Survey of Local Workforce Investment Board

Executive Directors

Second Interim Report
Evaluation of California's Workforce Development System

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Summary of Major Findings

This interim report on the implementation of WIA in California presents an overview of California's local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), based upon a telephone survey of WIB executive directors conducted in August and September, 2004. The purpose of the survey was two-fold: to obtain basic information about the WIBs and their role in implementing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in California, and to enable executive directors to voice their perspectives on state and local implementation issues. We are grateful to the 49 executive directors who took the time to provide the information and perspectives expressed in this report. Their candid discussions of their experiences and philosophies serve as a snapshot that illustrates the diverse structures, activities, and outlooks of California WIBs.

The survey provides particularly revealing evidence in four areas: the relationship of federal funding decreases to the adequacy of local WIA implementation; the directors' ideas about the desired balance between local autonomy and state leadership; the tensions evident in how WIBs are defining their mission as local institutions; and implementation issues about which local executive directors have strong, clear messages for state leaders.

1. Expanding mission; declining funding

WIA legislation expands the mission of the local workforce development system, adding new customers, priorities, directives, and guidelines. At the same time, WIA retains most of the pre-existing policy commitments from the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). However, federal funding for the system has been declining since WIA was implemented in 2000. The growing gap between mandate and resources seriously undermines the ability of local WIBs to implement WIA provisions effectively.

2. Local autonomy; limited state support

WIB executive directors value WIA's emphasis on local discretion, and the 50 local workforce areas pursue widely varying approaches to implementing WIA provisions. Directors express concern that state-level directives may compromise local autonomy, but at the same time indicate that local implementation has been significantly hampered by the inability of the California Workforce Investment Board to provide credible and effective coordination and support. Local directors want a state Workforce Investment Board that understands local concerns, supports local implementation, and advocates for local interests with state and national decision makers.

3. Community catalysts; service overseers

Similar to what we found in preparing our first interim report addressing state-level implementation, this survey finds that considerable ambiguity exists about the WIA mission. Most directors describe their local WIBs as potential or actual community

catalysts that bring together and integrate local workforce development stakeholders in order to support local economic development. At the same time, WIBs have responsibility to administer and oversee the local system of One-Stop centers that provide workforce services to job seekers and businesses. Local WIBs appear to be in a dynamic flux between their social service roots and commitments to low-income job seekers, on the one hand, and WIA's emphasis on serving businesses and promoting local economic development, on the other.

4. Maintain local boundaries; revise performance measures

Two areas of inquiry in our survey provoked the most emotionally charged responses. First, nearly all directors are emphatic about the desire to maintain the current local area boundaries, citing the need to preserve carefully built relationships with local businesses and other partners that have taken years to develop. They also provide numerous examples of their ability to realize the advantages of regional cooperation within the current framework. Second, directors strongly object to many aspects of the existing performance measurement system. They believe that there are too many performance measures, that existing measures don't cover the right things (e.g., the provision of universal services and business services), and that data systems designed around the existing measures don't repay data collection efforts with timely, useful management information. This is one area in which they are especially eager for more effective statewide leadership that supports local needs.

Condensed Summary of Survey Responses

This section provides a condensed summary of the responses to the questions asked in our survey. For clarity, we have grouped responses under key themes, often drawing on answers to related questions in doing so. The main body of this report (p.11) provides a more detailed, question-by-question look at the survey responses.

Executive Director Perspectives on WIA Implementation

A number of survey questions asked directors for their opinions on various aspects of WIA implementation. Their candid and frank comments reveal strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of the current WIA system.

WIB Mission and Role

Overall, directors express an expansive sense of WIB mission that encompasses but goes well beyond the effective management of WIA-funded programs. Asked whether their WIBs saw themselves primarily as being community catalysts or as overseers of WIA-funded programs, 23 executive directors chose the "community catalyst" role, 8 chose the "overseer" role, and 16 said their WIB did both. Directors describe their WIBs' primary goals and value to the community as:

- providing community leadership that spans sectors and policy boundaries,
- meeting and integrating the needs of job seekers with the needs of business,
- bringing all workforce development activities under one tent,
- connecting workforce development and economic development,
- leveraging partnerships and dollars; and
- aligning education with the needs of employers.

Partnership Challenges

Given their expansive sense of mission, local WIBs face a wide variety of partnership challenges, which can be grouped into one of three main categories:

- *Maintaining One-Stop infrastructure*. WIBs are responsible for managing the One-Stop infrastructure on behalf of all the mandated partners, yet none of the partners are required by law to contribute to infrastructure costs. Some mandated partners do pay for space and work hard to turn the One-Stop ideal of seamless service delivery into reality. Other partners refuse—or are unable, due to their own bureaucracies—to cooperate in one or more areas, and at present there is no mechanism by which they can be compelled to do their share. Directors suggest that this is an area that needs to be debated and codified at the state level.

- *Establishing the WIB as a legitimate focal point for community-wide planning.* WIBs that embrace the role of community catalyst often describe their efforts as a struggle due to territorial issues on the part of established organizations, perceptions that WIBs are just another government social service provider, and a limited understanding of what the WIB could contribute to community planning. The complexity of workforce development issues—which involve players in diverse policy areas such as public education, job creation, housing, and transportation—make it difficult for the WIBs or any other single purpose institution to assert a widely recognized community leadership role.

- *Training a skilled workforce in the current economy.* Issues mentioned by directors include the growing gap between job-seeker skills and the requirements of good-paying jobs, heavy layoffs together with persistently high unemployment rates in some areas, populations with multiple employment barriers, and the difficulty of meeting the needs of California's large immigrant population. All of these issues require WIBs to partner not only with businesses, but with a wide range of community based organizations that specialize in the needs of particular populations. These organizations may have little experience in collaborating with government programs.

Engagement with the Private Sector

Efforts to engage the business community in WIB decision-making appear to be considerably more advanced locally than we found at the state level (see our First Interim Report, December 2004). Of the 49 WIBs surveyed, 11 lacked business majorities at the time of the interview and were working to recruit new business members.

- Many directors see the business community as the vital component in the effort to develop a skilled workforce, and value the fact that WIA mandates continual interaction with employers in ways that make them partners in short- and long-range planning.
- Almost all WIB directors report serving businesses directly through their One-Stop centers, and over a third of the WIBs have also developed separately identifiable business services centers.
- Across the local areas, WIBs have displayed considerable creativity and innovation in developing business services. In some cases, teams of trained specialists track economic development data and make proactive visits to firms on the verge of either layoffs or increased workforce requirements. Other areas routinely visit local businesses to offer their services. Some One-Stops provide full-scale human resources services on a routine basis for small, medium-sized, and even large business customers. Others are prepared to recruit, select, and screen job seekers for particular positions as requested by local businesses, providing One-Stop space for the company to move in temporarily to interview prospective employees.

Funding

The ability of WIBs to fulfill their stated missions and to develop meaningful partnerships is severely constrained by the steady decline in WIA funding allocations. Overall, local WIBs are serving increasing numbers of customers with fewer resources, severely constraining the ability of the system to provide intensive services and training.

- According to EDD data, four of every five local workforce areas in California have seen their WIA allocations decline since 2001, by an average of 26%.
- According to local WIB directors, funding reductions over the past few years have had major effects on every aspect of WIB and One-Stop operation, leading to staff layoffs, consolidation or closure of One-Stops, and fewer enrollees served.
- Another reported outcome of funding cutbacks is a strained relationship with WIB/One-Stop partners, nearly all of whom are experiencing funding shortages of their own and most of whom do not share in the cost of One-Stop infrastructure.

The survey reveals wide variations in the degree to which WIBs rely on WIA formula allocations as the main source of funds.

- Based on the reported estimates of the 49 directors surveyed, an average of 57% of WIB budgets come from formula funds, 17% from WIA discretionary funds, and 20% from other public agencies, usually those with which the local WIB is administratively housed.[1] Very few WIBs report leveraging significant amounts of private sector funding, and directors had difficulty quantifying the contribution of in-kind resources.
- Where WIBs have been able to leverage partner resources they partially offset the recent declines in WIA formula allocations.

