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Opening Doors

How to Make the Workforce Investment Act Work for Women

Liz Weiss July 2010

Center for American Progress



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Introduction and summary

The U.S. workforce development system is not meeting the needs of one half of our workforce—women. The Workforce Investment Act is a critical tool for employment and training for American workers. But WIA emphasizes quick job placement over building skills or attaining education, and the system is not set up to recognize and prevent unequal results of women or other participants.

Women are particularly short-changed by this system because it perpetuates, and even exacerbates, labor market inequities, specifically gender segregation by occupation and a large gender wage gap. WIA programs do not focus on these problems. Nor do they provide adequate training or career counseling. The upshot: Women enter mostly low-skill, low-wage “women’s jobs,” such as nursing aides, cashiers, and office clerks, and earn much lower wages than men. This segregation occurs even for women who receive the highest level of WIA service—training.

Congress and the Obama administration can do better for women. Their vehicle for reform: Congressional reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act. WIA programs simply must deliver a well-functioning workforce development system for women. Women today often depend on their own income to support themselves and their families, especially the nearly half of women who are unmarried. But a woman’s income is too often not adequate for a decent standard of living or to support a family (see box on page 4).

Women can obtain better jobs and self-sufficient wages through postsecondary education, including job training and formal career pathways, and career development in high-wage, high-demand occupations, including occupations that are nontraditional for women. A key ingredient in obtaining a job with family-sustaining wages is a minimum of one year of education after high school.¹ Education and training will allow women to move up in position and pay rather than become stuck in dead-end jobs. A workforce development system that fails to prepare women for higher-paying jobs, especially jobs nontraditional for women, means women will be paid less and receive fewer employment benefits such as health insurance and retirement savings programs.²

Yet the kinds of postsecondary education and training needed for women and men to build skills and increase earnings are *not* often achieved through participation in WIA programs. Currently, less than 16 percent of female WIA “exitors” receive training, and less than one percent enter into jobs that are nontraditional for women.³

Further, research shows that employment in “middle-skill” jobs will remain significant (40 percent to 45 percent of hiring) today and in the next decade—jobs that require some postsecondary education beyond high school but less than a bachelor’s degree, such as auto mechanics, truck and bus drivers, carpenters, and computer support specialists, along with jobs in the health sector.⁴ Combining women’s need for postsecondary education with the national economic need for enough skilled workers to fill so many openings would benefit workers and employers alike.

WIA programs can and should serve as a bridge between the labor market and postsecondary education, and they should help catalyze career development for women. Further, women—and other disadvantaged groups—have specific needs that must be recognized and addressed if they are to enter good, higher-paying jobs. Improvements in five areas would make WIA programs stronger to better ensure women workers can obtain the skills, education, and types of jobs they need to support themselves and their families. Specifically, WIA programs should incorporate:

- A proactive approach to improving gender equity in participation and outcomes
- Career development through case management, supportive services, and outreach
- A renewed emphasis on postsecondary education and training
- Improved use of financial assistance mechanisms
- Better performance measures to ensure the workforce development system does what works.

Let’s briefly examine how these five reforms can be accomplished by state and local Workforce Investment Boards, or WIBs, which implement WIA on the local level through centers called One-Stops (see box on page 10), alongside some strategic changes to the WIA statute by Congress.

First, policymakers and state and local WIBs need to make moving toward gender parity among WIA participants a strategic goal. Gender parity should be determined by participation and outcomes in terms of earnings and occupations. WIBs must be intentional about working with women and overcoming long-standing barriers and discrimination. They must move beyond a culture of passivity that does not serve to advance their clients, especially women.

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Second, WIA programs should focus on career development. Women would benefit from case management services, including career guidance and counseling; the provision of supportive services, such as child care assistance; and outreach to underserved women. These strategies would support women as they enter and then complete the necessary training and education programs for their careers, helping them to develop and maintain successful, better-paying careers. Self-sufficiency should become a primary objective of WIA, and self-sufficiency standards should be used as a tool and guide for career guidance.

Third, WIA programs should be used as a bridge to postsecondary education, including entering career pathways, rather than quick-fix crisis intervention at a time of job loss. Career pathways are defined by researcher David Jenkins, one of the originators of the career pathways concept, as a:

“Series of connected education and training programs and support services that enable individuals to secure employment within a specific industry or occupational sector, and to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in that sector. Each step on a career pathway is designed explicitly to prepare the participant for the next level of employment and education.”⁵

All education and training should result in a recognized credential—an occupational certificate or a degree—that has labor market value. An emphasis on training for women in nontraditional jobs would help women meet the goal of becoming self-sufficient. And it would help WIBs work toward gender parity in the wages and occupations of WIA participants.

Fourth, financial assistance is a necessity for low-income workers who need training or higher education but do not have the financial means. Better use of Individual Training Accounts, which provide funds for purchasing training or education, as well as added flexibility and better oversight of WIA clients’ training programs and educational institutions, would increase affordability and result in better outcomes for WIA clients.

Finally, improvements to WIA performance measures would incentivize desirable outcomes, namely obtaining postsecondary education and higher-paying jobs. Measuring earnings in terms of self-sufficiency, measuring training for and placement in nontraditional jobs, and measuring credential attainment would incentivize a focus on ensuring more women receive training and enter better paying jobs, instead of being continually segregated into lower-paying

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female occupations. With a measure of self-sufficiency, we would have a metric to determine how WIA is working to improve the lives of clients, especially by moving low-income individuals into jobs with family-supporting wages.

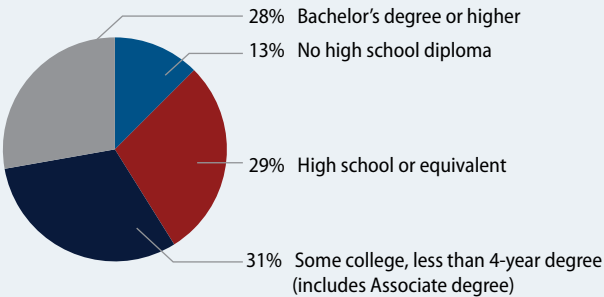
In the pages that follow, this report will first explore how women fare in current WIA programs to demonstrate why a focus on gender in participation and outcomes is essential to WIA reform. We'll then examine in detail how career development, along with more education and improved financial assistance, will enable women to support themselves and their families on their own. We close with a look at how improved performance measures can ensure that WIA programs and services do what works over the long term, delivering efficient and effective workforce development programs well into the future. As we'll demonstrate, reform of the Workforce Investment Act could make WIA work—and work well—for women.

Education and earnings of unmarried women

Single women often need to support themselves or a family. But many women, including single women, have not acquired the level of education necessary to hold a job paying a family-sustaining wage. Only 28 percent of unmarried women ages 25 to 64 have a bachelor's degree, and another 31 percent have some college or an associate degree (see Figure 1). This means more than 4 in 10 unmarried women in their prime working years do not have any education beyond high school. And as Figure 2 shows, unmarried women earn very little without higher education.

