297	\$287,078,033
2006	\$63,707,670	\$61,251,265	\$71,452,631	\$196,411,566	\$232,589,020
2007	\$61,807,331	\$59,076,349	\$68,170,151	\$189,053,831	\$218,329,070
2008	\$54,654,801	\$53,779,185	\$50,790,224	\$159,224,210	\$176,669,918
2009*	\$55,635,768	\$54,853,314	\$63,490,356	\$173,979,438	\$192,832,271
2010	\$51,835,670	\$51,212,616	\$65,439,096	\$168,487,382	\$181,829,117
2011	\$46,253,787	\$45,853,506	\$55,804,488	\$147,911,781	\$157,271,877
2012	\$45,892,839	\$45,779,283	\$53,040,830	\$144,712,952	\$149,443,479
2013	\$46,093,646	\$44,780,964	\$64,292,997	\$155,167,607	\$157,497,814 <sup>9</sup>
2014	\$52,011,703	\$50,339,040	\$67,330,827	\$169,681,570	\$169,681,570

\* One time infusion of \$169,410,659 in WIA funds was also provided in 2009 under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act \*\* Include rescissions  
 Source: State Statutory Formula Funding, USDOL Employment & Training Administration (<http://www.doleta.gov/budget/>).



million increase in training and employment services comes through Health Workforce Retraining dollars that are intended to support the sector in a range of ways, from occupational training to professional development related to changes in the healthcare industry. However, it is difficult to discern how the funds are being used across the state. Virtually across the board, a better understanding of how and why the state chooses its investments, and greater transparency around the objectives and outcomes of programs, would enable more insightful analysis and a clearer sense of the return for New York taxpayers on these investments.

State leaders deserve praise for adding about \$19 million in the category of college access and postsecondary workforce services. The State University of New York (SUNY) and

City University of New York (CUNY) have seen particular support: new initiatives such as the Next Generation NY Job Linkage programs, through which community colleges train students to fill the talent needs of local employers,<sup>11</sup> hold promise to spur innovation and deepen connections between businesses and educational institutions. Albany also has signaled greater support for career-focused education models in the K-12 system, through the Board of Regents' approval of alternate pathways to high school graduation and funding to expand the number of career-focused early college high schools through the Pathways in Technology Early College High School (P-TECH) initiative.<sup>12</sup>

## EDUCATION AND TRAINING FOR PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Recent data show that approximately 1,341,900 New Yorkers between the ages of 16 and 64, more than 10 percent of the total, have a disability.<sup>13</sup> The employment rate for disabled New Yorkers ages 18 to 64 is 31.2 percent, compared to 72 percent for those without a disability. In addition, the poverty rate for New Yorkers with disabilities ages 18 to 64 living in the community is 28.6 percent, more than twice that of state residents without disabilities (12.3 percent). Despite broad agreement that work is a critical component to enabling individuals with a disability to lead an independent life, and significant investment toward helping connect disabled New Yorkers to access meaningful employment and career opportunities, state policymakers continue to struggle in serving this population.

As with workforce development generally, multiple state agencies share responsibility for supporting education and training services for individuals with disabilities. The largest are the New York State Education Department and the New York State Department of Mental Hygiene's Office for People with Developmental Disabilities (OPWDD), which received a combined total of roughly \$180 million<sup>14</sup> in the 2014-2015 enacted budget last year for these purposes, mostly from federal sources. This funding supports prevocational activities such as interest and skills assessments; job placement services; work adjustment activities, including employment coaching; and job and life skill activities help to keep individuals with disabilities employed.

This area of policy is currently in flux, with OPWDD enacting broad changes in how disabled New Yorkers are referred and placed into employment opportunities while indicating that total funding for these services will remain essentially flat under a self-imposed budget cap.<sup>15</sup> At the same time, the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act emphasizes services to these individuals and Governor Cuomo signaled his commitment to addressing this issue with an executive order issued in September 2014 that set a goal of increasing employment for disabled New Yorkers by five percent, while lowering the poverty rate among this population by the same amount. Unfortunately, no new state resources have accompanied this measure to this point—essentially rendering it an unfunded mandate.

