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Save Workforce Development Funding

Workforce development programs are an important part of the nation's economic recovery and job creation efforts -- working with employers to train workers for existing and emerging high-demand jobs. Yet the US House of Representatives recently passed the [House Fiscal Year 2011 Continuing Appropriations bill](#), HR 1, which completely zeros out all funding for Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth state and local employment and training programs, a cut of over \$3.6 billion for the coming year (beginning this July). Other programs targeted for deep cuts or elimination include Perkins Career and Technical Education, YouthBuild, Job Corps, green jobs training, reintegration of ex-offenders, and Community Service Employment for Older Americans. HR 1 is now being considered by the Senate. During the week of March 21, members of both the House of Representatives and Senate are scheduled to be home for a District Work Period. Thursday, March 24th has been identified as "Workforce Day of Action," to ensure all members of Congress and their staff are made aware of the importance of the nation's workforce development system. Employers, workers, educators, providers and others who understand the value of these programs must join together in this effort.

[Nearly 14 million Americans remain unemployed](#) as of February, with over 40 percent unemployed for over six months and longer. As of January, [more than 633,000 Illinoisans](#) are out of work. Many are unable to return to their prior jobs because those occupations no longer exist; unfortunately, these workers and many others lack the skills and education needed for today's 21st century economy.

The workforce development system has faced unprecedented challenges in recent years as demand for education and training skyrocketed during the recession. Over the past program year, the WIA system served over [8.4 million job seekers](#) in the U.S. and helped 4.3 million gain employment. In Illinois, [173,109](#) job seekers were served by the WIA system in the past program year. Since the beginning of the recession in 2007, WIA participation rates in Illinois have increased 25.1% for adults and 24.6% for youth who are seeking employment, education, training and work experience (percent increase calculated from the [PY 2007 DCEO IL Workforce Development Annual Report](#) and the [PY 2009 DCEO IL Workforce Development Annual Report](#)). Despite funding remaining stagnant at 2008 levels, [nationwide WIA participation rates increased 234 percent](#).

If HR 1 becomes law, the cuts will result in:

- Closing of [3,000 One-Stop Centers](#) that serve millions of job seekers in need of career guidance, training and employment services.
- [276,000 youth](#) will lose access to employment, education, training and work experiences under WIA youth programs (over 13,000 youth in Illinois); more than [7,000 low-income, young people](#) will lose access to services under YouthBuild; [10,000](#) more will lose access to services under Job Corps.
- [Over 14 million students](#) enrolled in school-based career and technical education programs supported by Perkins will see services and opportunities cut or even eliminated.
- As many as [50,000 low-income seniors will be denied part-time community-service jobs](#) under the elimination of the Community Service Employment for Older Americans program.
- And veterans who receive priority services under WIA will have to find other sites to get the help they need to successfully transition to civilian jobs.

This national effort is led by the [National Skills Coalition](#) and others. To prepare for a meeting or site visit with Members of Congress, read the [National Skills Coalition's Workforce Day of Action: How to Prepare memo](#) for more specific information.

The nation's workforce investment system has played a vitally important role in helping Illinois' and America's workers find new jobs or to get the training they need to make career changes in a very tough economy. Today, more than ever, federal policy must support investment in the skills of the American workforce to help support the nation's economic recovery and job creation efforts. Reducing our nation's investment in workforce development, basic skills and post secondary education will have an immediate

impact on job seekers looking to increase their skills for available jobs, and on employers seeking skilled workers.

Now is not the time to eliminate the nation's primary system for getting people back to work. Tell your Members of Congress where you stand on workforce development cuts. Click [here](#) to contact your Illinois Senators at their district office. Click [here](#) to contact your Illinois Representative at their district office.

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