FIGURE 1
Unmarried women's educational attainment

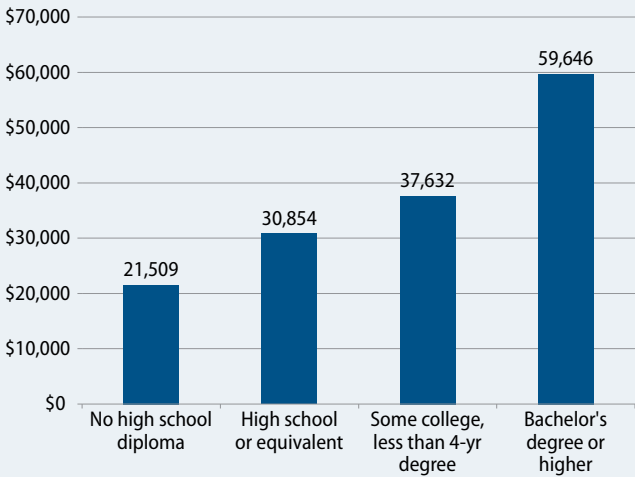
Forty-two percent of unmarried women ages 25 to 64 have a high school degree or less



Source: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2009, with CPS Table Creator. Unmarried includes women who have never married or are divorced, separated, or widowed.

FIGURE 2
Average earnings of unmarried women

Average annual personal earnings of unmarried women ages 25 to 64, by education



Source: Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplement, 2009, with CPS Table Creator. Earnings data is for full-time, full-year workers ages 25-64. Earnings are based on a combined, weighted average of earnings for never-married, divorced, widowed, and separated women.

Women and the WIA system

WIA programs overseen by the Department of Labor assist over a million workers a year to obtain employment, and in some cases training or other educational services.⁶ But the WIA system does not serve its clients well, especially women. First, WIA services currently focus more on job placement and crisis intervention at a time of job loss, deemphasizing education and building skills, as well as career development. Most workers interfacing with this system, then, don't have the opportunity to train for a better job.

Further, the results of women's participation in WIA are troubling. Women earn significantly less after exiting WIA services than do men, and they enter vastly different occupations than do men. Official annual data indicates that in 2008 female WIA exiters in the Adult Program, which serves disadvantaged workers among others who are age 18 and older, earned only 71 percent on average of what men did at the end of one year after participating in WIA.⁷ This is worse even than the national gender wage gap of 77 percent that year.⁸

Women WIA participants

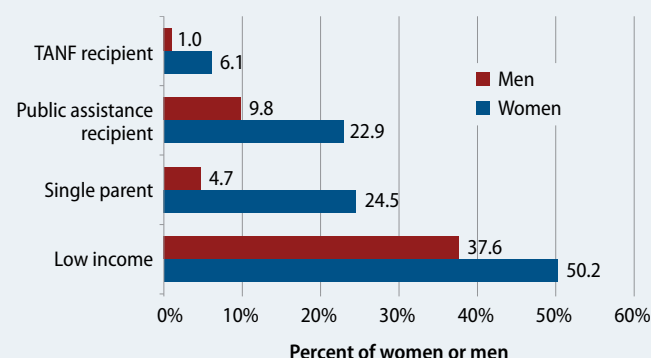
In program year 2008, nearly half (48 percent) of all WIA exiters were women. Two-thirds of women participated in the Adult Program, and a quarter participated in the Dislocated Worker Program aimed primarily at recently laid-off workers. (The remainder participated in a third program, Youth, which is not covered in this report.)

Women are more likely than men to be economically disadvantaged, such as being a single parent or recipient of public assistance (see Figure 3). WIA data is not available by marital status, but we know that most low-income women, most people on public assistance, and even a majority of unemployed women are unmarried women, and thus more likely to be economically self-dependent.

FIGURE 3

Characteristics of Adult WIA exiters, by gender

Share of WIA exiters who are economically disadvantaged, among those who received intensive or training services, 2008



Source: Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Table 11-5 (2010). Data for low-income, public assistance and TANF recipients, and single parents is available only for the subset of WIA clients who received mid-level "intensive" services or high-level training services.

This gender wage gap for WIA exiters is likely due in large part to occupational gender segregation. Female WIA exiters go into very different jobs than their male counterparts, even when they receive the highest level of service—training. Women are about as likely to receive training and are actually more likely to have more weeks of training than men.⁹ But women are trained for markedly different types of jobs than men, primarily female-dominated jobs, such as nursing aides and orderlies, which pay lower wages than the jobs for which men are trained, such as truck and bus drivers and electricians (see Table 1 on page 7).¹⁰

Further, women may receive more weeks of training, but the additional training often does not equal additional earnings. For instance, the average six-month earnings of (female) medical assistants, who trained on average 43.6 weeks, was \$10,230, while the average earnings of (male) computer support specialists after an average of 42.6 weeks of training, was \$17,759.¹¹

Unfortunately, more detailed information about the types of jobs that women and men enter after receiving services other than training—that is, the nearly 85 percent of women who receive core or intensive services—is limited and available for less than 10 percent of WIA exiters.¹² This limited information, however, reveals a similar pattern of gender segregation. The top 10 occupations of employment for women include various health professions, office clerks, and cashiers, while the top 10 occupations for men include truck drivers, production workers, maintenance workers, and security guards.¹³

Indeed, very few women now enter nontraditional employment (defined by law as those occupations where one gender is less than 25 percent of the workforce) after participating in a WIA program—only 1 percent of all Adult women exiters, or 2 percent of those receiving training, and 1 percent of all female Dislocated Worker exiters, or 3 percent of those receiving training.¹⁴ This is even worse than the national workforce, in which 5.5 percent of women work in nontraditional jobs.¹⁵

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TABLE 1
Gender segregation in WIA training

Top 10 occupations of training for women and men, in the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs, Program Year 2007

Occupational title	Average weeks of training	Average Earnings	Gender makeup of occupation, among WIA trainees
Women			
Nursing aides, orderlies, and attendants	15.6	\$9,228	93.0 % female
Licensed practical and licensed vocational nurses	52.3	\$16,015	92.3
Registered nurses	67.0	\$23,429	87.9
Medical assistants	43.6	\$10,230	94.9
Office clerks, general	36.3	\$10,750	88.7
Medical records and health information technicians	43.8	\$11,406	94.0
Executive secretaries and administrative assistants	41.1	\$11,837	94.6
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer	11.3	\$11,640	10.7
Medical secretaries	41.7	\$10,888	
Customer service representatives	17.3	\$13,452	67.3
Men			
Truck drivers, heavy and tractor-trailer	9.6	\$15,139	89.2% male
Truck drivers, light or delivery services	9.5	\$14,874	
Welders, cutters, and welder fitters	23.1	\$15,587	
Electricians	42.1	\$17,284	
Production workers, all other	14.5	\$15,861	56.5
Computer support specialists	42.6	\$17,759	
Heating and air conditioning mechanics and installers	43.4	\$15,073	
Registered nurses	70.1	\$25,740	12.0
Customer service representatives	12.1	\$19,515	32.3
Helpers-production workers	12.0	\$14,395	

Source: Information was obtained from the Department of Labor. Data on occupation of training is reported for approximately 60 percent of WIA exiters who received training. Gender makeup of occupations is available only for the top 10 occupations of training for all exiters (men and women combined) in the Adult and Dislocated Worker Programs. Average earnings are for the second and third quarters after exit.