# NYS WORKFORCE FUNDING STREAMS

	Program	Funding Type	Agency	2009 - 2010 Enacted Budget	2014-2015 Enacted Budget	Difference
1. Adult Education Funding	Adult Literacy Education (ALE)	State	Education	\$6,279,628	\$6,293,000	\$13,372
	Basic Adult Education/Welfare Education Program (WEP)	State	Education	\$1,843,000	\$1,843,000	\$0
	Funding for the Consortium for Worker Education	State	Education	\$11,500,000	\$13,000,000	\$1,500,000
	Employment Preparation Education (EPE)	State	Education	\$96,000,000	\$96,000,000	\$0
	Hispanic Federation Adult Basic Literacy and Education Initiative	State	OTDA	\$0	\$250,000	\$250,000
	Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title II	Federal	Education	\$38,417,302	\$48,704,000	\$10,286,698
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$154,039,930</b>	<b>\$166,090,000</b>	<b>\$12,050,070</b>
2. Workforce Development Funding (Job Training/Workforce Services/Career & Tech Education/Employment Services)	Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Statewide Services to Adult, Dislocated Worker, Youth and Rapid Response Activities	Federal	Labor	\$172,295,000	\$155,731,000	-\$16,564,000
	Misc. Services & Expenses Related to Administration of WIA	Federal	Labor	\$25,994,000	\$20,000,000	-\$5,994,000
	UI Occupational Training Fund	Federal	Labor	\$21,500,000	\$26,500,000	\$5,000,000
	Senior Community Services for Older Americans	Federal	Aging	\$9,000,000	\$9,000,000	\$0
	TANF Workforce Training & Employment Programs *	Federal	OTDA	\$63,692,000	\$16,749,000	-\$46,943,000
	Summer Youth Employment	Federal	OTDA	\$35,000,000	\$27,500,000	-\$7,500,000
	Career Pathways Program	Federal	OTDA	\$10,000,000	\$1,000,000	-\$9,000,000
	Employment support for individuals with HIV/AIDS	Federal	OTDA	\$1,400,000	\$1,161,000	-\$239,000
	Displaced Homemaker	State	OTDA/Labor	\$5,600,000	\$1,630,000	-\$3,970,000
	Chamber/Community Organization Workforce Activities	State	Labor/OTDA	\$2,557,700	\$900,000	-\$1,657,700
	AFL-CIO Workforce Development Institute funding **	State	Labor	\$2,900,000	\$7,700,000	\$4,800,000

These three tables (starting on page 10) track the significant public funds by program and relate these programs to three larger categories for investment: 1) adult education funding 2) workforce development funding and 3) college access and workforce services in higher education. The tables also indicate where programs receive their funding, what agency or department oversees them and how their funding has changed in the past five years.

	Program	Funding Type	Agency	2009 - 2010 Enacted Budget	2014-2015 Enacted Budget	Difference
	Center for Employment Opportunities Services workforce development activities	State	Parole/Corrections	\$10,279,000	\$12,029,000	\$1,750,000
	Reentry programs	State	DCJS	\$3,697,000	\$5,400,000	\$1,703,000
	Office for New Americans	State	Dept. of State	\$0	\$3,440,000	\$3,440,000
	Health Workforce Retraining***	State	Health	\$10,400,000	\$26,817,000	\$16,417,000
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$374,314,700</b>	<b>\$315,557,000</b>	<b>-\$58,757,700</b>
3. College Access and Workforce Services in Higher Education	SEEK Program (CUNY Senior Colleges)	State	CUNY	\$17,100,000	\$19,498,000	\$2,398,000
	Next Generation NY Job Linkage Program	State	CUNY & SUNY	\$0	\$5,000,000	\$5,000,000
	State Financial Assistance for Community College contract courses and workforce development	State	CUNY & SUNY	\$3,760,000	\$3,760,000	\$0
	Early College High Schools and P-Tech Expansion	State	Education	\$0	\$4,500,000	\$4,500,000
	Financial Aid for educationally & economically disadvantaged; high need program support	State	CUNY & SUNY	\$2,515,900	\$2,629,390	\$113,490
	CUNY Accelerated Study in Associate Programs	State	CUNY	\$0	\$1,700,000	\$1,700,000
	Language Immersion Programs	State	CUNY	\$1,070,000	\$0	-\$1,070,000
	STEP/CSTEP Programs	State	CUNY/SUNY	\$14,283,000	\$19,554,550	\$5,271,550
	Higher Education Opportunity Program	State	Education	\$23,752,000	\$24,996,040	\$1,244,040
	<b>Subtotal</b>			<b>\$62,480,900</b>	<b>\$81,637,980</b>	<b>\$19,157,080</b>
<b>TOTAL WORKFORCE FUNDING</b>				<b>\$590,835,530</b>	<b>\$563,284,980</b>	<b>-\$27,550,550</b>