The California Workforce Investment Board

Directors were critical of the State Board's leadership in WIA implementation.

- A large majority of respondents said that the State Board is out of touch with local workforce investment areas and is either unaware of, disinterested in, or powerless to address their most pressing problems.
- Directors favor a more active State Board that sets statewide policy and advocates for local WIBs, without restricting local autonomy. Local directors state that many of the complex issues they are facing—funding cuts, getting partners to share expenses, marketing the WIB—would best be confronted at the state level and that trying to resolve them individually and locally is an expensive redundancy.

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[1] In many cases, directors responded to funding questions with their best estimates rather than with precise numbers, so our aggregate figures must be considered as rough approximations only.

The Employment Development Department

Directors gave EDD's role in state and local WIA implementation mixed reviews.

- Overall, directors expressed their highest satisfaction with EDD when they talked about the EDD regional advisors. Directors speak of the many ways their regional advisors have helped them—interpreting directives, researching questions of policy and procedure, offering technical assistance, and always being responsive to their needs.
- Most directors expressed satisfaction with local EDD representatives also, generally regarding them as good partners on the WIB and in the One-Stops, however hampered they might be by their state-level administration and by current funding issues of their own.
- Directors also express appreciation for EDD labor market information, and are eager for any information that helps them relate their activities to local economic trends.
- On a more critical note, many directors described EDD officials in Sacramento as mired in bureaucratic detail and slow to respond to funding requests. A number of directors singled out EDD directives for criticism, calling them unclear, too frequent, and too demanding, and said that they often require unrealistically short turnaround times.

Performance Measures

Directors acknowledged the need for performance measures and underscored the validity of some of the current performance criteria. Overall, however, directors believe the existing performance measurement system is not meeting their needs and is hampering the system's ability to tell the full story about its public value. Specific issues include:

- The way performance measures are constructed promotes "cherry-picking" or "creaming" among job seekers. Directors all across the state recognize that there is a clearly-defined conflict between being in compliance with performance standards and serving the hardest-to-employ populations in their areas.
- WIA performance incentives skew long-term workforce development by rewarding immediate employment over an approach that invests in advanced training to build a more skilled workforce.
- Directors provided numerous and highly specific suggestions for new or additional performance measurement criteria, particularly with regard to business services and use of core services (see p. 51 for details).

Local Workforce Area Boundaries

Only 2 of the 49 directors agreed philosophically with the California Performance Review's recommendations for consolidating workforce areas. Four more would make minor changes in their own boundaries for logistical reasons, and the rest were satisfied that their present boundaries enable them to make the best possible use of connections

forged with local stakeholders through years of negotiating and interacting for the good of the community.

- Many directors also indicate how well the workforce investment area fits into, or is defined by, the boundaries of the city, county, or special social or economic niche they serve.
- Together with connections provided by the membership of the local WIB, current configurations help WIBs engage local employers and promote sound business partnerships.
- Almost half of directors reported no disadvantages with their own current local area boundaries. Of those who mentioned disadvantages, most cited size and complexity as problems (major distances and multiple political units) and others saw vulnerability to consolidation with another workforce area as their only disadvantage.
- Directors believe the advantages of regional cooperation can be realized without the need for a regional reconfiguration of local areas. Many directors described how they already work together with other WIBs in regional groups that have common characteristics and issues—applying for grants together, sharing training opportunities, and otherwise acting collectively for mutual benefit. In addition, WIB directors are already learning from one another. Directors singled out 21 WIBs as providing inspiration for their own programs, citing those that have pioneered innovative programs, neighbors dealing with similar populations and economic challenges, and WIBs that are similarly nested administratively.

Perceived Strengths of the WIA System

Despite their many challenges and concerns, directors expressed considerable support for the philosophy and ideas that undergird the WIA system.

- Even as they point out gaps between the One-Stop conceptual model and its realization in the present economic climate, directors embrace the concept. WIA provides the infrastructure and opportunity for partners to come together to leverage resources, to work together to serve the same customers, to identify and avoid duplication of effort, and ultimately to build a collaborative, strategic workforce development system.
- Directors who have been engaged in workforce development since before WIA are particularly happy being able to serve all job seekers without needing to be concerned about jurisdiction or eligibility issues.
- Directors strongly believe the emphasis on local control and the norm of significant private sector involvement are key strengths of the WIA system.

<center>**System Profile**</center>

Many survey questions asked for basic information about WIB and One-Stop administration and programs, summarized under the headings below. Percentages are based on a total of 49 respondents, or in some cases fewer when not every executive director provided the information.

WIB Directors

- 57% of the respondents are not full-time directors and have work responsibilities beyond their WIB/WIA obligations, usually with a city or county department in which the WIB is administratively nested.
- 55% of WIBs have had only one executive director since WIA was first implemented.
- About half of the directors have been involved with workforce development prior to WIA and 11 have served in the community/workforce development field since the 1980s, 9 of these as local directors.

WIB Administration

- 77% of WIBs are run by government entities, 18% by nonprofit agencies, and 5% by government/nonprofit hybrids. None are governed by a private entity.
- Government-based locations/arrangements for managing WIBs vary widely. About half of the WIBs are nested in a human/social services department or an employment/economic development department, in roughly equal proportions.
- Estimated local WIB budgets reported to us vary widely, from a high of $72 million to a low of $1 million, with an average budget of nearly $15 million and a median budget of $36.5 million.

WIB Membership

- The average number of WIB members is 33 and the average number of business members is 18.
- Thirteen WIBs reported 20 or more business representatives.
- Eleven WIBs reported that they lacked business majorities at the time of the interview and were actively recruiting new business members.
- 69% of WIBs report high levels of business involvement in decision-making.
- 49% of WIBs report active involvement of labor union representatives.
- 82% of WIBs report having "active" to "very active" Youth Councils.

One-Stops

At the time of our survey, the 49 local workforce areas were operating a total of 243 One-Stops (157 full-service or comprehensive One-Stops, plus 86 satellite One-Stops, plus an

unknown number of kiosks). Local definitions of One-Stop characteristics tended to vary, but to the best of our understanding One-Stop distribution can be summarized as follows:

- The average number of One-Stop per local area is 5 (range from 1-19), with 3 that are *full-service.* Eighteen WIBs reported having only one full-service One-Stop; in some multi-county consortia, the WIB has more than one full-service One-Stop, but only one per county.
- Almost two-thirds of One-Stops are operated by government entities (149) and about one-third are operated by nonprofit organizations (84). Only 10 are managed by private organizations, and these 10 exist in only four of the 50 local areas.
- Less than half of the directors indicated that all mandated partners were physically co-located. A majority of respondents identified at least one center where *nearly* all partners were co-located. Many directors favor or accept electronic co-location of partners as fulfilling the WIA mandate.
- 57% of directors favor having more One-Stops than at present, 28% would prefer fewer, and 15% the same.
- At least 16 different data management systems are being used by the 49 WIBs, and 6 WIBs were still tracking universal or core customers manually when we conducted the survey.
- With a single exception, directors report that their One-Stops use CalJOBs. However, about a third of directors raised serious questions about how useful CalJOBs is, and many noted the availability of other tools that they consider better.

Numbers Served

Given the lack of a consistent data system for tracking use of universal services, no hard count of statewide users of the WIA system is possible.

- Estimates of average use provided by directors translate into approximately 1.5 million users (unduplicated count) statewide in 2003-04. As discussed in the main body of our report, the validity of these estimates is uncertain, so this figure should be taken as a rough estimate only.
- Roughly speaking, the average number of users per WIB is approximately 31,000 (range 750 to 125,000). Most WIBs serve between 5,000 and 25,000 users per year.
- 77% of directors characterize demand for One-Stop services as "very high."

Training Services

Our effort to ascertain how many individuals are being trained as the result of WIA funding proved to be more difficult than expected. Obtaining accurate figures is complicated by local definitions of what counts as training and by the difficulty of knowing how much training is being indirectly leveraged as the result of WIB partnerships.