Working toward gender parity

WIA program staff must be intentional about working with women, utilizing practices that focus on women's particular challenges and needs, and work to overcome lasting inequities in the labor market. The current, primarily passive approach that has no focus on gender outcomes is clearly not achieving good results if the gender wage gap is larger and nontraditional employment is lower for WIA participants than the general workforce.

Gender parity should be a strategic goal of WIA programs. While this report does not suggest that *full* equality between men and women is likely—or even desirable for occupations—setting such a goal is a necessity to ensure attention and focus, as well as to achieve significant improvement in gender outcomes.

At the federal level, Congress should adopt relevant language in the statute to ensure attention to gender equality in every state. The Department of Labor should play a technical assistance role with setting goals related to increasing gender equality, identifying best practices, and enacting programs.

State and local Workforce Investment Boards should adopt appropriate practices as outlined in this report, to be put into action primarily at the counselor level, as discussed below. States must take active measures to ensure that WIA clients—especially women and those who are economically and otherwise disadvantaged—receive good, up-to-date information about the career and self-sufficiency potential of all jobs, including traditionally male jobs, so that they can make a fully informed choice about what career or educational path to take.

And at the local level, One-Stop staff and staff of training or other programs or classes should receive their own training about occupational gender segregation, what programs are available locally to move women into nontraditional jobs, and how to proactively help women enter nontraditional careers and overcome barriers to this work—ideally as technical assistance from the Department of Labor or from local groups with experience in this area.

Some local One-Stop staff should be specially trained to work with these women throughout the process, including helping them overcome socialization to traditional gender roles, low self-esteem, lack of exposure to tools or other aspects of traditionally male jobs, and handling challenges such as discrimination or harassment. Many community organizations offer programs to help women enter non-traditional fields, and WIA staff should be aware of these programs and regularly work to match up women with appropriate programs.

Career development

To achieve greater gender parity, case management needs to be instituted alongside the provision of support services and active outreach at the state and local levels. And as working learners—or those who are “already in the workforce [but] who currently lack a postsecondary credential and are needed wage earners for themselves or their families”—many women will need supports to combine their work and family responsibilities with training or school.¹⁶ State and local WIBs should pro-actively work to reduce the gender wage gap by focusing only on jobs or career paths that will enable self-sufficiency in the long term; a large part of this must be to decrease occupational segregation by guiding women into nontradi-

How does WIA work?

Federal level: Congress authorized three programs (Adult, Dislocated Worker, and Youth), each with its own funding stream, in the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, Title I. The law sets out parameters for the programs, establishes the Workforce Investment System (comprised of state and local Workforce Investment Boards, discussed below), requires annual reporting from the states, and establishes performance measures. These are managed by the Department of Labor, among other administrative and oversight functions. The bulk of the WIA programs’ work occurs at the local level, with state-level planning and oversight.

State level: State Workforce Investment Boards are appointed by the governor and include representatives of business, labor unions, state workforce agencies, city and county elected officials, and service delivery organizations, among others. The state WIB develops a strategic plan, develops statewide activities, designates the local workforce investment areas which correspond to local WIBs, develops goals for state performance levels, reviews local WIA plans, and prepares annual reports to the federal Department of Labor.

Local level: Local WIBs also have business and labor representatives, along with economic development agencies, local educational organizations, community-based organizations, and One-Stop partners, among others. The local WIBs oversee the One-Stops in their local area, including establishing One-Stops and designating One-Stop operators. The local WIBs are also responsible for developing local plans for WIA programs, identifying eligible training providers, and negotiating performance levels with the governor. Implementing WIA programs on the ground are primarily the responsibility of local WIBs. There are about 600 local workforce areas, each with a local WIB; there were 1,600 local One-Stops in 2007.

Sources: The Workforce Alliance, “Training Policy in Brief” (2007); and Sigurd R. Nilsen, GAO, “Workforce Investment Act: Additional Actions Would Further Improve the Workforce System,” Testimony before the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, June 28, 2007.

tional jobs. While many local WIBs do have programs targeted to women, this is optional and happens irregularly and at the discretion of local offices.¹⁷

Meanwhile, the federal government has a role in setting goals and objectives for the program, providing guidance and technical assistance, and updating requirements for performance measures (see box below).

Case management

Many women would benefit from a structured case management system, including career navigation and counseling.¹⁸ The keys here are good career advice, with an eye to real self-sufficiency wages, complete and real-time information about the local labor market (wages and benefits, jobs, and support services), and encouragement. Such a program could help women overcome barriers to entering work or school, balance the demands of both work and school (and often family) that they face as working learners, and find the right fit in education and employment.

Currently, case management and career counseling are available only to clients eligible for intensive services, or those who have not found employment through core services. The majority of clients access only core, or basic, services (see box below). This is a missed opportunity.

One-Stops should offer most, if not all, WIA clients individualized, professional career guidance and counseling to help them make good decisions about training

Services offered by WIA programs

There are three types of services offered in WIA programs. These are offered sequentially; to move on to the next level WIA clients must demonstrate they are unable to find employment with the lower level of service.

Core services. The most basic service offered to all WIA customers. Core services include basic job searches, minimal staff-assisted job searching, and provision of basic information on job training services, the labor market, and other topics.

Intensive services. The middle level of service offered to those for whom core services were insufficient. Intensive services include skills assessments, career counseling, development of an employment plan, and short-term prevocational services.

Training services. The highest level of WIA service might include on-the-job training, community college classes, basic training, or other occupational training.

Source: The Workforce Alliance, "Training Policy in Brief" (2007).

and careers. Career counselors should guide women to high-wage, high-demand careers that will provide self-sufficiency, including careers nontraditional for their gender, and the training or education necessary to be successful. Because most current One-Stop staff do not have a background in professional career counseling and guidance, these staff will need to receive their own relevant training. Local WIBs will probably need to hire additional career counselors with requisite skills, too.

Moving women into good jobs, especially nontraditional jobs, will require an intentional effort. Women face particular barriers in developing their job skills and education, including social barriers, such as gender-based stereotypes; educational barriers, such as limited information about nontraditional careers; and job-related barriers, such as lack of child care and sexual harassment, among others.¹⁹

Yet too often, workforce development system counselors take a passive role when a worker is deciding on a career or job path, drawing up career plans based on a client's past work experience, a client's own ideas for jobs and careers, and her own research into labor markets.²⁰ This only serves to perpetuate many women's low expectations, low wages, and accepted or assumed occupational segregation. An active role on the part of counselors is needed to overcome the socialization and other barriers faced by women, to plant the seed for different types of jobs, to provide information beyond what a client might seek out given no guidance, and to provide encouragement and support.

