

## **Workforce Investment Act Frequently Asked Questions Vol. VI**

### **Background:**

On September 17, 2002, Ohio Department of Job and Family Services administration met with the Department of Labor to discuss several Workforce Investment Act compliance issues involving the Ohio Option. A special set of FAQs were distributed on November 12, 2002, to summarize the meeting's results. As noted in the FAQs, ODJFS is meeting regularly with the County Commissioners Association of Ohio and the Ohio Job and Family Services Directors' Association to identify and discuss options to resolve the compliance issues identified by DOL. These meetings will continue to occur as we work toward resolution.

As these discussions have been happening, two other developments occurred that have caused some speculation about the direction of Ohio's workforce development system.

Early in December, the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) announced a plan to reorganize that includes the creation of an Office of Workforce Development. The purpose of this reorganization is to combine many of the state's employer-based workforce development programs into a single office. This should lead to improved coordination of workforce development services and better program results for employers with new and expanding business opportunities in Ohio. Along with many other state agencies, the Office will help prepare Ohio's workforce for the knowledge-based jobs of the future anticipated by Governor Bob Taft's Third Frontier initiative. The Office will also provide administrative support to the Governor's Ohio Workforce Policy Board to help implement the strategic objectives contained in the AdvanceOhio plan. This plan has been in development for more than a year and is the blueprint for creating a comprehensive workforce development system in Ohio.

A few days later, at the Board's quarterly meeting, a resolution was introduced and tabled to establish a sub-committee that will identify the number of certified full service, comprehensive One Stop centers needed in Ohio. Although the motion was tabled, the Board provided clear direction to Chairman Summers and other members of the sub-committee that it should undertake action related to this matter and be prepared to recommend a course of action at the Board's March 2003 meeting. The Board suggested using ODOD's 12 economic development regions as a framework for determining the number of certified full service, comprehensive One Stop centers needed to serve the needs of Ohio's job seekers and employers. To begin the discussion, the resolution suggested that each region will contain at least three certified full service, comprehensive One Stops centers.

The following Q&A is designed to provide additional information on this issue. The following questions are representative of the many inquiries we have received since these announcements were made.

**Q1. Who are the members of the Governor's Workforce Policy Board One-Stop sub-committee?**

Members of the sub-committee are: ODJFS Director Tom Hayes, Board Chair Mike Summers, Board Vice Chair and Area 7 Board Chair Donna Alvarado, ODOD Director Bruce Johnson and CCAO Executive Director Larry Long.

**Q2. What exactly will the sub-committee decide?**

The sub-committee is charged with determining the number of certified full service, comprehensive One Stop centers in Ohio. Determining factors the sub-committee will consider include local needs, patterns of cooperation, labor market factors, and the effectiveness of what is already in place in each region. These centers will provide the framework for Ohio's One-Stop system and will serve as the locations where State resource investments will be made.

**Q3. Why is the economic development regional map being used as a guide in this exercise?**

These economic development regions were developed based on labor market factors similar to those used to determine local workforce areas under the Workforce Investment Act.

**Q4. Following the ODOD map's regional boundaries, can counties Across over® borders to work on initiatives with counties in another region?**

Yes. The map serves as a basis for determining the number of certified full service One-Stop centers and has not been suggested as a basis for governance structure. There are currently no prohibitions to individual counties aggregating for planning, governance, or service delivery outside these specific regions.

**Q5. How do these recent events affect the Ohio Option compliance discussion that is taking place with OJFSDA and CCAO?**

The discussions taking place around the Ohio Option and related compliance issues are separate from these other items. Discussions regarding the Ohio Option and governance are still taking place and will continue until we reach resolution.

**Q6. Does the Department of Development's decision to create an office devoted to Aworkforce® issues mean ODOD is taking over Ohio's workforce systems program?**

The ODJFS will continue to operate its Office of Workforce Development, which provides a variety of programs and services including not only WIA, but the public labor exchange, migrant and seasonal farmworker programs, work opportunity tax credits, apprenticeship, veterans' programs, and refugee assistance. The Governor's vision for AdvanceOhio promotes the coordination of the State of Ohio's economic development, workforce development, and education and training programs and services at the State levels to meet the needs of Ohio businesses, communities and residents. The ODOD and ODJFS will continue to work closely to accomplish this strategic plan. In addition, we will work to

build and strengthen relationships between State agencies, between State and local governments and between Ohio's employers and State and local workforce development organizations.

**Q7. Is there consideration being given to changing how the state's WIA discretionary funds are used?**

The issues being discussed regarding the use of discretionary funds under WIA relate to clarifying the purpose of investments made from this source. This reflects a change in approaches from considering specific projects on a case-by-case basis to a more focused approach to ensure that projects clearly support the AdvanceOhio goals and objectives. Additionally the Governor's Workforce Policy Board has the opportunity to identify specific resources that will be required to address its ongoing strategic planning initiative as well as support the activities of the individual committees. Amounts necessary for this purpose may be set aside for appropriation by the Board's Executive Committee in a fashion similar to the initial funding allocation that the Board was provided in PY2000.