- Estimates from executive directors suggest that as many as 20,000 WIA enrollees statewide received training in 2003-04.
- With 46 WIBs reporting, the average number of WIA enrollees trained per WIB in the previous year is about 400 (range 0 to 1,800).
- Most executive directors could only offer very rough guesses as to how much additional training is being leveraged with WIA funds. The better integrated a WIB is in its community, the more difficult it can be to tease apart the funding and in-kind contributions that enable various forms of training to occur.
- Improving the relationship with local community colleges tops the list of directors' suggestions for enhancing local training opportunities.
- Directors cited WIA-imposed eligible training provider requirements as an impediment to local training partnerships.
- Directors believe that increased funding and the passage of enabling legislation are the biggest keys to enhancing local training partnerships.

Detailed Report of Responses to Survey Questions

This interim report presents an introductory overview of California's local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs), based upon a telephone survey of WIB executive directors conducted in August and September, 2004.[2] The purpose of the survey was two-fold: to obtain basic information about the WIBs and their role in implementing the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) in California, and to enable executive directors to voice their perspectives on a variety of associated issues. The quantitative and qualitative data summarized here offer a snapshot of local WIA implementation at one period of time in 49 of the 50 local workforce areas.

We are grateful to the 49 executive directors who took the time to provide the information and perspectives expressed in this report. Their candid discussions of their experiences and philosophies served to illustrate the diverse structures, activities, and outlooks of California WIBs.

Methods

We designed a telephone interview protocol after consulting with state-level workforce development experts, including members of the WIA Evaluation Technical Advisory Committee (TAC).[3] The telephone survey method was chosen for its efficiency, allowing maximum coverage in a brief time, and because it allows research team members to answer any questions from respondents about the meaning of particular survey items, to note differences in how vocabulary is used by the various respondents, and to probe items of particular interest that arise during the interview.

The survey was pre-tested on three executive directors, including the two members of the TAC. The protocol included both close-ended and open-ended questions (see Appendix 1). In early August 2004, all 50 WIB executive directors were invited to take part in the survey. Each received a summary of the UC Davis research design, a letter of introduction from the research team, and a copy of the survey instrument. Members of the research team then called to arrange appointments for telephone interviews, alerting the executive directors to questions they might need to prepare for in advance.

The interviews took place in August and September 2004. Conversations ranged from 30 minutes to nearly 3 hours, with the majority averaging a little over 1 hour. With the permission of the executive directors, we tape recorded and transcribed the interviews. To encourage candor, we promised anonymity to all executive directors, and thus do not attribute quotes in this report to particular individuals. With a single exception, we were successful in reaching every person who fills the executive director role.

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[2] Most, but not all, local areas use the "executive director" nomenclature to describe the lead administrator for the local WIB. For simplicity we have adopted the term throughout this report.

[3] The TAC is made up of representatives of key state-level WIA partner agencies and two local executive directors.

The research team analyzed and coded the answers to open-ended questions, first individually and then during a team coding session where we used group discussion to resolve differences. Answers to close-ended survey items were recorded by interviewers during the interview and later entered into an Excel spreadsheet. These items were checked for accuracy against the transcripts, and were provided to the executive directors to review prior to their inclusion in this report.[4]

This report summarizes both the quantitative and qualitative data we collected, providing a snapshot of local WIA implementation at one period of time from 49 different perspectives. In addition to answering our direct questions, many executive directors also volunteered a great deal of information that helped round out our understanding of their situations. We are grateful for the effort they made to educate us about the intricacies of the Workforce Investment Act and about the challenges they face in attempting to adapt its provisions to their own economic and geographic regions. We hope that our summary of their remarks accurately reflects both the content and the constructively critical spirit in which they were offered

Presentation

Our report follows the order in which the interview questions were administered. Each page begins with a survey question, written in italics, followed by a discussion of the responses we received to that question. When we have comparable responses to a particular question across all, or nearly all, of the interviews, we present the information in a table.[5] Typically, questions were asked in a manner that allowed respondents to give more than one response, so the reported Ns are the number of different directors that offered a comment in the indicated category, and the total number of Ns for any question often exceed the total number of directors interviewed (49).

Where it seems warranted, we report additional information that some executive directors provided that went beyond direct responses to the questions we asked. In those cases the information appears either in a bulleted list outside of a table or in our narrative presentation.

A few tables included in this report break out the data by grouping the local areas based on their local area population or unemployment level. Appendices 2 and 3 provide lists detailing the WIBs included in each such grouping.

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[4] Executive directors in 13 local areas responded, with 11 sending back minor corrections or additions.
[5] In reading the tables, keep in mind that response counts (N) do not always add to 49, since many questions allowed for responses that fall into more than one category and some directors gave more than one response to a particular question. In other cases, not everyone responded to a question.

ABOUT THE WIB

Executive Directors

What is your title(s)?

Forty respondents gave us their titles in terms of their position with the WIB—typically some form of "executive director" for government-run WIBs, and "President" for some nonprofit WIBs. Nine executive directors used their city or county departmental title.

What is your role(s)?

Many WIB directors (28) also head or serve in departments for the city or county that employs them. Percentages of time allocated to WIB activities versus other responsibilities vary considerably. Half of the 24 who mentioned their role in operational support specified that they are limited to providing *administrative* support or *oversight* only due to WIA's "firewall" provision that precludes WIBs from operating One-Stops.

N	Description of Roles
30	Administrative/staff support for WIB
28	Occupational responsibilities beyond WIB/WIA obligations
24	Operational support for WIA programs

How many executive directors of your Workforce Investment Board have there been since WIA was implemented in July 2000?

Nearly 80% of WIBs (38 of 49) have had only 1 or 2 executive directors since WIA was implemented.

N	Number of Executive Directors the WIB Has Had	Comments
26	1	25 of these were in place prior to WIA
12	2	
7	3	
2	4	
1	5	
1	0	One respondent made the point that there is no director per se for the WIB.

We also learned that most WIB directors are experienced, with half indicating that they have workforce development experience that pre-dates WIA and 11 having served in the community or workforce development field since the 1980s. Seven respondents indicated that they have held their director position for a year or less.

WIB Management

Is your WIB a government, private, or nonprofit organization? If government, where is the WIB administratively situated (e.g., within what department or agency)?

Over three quarters of WIBs are managed by some form of government entity, and none are managed by a private entity.

N	Managed By
38	Government
9	Nonprofit
2	Hybrid nonprofit/government
0	Private

Within government, there is a wide range of locations/arrangements for managing WIBs. About half of WIBs are nested in a human/social services department or an employment/economic development department, in roughly equal proportions.

N	Percentage	Nesting of Government-administered WIBs
10	25%	Human Services
9	23%	Independent unit or department
8	22%	Employment or Economic Development
4	11%	Joint Powers Authority or Special district
3	8%	Employment & Human Services
3	8%	Community Development
1	3%	Education

WIB Membership

How many members are currently on the WIB? How many business representatives are on the Board?

The average is 33 members and 18 business members. In general, the WIA mandates requiring broad participation in WIBs have led to relatively large boards, although WIBs in less populated areas are somewhat smaller. Only 3 WIBs report fewer than 20 members, and most WIBs (33 of 49) have 30 or more members. Some directors specifically mentioned the importance of using committees—often headed by private sector members—to accomplish WIB goals. At least 3 of the 9 largest WIBs (41+ members) and 8 of the 24 WIBs with 31-39 members use committees to deploy large boards successfully.

Of 49 WIBs surveyed, 11 reported that they lacked business majorities at the time of the interview and were actively recruiting new business members. Directors in 13 WIBs reported 20 or more business representatives.

N	Number of Members
9	40 or more
24	30-39
13	20-29
3	Less than 20

Average Number of Board Members and Business Representatives (by population)				
Population Category	Local Area Population	# WIBs	Average # Board Members (range 16-50)	Average # Business Reps (range 6-38)
High	(1 million +)	9	40	22
Above Average	(500,000-999,999)	10	33	18
Average	(300,000-499,999)	12	32	17
Below Average	(150,000-299,999)	9	30	16
Low	(50,000-150,000)	9	30	15

Business Involvement in WIB Decision-Making

How would you describe the level of business involvement in WIB decision-making?