A 2002 study of women seeking job training through the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families program, for example, found that more women were interested in nontraditional occupations than were actually placed in or recommended to such training.²¹ The study included a survey of TANF clients then participating in training or school; the survey asked the students to identify if they were interested in any of a long list of jobs read to them. Nearly two-thirds (64 percent) of these women indicated an interest in at least one nontraditional job—even though the list was read without further information about wages, in which case there would likely have been even more interest.²² Interestingly, unmarried women were more willing to consider additional nontraditional jobs than were married women, probably because they have a greater need for self-sufficiency or were supporting others.²³ It is clear that many women would be interested in nontraditional employment, but too often that option is simply not presented.

To help overcome segregation, case managers should provide encouragement, and not reinforce clients' own, culturally-based ideas or plans. Counselors should dis-

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cuss a full range of employment options with an emphasis on likely wages, including comparing wages in different jobs and the potential for self-sufficiency, such as information like that contained in Table 1 on page 7. And counselors should be the ones to provide good, up-to-date information about local labor markets. They should be sure to link up women with local programs geared to their needs.

Women would also benefit from longer term case management, including follow-up after a worker has exited the WIA system and long-term mentoring programs. This is especially true for women entering nontraditional education or work, given the more difficult work environments they may face, such as a greater incidence of sexual harassment. Anecdotal reports indicate that some women have been pushed out of a new, nontraditional job because of a hostile work environment, which is unacceptable. Another crucial element is to prepare employers and training providers for women who will enter their male-dominated jobsite or classroom, to ensure that they are providing an equal opportunity environment. Follow-up with WIA clients should also ensure as much as possible that they complete a program of learning and earn an intended credential. Unfortunately, WIA currently has statutory requirements that make it difficult for WIA programs to work with participants once they are back at work.²⁴ This must be changed.

Among women, certain disadvantaged groups may need specific and additional guidance, including single mothers, especially those receiving public assistance, as well as displaced homemakers. These are individuals—usually women—who had been providing unpaid services to family members but who lose their primary means of financial support. This might happen through the loss of a spouse by death or divorce. They may face difficulty finding paid employment, with outdated skills, lack of work experience, or facing other barriers.

Supportive services

Case managers also should help women to receive the supportive services such as child care and transportation assistance that they need to get to work or school, and help these working learners combine work and family responsibilities with training or school.²⁵ Few women currently receive any supportive service—less than 10 percent of adult WIA exiters—although for single parents who receive intensive or training services, 3 in 10 do.²⁶

Supportive services are crucial to success. One national survey of WIA service providers indicated that “lack of adequate child care often or very often prevented women clients from succeeding in training programs.”²⁷ Yet supportive services are provided through WIA funding only if such services are unavailable through another program. Case managers could play a role here to help women navigate other programs and obtain necessary supportive services.

Needs-related payments also are allowed for WIA clients enrolled in training programs, but there is no dedicated funding or federally required portion of funding meant for these payments. Less than 1 percent of female adult and dislocated worker WIA exiters received needs-related payments in program year 2008, as did only 2 percent of those single parents who received intensive or training services.²⁸ Local workforce boards may determine how—and whether—to provide such payments, although the Department of Labor “encourage[s] states to establish policies that ensure supportive services and needs-related payments.”²⁹

To find the right supports for their clients, WIBs will need to do some significant problem-solving, customizing solutions to the issue at hand. A review of local WIBs’ practices that work well for women found many that go the extra mile to help their clients succeed. These additional efforts include, for example, a door-to-door van in a county with a poor bus system or helping get grant money to child care centers so there would be more capacity for female WIA clients’ children.³⁰ All WIBs should be this diligent.

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Outreach

Targeted outreach by local One-Stops to get more women and other disadvantaged groups in the door while they are employed would help overcome the current WIA focus on crisis intervention. Experts suggest that it is best for workers to upgrade skills while they are still working and have an income.³¹ Workers should not wait until they are unemployed to consider WIA services because they are more likely to simply want new employment—even if it does not pay well or does not offer a career ladder. Yet currently-employed workers who could benefit from WIA services or training are unlikely to seek out WIA services. In fact, the vast majority of WIA participants (over 80 percent of Adult exiters and over 95 percent of Dislocated Worker exiters) are unemployed when they enter the program.³²

One-Stops need to be ahead of the game. Approaching potential WIA clients while they are still working would help ensure that training and education are begun at a time of strength, with income, rather than a time of desperation, like unemployment. Targeted outreach to workers could be done through union partners, local businesses, or trade associations in need of skilled workers—groups that may have access to low-skilled workers on a regular basis. Other creative avenues could include accessing workers through community centers or community-based organizations, parents of children in child-care facilities, or customers of other state or local government offices that provide services to women struggling to make ends meet. Any outreach program not targeted to women should set goals for a minimum recruitment of women.

Because outreach can be particularly costly, the use of innovative technologies to find and recruit women and other disadvantaged groups would be prudent. These could include links from local newspapers' online classifieds to local WIBs' websites where people could get information about available training programs, with some web pages dedicated to women and the potential of nontraditional employment. Local WIBs might also establish email-based distribution of notices about (high-paying) employment opportunities or training programs. Because information is a major barrier in moving women into higher-paying, especially nontraditional jobs, online systems could be tooled to provide at least preliminary information to a wide audience, as well as targeted audiences.

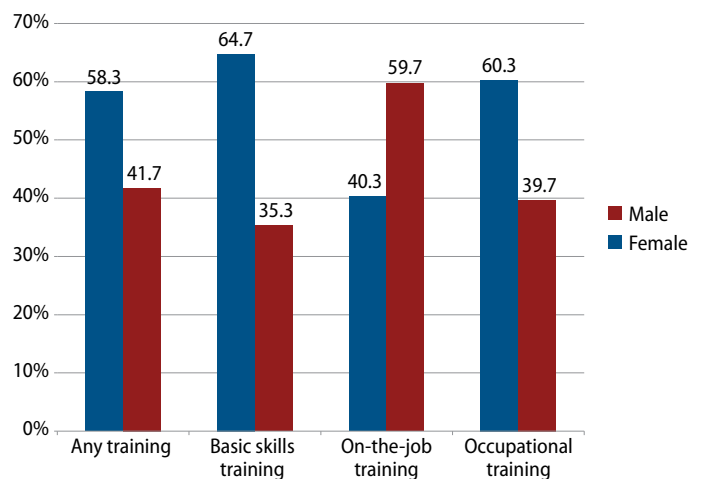
Training and postsecondary education

WIA programs should and can be a bridge to postsecondary education for working learners, becoming a pathway to the middle-skills jobs that are now and will be in the future in high demand. These middle-skills jobs require postsecondary education, or education beyond high school, but less than a bachelor's degree. Further, to have a successful career and earn family-sustaining wages in today's economy frequently requires postsecondary education.³³

Alas, WIA currently incentivizes quick job placement and employment crisis intervention over skills-building, training, or other advancement. The sequence of services (see box on page 11) that allows training only for those who are unable to find work through lesser services is a major contributor to this crisis intervention approach. This sequencing instills a “work-first” mentality and disincentivizes One-Stops from providing many WIA clients with job training,³⁴ and it should be eliminated.

