



Voice - Knowledge - Progress
For Workforce Development

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2023 Legislative Priorities

Income Disregard

In New York and across the country, unemployment benefits and pandemic unemployment assistance are helping millions of people make ends meet, however those who were unemployed or working in temporary or unstable employment prior to COVID-19 will struggle to re-enter the workforce. Prior to COVID-19, 38% of New Yorkers receiving Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) were from working families. As of June 2020, 2.6 million New Yorkers are receiving SNAP and just over 500,000 are receiving Temporary Assistance, and based on current work participation rates 18% of recipients are participating in work. New Yorkers need to get back on their feet as they re-enter the workforce, and there are realistic solutions to help mitigate the impact of earnings gains on “the benefits cliff.”

Request

To increase work participation and decrease poverty of low income workers, the Governor should amend the Social Services Law, Article 5, Title 1, Section 131-A to allow for six month, 100% income disregard for individuals receiving public assistance, SNAP, public assistance recipients who are participating in publicly funded workforce, postsecondary education and employment opportunities. We are asking to keep this proposal and verbiage from the 2023 State of the State Book by Governor Kathy Hochul.

In pilot programs launched by the New York City Human Resources Administration, public assistance recipients are connected to private sector and public sector subsidized employment and receive work readiness, job training and wrap-around work support. The participants earn wages over the course of six months, with no negative impact to their benefits. Around half of the participants, who would have otherwise remained unemployed, have connected to unsubsidized work. This is not unprecedented, in 2018 Massachusetts legislated a 100% income disregard for a six month period to eligible welfare recipients. New York could do the same, helping hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers obtain skills, to work and build a safety net.

Recommendations

- Keep the language as included in the 2023 State of the State Book presented by Kathy Hochul to establish a six-month, 100% income disregard for New York's public assistance recipients participating in publicly funded workforce and postsecondary education programs, and employment opportunities.

Registered Youth Apprenticeship

Young adults are a pool of untapped talent employers can leverage to meet their current and future demands. Structured youth work experience, including pre-apprenticeship, registered apprenticeship and career and technical education (CTE) are a means of addressing the skills and opportunity gaps that have persisted across New York. Per the American Association for Career and Technical Education, "the average high school graduation rate for students concentrating in CTE programs is 93 percent, compared to an average national freshman graduation rate of 80 percent." Youth who have completed an apprenticeship program have averaged \$42,000 in annual earnings, much higher than the \$33,600 average for all 22- to 26-year-olds in the U.S. and 1.5 times the average earnings (\$27,900) of 22- to 26-year-olds with a high school diploma but no bachelor's degree.

Unfortunately, workforce programs and businesses continue to grapple with policies and practices that inhibit their ability to recruit and train young adults. Several consistent issues include the number of hours a minor may work per day and per week, licensure requirements and the lack of clarity related to recruiting young adults under 18 years of age or over 18 years of age without a high school diploma into registered apprenticeship programs. For example, students engaged in work-based learning programs are now required to shuttle back and forth between an employer and school the same day, instead of block scheduling school 2 - 3 days per week and work experience the remainder of the week, saving time, money and allowing students to focus.

Recommendations

- Identify inconsistencies in the law and guidance from the Department of Labor and State Education Department regarding Youth Apprenticeships.
- Convene a task force aimed at identifying and eliminating the policy barriers to recruiting and supporting young adults in work-based learning and apprenticeship, while enrolled in high school or postsecondary education.

Integrated Data System

The need for a thoughtful, integrated workforce development data system is especially timely considering the number of New Yorkers unemployed and without a path forward.

Request

New York can be a national leader for workforce data by investing \$7- \$10 million of State Wagner Peyser funding for an integrated data system that enables workforce professionals to effectively share and manage programs and performance.

Recommendations

Commit state resources and direct state agencies, in collaboration with local stakeholders (e.g., employers, workforce training providers, and colleges), to build and sustain a comprehensive data system through a transparent and accountable process.

- Adopt a set of common performance metrics to be used across workforce development programs and funding streams.
- Build and test the technical elements of the data system.
- Integrate SUNY and CUNY into the statewide data system to better capture workforce outcomes of the state's public higher education system.
- Make data available and user friendly to state and local government agencies, workforce training providers, legislators, employers, and the general public to ensure that it is used to support strong workforce outcomes.

Continued funding of the Office of Strategic Workforce Development at Empire State Development

Request:

Fund the Office of Strategic Workforce Development in the recommended amount of \$150 million through grant programs.

Recommendations:

- Adequately fund the Office of Strategic Workforce Development at ESD with a \$150 million grant program to support new innovative programming and scale what is already working. The Office should continue to award grants to proven providers that ensure New Yorkers are ready to meet employer needs, while expanding access for marginalized communities through wraparound services and other tested models that reduce systemwide inequities.
- NYATEP is supportive of Governor Hochul's proposal to develop a new, statewide framework that will guide New York's workforce development strategy.