A sizable majority of WIBs report successful levels of business involvement. It is clear that all 49 WIB directors we spoke with are well aware of the importance of involving the private sector in their policy-making.

N	Level of Business Involvement
29	Very active and involved
5	Good or "moderate to high"
11	Mixed—some engaged, some not
4	Not active

Directors described various levels of participation; for example:

> "It's extremely high, on a scale of 1 to 10, I'd say they're 9.5. We just did a business survey, in the business community, and 12 of our board members actually conducted the surveys over the phone themselves, to make sure they were getting information that was usable, and that they were well-connected with the issues that employers have."

> "Minimal. Some are very active, some not so active. It has been an effort. Our main effort has been to involve the business community. We don't have large employers here. We have a lot of small employers. It is often hard for them to leave their businesses..."

Labor Union Involvement in WIB Decision-Making

How would you describe the level of labor union involvement in WIB decision-making?

Nearly all WIBs have the requisite two labor union representatives, although a few have elected to have three and one has four.

N	Level of Labor Union Involvement	Comments
9	Very active	Union representatives are often involved with Youth Councils and in developing apprenticeship programs.
15	Active	At least one labor union representative is active.
7	Somewhat active	Some union representatives are new and not yet up to speed, some have extensive territories that limit engagement.
16	Not active	Either there are no current union representatives, or low interest on the part of the labor union representative.

Roughly equal numbers of directors described situations in which labor union representatives are self-motivated and take enthusiastic part in WIB business and situations in which representatives are more difficult to involve. A sample of comments follows:

> "Very high. We have 2 labor unions represented on our Board, one is for the county labor union, and the other one is the labor union for the (name withheld) stores locally. And, in fact, both of those people sit on what we call our Workforce Issues Team, and they are highly active in that role, helping us identify issues related to what employers and employees share, so they're an extremely important role on our Board."

> "A couple years ago, or I should say back in the Davis administration, there was more discretionary money for labor type projects. So, I think they were more involved then. Our last labor representative, a couple years ago, was very involved with the youth program. He actually chaired the youth council. So, it really… it just depends… our labor representatives change out typically every couple years, so it just depends on who we get. Our current representatives, they're involved but not as involved as some in the past."

> "We have 2 labor reps on our board. Their involvement is almost nil. They don't come to the meetings at all regularly...If you ask them for something, they are responsive."

Youth Council Activity

How active is your Youth Council?

Most WIBs (40) reported "active" to "very active" Youth Councils. Some directors declared that this is their most active committee:

> "For a while, it seemed like almost the activities of the Youth Council required as much staff assistance and support as the WIB... As far as their role of overseeing service providers, that activity has gone down a little, because of the decrease in funds, but they've also taken the approaches that anything involving Youth Workforce development, they want to be involved with, and if there's a way to make some positive change, to make that a better system, they want to be there at the table."

A small number—particularly those that comprise a large rural area—find it difficult to rally support in this area.

N	Level of Youth Council Activity
22	Very active
18	Active
1	Fairly active
3	Not very active
4	Not active at present

Has the WIB delegated any decision-making responsibilities to the Youth Council?

Youth Councils are typically organized as one of the WIBs' standing committees and, as such, cannot make their own decisions without WIB approval. However, it appears that it is rare for a WIB to deny or reverse a Youth Council proposal, as one director illustrates:

> "The WIB gives its committees a lot of authority and that includes the Youth Council. So, for example, the Youth Council decided that they wanted to have a one-day youth summit about youth leadership issues. They didn't go to the WIB and say, may we do this? They went to the WIB and said, 'we're going to do this.'"

Directors indicated a number of roles played by Youth Councils (grouped below in descending order with the number of responses per category; sub-categories receiving more than one response also shown):

N	Youth Council Role	Comments
40	Advises WIB	• Gives input on selecting service providers • Makes funding recommendations • Gives input on youth portion of job training plan
14	Programmatic	• Can re/design program model and framework • Has performance review responsibilities • Focuses on employment and training • Assesses target populations
7	Community roles	• Is directly involved with community youth • Convenes public meetings, takes public testimony

MISSION AND DIRECTION

The WIB's Role: Overseer or Catalyst?

Some WIBs see their role primarily as being a catalyst for community wide workforce planning, and others see their role primarily in terms of overseeing WIA funded programs. Where does your WIB fall?

Although many respondents' answers to this question did not fall neatly into one of the two functions—instead, they landed at many points on a continuum that stretched from the Overseer pole to the Catalyst pole—the distribution can be broken out as follows:

N	WIB Role
23	Community Catalyst
8	Overseer of WIA Programs
16	Both roles
2	Not able to code

Eight WIBs saw themselves as primarily responsible for program oversight:

> "This leadership I have is very practical, they're very well-grounded, they've come on board in part to help oversee tax-supported programs and make sure they're well-run..."

Sixteen directors described a dual function:

> "We have a two-track WIB system. One is strategic and one is compliance. From the strategic standpoint, we try to develop an employment training system through a public-private partnership whereby we can provide quality program to meet the local labor market demands. Basically the function is to connect job seekers and employers. The second half is to comply with the regulations for the Workforce Investment Act. With all the performance standards and auditing and monitoring we do have to primarily be the administrator for the WIA funds..."

Almost half of the directors indicated that the Catalyst role is the preferred role, and in all but one case, those who described their WIB in a state of change said it is progressing from the overseer role toward the role of community catalyst:

> "I think that they want to be the catalyst and are trying to move in that direction, pay more attention to what the workforce system is doing and less to what the WIA funded Title 1B programs are doing."

> "The board members really enjoy doing the policy-setting role and community planning much, much more than program oversight. That's how you really do get the business investment."

Primary Value of the WIB

What would you say is the primary value your WIB provides to the community?

About half of directors see their WIB's primary value as being a "system builder" and change agent. Elements of this role that were mentioned include:

- bringing all workforce development (WFD) activities under one tent,
- being the only organization specifically focused on WFD,
- connecting WFD and Economic Development,
- having WIB members "plugged in all over the community,"
- leveraging partnerships and dollars.

As one director told us,

> "It's two-fold, one of a system builder and one of a change agent. When I say system builder, I mean we serve as this catalytic engine, if you will, to bring together the programs and services funded by WIA in a cohesive and flexible and responsive system that brings together partners and leverages resources and is sustainable for the business community. Again, our mission and hope is to be a supplier to the business community and based on these principles and visions and goals, we work to serve as a change agent to reduce poverty within our region."

Another director said,

> "It brings people to the table. I mean, the whole idea of creating collaborations and strategic alliances and partnerships within our community to address the issues. That's the role of the WIB."

About one-third of the directors articulated the WIB's value as integrating the needs of job seekers with the needs of businesses. These directors mentioned serving business about twice as frequently as serving job seekers.

N	Primary WIB Value to Community
27	Being a system-builder and change agent
15	Integrating the needs of job seekers with needs of business
12	Being a general resource
5	Marketing One-Stops
4	Locating funding

Local Challenges

From your perspective, what are the 2-3 most important workforce development challenges in your local area?

What is most striking in the answers to this question is the enormous variety of challenges mentioned. The core challenge of training and educating the workforce is mentioned by about half of respondents, and funding challenges are mentioned nearly as often, both the insufficiency of funds and the instability of the funding stream. In addition to these basic issues, a host of other obstacles impinge on the ability to achieve workforce goals, including job creation and economic development, affordable housing, and transportation. Although the answers we received had unique geographic and economic flavors and naturally reflected rural and urban differences, we found that many issues are shared among workforce investment areas around the state.