Of the three levels of services offered by WIA programs, training results in the greatest earnings gain for exiters,³⁵ and education generally translates into higher wages. Yet less than 16 percent of female WIA clients received training in program year 2008.³⁶ Although women are more likely to receive any training than men (16 percent versus 11 percent), clients receiving basic skills training, such as English and math, were more likely to be women, while those receiving more lucrative on-the-job training were more likely to be men (see Figure 4). Occupational training is by far the largest category of training, representing over 90 percent of female Adult exiters receiving any training.³⁷ Usually classroom-based, occupational training

FIGURE 4
Gender distribution of adult WIA exiters receiving training



Source: Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Table II-13 (2010).

varies greatly, from basic computer skills to office etiquette, to how to work with children to auto body repair, and more advanced skills. Thus it is difficult to say if women and men experience different levels or types of training within occupational training.

WIA should be encouraging training and postsecondary education to as many clients as possible. There are currently no minimum or other requirements for what portion of WIA funding should be spent on training—meaning there is competition for funding among administrative, training, overhead, and other expenses—and there is wide variability in states and localities.³⁸ Such a minimum should be set in the future to ensure that an acceptable portion of funds are spent on training. A set portion of training funds should be reserved for vulnerable clients, such as low-income workers, displaced homemakers, welfare recipients, and clients without any postsecondary education. Federal, state, and local policymakers and WIA program managers must be aware that for a working learner, especially a single parent, a one-year full-time training or education program may take considerably more time to complete part time—during which time continued supportive services and funding may be necessary.

Within activities to move WIA clients into postsecondary training, One-Stop staff should do so with an eye to putting clients on formal career pathways—that is, linked employment and training programs designed to prepare participants for the next level of employment and education.³⁹ Career pathways exist with the participation of many actors, including businesses and in many cases unions, so they are not available in every industry in every locality. Where career pathways are available, a focus on gender is still important because they tend to be in male-dominated professions like the building trades,⁴⁰ and because women’s jobs, even with a career pathway, pay less than men’s jobs.

A certificate or degree with labor market value should be a requirement of any training program. This would provide working learners with a recognized, portable credential that can be relied on if a worker faces unemployment, signals to potential employers the student’s skills and appropriate wage, and is available for a student to use to receive credit in future educational programs.

In line with the case management and outreach described above, a concerted effort should be made to recruit women for training or education leading to nontraditional occupations, or NTOs. As University of Illinois-Chicago professor Sharon Mastracci, who has researched the effectiveness of NTO training, explains, “To train women for NTOs is to prepare them for rewarding, remunerative

careers.”⁴¹ While states currently must describe how they will serve clients training for nontraditional occupations,⁴² states also should be required to proactively work toward desegregation in training and employment, and equal earnings between men and women. States should be required to set a minimum percentage of WIA clients who will receive nontraditional occupational training or be placed in nontraditional jobs, and increase that percentage gradually. (Such data should be an outcome measure as well, as discussed later in this report.)

It is clear that the current passive approach does not reduce occupational segregation. WIA services, including training, perpetuate occupational segregation and the low earnings of women. As noted, very few women now enter nontraditional employment after participating in a WIA program, including training, and the top occupations for female WIA trainees are heavily female-dominated jobs, with at least 7 of the top 10 more than 85 percent female (see Table 1 on page 7).

In the future, states should intentionally work against such outcomes by setting goals for training in nontraditional jobs and activities that will reduce occupational segregation and the gender wage gap. Goals and outcome data should be disaggregated by gender because more men train for traditionally female jobs (primarily in health care) than do women for traditionally male jobs. One-Stop staff, as well as staff of training programs, should receive their own training and technical assistance about the benefits of nontraditional occupations, equal opportunity, and what women need once they are in training programs to be successful, including encouragement, mentoring, and tools to handle sexual harassment or other challenges on the job or in the classroom.

WIBs should also look to pre-apprenticeship programs, contracting classes specifically targeted or tailored to women, and other means to engage women and give them equal opportunity for training in lucrative jobs, such as electricians, computer technicians, or construction-related jobs.

Training for nontraditional occupations will not always be the answer, however. Some women will simply not want to go this route, regardless of what encouragement or supports they might receive to do so. And not every traditionally female occupation has a dim future: some nursing jobs and other health care professions can be relatively well-paying and they are expected to be in great demand in the coming decades. But especially because of the challenges of this field—requiring more training for a high wage than other occupations, and simply being difficult work—women should not simply be shuttled into the health care field without a full assessment to determine if that is the best option for them.

In the future, states should intentionally work against such outcomes by setting goals for training in nontraditional jobs and activities that will reduce occupational segregation and the gender wage gap.

Making training and education affordable

If local and state WIA programs succeed through case management to place many more clients in postsecondary education or training programs then there will be a need for adequate funding, especially for low-income women or displaced homemakers and other groups that do not have any or enough income to cover tuition and living expenses at the same time. This section discusses financing mechanisms that help cover WIA clients' expenses beyond the needs-based payments discussed above. These mechanisms must work to ensure women receive the services they need.

Currently, Workforce Investment Boards help WIA clients purchase training and education by providing them with Individual Training Accounts, or ITAs, which are vouchers that eligible WIA clients can use to purchase training or educational services. ITAs are “established” at the discretion of local-level staff. Local WIBs usually limit the amount of time participants can spend in training as well as the amount of the ITAs.⁴³

Some WIBs (an estimated 18 percent according to a 2005 report by the Government Accountability Office) require that the amount of ITAs should cover the costs of supportive services.⁴⁴ This is bound to disproportionately affect those clients with the greatest need for supportive services, especially single parents. The use of ITAs for supportive services could be good or bad, depending on how this is implemented, so this is a practice that should be applied carefully to ensure it is not counterproductive.

On the negative side, with monetary limits on ITAs and the high costs of child care, there may not be enough money left over to pay for a quality training program or degree. On the plus side, *allowing* clients to use ITAs for supportive services may introduce a degree of flexibility that could be beneficial for some. At a minimum, WIBs that utilize this practice of requiring ITAs to cover supportive services should increase the amount of the ITA by the amount needed for the supportive service.

Beyond funding, local WIBs are also responsible for developing the list of eligible training providers available to recipients of ITAs. Unfortunately, the ITA system has meant that some effective trainers, particularly community-based organizations and

community colleges, have opted out or been effectively forced out of providing ITA-funded training.⁴⁵ These organizations may not be in a position to take the cash flow risks associated with the ITA-based payment system, for instance if not enough ITA recipients enroll in the class to cover the cost of providing the training. Second, onerous reporting requirements may necessitate more effort than is possible on the part of understaffed organizations. The withdrawal of these organizations from the list of eligible training providers limits the options of WIA clients.

Further, the focus on eligible training providers may harm women in particular. The ITA voucher system relies on appropriate training already being available, rather than encouraging tailored programs for a particular group of workers or employers.⁴⁶ This may especially hurt women who could benefit from tailored classes, such as a class that would train them for nontraditional employment. In certain circumstances, however, local WIBs may be allowed to fund training under contract. These include: on-the-job training or if the local WIB determines that a community-based organization is effective at serving specific populations that face multiple barriers to employment, including ex-offenders or the homeless or “hard-to-serve populations as defined by the Governor.”⁴⁷ This avenue, which helps overcome gaps in the ITA system and/or meets the specific needs of specific populations, should be explored by WIBs regarding local programs that focus on training for women in nontraditional jobs.