\* Includes: Bridge, Educational Resources, Green Jobs Corps, Health Care Jobs, Intensive Case Services, LIVES, Nurse Family Partnership Program, NYS Refugee Resettlement Assistance, Parent Support Program, Technology Training/ATTAIN, Wage Subsidy Program, Welfare to Careers, and Wheels for Work \*\* 2009-10 Total Confirmed with WDI \*\*\* Help train incumbent workers in shortage occupations; and also develop new skills necessary in changing healthcare sector. It is unclear how much is spent on job training. Source: 2009-2010 and 2014-2015 New York State Enacted Budgets

# DISCONNECTION FROM ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

REDCs have seen much talk but little action on training and jobs

Regional Economic Development Councils (REDCs) have emerged as a linchpin of the Cuomo administration's statewide economic development strategy. Created in 2011, each of the ten REDCs across the state is comprised of local leaders from business, government, academia and the nonprofit community. The premise of the REDCs is that these stakeholders are best positioned to identify regional priorities for growth.

In 2014, the state made approximately \$710 million available through the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) that supports REDC projects. Although REDCs are charged with job creation and community development, and two of the seven named REDC priorities for 2014 make explicit reference to workforce development, only about \$7.8 million—just over one percent of that \$710 million total—is available to directly support job training. The bulk of the workforce spending through REDCs in 2013 came from the State's Department of Labor, which spent \$5.07 million on its New Hire, Unemployed Worker and Existing Employee training programs within the CFA, making a total of 85 awards to train 5,053 workers.<sup>16</sup> The Department of State allocated an additional \$1 million for workforce services through the CFA.<sup>17</sup>

In conversations to inform this report, we repeatedly heard that while REDC deliberations often touch upon workforce issues, Councils ultimately prioritize higher-profile brick-and-mortar projects—and while job creation is often cited as a priority, provision for training to fill those jobs is comparatively rare. Indeed, a scan of press releases from the ten REDCs over the last three years found that only about ten percent of them referenced training initiatives at all.<sup>18</sup> Considering the importance of connecting training to economic development investment, the REDCs are missing a golden opportunity to ensure that community residents can connect to

the new jobs and advancement pathways enabled by REDC activities and resources secured.

Were REDCs more supportive of workforce outcomes, it could help fill an important void: unlike many other states, New York has no established statewide program to provide customized training for employers to add skills for their incumbent workers in response to changing industry demands. The state's last broad-based customized training program, the Strategic Training Alliance Program (STRAP), provided a total pool of \$34 million over the period 1999-2002, from which employers could apply for grants between \$1,500

## WYANDANCH RISING

While Regional Economic Development Councils overall have not focused on workforce development, one program on Long Island shows how Councils can make strategic investments to help advance workers in their communities. The Long Island REDC has backed a \$500 million transit-oriented community initiative, known as Wyandanch Rising, that includes a Hiring Agreement through which the lead developer, the Albanese Organization, agreed to consider long-term unemployed Wyandanch residents for related employment opportunities. Applicants must complete a 300-hour set of pre-construction training classes, and receive additional support services. From an initial class of 16 in August 2013, 14 participants completed the courses and 11 had obtained employment, including six with Albanese, by February 2014. A second class held in spring 2014 with 16 participants saw all 16 complete the coursework and earn an industry certification. Ten of those program completers found employment in construction industry occupations, earning average wages of \$17.50 per hour, and six were accepted into unions.