N	Important Challenges	Comments
30	Train/educate workforce	• Address skills gap • Serve population with high barriers • Serve youth • Align business and education • Expanding skills of immigrants
30	Funding	• Insufficient funding • Unstable funding • Staff layoffs • Dividing funds between training and infrastructure • Bringing resources into the community
11	Find/create better jobs	
9	Affordable housing	• Jobs-housing imbalance
7	Meet employer needs	
7	Work with partners	• Get partners more involved with workforce development • Educate private sector
6	Align workforce and economic development	• Double digit/very high unemployment • Track/respond to/anticipate change
5	Transportation	• Commuter issues • Inability to access employers
3	Access partner resources	• Getting partners vested monetarily/programmatically into workforce development system
3	Meet performance goals	

Local WIB Goals

From your perspective, what are the most important goals of your local WIB?

Ranking highest among a plethora of goals is the objective of providing community leadership in an impressive number of areas. Meeting the needs of local employers is next, followed by meeting the needs of job seekers. Although the job seeker category received fewer votes than the employer category, it was expressed in far greater detail, perhaps because this category reflects so many different local priorities and conditions. Tied for the next largest number of responses are the desire to make the educational system more responsive to adults in need of training or retraining and to align workforce and economic development.

N	Important WIB Goals	Comments
31	Provide community leadership	• Influence policy as a voice for workforce issues • Get organized/choose projects • Ensure that One-Stop performance meets/exceeds WIA standards • Stretch training dollars/leverage partner resources • Be the city/county employment and training arm • Be responsive to local stakeholders • Build a One-Stop system that includes all community workforce partners • Secure funding for One-Stop/WIB work • Provide leadership/advocacy for partners • Impact state/local financing philosophy • Improve community's quality of life
21	Meet local employer needs	
16	Meet needs of job seekers	• Increase job opportunities—get people jobs • Develop incumbent worker programs • Address skills gap (soft skills, language, job specific skills)
10	Redirect the public education system	• Align education to address needs of employers
10	Link workforce and economic development	• Impact labor shortages in key sectors of the economy
9	Change established mind-sets	• Gain recognition in business community • Educate WIB/One-Stop staff • Gain recognition among elected officials
7	Serve youth	• Educate toward best-paying jobs • Expand opportunities

Difficulty in Achieving Goals

How hard has it been for the WIB to see its goals carried out system-wide?

Of the 47 people who expressed an opinion, 33 indicated that they had indeed encountered difficulties and 14 said they did not. Difficulties encountered are primarily attributed to the attitudes toward the WIB on the part of other local stakeholders and partners, and to the lack of resources that might influence those attitudes in a more productive direction. A smaller number of directors point the finger at their own WIBs and at problems embedded in WIA legislation.

N	Reason for Difficulty	Comments
19	Lack of participation among WFD players	- Resistance to new ideas - WIA suffers from "government" stigma in the eyes of business. - There is a lack of understanding about what a WIB could do. - Policy-makers are hard to influence. - People are busy—it's hard to get an audience. - Territorial issues
9	Limited funding	
4	Problem is with the WIB	- WIB is too busy with other responsibilities to push new goals. - WIB is "caught up in detail and minutiae." - WIB needs to identify relevant goals, sell them to stakeholders, and follow through. - It's hard to convene volunteer WIB members from busy small businesses.
4	Problem is with WIA design	- There is a disconnect between WIA mandates and funding. - Too many rules and regulations, especially around record-keeping. - Eligible Training Provider List requirements are resisted by local training providers. - The "firewall" interferes with communication.
3	This will simply take time and patience	

Of the 14 directors who said they were meeting their goals without significant difficulty, several offered explanations:
- WIA flexibility—it allows them to ask employers what they needed and find ways to provide it.
- The JTPA-to-WIA-Transition Committee and cross-training of staff (including partner staff) puts everyone on the same page.
- Committee-run sector initiatives thrive due to WIBs community connections.

- Every player of note is represented on the WIB and all are dedicated to carrying out their part of the commitment in their areas.
- WIB is part of a highly integrated system of stakeholders working toward the same goals.
- The WIB has allocated a large portion of their resources to support the effort.
- WIB is practical—it sets achievable goals and "a lot of what we take on is pretty commonsensical."
- The WIB taps its political support to get things done.
- Their association with the economic development side of things helps a lot.

ONE-STOP OPERATION

The Number of One-Stops

How many One-Stop centers (of any kind) currently operate in your local area? How many of your One-Stops are considered comprehensive or full-service?

At the time of our survey, the 49 local areas were operating a total of 243 One-Stops (157 full-service or comprehensive One-Stops, plus 86 satellite One-Stops, plus an unknown number of kiosks). The number of One-Stops per WIB ranged from 1-19. Directors of 18 WIBs reported having only one full-service One-Stop center; in some multi-county consortia, the WIB has more than one full-service One-Stop, but only one per county.

N	Number of One-Stops
5	10 or more
16	Between 5 and 9
22	Between 2 and 4
6	Only 1

Not all directors defined terms identically, but the responses suggest a rough consensus that a *full-service One-Stop* offers some form of convenient access with the mandated partners, whether they are physically co-located on a full-time basis, physically located on a part-time basis, and/or electronically co-located.

By contrast, *satellite One-Stops* offer fewer services than those designated as comprehensive and/or exist to serve a particular geographic area or a particular population. Satellites are scaled down in terms of staff, size of facility, and services offered. Several times we were told that satellites are strategically placed to serve particular populations or to serve smaller cities. Some urban satellites seem to draw customers from more than one workforce investment area, sometimes by design but more often because they are more convenient—or otherwise more attractive—than the other area's designated One-Stop.

Kiosks are unstaffed information stations that are situated where high numbers of potential customers are naturally found, such as shopping malls, community centers, or libraries. A small number of workforce investment areas, including San Diego and Tulare, have some form of kiosks, which are also called access points, affiliate sites, or virtual One-Stops. These can be very elaborate, with multiple computers able to access a variety of web-based functions, printers, fax machines, and telephones, or they can be as simple as a stand-alone computer system. Most seem to be placed to serve job seekers, but we heard about others located in libraries and at the Chamber of Commerce that also provide access to business customers. Directors who have kiosks speak very highly of their systems and are pleased with the amount of use they get.

One-Stop Management

Who manages each of the currently operating comprehensive/full or partial service One-Stop Centers in your area? For each different operator, are they a government, private, or nonprofit organization?

Almost two-thirds of One-Stops are operated by government entities (149), and about one-third by nonprofit organizations (84). Only 10 are managed by private organizations, and only four WIBs statewide have private organizations managing a One-Stop: LA City (5), San Diego (3), Fresno (1), and Alameda (1).

N	Percentage	Type of One-Stop Management
149	61%	Government
84	35%	Nonprofit
10	4%	Private

Co-location of Mandated Partners

Are all mandated partners co-located in your One-Stop centers? If not, which are missing and why?

Less than half of the executive directors indicated that all mandated partners were physically co-located. A majority of respondents identified at least one center where *nearly* all partners were co-located. One director questioned the necessity and even the desirability of attempting to achieve physical co-location:

> "We're not even sure why they're supposed to be here in some cases. It's a great idea conceptually, but at the street level it doesn't really work that well. ... It doesn't say they have to be on-site every day all day, just a presence here is enough, and that's how we do with most of them. Not only does it save their resources, it also saves ours. Because, now I only need a desk for one person, because there's only one here at a time, if I schedule it properly."

The following list indicates the mandated partners most frequently mentioned as not being co-located. Because not everyone answered this question, or answered it the same way, this is not an exhaustive list:

    10—EDD
     7—Dept. of Rehabilitation
     4—Community college
     4—Native Americans
     4—Seniors
     3—Adult education
     3—Social Services (CalWORKS)
     3—Veterans
     2—Migrant farm workers
     2—Job Corps
     1—Forestry

Asked why these partners weren't physically represented, 28 of the directors responded as follows:

    20—Lack of funds
     5—Partners' mindset
     4—Lack of space in the One-Stop facility
     4—EDD's "seismic issue"[6]
     2—Size of presence in county

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[6] By regulation, EDD staff are not allowed to work in buildings that do not meet specific earthquake safety standards.

Business Services

Does your WIB or do any of your One-Stops have business services units? If yes, how many individuals (FTE) work in those units?