In addition, some WIBs require a guarantee of employment prior to providing funding for training, although this practice may not be very common.⁴⁸ Again, this will only disadvantage those most in need of training, including women who may seek nontraditional training but cannot find an offer of employment from potentially skeptical employers. This practice should be avoided as well, or an alternative mechanism should be found for women seeking nontraditional employment or facing particular challenges to finding an employer before succeeding in training.

Finally, trainers and schools available to WIA clients using ITAs must be approved by local WIBs, but the quality of the education can still be questionable. The Government Accountability Office states that “little is known on a national level about the outcomes of those being trained.”⁴⁹ Further, Congress, as well as case managers, must also keep an eye on the use of student loans that may be used by some WIA clients to supplement ITAs, as well as on the quality and earnings outcomes of training programs to which they refer students. This is especially important given the difficulty to discharge student debt, even in cases of hardship, and in light of recent reports indicating growing numbers of students of for-profit trade schools drowning in debt they cannot afford on low posteducation wages.⁵⁰

Performance measures and data

Several improvements to official measures of WIA program performance could particularly help women clients by better incentivizing the goals discussed above, better evaluating the progress of WIA participants, and ensuring that even difficult cases are served.

Currently, WIA measures success by rate of placement in (any) employment, employment retention rate, and average earnings.⁵¹ Congress should mandate three other performance measures: achievement of, or surpassing, self-sufficiency earnings, placement and retention in nontraditional jobs or completion of training for nontraditional employment, and credential attainment. Measures are important not just for analysis and record-keeping, but also as an incentive for states to focus on the variable to be measured and reported.

States' success should be measured, in part, by how many WIA participants enter into nontraditional employment and/or a nontraditional training program, complete that program, and retain employment in a nontraditional job. This data should be disaggregated by gender, since many states actually train or place more men in nontraditional employment than women.

Making nontraditional employment a formal performance measure would also make states eligible for incentive grants that are tied to exceeding expected levels of performance.⁵² For instance, local WIBs that place a minimum portion of their female clients into nontraditional occupations could receive a monetary bonus, perhaps 10 percent of their budget or equal to the amount of that WIB's average ITA for each client placed in nontraditional training or employment.

Self-sufficiency is an extremely important indicator for unmarried women, and it should be a central measure of WIA's success. While the WIA statute references "self-sufficiency," it does not offer a definition, nor does it require relevant data collection or include the concept in performance measures. Under the WIA statute, state and local WIBs must set their own definition of self-sufficiency, although

Measures are important not just for analysis and record-keeping, but also as an incentive for states to focus on the variable to be measured and reported.

at a minimum it means employment that pays at least the lower living standard income level, which is developed by the secretary of labor.⁵³

This lower living standard income level, while varied by region and metropolitan status, does not incorporate many of the elements common in self-sufficiency standards, which determine necessary income by family size and ages of children in order to meet the local costs of housing, food, transportation, child care, out-of-pocket health care, and taxes without public subsidies. Self-sufficiency standards exist in 40 states and have been adopted by many workforce boards, many of these based on nongovernmental groups' research and calculations.⁵⁴

Congress should require that states develop standards for self-sufficiency, or adopt a standard created by a non-governmental organization, and it should make achieving or surpassing family-based self-sufficiency an additional outcome measure.

The share of WIA clients who attain credentials should also be a measure of success, specifically completion of an appropriate training or educational program that offers a recognizable certificate or degree with labor market value. This would incentivize WIBs to move more clients into training and education, rather than quickly into any new job. Credential attainment is a "core indicator" listed in the WIA statute, but it is not a "common measure"—one of the three measures listed above, employment, retention, and earnings—and thus it is not a required measure of states' performance. Most Department of Labor and other publications about WIA performance focus only on the three "common measures."⁵⁵

In general, performance should be measured by distance traveled, such as by intermediate performance measures, in addition to outcome reached. This would fit well with the concept of career pathways, which have so called stackable credentials and definitive milestones, each leading to the next level of learning and work skills. For credential attainment, for example, an intermediate measure could be completing basic education for those who need it, or for those with the lowest skills. Intermediate measures will allow these milestones to count as a success for the client and the WIB.

Intermediate measures would also help prevent a perverse result of the current performance measures—the practice of "creaming." To make their outcome numbers better, some local WIBs prioritize those WIA clients who are more likely to be successful, making the WIB's performance measures look as good as possible.⁵⁶ By creaming, clients that are harder to serve are left out, including women and others who may require more time, money, or effort on the part of One-Stop staff.

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WIA outcome measures also do not take into consideration the difficulties of serving disadvantaged clients, which penalizes WIBs that do focus on these clients compared to WIBs that focus on those easier to serve.⁵⁷ Using starting point baselines and intermediate measures in performance measures would reduce the disincentive to focus on short-term solutions or outcomes. Yet given the consistently disparate earnings outcomes of men and women, separate measures should be developed that will account for starting points, but measure equitability of outcomes for clients by gender, race, and other attributes.

Finally, future improvements to the WIA system and better tracking of participants would be possible with better data and information. The primary source of information about WIA clients, the *Workforce Investment Act Standardized Record Data* database, or WIASRD, should be more extensive. For instance, there is very limited information about WIA exiters' occupations because there is little follow-up by localities and because outcome data is obtained from computerized wage data that does not include occupation. Even occupation data for those receiving training services is available for only 60 percent of trainees.⁵⁸ This makes tracking and analyzing gender segregation (and other inequalities) difficult. Obtaining detailed, individualized outcome data is no doubt a challenge, but follow-up, surveys, and other methods should be utilized. Good outcome data is crucial for evaluation of the effectiveness of WIA programs.

Demographic data should also be gathered for all WIA clients, and information on clients' experience with WIA, including services obtained and outcome measures, should be provided for certain groups, such as single parents, both as a whole and broken down by type of service received. Currently, the data do not reflect what proportion of *all* WIA exiters are low-income, single parents, or receiving public assistance. This information is only available for WIA clients receiving intensive or training services. Demographic data should include marital status and/or the size of a client's household, family, or similar economic unit, in addition to information like gender and age. This will allow policymakers and advocates to better ensure that those with the greatest challenges have their needs met.

Conclusion

Women, and especially unmarried women, clearly need our policymakers and workforce investment system to work more proactively for their workforce development needs. With lower incomes and a greater likelihood of supporting a family on that one income, low-income, unmarried women need access to postsecondary education, career pathways, and high-wage, high-demand occupations, including traditionally male occupations. They also need the workforce development system to pay attention to gender in terms of participation and outcomes, including occupational segregation and the gender wage gap.

