

## Job Access



T H R E E R I V E R S

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

TRWIB, Inc.

REGIONAL ENTERPRISE TOWER • SUITE 650 • PITTSBURGH, PA 15219 • p: 412.552.7090 • f: 412.552.7091

### Issue

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With many new entry-level jobs located in suburban areas, low-income and/or welfare recipients have difficulties accessing these jobs from urban and rural neighborhoods on a daily basis. Many employment-related trips are complex, often involving multiple destinations, including reaching childcare facilities and other services as part of the work trip. Many entry-level jobs require working late at night or on weekends when conventional transit services are either reduced or non-existent.

### Regional Approach

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Three key local organizations (the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB), Port Authority of Allegheny County, and the Southwestern Pennsylvania Commission), with funding assistance from The Pittsburgh Foundation, formed The Access to Work Interagency Cooperative (ATWIC) in 1997. ATWIC's responsibility is to coordinate efforts and produce integrated and effective public transportation solutions for the region's workforce.

The Job Access and Reverse Commute (JARC) funds were established as part of federal transportation act TEA-21 to address the unique transportation challenges faced by welfare recipients and low-income persons seeking to attain and retain jobs. JARC funds are matched by state and local resources. ATWIC immediately saw the importance of these funds and since 1999 has facilitated the development and implementation of over a dozen JARC transportation and transportation coordination initiatives **securing over \$50,000,000** in federal, state and local resources for the southwestern PA region.

### JARC Outcomes

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In 2008 alone, 10 JARC projects totaling **\$8,958,302 served over 900,000** customers throughout the 10-county southwestern PA region (\$9.95 per customer). JARC projects present a variety of services to low-income individuals including: adjusting bus routes based on economic development, on-demand shuttles, community vans, travel training and instruction, bus pass distributions, and planning activities.

### Needs

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#### **Dedicated funding for public transportation (including JARC program)**

- The state match needed for JARC funds can be found in PennDOT's budget under the line item "Projects of Statewide Significance".
- Access to public transportation is essential for the region's economic health and prosperity: it connects workers to jobs, and customers to businesses.
- Public transit supports and stimulates business development around transit centers. Not having a long-term public transportation funding commitment means the state sacrifices significant federal funding (capital projects, JARC funds, etc.).



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Workforce development has taken center stage with an historic presidency, the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, the focus on green jobs and a vast number of job losses. Through national dialogue with the United States Conference of Mayors, the National Center on Education and the Economy, and the United States Department of Labor, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania and the Three Rivers Workforce Investment Board (TRWIB) are ready for the challenge. Three main changes to the workforce development system are being discussed at a national level and TRWIB is at the forefront of each.

### **1) Align the education system with the workforce development system to facilitate career pathways.**

- a. Funding from general revenues appropriated by the General Assembly through the Rendell administration's Job Ready PA program allows TRWIB to operate in 22 Allegheny County school districts to increase career awareness.
- b. TRWIB secured a United States Department of Labor grant to develop recommendations for educational pathways for students who have dropped out of school or are at risk of dropping out.
- c. TRWIB convenes post-secondary education providers to discuss the needs for remediation by students in post-secondary education or training.
- d. TRWIB recognizes the importance of career and technical education and is working to promote careers from these institutions as viable options to gain family sustaining wages.
- e. TRWIB has developed work ready competencies that are being used to measure all youth participating in city of Pittsburgh workforce development programs.

### **2) Increase training to high demand occupations and increase sector initiatives.**

- a. Funding from general revenues appropriated by the General Assembly through the Rendell administration's Job Ready PA program have offered training opportunities to 6,300 companies in PA representing 20 industries. 3,000 people in Allegheny County received training from these funds.
- b. PA produces a high priority occupation list used for public training funds. Based on local labor market information, TRWIB will petition to add between 10 and 20 occupations to be sure the list addresses local demand.
- c. TRWIB convenes a Green Jobs Advisory board with over 60 organizations to further refine and implement upcoming opportunities in weatherization, alternative energy, and the greening of jobs.
- d. TRWIB analyzes and communicates labor market information for employers, educators, policy makers, and workforce professionals.

### **3) Increase focus on the hard to serve populations and those in poverty.**

- a. TRWIB implements the Priority of Service policy each year for the use of workforce development funds to be utilized by special populations first and foremost.
- b. The PA Department of Labor and Industry funded TRWIB to help coordinate and serve as the fiscal agent for a grant to Steamfitters Local 449 which trains military veterans for welding jobs in the region's labor unions.
- c. TRWIB has oversight over the PA CareerLink Allegheny County centers. From January 2009 through March 2009 85% of the people looking for assistance were unemployed and 41% were within a special population (veteran, disabled, single parent, offender, public assistance, SSI, etc).
- d. TRWIB oversees Job Access and Reverse Commute funding to ensure individuals can access training opportunities and jobs through public transportation.