The responses suggest that WIBs have devoted considerable attention to developing business services, with 47 WIBs reported having some kind of business services. The average number of full-time equivalent staff working in this area is 7.

Executive directors reported a wide array of business services and methods of providing benefits to employers. While some WIBs integrate business services in their One-Stop Centers, others have established a dedicated business service center, which may be co-located with a One-Stop, or physically separate. A significant number of WIBs have specialized "Business Service Units" which consist of staff members who travel to employers to provide convenient access to WIA employer services. Other WIBs do not have the capacity to provide such intensive services, but do provide some level of business services through the executive director or other board members.

N	Nature of Business Services	Comments
21	Part of One-Stop Services	
17	Dedicated business service center	
5	Executive director handles	
8	Other	Have business services but response did not specify location/administration

Several directors discussed their relationships with employers in detail. Their business services run the gamut from highly sophisticated interaction in local economic events to providing basic assistance when business customers approach the One-Stop for help. In some cases, teams of trained specialists track economic development data and make proactive visits to firms on the verge of either layoffs or increased workforce requirements. Other areas routinely visit local businesses to offer services. Some One-Stops provide full-scale human resources services on a routine basis for small, medium-sized, and even large business customers. Others are prepared to recruit, select, and screen job seekers for positions as requested by local businesses, providing One-Stop space for the company to move in temporarily to interview prospective employees.

Innovations in the business services arena include the development of a software program called Biznet that offers a broad spectrum of information and direct services to local businesses, which has proven to be a good tool for building connections with the business community. One WIB has subcontracted its business services to a private company and is very pleased with the arrangement, saying that incorporating the private sector element has invigorated the whole system in addition to providing excellent services to local business. Yet another WIB, as the designated entity to sign and process its city's enterprise zone vouchers, has imposed a fee-for-service structure that appears to be unexpectedly lucrative.

Demand for One-Stop Services

How much demand is there for your One-Stop services?

Of the 42 people who gave us a comparative answer about job seeker demand, 33 described it as very high. Many used words like "astronomical," "pretty huge," "a constant, ever-increasing trend," together with comments about having to impose time limits on computer use and not having sufficient staff to keep up with the traffic.

Three said demand varies by season and economic events, and 2 said that it varies by location within their workforce investment area. Three considered demand "fairly high." One director noted that demand is actually somewhat lower this year than last year.

N	Level of Demand for One-Stop Services
33	Very high
5	Variable
3	Fairly high
1	Declining
7	Unable to code response

Ideal Number of One-Stops

If you could start from scratch and design the system without concern for the past or for politics, how many One-Stops would you operate in your local area?

There was surprising variability in these answers, although most directors tilted towards having more One-Stops than they do currently. Two directors challenged the existing paradigm for One-Stops. One of these expressed a preference for moving away from the funding and logistical difficulties of maintaining a "bricks and mortar" infrastructure and toward a technological service delivery system (one director reports already having an Internet One-Stop). Another director is in favor of organizing a One-Stop system around industry clusters in order to convey more effectively the new business-centered approach to workforce development.

N	Ideal # of One-Stops Compared to Present
27	more
13	fewer
7	same
2	other

Data Collection Systems

Does your WIB have a system for collecting data on individuals using One-Stop services who are not enrolled in WIA? If yes, what is the system name? What other WIBs, if any, use it?

A very wide variety of data management systems are being used across the local areas.

N	Name of Data System	Comments
9	Smartware	
4	Central Valley Regional 1-Stop Tracking System	Sometimes called the Universal Tracking System
3	CISRs	Client Information Services Reporting System
3	I-Train	specifically the Passport System
2	Primeworks	
2	Microsoft Access	modified

Others with at least one mention include (with titles and acronyms reproduced as faithfully as we could):
- *CESID*
- *Client Track System* or *Case Management System*
- *eMAE*
- *Regional Career Center Geographic Solutions*
- *Scancard System*
- *Softscape Case Management System*
- *State JTA*
- *WERZ (Workforce WIA Zone Reliable Data)* aka *Wizard + JPA*
- *Workforce Plus*
- *Worknet Registration/Membership Registration*

At least 6 areas use a manual system to keep track of their universal or core customers. Another 3 directors reported tracking core services but didn't specify whether their system is manual or not. Of the remaining 40 directors who use software systems for this and additional purposes, 3 didn't know what their system is called and 3 said they haven't assigned a name to the system they had developed. At least 9 directors volunteered that they have developed their own tracking software—in-house or with outside assistance— or have significantly modified commercially available or state-provided software.

Many of our respondents, even when they were in favor of universal service in principle, registered strong protests over the profound unfairness of WIA legislation in requiring them to provide core services without giving them any credit for it. They indicate that it is in self-defense that they developed or purchased the best tracking software they could afford—and many feel that appropriate software should have been made available to all the WIBs by the state or federal governments.

Number of One-Stop Customers

What is your estimate of the total number of customers that used any of your area One-Stop services in FY 2003-04?

No statewide data system has been put in place to track the total number of One-Stop customers. The lack of such a system is viewed by executive directors as a key failure of statewide leadership, and leaves them with no standard and established method to receive credit for serving the large percentage of their customers who are never formally enrolled in WIA. Given the lack of a consistent data system, no hard count of statewide users of the WIA system is possible. However, our survey provides a reasonable estimate of total customers statewide based on the following parameters and assumptions:

- 34 directors provided us with computer-tracked counts of unduplicated users, derived from their own data systems;
- 9 directors provided counts of unduplicated users based on their own best estimates;
- 6 directors provided estimates that included duplicate counts, and we arbitrarily subtracted one-third from these to estimate unduplicated users.

With these caveats in mind, the directors' estimates of average use translate into approximately 1.5 million users statewide in 2003-04. Most WIBs serve between 5,000 and 50,000 users per year.

N	Reported # Users/Year
5	100,000+
4	50,000-99,999
12	25,000-49,999
12	10,000-24,999
10	5,000-9,999
6	750-4,999

Overall Average: 30,980
High: 125,000
Low: 758

As the following charts suggest, we find no consistent relationship between unemployment rate and number of users. By contrast, there does appear to be a correlation between population of the local area and number of users. Overall use of the system by the public is highly concentrated in a few large WIBs.

Average Number of 1-Stop Users per Year

(WIBS grouped by unemployment rate)

Average # Users/Year

- High (12%+): 34,223
- Above Average (7.3-11.5%): 30,641
- Average (6.2-7.2%): 44,290
- Below Average (5.0-6.1%): 34,973
- Low (0-4.9%): 15,233

Unemployment Rate

Average Number of 1-Stop Users per Year

(WIBS grouped by population)

Average # Users/Year

- 1mil+: 58,196
- 500,000-1mil: 50,498
- 300,000-500,000: 23,254
- 150,000-300,000: 15,015
- 50,000-150,000: 8,346

Local Area Population

CalJOBS

Do the One-Stop centers in your area encourage job seekers to use CalJOBs? How useful is the CalJOBs system?

With a single exception, directors indicated that their One-Stops ensure that job seekers use the CalJOBS systems. Overall however, directors appear less than enthusiastic about the usefulness of CalJOBs, and 15 indicated that they found it not useful at all. Several directors compared CalJOBS unfavorably with other Internet-based job-search programs, and indicated that they make these alternatives available to both job seekers and business customers. Directors in 15 WIBs noted that they used CalJOBs primarily because they are required to do so by EDD.

N	Value of CalJOBs	Selected Comments
12	Useful	"highly utilized and looked upon favorably"
15	Somewhat useful	Although considered "cumbersome" and "not flexible, limited in options"
15	Not at all useful	"It's a useless piece of junk;" "a $100 million boondoggle," "a joke," "garbage"
7	Unable to code response	

Training Opportunities in Relation to Local Need

How effective are existing training opportunities in meeting local needs?

The wording of this question led some respondents to comment on demand for and supply of training, while others chose to talk about the effectiveness of training. Thus we were unable to get good comparative data to report.

