



Voice - Knowledge - Progress  
For Workforce Development

Good Afternoon Chairpersons Krueger, Pretlow and Honorable Members of the New York Legislature,

Thank you for allowing NYATEP the opportunity to submit written testimony. NYATEP, the statewide workforce development association representing New York's education, job training, adult education, postsecondary and employment providers. NYATEP's members serve over 1.2 million New Yorkers annually in education and employment services, and support thousands of businesses in their regions as they train and employ talent. For the last five years, our members who work directly with the working poor and those in poverty have noted a major hurdle that keeps low-income New Yorkers from economic mobility.

These organizations have indicated that often, despite wanting to pursue career advancement or on the job training, doing so risks an individual or family going above the income eligibility threshold for public assistance programs.

In recent years, New York has seen its allocation of federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) funds decrease significantly. This is the primary funding for the One-Stop Career Centers that are in every county in New York, and provide free employment and training resources to job seekers, especially those with significant barriers to participation in the workforce.

Last year, WIOA funding to New York decreased by \$11.8 million, translating to a \$8.5 million loss in funding for the WDBs, statewide). This year, WIOA funding stands to be reduced by another \$16.7 million (the impact to the WDBs is yet unknown but is expected to be proportional to the previous year). This is not a new development as more than half of the State's local workforce boards will receive less WIOA funds in 2025 than they did in 2019. At a time when the services provided by One-Stop Career Centers are more vital to New Yorkers than ever - particularly those from disadvantaged communities that are underrepresented in the workforce - these funding reductions have implications.

The Governor and Legislative have expressed a willingness to invest in workforce development programming in recent years, however, it must also ensure that the existing workforce development system in New York is not left behind. **Therefore, NYATEP is recommending funding in the amount of \$13 million in supplemental state funding to hold local workforce development boards harmless from reductions in federal WIOA allotment, retroactive to Fiscal Year 2024.**

As you know, the Office of Strategic Workforce Development at Empire State Development was launched in April 2022. Since April of 2022 the Office has announced **only \$60 million** in funding released to several projects of the **\$150 million** set aside for grant funding. While we are

thrilled to see the latest announcement in late 2024 of another set of announcements, we remain cautious, as a number of our members have expressed concerns about payback timing and mixed messaging when it comes to operations and time frames. We appreciate the efforts by the Governor's Office, ESD and OSWFD who have come together and helped our members, but we want to look out for all New Yorkers and New York businesses. This office and funding is critical to the future of the workforce sector statewide. Without a state dedicated investment pipeline, the only workforce funding the state has is from the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. which currently is being looked at with reauthorization and would mean a significant cut to funding, particularly to New York State. **Therefore, we are asking that the Legislature fund the Office of Strategic Workforce Development and spend down the current funding to those that have fit the criteria, applied and been accepted.**

We greatly appreciate your support and advocacy in the past for NYATEP's priorities, including adjusting social services law in the enacted budget for 2023-2024 that included a one-time income disregard for individuals completing an approved employment program. However, we have some concerns with the language requiring individuals are only eligible whose income doesn't exceed the 200% federal poverty level (FPL). We believe this language limits the number of people participating due to the 200% FPL cap and believe it excludes individuals in New York City and Long Island. **We are asking the legislature to include in their One House Budget Proposals bill language that would remove the federal poverty level requirement for recipients where it concerns the one-time disregard of earned income.**

NYATEP fully supports Governor Hochul and Assemblymember Bronson's initiative that would allocate \$10 million in local assistance funding to establish apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in high-demand fields. This initiative will help address workforce shortages, provide sustainable career pathways, and strengthen New York State's economy by ensuring workers receive the necessary training and support to succeed in critical industries.

High-demand occupations across various sectors, including healthcare, technology, advanced manufacturing, and skilled trades, continue to face workforce shortages due to a lack of trained professionals. Traditional education pathways may not be accessible to all job seekers, particularly those from underserved communities. By investing in apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs, New York State can expand workforce readiness, reduce employment barriers, support economic growth in their communities, all while enhancing equity and accessibility for all. **Therefore, we request that the NYS Legislature fully fund the \$10 million investment in local assistance funding to establish apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in high-demand fields.**

The Hochul Administration in 2023, as a result of the recent influx of (New) New Yorkers identified more than 18,000 job openings with nearly 400 employers who are willing to hire migrants and asylum seekers who have attained legal work status in the United States. This has been a particularly priority issue for New York City and other key parts of NYS. Therefore, we are recommending that New York State expand the allowable credentials for these individuals to enter the workforce in New York State and help them fill the thousands of jobs

that are desperately needed. *Therefore, we request that consideration to alleviate restrictions that may have been implemented preventing them from being considered prior.*

Skills training is vital—not only for preparing Mechanics, Plumbers, Service Line Workers and Electricians but also for fostering growth in industries like IT, Semiconductors, Clean Energy, and Advanced Manufacturing. These sectors create the kind of well-paying, high-quality jobs we need to see more of. By providing organizations that support youth and adults with adaptable funding, we can help many more New Yorkers—particularly those who have historically been left behind—access these career opportunities. The true measure of our state’s progress will be how well we help these individuals build and succeed, and stay in New York State.

To that end:

- **Set aside \$13 million in supplemental state funding** to hold local workforce development boards harmless from reductions in federal WIOA allotment, retroactive to Fiscal Year 2024.
- **Annually Fund** the Office of Strategic Workforce Development and **spend down the current funding** to those that have fit the criteria, applied and been accepted.
- For the 2025-2026 Executive Budget please **remove** the following language that states a recipient’s total income shall not be more than 200% of the federal poverty level or **increase the FPL to 400%**. As written, the language limits the number of participants that are on a career pathway to benefit from this income disregard.
- **Fully fund the \$10 million investment in local assistance funding** to establish apprenticeship and pre-apprenticeship programs in high-demand fields.
- **Expand the allowable credentials** for these individuals to enter the workforce in New York State and help them fill the thousands of jobs that are desperately needed. To alleviate restrictions that may have been implemented preventing them from being previously considered.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

If you have any additional questions, do not hesitate to contact Katie Hohman at [katie-hohman@pwh-llc.com](mailto:katie-hohman@pwh-llc.com)