# New York's Regional Economic Development Councils are investing just over 1 percent of available funds to support job training—essentially passing up a golden opportunity to ensure that community members can connect to the new jobs and career advancement pathways their investments are creating.

and \$5 million. The program was discontinued after 2005.

Since then, state investments in customized training have been few and far between. One initiative began in 2009, when the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) launched Green Jobs-Green New York (GJGNY), which included support for partnerships offering customized and on-the-job training (OJT) for skills in the growing clean economy such as weatherization and solar panel installation. To achieve the goals of GJGNY, NYSERDA collaborated with NYSDOL and local workforce areas to provide OJT for businesses to train new hires in sustainability skills. While this initiative was encouraging as an indication of state interest in training and collaboration with employers, its reach was limited: according to the GJGNY 2014 annual report, a total of 320 individuals had been hired to that point, 166 of whom had been supported with GJGNY funding.<sup>19</sup>

An underappreciated labor market trend should provide additional motivation for New York policymakers to ramp up support for customized training: employers themselves seem to be spending far less on training their incumbent workers for potential advancement opportunities than was once the case. While clear data are hard to come by, a growing volume of research suggests that firms have drastically reduced their

budgets for internal training other than for senior leadership. Many fewer firms offer apprenticeship or management training programs, in part because of fears that competitors will move to poach workers in whom firms invest. An Accenture survey of workers in 2012 found that only one in five workers had received employer provided training for new job skills over the previous five years, and a plurality of those surveyed reported that their employer gave work assignments based solely on their formal education and prior job experience rather than any other assessments of their abilities or knowledge.<sup>20</sup> One talent management company, Taleo Corp., recently found that two-thirds of all job vacancies are now filled by outside candidates—up from about ten percent a generation ago, when firms utilized promotions and transfers far more often.<sup>21</sup>

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# FALLING BEHIND OTHER STATES

NYS even lags Texas on training investments

Notwithstanding the long-term trend of federal disinvestment in workforce development through falling Workforce Investment Act appropriations (see p. 8), New York has received a number of substantial, unexpected federal funding infusions for workforce services in recent years. Unfortunately, these resources have come in response to disastrous events: National Emergency Grant funding in the wake of hurricanes Irene and Sandy, and American Recovery and Reinvestment Act funding following the Great Recession. Additionally, many of these pots of money are constrained by programmatic and implementation requirements, limiting their relevance and value to employers. For example, recent federal grant funding to support the long-term unemployed or to develop new models for apprenticeship, both require an emphasis on industries and occupations for which employers are using H-1B visas to hire foreign workers.<sup>22</sup>

Invaluable as these ad hoc resources are to local workforce systems, they are no substitute for a long-term, statewide strategy to invest in and grow New York's skilled workforce. As state leaders consider actions to correct this problem, they should consider steps other states have taken to support training that serves both employers and workers:

- Michigan invested \$8.5 million this fiscal year for its Skilled Trades Training Fund, which leveraged \$45 million, including employer contributions among a total state commitment of approximately \$97 million for workforce-related programs.<sup>23</sup>
- Massachusetts draws upon a well-established Workforce Training Funds Program, which trains new and incumbent workers through a levy of 0.06 percent on taxable wages in the state. In Fiscal Year 2014, the program worked with 667 employers, who received a total of \$19.3 million to train 14,343 workers in the Bay State.<sup>24</sup>

- Minnesota has a similar mechanism for its Workforce Development Fund: a 0.1 percent assessment on employers on all taxable wages that yielded \$48.6 million in the current fiscal year. This resource has supported a wide range of employment and career initiatives, from sector-specific initiatives in technology and healthcare to youth work experiences and afterschool programming.<sup>25</sup>

Perhaps the most compelling example for New York's potential direction on workforce policy comes from California. In 2012, that state's Workforce Investment Board adopted a strategic plan focused on regional/sectoral partnerships in a career pathways framework, to which all local plans must align. A year later, the state allocated \$250 million to further develop this system, plus an additional \$25 million over two years to support planning and implementation for regional education consortia that enable high school students to transition into higher education or the workforce.

