

**EXPANDING THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING CAPACITY AND  
FLEXIBILITY  
IN A LOCAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM**

1. **WHEREAS**, the nation's locally-driven job training system is in place to meet the ever increasing needs of worker preparation, basic and occupational skills training, employment, job retention, upgrade training and the workforce needs of business; and
2. **WHEREAS**, in order to remain competitive in the global market, the U.S. must invest in educating and training a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce; and
3. **WHEREAS**, the *Workforce Investment Act* (WIA) is one tool to provide flexibility at the local level to address the needs of business both regional and local; and
4. **WHEREAS**, employers have a need to train/upgrade the skills of over 50 percent of workers or risk falling behind in the global labor market, and are faced with the challenges of future tight labor markets and increasing demands for higher skill levels; and
5. **WHEREAS**, within the next 25 years there will be 19 million more jobs than available skilled workers, requiring education beyond a high-school diploma, with employers estimating that 39 percent of their current workforce and 26 percent of their new hires will have basic skills deficiencies; and
6. **WHEREAS**, low-wage, low-skilled workers, youth out-of-school, at-risk in-school youth, returning offenders, people moving from welfare to work, the long-term unemployed and other hard-to-employ individuals are the populations not equipped for jobs in a 21<sup>st</sup> century workforce; and
7. **WHEREAS**, the labor force in the U.S. lacks fundamental and core skills needed for successful employment, including literacy; and

8. **WHEREAS**, many low-wage workers lose their jobs in their first year - at considerable cost to their employers - and many who retain their jobs do not move up over time; and
9. **WHEREAS**, according to the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University, the largest growing occupations within the next ten years will be in the private service industry - including information, financial, professional and business, educational, health and social and leisure services - all of which will require postsecondary education or training; and
10. **WHEREAS**, both skills training and postsecondary education need to be part of a larger strategy and are critical for job advancement for low-wage workers; and
11. **WHEREAS**, comprehensive skills training provides opportunity for productive employment with sufficient wages and benefits leading to family self-sufficiency for the working poor, the long-term unemployed and people moving off of welfare; and
12. **WHEREAS**, the largest growing segment of the youth labor force is largely minority and immigrant and mostly concentrated in areas of cities that have the lowest socioeconomic data, are at-risk of dropping out, and are least prepared to enter the workforce; and
13. **WHEREAS**, the national graduation rate is 68 percent, nearly one-third of public high school students fail to graduate, and in many of the nation's low-income neighborhoods dropout rates are 50 percent or higher; and
14. **WHEREAS**, the Administration is focused on moving the job training system to vouchers for individuals, but in a demand driven system, there must be multiple training tools including customized, on-the-job training, and other business driven strategies; and
15. **WHEREAS**, funding for job training programs has been cut by Congress by over \$1 billion since FY 2002,

16. **NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress to make an ongoing major funding investment in education and workforce skills training programs based on funding levels of Fiscal Year 2002; and
17. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges that comprehensive skills training strategies be included as part of a local workforce system that aligns with the labor market demands of local economies where business is located; and
18. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors recommends the creation of comprehensive and career advancement strategies for low-wage, low-skilled workers, youth out-of-school, at-risk in-school youth, returning offenders, people moving from welfare to work, the long-term unemployed and other hard-to-employ individuals through partnerships with employers and industries and that they be targeted to industries and occupations that provide the working poor with opportunities to move up the career ladder across industries to self sufficiency; and
19. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for publicly-funded, transitional job opportunities for welfare recipients, returning offenders with no job experience and other long-term unemployed and hard-to-employ individuals that provide entry level work experience, exposure, support and a first step in a career ladder; and
20. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for the development of and access to alternative education opportunities and learning settings for out-of-school youth and adults without high school diplomas and provide better transition to college for these students; and
21. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors calls for an increase of funding, including student-aid, for access to postsecondary education opportunities for both in and out of school youth, low-wage, low-skilled workers returning offenders, people moving from welfare to work, the long-term unemployed and other hard-to-employ individuals, at career schools, vocational and technical schools, 2-

year community colleges and 4-year institutions and that there be greater access and support for part-time postsecondary education opportunities for working adults and educational opportunities during working hours and complimentary to working schedules,

22. **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that The U.S. Conference of Mayors urges Congress to ensure that in all appropriate legislation, training in two year postsecondary institutions and programs responds to the needs of business and industry.

Projected Cost: Unknown