This report outlines many ways that policymakers could improve the federal Workforce Investment Act so that WIA programs work better for women. A number of strategies that state and local WIBs and other programs might adopt are also discussed. These include:

- Setting goals for gender parity in participation and outcomes
- Utilizing counseling and case management to provide the options and support that women need to enter better jobs
- Using WIA as a path to career pathways and credentialed postsecondary education
- Ensuring the affordability and availability of appropriate education and training programs
- Reforming performance measures and data collection for the WIA program

Most of the recommendations discussed in this report would intentionally focus on moving low-income women into training programs for nontraditional occupations. Many of these recommendations are also included in pending legislation, the Women and Workforce Investment for Nontraditional Jobs Act (Women WIN Jobs Act), introduced by Reps. Jared Polis of Colorado and Rosa DeLauro of Connecticut. This act would provide \$100 million in federal funding to partnerships between community-based organizations, employers, and qualified training or educational institutions.

These partnerships would recruit, train, and retain low-income women in high-wage, high-demand fields that are nontraditional for their gender. As envisioned in the bill, partnerships would include career counseling; training and postsecondary education, including pre-apprenticeships; supportive services; public education and outreach; post-job placement supports such as mentoring; and other supports aimed specifically at increasing women's employment in nontraditional, high-demand occupations leading to self-sufficiency. The proposed legislation would result in many programs around the country targeted to women, and it would establish a clearinghouse of best practices used in partnerships that would be valuable long into the future.

As Congress debates the contents of a Workforce Investment Act reauthorization package and what changes may be made, it should incorporate the Women WIN Jobs Act, as well as the recommendations of this report. With these measures, we could put millions of women workers on the path to self-sufficiency while addressing the nation's need for a skilled, qualified, and innovative workforce.

Endnotes

- 1 Louis Soares, "Working Learners—Educating our entire workforce for success in the 21st century" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2009).
- 2 See Ariane Hegewisch, "The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation" (Institute for Women's Policy Research, April 2010).
- 3 Figures are provided for the portion of total women receiving training in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs combined; in the Adult program, 14.5 percent of women received training, as did 19.4 percent of women in the Dislocated Worker program. See Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-29, II-35, III-33, and III-38 (2010), available at http://www.doleta.gov/Performance/results/pdf/PY_2008_WIASRD_Data_Book_FINAL_1192010.pdf. Nontraditional occupations for women are defined as those in which fewer than 25 percent of jobs are held by women (Department of Labor, "Quick Facts on Nontraditional Occupations for Women" (2009), available at <http://www.dol.gov/wb/factsheets/nontra2008.htm>).
- 4 Harry Holzer and Robert Lerman, "America's Forgotten Middle-Skill Jobs," Skills 2 Compete (2007); and Harry Holzer, "Is the Middle of the U.S. Job Market Really Disappearing?" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2010).
- 5 Davis Jenkins, "Career Pathways: Aligning Public Resources to Support Individual and Regional Economic Advancement in the Knowledge Economy" (Workforce Strategy Center, 2006), available at <http://www.workforcestrategy.org/publications.html>. See also discussion in Harry Holzer and Demetra Nightingale, "Strong Students, Strong Workers," (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2009), available at http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/12/pdf/strong_students.pdf.
- 6 One million is the number of exiters; many more enter the One-Stops but are not logged in as WIA clients (The Workforce Alliance, "Training Policy in Brief" (2007), available at http://www.national-skillscoalition.org/federal-policies/workforce-investment-act/wia-documents/trainingpolicyinbrief_2007_chaper1.pdf).
- 7 Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Table II-29. Average earnings for exiters receiving training is not available by gender.
- 8 Institute for Women's Policy Research, "Fact Sheet: The Gender Wage Gap: 2009" (March 2010), available at <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C350.pdf>.
- 9 Ariane Hegewisch and Helen Luyri, "The Workforce Investment Act and Women's Progress: Does WIA Funded Training Reinforce Sex Segregation in the Labor Market and the Gender Wage Gap?" (Washington: Institute for Women's Policy Research, 2010), available at <http://www.iwpr.org/pdf/C372WIA.pdf>.
- 10 Information obtained from Department of Labor, on file with author; data covers only 60 percent of WIA exiters who received training (Personal communication from Karen Staha, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, June 4, 2010). For detailed information about wages by gender and occupation in the national workforce, see Ariane Hegewisch, "The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation."
- 11 Information obtained from Department of Labor, on file with author; data covers only 60 percent of WIA exiters who received training (Personal communication from Karen Staha, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, June 4, 2010). Computer support specialists are not technically non-traditional jobs for women, as 28 percent of these jobs in the national workforce are held by women (Bureau of Labor Statistics, "Women in the Labor Force: A Databook (2009)," available at <http://www.bls.gov/cps/wlftable11.htm>).
- 12 Occupational data is available only if the local area is able to do follow-up or has some reason to know about a WIA exiter's job; there is no rule and the availability of this information varies from locality to locality and state to state (Personal communication from Karen Staha, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, June 4, 2010).
- 13 Information obtained from Department of Labor, on file with author.
- 14 Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-29, II-35, III-33, III-38. There is some variation by state in nontraditional employment. In 11 states at least 5 percent of female WIA exiters in either the Adult or Dislocated Worker program entered nontraditional employment, and in three states, roughly 15 percent or higher of women did so in one of those two programs. The 11 states are Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Idaho, Michigan, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, Utah, Vermont, and Wyoming. The three states are Alaska, Idaho, and Montana. There is nothing to indicate these three states have a particular focus on women; it may be a result of their large extractive industries. In those 11 and in an additional six states, at least 5 percent of female exiters receiving training in either the Adult or Dislocated Worker programs entered nontraditional employment; the additional six states are Maine, Mississippi, Missouri, North Dakota, Oklahoma, and West Virginia. For state data see Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book [State]," (2010), Tables II-29, II-36, III-33, and III-38, available at http://www.doleta.gov/Performance/results/WIASRD_state_data_2008.cfm, based on CAP analysis of individual state reports).
- 15 Hegewisch, "The Gender Wage Gap by Occupation."
- 16 Soares, "Working Learners—Educating our entire workforce for success in the 21st century."
- 17 For a review of WIBs that do emphasize services to women, see Wider Opportunities for Women, "Reality Check: Promoting Self-Sufficiency in the Public Workforce System—Working with Women, Youth and Ex-Offenders," available at <http://www.wowonline.org/resources/documents/RealityCheck2.pdf>.
- 18 Such a system was discussed in a recent CAP report: Vicki Choitz, Louis Soares, and Rachel Pleasants, "A New National Approach to Career Navigation for Working Learners" (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2010).
- 19 Wider Opportunities for Women, "Women and Nontraditional Work," available at <http://www.wowonline.org/publicpolicy/documents/womennontradsheet2005.pdf>.