California also supports the Employment Training Panel (ETP), a customized training program created in 1982 to collaborate with employers in providing skill upgrades to incumbent workers that lead to better jobs, higher wages and more successful companies. Funded by a payroll tax of up to \$7 per employee per year, the ETP approved nearly \$67 million in Fiscal Year 2012-13 to help train more than 69,000 newly hired and incumbent workers in California.<sup>26</sup>

New York's weakness in this area is not new. In 2007, the U.S. Department of Labor Employment and Training Administration conducted an evaluation of customized training activity in the states that focused on training as an economic development input and emphasized employer needs. The authors reviewed state expenditures on an absolute and per capita basis, and the results did not reflect well on New York: its total expenditures of \$3.5 million ranked 32<sup>nd</sup> among



## DOLETA Analysis of Customized Training in Selected States, 2006

State	Customized Training Budget 2006	Budget Rank	Per Capita 2006	Per Capita Rank
Iowa	\$62,295,287	1	\$42.48	1
Missouri	\$31,300,000	4	\$11.60	8
New Jersey	\$28,700,000	6	\$7.04	11
Massachusetts	\$21,000,000	9	\$6.54	12
California	\$52,182,000	2	\$3.54	25
Michigan	\$9,798,000	18	\$2.28	35
Texas	\$20,000,000	10	\$2.09	38
<b>New York</b>	<b>\$3,500,000</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>\$0.41</b>	<b>46</b>

Source: Steve Duscha and Wanda Lee Graves, "The Employer as the Client: State-Financed Customized Training," U.S. Department of Labor, Employment & Training Administration, 2007.

the 50 states, while the per-capita total of \$0.41 ranked 46<sup>th</sup>. As the table above illustrates, even Texas, a state not known for worker-friendly policies or a strong commitment to developing its human capital, spent more than five times as much as New York both in total allocation (\$20 million) and per state resident (\$2.09).<sup>27</sup> While these data are obviously now out of date, our research for this report—and the simple fact that the state does not offer a broad-based customized training program—gives little reason to believe the situation has improved.

In the last several years, Empire State Development has attempted to engage employers through a series of tax incentives geared toward the job creation plans and hiring needs of large firms. REDCs can access the Excelsior Jobs Program tax credit, available to businesses in priority sectors such as information technology, biotech and manufacturing that meet job creation or capital investment goals. The state also offers a handful of tax credits for targeted populations: one credit for veterans entitles businesses that hire unemployed individuals who served on active military duty after September 11, 2001 to recoup

up to \$5,000 (\$15,000 for disabled veterans). The Cuomo administration has touted its New York Youth Works Program (now called the Urban Youth Jobs Program), through which it claims 1,270 businesses across the state hired nearly 13,000 at-risk young people in 2012, receiving credits of up to \$3,000 for each.<sup>28</sup>

One concern with tax credits is that it is impossible to know the extent to which the availability of the tax credit informed and influenced employers' hiring decisions. A report released in November 2013 by the New York State Tax Reform and Fairness Commission noted that no evidence exists to support the theory that business tax incentives yield net economic gains, and pointed out that such incentives "violate principles of good tax policy and tenets of good budgeting."<sup>29</sup> Had the state not created the New York Youth Works Program and simply collected the tax revenue lost by take-up of the credit, it might have had an additional \$25-30 million to invest in programs to bolster the skills and employability of young adult jobseekers—without necessarily losing many of those hires for whom employers claimed the credit.

