



The Minnesota Association of Workforce Boards (MAWB) represents Minnesota's 16 local workforce boards. Our feedback on H.R. 6655, A STRONGER WORKFORCE FOR AMERICA ACT:

Items of concern:

- **50% Training Requirement:** The mandate for local workforce development boards to allocate 50% of their funding for training presents a significant challenge. This federal requirement could limit our ability to remain responsive to the rapidly changing needs of local employers. Moreover, the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes 'training' under this mandate could lead to ambiguity and inconsistency in program implementation. Our priority is to ensure that workforce development strategies are tailored to local economic conditions and employer needs, and this requirement could impede that flexibility.
  - **Recommendation: Eliminate the mandate on training expenditures which mirrors current WIOA law. Workforce programming is most successful when flexibility to meet local needs is prioritized.**
- **Increased Governor's Set-aside for "Critical Industries Fund":** The proposal to increase the Governor's set-aside fund by 10% to establish a "critical industries fund" raises concerns about the potential reduction of resources available to local workforce development systems. While the intent to focus on critical industries is understandable, this shift in funding risks duplicating services that are already being effectively delivered at the local level. It is essential that funding remains adequate to support the unique workforce needs of local job seekers and employers.
  - **Recommendation: Eliminate states' ability to reserve an additional 10% of funding to ensure the maximum amount dollars reaches local communities.**
- **Redesignation of Local Workforce Development Areas:** The proposed redesignation of local workforce development areas is another area of concern. This move could diminish local accountability and stifle innovation, which are cornerstones of a demand-driven workforce system. It is crucial that the voice and needs of the business community remain at the forefront of workforce development strategies. Local expertise and engagement are key to creating effective, employer-responsive programs.
  - **Recommendation: Maintain local area designation language that appears in WIOA.**

Items we support:

- Changing the definition of Out of School Youth to Opportunity Youth—this helps us serve young people most in need of our services.
- Repurpose the H-1B fee revenue and allotting the funding through states and down to local areas based on a formula. This improves our capacity to serve Dislocated Workers on the local level.
- Raising the cap on "incumbent worker training" so local workforce boards can better meet employer demand for this critical program.