- 20 Such practices are described in Cynthia Negrey and others, "Working First But Working Poor: The Need for Education & Training Following Welfare Reform" (Washington: Institute for Women's Policy Research, a report to NOW Legal Defense and Education Fund, 2002); and Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Substantial Funds Are Used for Training, but Little Is Known Nationally about Training Outcomes," GAO-05-650, Report to Congressional Requesters (June 29, 2005), available at <http://www.gao.gov/new.items/d05650.pdf>.
- 21 Negrey and others, "Working First But Working Poor." Coordination between TANF and WIA is fairly common; thirty states have TANF services on-site at one-stop centers. See Sigurd R. Nilsen, Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Additional Actions Would Further Improve the Workforce System," Testimony before the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, June 28, 2007.
- 22 Negrey and others, "Working First but Working Poor."
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Soares, "Working Learners."
- 25 In WIA, "The term 'supportive services' means services such as transportation, child care, dependent care, housing, and needs-related payments, that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized" (*Workforce Investment Act of 1998*, Public Law 220, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (August 7, 1998), Section 112, available at <http://www.doleta.gov/usworkforce/wia/wialaw.pdf>).
- 26 Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-18 and II-23. Female dislocated worker exiters were more likely to receive supportive services, at 11.5 percent (Table III-21).
- 27 As described in Women Work, "Women Work! Recommendations" (2008), available at <http://www.womenwork.org/policy/WIArecom-mendations112408.pdf>.
- 28 Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-18, II-23, III-21, and III-25.
- 29 US Department of Labor, "FY2011 Congressional Budget Justification, Employment and Training Administration, Training and Employment Services," available at <http://www.dol.gov/dol/budget/2011/PDF/CBJ-2011-V1-04.pdf>.
- 30 Wider Opportunities for Women, "Reality Check: Promoting Self-Sufficiency in the Public Workforce System—Working with Women, Youth and Ex-Offenders."
- 31 Vicki Choitz, Louis Soares, Rachel Pleasants, "A New National Approach to Career Navigation for Working Learners," (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2010).
- 32 Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-5 and III-7.
- 33 Soares, "Working Learners."
- 34 George Scott, Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Labor Has Made Progress in Addressing Areas of Concern, but More Focus Needed on Understanding What Works and What Doesn't," GAO 09-396T, Testimony before the Subcommittee on Higher Education, Lifelong Learning and Competitiveness, Committee on Education and Labor, House of Representatives, February 26, 2009.
- 35 Carolyn Heinrich, Peter Mueser, and Kenneth Troske, "Workforce Investment Act Non-Experimental Net Impact Evaluation—Final Report," IMPAQ International, 2008, available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/research/FullText_Documents/Workforce%20Investment%20Act%20Non-Experimental%20Net%20Impact%20Evaluation%20-%20Final%20Report.pdf; and Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-35 and III-38.
- 36 Figure is provided for the portion of total women receiving training in the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs combined; in the Adult Program, 14.5 percent of women received training, as did 19.4 percent of women in the Dislocated Worker Program (Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Tables II-18 and III-21).
- 37 Social Policy Research Associates, "PY 2008 WIASRD Data Book," Table II-13.
- 38 The Government Accountability Office has estimated that local WIBs spend about 40 percent of their total available WIA funding to obtain training services (Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Substantial Funds Are Used for Training, but Little Is Known Nationally about Training Outcomes").
- 39 Jenkins, "Career Pathways."
- 40 Susan Crandall and Surabhi Jain, "New Directions in Workforce Development: Do They Lead to Gains for Women?" *New England Journal of Public Policy* (22) (1 and 2) (2007). The authors review a study of six sectoral initiatives that did not aim to reduce occupational segregation. They find that while the wages of both men and women rose, the average wages of women after 2 years of training was less than men's average starting salary: "Even after two years of successful education and training and the resulting wage gains, the average female participant was still earning less than the average male participant who had yet to do his first hour of training" (p. 89).
- 41 Sharon Mastracci, "Employment and Training Alternatives for Non-College Women: Do Redistributive Policies Really Redistribute?" *The Policy Studies Journal* (31) (4) (2003).
- 42 *Workforce Investment Act of 1998*, Public Law 220, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (August 7, 1998), Section 112.
- 43 Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Substantial Funds Are Used for Training, but Little Is Known Nationally about Training Outcomes."
- 44 Ibid.
- 45 The Workforce Alliance, "Training Policy in Brief" (2007); and Kathleen Shaw and Sara Rab, "Market Rhetoric versus Reality in Policy and Practice: The Workforce Investment Act and Access to Community College Education and Training," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* (586) (2003).
- 46 Louis Soares, "Working for a Living, Learning for the Future," (Washington: Center for American Progress, 2010).
- 47 Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Substantial Funds Are Used for Training, but Little Is Known Nationally about Training Outcomes"; and The Workforce Alliance, "Training Policy in Brief" (2007).
- 48 Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Substantial Funds Are Used for Training, but Little Is Known Nationally about Training Outcomes." This practice was seen at 1 of 8 local WIBs that the researchers visited.
- 49 Government Accountability Office, "Workforce Investment Act: Substantial Funds Are Used for Training, but Little Is Known Nationally about Training Outcomes."
- 50 Peter S. Goodman, "In Hard Times, Lured Into Trade School and Debt," *The New York Times*, March 13, 2010, available at <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/03/14/business/14schools.html>.
- 51 Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, "Common Measures At-a-Glance," available at http://wdr.doleta.gov/directives/attach/TEGL17-05_AttachA.pdf. While additional outcomes data is collected, there are irregularities among states and localities, and only formal performance measures are associated with state-level goals and incentives like rewards, and only performance measures gain significant attention.

52 *Workforce Investment Act of 1998*, Public Law 220, 105th Cong., 1st sess. (August 7, 1998), Section 503.

53 Lower living standard income level is available for 2009 in *Federal Register* 74 (57) (March 26, 2009): 13262-13266, available at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/pdf/E9-6618.pdf>.

54 Personal communication with Susan Rees, Wider Opportunities for Women, May 7, 2010. See also Wider Opportunities for Women, “Reality Check: Promoting Self-Sufficiency in the Public Workforce System—A Promising Practices Guide for Workforce Boards” (2008), available at http://www.insightcced.org/uploads/publications/wd/WOWReality_Check.pdf. Most WIBs use a higher standard than the federal minimum, including the WOW Self-Sufficiency Standard. The WOW standard “is a measure of how much income families need to cover their basic costs, depending on where they live and who is in their family. The standard adds up the costs of housing, child care, food transportation, health care, and taxes, and subtracts out tax credits to calculate the income a family would need for long-term economic self-sufficiency—assuming no public or private

supports or subsidies.” A self-sufficiency standard differs from the more common poverty threshold, which is based on the food budget proportion of a household budget, adjusted for inflation since the threshold’s creation in the early 1960s. The poverty guideline is widely considered inadequate and outdated.

55 See for example, Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration, “Workforce Investment Act Adult Program,” available at http://www.doleta.gov/Performance/results/quarterly_report/Dec_31_2009/WSR_Report_WIA.pdf.

56 Shaw and Rab, “Market Rhetoric versus Reality in Policy and Practice”; and Sharon Mastracci, “Employment and Training Alternatives for Non-College Women: Do Redistributive Policies Really Redistribute?”

57 Shaw and Rab, “Market Rhetoric versus Reality in Policy and Practice.”

58 Personal communication from Karen Staha, Employment and Training Administration, Department of Labor, June 4, 2010.

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