# YOUR MOVE, ALBANY

Federal and Local Workforce Gains Put the Onus on New York State

A year ago, state policymakers could have made a plausible argument that the absence of progress in Washington, DC, where Congress had been stalled for more than a decade in efforts to reauthorize federal workforce law, justified their own inaction. But Congress finally took action last July, when it passed and President Obama signed the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). The new measure supersedes the Workforce Investment Act of 1998, and includes a number of provisions that increase the importance of the state role. On balance, WIOA shifts the policy landscape toward greater emphasis on across the board skill development, sector focus, and true system building, inclusive of career pathways—all positive directions for New York State.

Perhaps the most consequential changes under WIOA are its call for states to submit unified plans incorporating adult basic education, secondary and postsecondary education, and skills training for youth and adults and for statewide reporting of unified workforce outcomes. Previously, states submitted plans for each of these areas separately, with no requirement from federal authorities to describe how—or if—they coordinated services, shared information, managed service hand-offs, identified and eliminated duplicative programs, or jointly leveraged outside resources.

To be clear, WIOA does not set quality standards for these unified plans; in theory, states could simply copy and paste separate plans into a single document and remain in compliance. But the shift to a single plan presents a great opportunity for states to build true systems that offer a much stronger value proposition to both employer and jobseeker customers. Likewise, the statewide reporting requirement compels the state to collect a previously diverse and unconnected set of outcomes data and align data systems for reporting these outcomes.<sup>30</sup> The key questions for the State Workforce Investment

New York's leaders could utilize the new planning requirements of the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act to build a truly integrated and functional workforce system worthy of the name—or simply comply with the letter of the law and continue business as usual.

Board and the agencies with primary workforce responsibilities—the Department of Labor, State Education Department, Empire State Development, Office of Temporary and Disability Assistance, and others—are what their joint goals are, how will they generate and direct new resources, what they will track, and what they ultimately will share publically.

This integrated planning process also provides an opportunity to reengage with the 33 local workforce areas across the state to understand

## A NEW WORKFORCE VISION IN NEW YORK CITY

In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio took action during his first year in office to refocus the city's nearly \$500 million workforce system. In April 2014, the mayor established an Office of Workforce Development to coordinate the efforts of the many city agencies involved with job training and employment services. A month later, he convened the Jobs for New Yorkers Task Force, comprised of leaders from business, education, government, the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, to set an agenda for the new office and the system as a whole.

The Task Force released its final report in November, calling for a dramatic shift in mission: from rapid placements into employment irrespective of job quality, to an emphasis on career advancement and filling a wider range of employer needs. Among its specific recommendations was a major new investment in skills training, deeper connections between New York City's economic development investments and priorities and its workforce programs, and creation of six "Industry Partnerships" in key sectors such as technology, healthcare, and construction.

While major questions of implementation remain, New York City's recent experience in reimagining its workforce system offers some clear lessons for the state. Building upon earlier work such as the "Re-Envisioning the New York City Workforce" report, released in 2013,<sup>31</sup> the Task Force examined both the successes and shortcomings of the status quo system, assessed a broad range of stakeholders both within its membership and in the larger community, and carefully considered what was feasible over the next several years given other city commitments and priorities. A similar process at the state level could help produce the strategic clarity and higher level of commitment necessary for real progress.

what is working, and how to continue to support the expansion and growth of promising practices, employer relationships, and regional strategies. The statewide planning process and policy setting under WIOA would benefit greatly from the front line experience of the local workforce boards, career centers, community-based partners, and educational institutions. Many of WIOA's key provisions, such as contextualized literacy, serving out-of-school youth, and career pathways, are already being implemented in areas throughout the state. Creating a statewide workforce strategy should not mean upending successful programs.

Other key provisions of WIOA include an expanded menu of training options for which federal funds can be used, including skills training for incumbent workers and contextualized adult basic education; and a broad endorsement of sector-focused partnerships. These changes align with the actions and priorities of a number of local areas across the state. In New York City, Mayor Bill de Blasio created an Office of Workforce Development and convened leaders from business, education, government, the nonprofit sector and philanthropy, to overhaul the city's

workforce system. (See the section above.)