The answers do suggest wide variations between local areas in the availability and effectiveness of training opportunities. We learned that some areas do maintain lists of job seekers who have requested training, but in other areas training dollars are so quickly exhausted that there is little point in trying to keep lists current until the next cycle. A few directors mentioned that there are not enough providers due to the cumbersome Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL) regulations. Some WIBs put a cap on the amount of training funds any individual can be granted, others partner with local community colleges to leverage training opportunities.

Number of WIA Formula Enrollees Receiving Training

How many WIA enrollees received training services in the past year?

Some respondents interpreted this question narrowly—as official training enrollees—and some more broadly, in ways that could include some people enrolled in intensive services. Although we will report the responses we received, we emphasize that all our figures are approximations and that we will continue to look for ways to better clarify the training issue.

Responses suggest that as many as 20,000 individuals statewide may have been enrolled in WIA training in 2003-04, with wide variation in how much training is occurring in various local workforce areas. One area answered that all their training occurs through leveraged partnerships with other agencies, in order to maximize the amount of support available to WIA enrollees.

N=46	Reported # Trainees/Year Avg. 400 Range 0 to 1,800
7	1,000+
6	500-999
7	300-499
8	150-299
12	50-149
6	Less than 50

As expected, the number of WIA enrollees trained appears to be related to both unemployment rate and population size, as evidenced in the following two tables.

Average Number of One-Stop Users & WIA Trainees by Local Area Population

Population	# of Users	WIA trainees
1mil+	58,196	453
500,000-1mil	50,498	542
300,000-500,000	23,254	438
150,000-300,000	15,015	346
50,000-150,000	8,346	230

Average Number of WIA Enrollees Trained per Year
(WIBs grouped by unemployment rate)

Average Trainees/Year

Unemployment Rate	Value
High (12%+)	802
Above Average (7.3-11.5%)	435
Average (6.2-7.2%)	337
Below Average (5.0-6.1%)	342
Low (0-4.9%)	236

Unemployment Rate
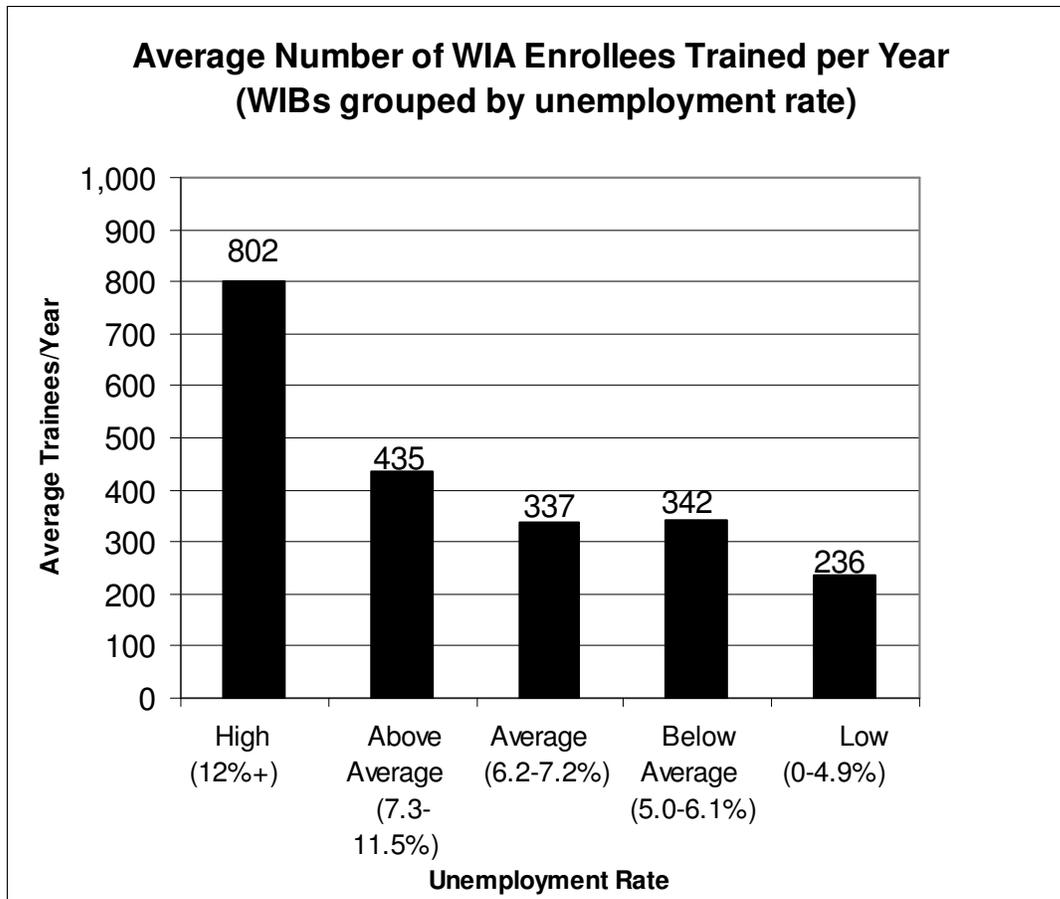
Compared to the number trained under WIA, how many individuals are being trained because WIA dollars are leveraging other funds?

We were unable to quantify or even estimate how many individuals who are not enrolled under WIA are receiving training services in which WIA funds play some role. Most executive directors could only offer very rough guesses in response to this question. Some directors did give us a number, but many others said flatly that it couldn't be done. It does appear that many local workforce networks have developed partnerships that leverage multiple sources of public and private funding to put training packages together. The more integrated a system is, and the more partnerships have matured to the point that credit for accomplishments is shared, the more difficult it becomes to quantify these types of system outcomes.

Policy/Program Changes That Would Improve the Training System

From where you sit, what policy or program fixes would help the training system work better?

The 44 responses we received centered primarily around relationships with the community colleges and funding issues. Directors are concerned that WIA-imposed requirements regarding eligible training provider lists have made it difficult for community colleges to partner with them. At the same time, many directors feel that community colleges need to change their own practices to become more valuable workforce development partners. They see increased funding and the passage of enabling legislation as necessary elements in building viable partnerships between One-Stop centers and community colleges.

N	Suggested policy changes to improve training	Comments
16	Ease ETPL reporting burdens	For both public and private educational facilities.
12	More short-term, intensive community college classes based on local demand occupations	Community Colleges need to adjust to the practical realities of wide-spread economic changes and become more effective partners in the effort to put people with families and mortgages back to work soon.
5	More funding	
5	Legislation mandating and funding better coordination between WIA and community colleges	
5	Better funding and support for incumbent worker training	Use training dollars to help employers with associated costs, or direct the governor's 15% discretionary funds should go to incumbent worker training.
4	Better labor market information to help target training	

Other suggestions offered included:
- Make the "Demand Occupation" list locally relevant
- Use formula dollars for demand occupations, not just customer choice
- Mandate discretionary money exclusively for training
- Do a lot more on-the-job training (OJT)
- TANF needs to make job training allowable again
- Have a state-local infrastructure pool that will free money for training
- Allow enrollment in training without first receiving core and intensive services
- Work with employers to develop job-linked training.

FUNDING

Budgets

What was your total budget (from all sources) in 2003-04?

According to the information provided by the directors, the size of local WIB budgets varies widely.

Average budget reported	$14,945,536
High	$72,000,000
Low	$1,000,000
Median	$36,500,000

What is your best estimate of the % of that total budget for each of the following categories:

We found wide variations in the degree to which WIBs rely on formula WIA allocations as the main source of funds. On average, 20 percent of local WIB budgets come from other public agencies, usually those with which the local WIB is administratively housed. However, the data presented in the categories "Other public funds" and "In-Kind contributions" likely underestimate the role of these two funding streams in WIA programs. Many executive directors reported that partner agencies did contribute significant in-kind resources, but there was no mechanism in place to represent this monetarily in their budget. Very few WIBs report that they have leveraged significant amounts of private sector funding.

