

**BALTIMORE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**  
**Public Policy Committee: Meeting Minutes**

*August 23, 2006, 12:30 –2:00 PM*  
United Way of Central Maryland, 100 S. Charles Street, Baltimore, MD

**Attending:** Larry Walton, Marlene McLaurin, Karen Sitnick, Phil Holmes, Victor Valentine, Anne Clemson, Cheryl Harrison-Clay, Martha Nathanson, Pegeen Townsend, Melissa Chalmers-Broome, Joanne Nathans and Yolanda Winkler

**I. Welcome & Approval of May 11, 2006 Meeting Minutes** – Larry Walton, Committee Chair, opened the meeting at 12:35 AM. A motion to approve the minutes was accepted and the minutes were approved as written.

**II. WIA Reauthorization: New Developments in Washington** – Karen Sitnick provided a brief summary of the chief differences between the new Senate-passed WIA reauthorization bill, S. 1021, and the House bill, H.R. 27. The latter bill calls for the consolidation and block granting of US Department of Labor funding to support the nation's workforce delivery system. The Senate bill maintains the three separate funding streams (Adult, Dislocated Worker and Youth) and allows the Governor the discretion to shift money between them. Congress is "stuck" on the issues of block granting and the faith-based hiring provisions included in the House bill; conference will not move forward these two issues are resolved. Movement on WIA reauthorization before the end of the year is considered very unlikely.

The Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill is one of the nine funding bills that have not been enacted. This means that the national workforce delivery system will be funded with one or more Continuing Resolutions (CR) after 9/30/06, something that has happened in the past. The CR situation could continue well into the first quarter of calendar 2007, making it difficult for local workforce investment areas to plan.

Federal funding for the local workforce delivery system has declined at an unprecedented rate since FFY 2002 and more budget cuts are expected. The WIA legislation that is now on the books does not require one-stop partners to contribute to supporting the infrastructure costs of the one-stop career center system. This oversight has always been problematic. Given the fiscal situation for workforce investment programs in Washington, it is clear that Maryland's workforce delivery system can no longer rely on federal Department of Labor funding as its sole means of support.

Another emerging fiscal challenge is the very real threat of a rescission of \$325 million in FFY 2006 WIA "carryover" funds included in the House appropriations bill. The Bush administration does not take into consideration the difference between "expenditures" and "obligations" of WIA funds. In their view, states are holding a significant pot of unexpended carryover funds. Maryland stands to lose \$2.6 million statewide if the rescission passes. Baltimore city will lose over \$700,000, likely forcing the closure of another one-stop. The Senate appropriations bill does not include the rescission. Mayor O'Malley and BWIB Chair John Ashworth have already sent correspondence opposing the rescission to key Congressional appropriators.

**III. Discussion: Public Policy Priorities for 2006-2007** – Karen summarized the BWIB's current strategic priorities. The group then identified several state public policy priorities, including promoting legislative and budgetary actions that will support Maryland's summer jobs program for disadvantaged youth, provide training for low-skilled job seekers and incumbent workers (including on-ramp "bridge" programs), promote training opportunities for ex-offenders, and fund education and training opportunities for disconnected youth. The group agreed that WIA reauthorization remained the chief federal legislative priority. The next step is to have the BWIB review/approve the 2006-2007 public policy priorities during its September strategic planning retreat.

Several committee members offered ideas about how to present information to state legislators during the 2007 session of the MD General Assembly. We need to "quantify" what will happen given anticipated cuts in federal workforce funding and without a dedicated state funding stream to support the Maryland's workforce delivery system. A committee member suggested preparing two or three charts that show five years of federal and state funding in review, juxtaposed against a chart showing Maryland's ongoing and emerging (BRAC) workforce challenges. The

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overarching message: our mission has not been accomplished — our work is not done. Meetings with key legislators should be scheduled for shortly after the election.

**IV. Meeting Schedule** -- The next meeting of the BWIB Public Policy Committee will take place in November 2006.

**V. Adjourn** – The meeting adjourned at 2 PM.