

# CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM

*Q: WHY SHOULD YOU SUPPORT CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM?*

*A: CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM IS ADDRESSING THE WORKFORCE NEEDS OF EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS.*

California has enjoyed its strongest economy ever. Ever increasing demands for high skilled workers, particularly in technology-related jobs, has resulted in historically low unemployment and a serious shortage of qualified workers. Ironically, at a time when demand for skilled workers is at an all time high, increasing numbers of Californian's are at risk of losing jobs through layoffs and business closures. Additionally, too many California's have been left out of the economic boom. They have not been able to find lasting employment because they do not have marketable skills. Now more than ever before, we need an effective system for retooling California's workers--to bridge the gap between high skills jobs and the millions of Californians who need additional training to be able to fill them. **In 1998, Congress enacted the Workforce Investment Act to assist States and localities build such a system.** The nation's workforce investment system is currently in its first full year of implementation. As a result, exciting changes are occurring in the way services are delivered. The system is undergoing revolutionary change that over time, in combination with reforms in our educational system, will ensure that workers in California and the Nation are the most highly skilled and competitive in the world.

*Q: WHAT IS THE GOAL OF CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM?*

*A: TO WORK WITH EMPLOYERS AND WORKERS TO ENSURE THAT BUSINESSES OBTAIN AND RETAIN THE WORKERS THEY NEED TO STAY COMPETITIVE AND THAT WORKERS OBTAIN THE JOBS THEY NEED FOR ECONOMIC SELF-SUFFICIENCY.*

## **Goals of California's Workforce Investment System Include:**

- Addressing California's worker shortage by providing access to high quality training for high demand jobs;
- Increasing the skills and earnings of low income and underemployed workers and families, providing career ladder opportunities for the working poor that lead to good jobs, self-sufficiency;
- Meeting the needs of dislocated workers as the state's economy restructures to remain competitive;
- Addressing the education, skill, and employment needs of disadvantaged youth, particularly those who have either dropped out of school or who are at risk of dropping out to ensure that "no child is left behind"; and
- Working effectively with the California's business sector as well as its economic development, education, and welfare systems, to create an inclusive workforce that is competitive, skilled and creative.

*Q: HOW IS CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM RESPONDING TO AN EVER CHANGING ECONOMY?*

*A: CALIFORNIA'S WORKFORCE INVESTMENT SYSTEM IS RESPONDING TO THE EVER CHANGING ECONOMY THROUGH A DYNAMIC SYSTEM THAT IS MARKET DRIVEN AND EMPLOYER LED, CUSTOMER FRIENDLY, UNIVERSAL, STREAMLINED, FLEXIBLE, INNOVATIVE AND ENTREPRENEURIAL.*

**The New Workforce Investment System Is:**

- **Market Driven and Employer Led:** The system is led by the State Board and 50 Local Workforce Investment Boards composed of influential business leaders who identify the employment needs of their regions and design comprehensive systems to meet those needs. The active involvement of high-level business leaders, in concert with elected officials, is not surprisingly proving essential in reform of the workforce investment system.
- **Customer Friendly, a Common Sense Approach to Service Delivery:** At the street level, workers and employers receive a broad array of services and information through a comprehensive, integrated One-Stop delivery system focused on customer satisfaction.
- **Universal--For All Workers and Employers:** The system provides universal access to “core services” for all workers and employers, including up-to-date information on the local market and jobs in demand, as well as job placement, supportive services, and training opportunities that are available in the local area.
- **Streamlined, Flexible, Innovative and Entrepreneurial:** State and local systems are developing new and expanded partnerships with employers, economic development agencies, and other programs and providers to leverage resources and expand and improve services for customers. Also, local Boards can develop broad policy and vision for their communities, ensuring that local workforce investment systems are relevant for employers, and responsive to the needs of local and regional economies.