



## 2008 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

### WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

#### ISSUE

The National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) supports sufficient and sustained funding of programs designed to meet the workforce needs of businesses and the training needs of individuals to ensure competition in all sectors within the global marketplace, particularly in the case of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA).

#### RECOMMENDATIONS TO CONGRESS

- Support restoration of funding for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) at FY05 levels to provide increased flexibility for state and local officials to establish broad-based labor market systems using federal job training funds for adults, dislocated workers and youth.
- Ensure various types of employment and training are operated by the existing local workforce delivery system and managed by the Workforce Investment Boards in partnership with locally elected officials.
- Promote regional and market-based approaches to worker training through strategic alliances with the private sector, community leaders and academic institutions.
- Urge the expansion of “green job” opportunities and fully fund this program at the \$50 million level as provided in HR 6 for workforce training for the new “green collar” workforce of the future, which updates traditional workforce development programs to train at-risk/underemployed people in emerging energy and environmental skills.
- Support the inclusion of “Climate Change Worker Training Fund” in S.2191 for clean energy workforce development.
- Encourage development of opportunities in urban and rural regions alike.
- Support real-time training initiatives.
- Coordinate and align resources between human services, housing and workforce development.
- Utilize the training of the current workforce to determine future sectors for workforce development.
- Encourage regional forums to identify and detail plans to support specific workforce development initiatives.

#### BACKGROUND

A trained, readily available workforce is essential to retain existing industries and to attract new ones in America’s communities. Economic development will assist in advancing the competitiveness and quality of life of a community, area, or region through investments in people, physical infrastructure and technology, that create the jobs and wealth, sustainable environments and workforce necessary in the global market place of today. Regional councils, councils of governments and metropolitan planning organizations are leaders in economic development and workforce development, and known for their ability to collaborate and bring diverse change to make a difference economically in an area or region.

The nature of a global marketplace, trade imbalances, aging infrastructure, an expanding service sector and lack of federal and state monies are being felt in all corners of and regions within the United States. Central to the U.S. is economic and community development through expanding jobs and bolstering commerce. However, over the years, significant fragmentation has occurred in our regions due to high unemployment in central cities and job openings becoming more prevalent in suburbia and rural areas, complicated by a lack of adequate transportation options and affordable housing and community infrastructure. Regional approaches, developed and implemented by regional councils in close coordination with all levels of government, are a proven way to meaningfully facilitate funding and project selection, link and build new infrastructure, and promote innovation and entrepreneurship to support the national economy. It is necessary, therefore, that developing and improving regional economies is a priority to build sustainable, workable and livable communities that truly integrate regional economic development strategies – urban, rural, large and small.