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### Issue

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The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has recognized the importance of properly preparing our youth for the workplace of the 21st century. The following policies help facilitate workplace learning either on the business, education or intermediary side.

- Competitive funds are available to school districts through the PA Department of Education, called Project 720, which provides resources to schools who wish to engage in reform efforts.
- The PA Department of Labor and Industry offers Regional Career Education Partnership Grants (RCEP) which provide resources to local intermediaries to connect schools with employers. Since 2006, Allegheny County was awarded \$260,000 for RCEP.
- TRWIB recognizes the importance of career and technical education and is working to promote careers from these institutions as viable options to gain family sustainable wages.
- The U.S. Department of Labor has awarded TRWIB a Multiple Education Pathways Blueprint Grant to develop recommendations for clear and differentiated educational pathways that will serve all students- whether they already dropped out or are at risk of dropping out of the public schools system.

### Regional Approach

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TRWIB currently works with three other Workforce Investment Boards to coordinate activities through the RCEP dollars. Through TRWIB's RCEP program titled Employers and Educators Engaged for Excellence (E4), TRWIB works with 22 Allegheny County school districts to assist teachers and staff in understanding the labor market and the importance of career education.

Employers and Educators Engaged for Excellence (E4)- Outcomes

Since 2006, E4 has operated in 22 (Baldwin-Whitehall, East Allegheny, Elizabeth Forward, Highlands, McKeesport, Northgate, North Hills, Quaker Valley, South Fayette, Sto-Rox, Wilksburg, Chartiers Valley, Cornell, Elizabeth Forward, Fox Chapel, Hampton, Montour, Moon, Pine Richland, Shaler, West Allegheny, Woodland Hills ) Allegheny County school districts and has:

- Assisted 5161 students with career exploration/interest assessment opportunities
- Coordinated 560 job shadows with over 52 neighborhood employers
- E-mentored 80 high school youth
- Taught 155 teachers basic labor market and career education information
- There were 183 new career education activities created in 2008-2009 due to E4
- A.W. Beattie Career Center, a career and technical school located in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, broke ground on a \$20 million dollar renovation after TRWIB provided critical labor market information that enabled the school districts to move forward.

### Needs

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Dedicated funding for career education activities

- Continue to support the RCEP grants which are funded through federal dollars located in the Department of Labor and Industry's budget, to expand TRWIB's E4 program into all 42 school districts in Allegheny County.
- Funding used for career education and development of curriculum to address the Career Education and Work Standards is available in money that has already been allocated to districts from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Districts can use money from professional development, PA-Pact, Accountability Block Grants, Educational Assistance Program, and Special Education dollars to fund these programs.

# Job Ready PA



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## Issue

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Governor Rendell's Job Ready Pennsylvania initiative, an industry-driven workforce development strategy that includes Industry Partnerships, Incumbent Worker Training, Customized Job Training, WEDnet, and the Nurse Shortage Initiative, is having noticeable effects in improving Pennsylvania's competitive position. Because of the support of the General Assembly's budget process, this initiative brings over 1.5 million dollars into Allegheny County for industry partnerships and workforce training initiatives alone.

The Industry Partnership Program was funded at \$15 million in 2008-2009 to further support targeted industries as part of the Governor's Job Ready Pennsylvania initiative. \$5 million dollars was available to assist in strengthening existing partnerships and for the establishment of new partnerships.

## Regional Approach

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In Allegheny County, through TRWIB, there are currently four industry partnerships focusing on the following industries:

- Advanced Materials and Diversified Manufacturing
- Energy
- Business and Financial Services
- Utilities

In 2008-2009 these partnerships received \$1,310,000 through Job Ready PA funding; and through March 31, 2009 have in-kind contributions totaling \$633,493.

## Outcomes of Job Ready PA

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Across Pennsylvania, there are more than **6,300 companies, in 80 active Industry Partnerships, representing 20 industries**, working to close skills gaps and address other workforce challenges. Employees who received training under this initiative during 2005 saw an average increase in their wages of 6.62 percent.

In Allegheny County, through the Industry Partnership Worker Training Program a total of over 3,000 incumbent and newly hired employees have been trained.

## The Need

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### Continued funding for the Job Ready PA Initiative

Pennsylvania's workforce is poised to grow stronger through state programs such as Job Ready PA which boosts workers skills and wages in high priority industries. Continued funding for PA workforce development initiatives is needed. The two line items in particular that are critical to Job Ready PA are:

PA Department of Labor & Industry

Training Activities.....\$12,754,000

Industry Partnerships.....\$ 3,613,000