Upstate, meanwhile, the Finger Lakes Workforce Investment Board has spearheaded a sector initiative of its own, the Finger Lakes Advanced Manufacturing Enterprise (FAME). Since launching FAME in 2007, the WIB has convened advanced manufacturing employers, educational leaders, and policymakers to support training and advancement pathways for jobseekers and workers within the manufacturing sector. Its accomplishments thus far include partnerships with 61 employers, 31 of which have hosted interns or tours and/or mentored students, and development of curricula for three courses at Finger Lakes Community College, a key partner in the program.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The next step in New York’s ongoing economic recovery is to ensure that its benefits spread to a wider share of state residents by helping them to add skills that will both augment their earning power and address employers’ talent needs. With the passage of WIOA and the local initiatives underway across the state, as well as the REDC structure in place to support economic development, Albany has a unique opportunity to reconsider policies and strengthen investments to keep New York moving forward.

We offer four recommendations to the Cuomo administration, state legislature and state Workforce Investment Board to take the next important steps:

**Create a true Statewide Workforce Development Plan, as called for in WIOA, that sets a clear and compelling strategy as well as specific goals to increase workforce investments, and use it.** This plan should incorporate adult workforce services, youth workforce services, adult basic education and postsecondary education, including well-defined interconnections between the four areas, aligned to statewide economic development investments and priorities and projected employer demand. To do this, the state needs to inventory the skills of its residents and outline the specific and significant work ahead to have the workforce we need to meet emerging opportunities. This includes understanding the relationship between economic investments and employer needs at the regional and local levels, and incorporating successful local strategies and partnerships underway in local workforce systems. The plan should provide a strategic justification for workforce investments, setting standards and criteria to evaluate specific proposals. In addition to training and education, the state must support system-building activities: aligning data systems, setting common definitions and processes across programs, and ensuring that both jobseekers and employers can easily access

the workforce programs best matched to their needs and circumstances.

**Substantially increase investment of tax-levy dollars in skill-building/contextualized education and systemic alignment within and between programs.** Important as clear strategic direction and greater coordination are, the plain truth is that New York will not make real progress on building its workers’ skills without significant new investment of resources—a change that will require commitment not only from the governor, but state legislators as well. The state has the opportunity to be a leader in the country, by creating a robustly resourced system that treats human capital as a critical element to its current and future economic development successes. Other states are ahead of the game by deliberately setting aside a portion of their available tax levy resources, or generating new funding to ensure that federal funding gaps don’t go unfilled.

**Link statewide and local economic development investments/priorities and workforce programs.** Few would argue against the principle that the benefits of economic development should include training opportunities for New Yorkers to access career-track work. The Consolidated Funding Application through which REDCs draw down resources is one vehicle for this; the 15 percent of the state’s WIOA allocation set aside for gubernatorial priorities is another. Additionally, these flexible funds have great potential value as a mechanism for supporting continuous improvement in the workforce field, such as funding innovative pilots or professional development for practitioners transitioning to WIOA.

**Provide accountability to the public through a “statewide skills report card” tracking program investments and outcomes.** In addition to fulfilling the WIOA requirement of stronger

reporting, greater transparency will increase system usage and focus on quality. The “report card” should measure human capital gains (credentials earned, skills acquired) and labor market outcomes (placement, advancement, wage gains) against both the universe of population served and aggregate estimated demand across the state. It should also show specific outputs and outcomes of programs the state has touted such as Next Generation Job Linkage, and tax credits

such as Urban Youth Jobs Program. Additionally, this is a unique opportunity to utilize the recently expanded availability of wage reporting data, to track employment outcomes statewide. The Governor, education institutions, and local workforce systems need to own the outcomes, good and bad—and to continue successful investments while adjusting or eliminating those that are not delivering value.

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# NYATEP

THE FORCE IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The New York Association of Training & Employment Professionals (NYATEP) is a 501(c)(3) membership organization serving the workforce development community throughout New York State. NYATEP's focus is ensuring that every New Yorker and employer in New York State has access to the skills they need to work in, and support a robust statewide economy.

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