Funding type	Avg %	High %	Low %
Formula WIA	57%	100%	10%
Discretionary WIA	17%	61%	0%
Other public funds	20%	82%	0%
Private sector	1%	10%	0%
In-kind contributions	5%	85%	0%

Effects of WIA Funding Reductions

How have reductions in WIA formula funds affected your programs?

Funding reductions have had major effects, including staff layoffs, consolidation or closure of One-Stops, and fewer enrollees served. Throughout all our interviews, the directors' frustration at being asked to serve a growing need with diminishing funds was painfully evident.

Number of directors who mentioned the effect	Effect of WIA funding reductions
30	Layoffs of staff
19	Less training for adult and dislocated workers
13	Forced to consolidate or close facilities
11	Fewer enrollees served
7	Reduced hours/cutbacks on travel, training, equipment
6	Cutbacks to youth programs
4	Services to clients cut

Administrative data from EDD indicates that 40 of the 50 WIBs have experienced declines in their formula WIA allocations since 2001-02, averaging 25%. The 12 directors who volunteered the information to us indicated that they had lost from 30 to 50 percent of their WIA funding since the program began in July 2000.

We were given vivid examples of how such severe reductions are felt in every aspect of program delivery. First, there are the tangible consequences—downsizing staff, downsizing and closing facilities, limiting programs, serving fewer job seekers and business customers. But more difficult still are the less measurable effects—overworked and demoralized staff who see no relief in sight, disappointed job seekers who don't know where else to turn for help, disillusioned private sector customers who see the time and effort they put into building partnerships with the WIB dissolving, and frustrated executive directors who find themselves dismantling hard-won agreements, shelving innovative programs just beginning to show results, and breaking promises through no fault of their own. One of the effects on their business service programs that directors felt most keenly is their inability to maintain their credibility when carefully negotiated partnerships and programs fall through because government couldn't hold up its end.

Another outcome of funding cutbacks is a strained relationship with WIB/One-Stop partners, nearly all of whom are experiencing funding shortages of their own. Sharing the cost of One-Stop infrastructure, always problematical, becomes much harder to arrange when partners cut staff or move out, as 5 directors told us. It is especially difficult ("catastrophic," one director said) when EDD pulls out.

Four directors pointed out that, in addition to losing WIA formula funds, they are finding it harder and harder to obtain the discretionary grants upon which much of their programs depend. Even some of the 6 directors whose allocated funds have increased find themselves still in difficulties—for example, as allocations double, discretionary funds can be halved, or increases may not keep pace with the needs. A director whose allocation has risen three years in a row told us, "Unfortunately, what that comes with is severe dislocation of workers. And it doesn't go up enough relative to the need. The need goes up dramatically and the funding goes up a little bit." Other directors pointed to a de facto funding loss as the population they must serve rises steadily.

Not every workforce investment area has been affected to the same degree. Being nested in a city or county department has helped cushion the effect of funding cuts for at least 3 WIBs, and 5 WIBs are developing alternative funding sources (beyond grants from any entities) by developing innovative fee-for-service plans.

Four directors managed to find a bright side to WIA's funding cuts. For example, 3 noted that they were able to turn the situation into an opportunity to refocus and tighten up their operation, enhancing the options left to them. With fewer training dollars, one director's One-Stop staff does better assessments and holds more workshops, and another director has improved the resource room to better serve more core customers. The fourth director is relying more on partners, which has drawn them into a closer relationship.

Perspectives of WIB Directors on
Aspects of WIA Implementation

The California Workforce Investment Board

How would you describe CWIBs' current role in the system?

Local executive directors were unanimous in declaring that the State Board is not playing an adequate leadership role in the state system. The majority of our respondents offered criticisms which can be summarized as follows: the CWIB is out of touch with local workforce investment areas and, to judge by its lack of activity, it is unaware of, disinterested in, or powerless to address their most pressing problems. The following comments provide representative opinions expressed by this majority:

> "Irrelevant. ... And, they're basically pretty ineffective.... They're more of a because-we-have-to-have-one agency. ...Workforce in California was ignored under Grey Davis, except as a place you could get money from. And, I'm not sure that Governor Schwarzenegger has really done any better, except he's appointed a pretty good Labor Secretary... I think that there needs to be serious changes at the state level, and they need to start taking workforce seriously, and I don't think they do."

> "I would describe it as very weak. Just locally it doesn't seem that the state WIB and the state administrative staff at EDD work very well together. Oftentimes they're working against each other and seems like it should just be the other way around; that we should all be working together, but it doesn't appear that way."

A number of directors offered as extenuating circumstances their observation that, during its early years, the CWIB suffered from a lack of support by the former governor, that its role was never properly defined, and that it was beset by bureaucratic obstructions. In discussing its current role, 9 directors expressed their opinion that the CWIB has become more active in the last several months. As one director said, "[W]e're starting to see the state WIB get more involved." Another director considers this survey a sign of renewed activity.

Even those who found some positive points to raise about the CWIB's performance to date, and are prepared to be optimistic about its future, feel that it has not provided the leadership that local WIBs require to tackle statewide problems effectively. We often heard from local directors that many of the complex issues they are facing—funding cuts, getting partners to share expenses, marketing the WIB—would best be confronted at the state level, and that trying to resolve them individually and locally is an expensive redundancy.

What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from CWIB?

Just fewer than 60% of directors did not name any helpful information received from CWIB. Small numbers of directors pointed to a few types of helpful information or support they had received from the State Board.

N	Helpful Information or Support from CWIB
29	None
6	Effort to involve local WIBs in the Rapid Response discussion
4	Presenting funding opportunities
3	Visiting a local WIB, accepting calls for assistance, and other local attention.
2	The Youth Council Institute that the CWIB established and supports.
2	The CWIB's support for local control and existing boundaries.

Roles the California Workforce Investment Board Should Play

What do you think the role of CWIB should be?

Local directors expressed very clear ideas about the roles they believe the State Board should play, favoring a more active State Board as long as it does not restrict local autonomy.

N	Roles CWIB Should Play
46	Advocate for locals with state and federal policy makers
32	Coordinate statewide policy development
18	Promote quality
17	Understand and support local WIBs
13	Act like a board
9	Respect local autonomy

Specific comments made about each of these areas, and a representative quote, include:

1.   Advocate for local WIBs.

- Make recommendations to the governor on the uses of discretionary funds, etc.
- Negotiate mandatory cost-sharing MOUs with partner agencies system-wide.
- Be the premier connection with the business community.
- Identify and promote new sources of funding for the local areas.
- Do the common marketing of the WIBs.
- Negotiate with Department of Labor to simplify the performance criteria.

"At present, local WIBs with powerful directors are dealing with the feds on an ad-hoc, one-off basis—that's inherently inefficient."

2.   Coordinate statewide policy development.

- Coordinate a coherent statewide planning process to help local WIBs.
- Analyze California's economy using categories that reflect the way local WIBs look at their regions and develop policy accordingly.
- Work to integrate education with workforce development at the state level.
- Establish partnerships/ integrate funding streams at the state level.

"Oh, it should be doing exactly what we're doing but on the state level. They should be pulling together the state EDD Department with state Welfare, with state Voc Rehab, and figuring out ways to coordinate, and the community colleges, and K through 12 education. If we think our job is difficult, I'm sure it would be twice as difficult at the state level to pull all of those state agencies together."

3.   Promote quality.

- Provide technical assistance and capacity-building for local WIBs.
- Provide clear and accurate labor market information for local areas and regions.
- Create One-Stop criteria and certify One-Stops.
- Create incentives to reward local areas for performing well and mutual aid.

"They have never provided statewide criteria for what a One-Stop is—nothing. Other states have statewide criteria for One-Stop certification."

4.   Understand and support the local WIBs.

- Learn how the programs/systems work in local communities.
- Meet staff/work more closely with the local areas.
- Provide needed statistical support/tracking software/and data
- Bring local WIBs together more.

"The more local and state WIBs worked together, the stronger the CWIB would become and the better the local workforce system would be."

5.   Act like a board.

- Speak for itself rather than being dominated by staff.
- Pattern its function after the local WIBs in decision-making and policy direction.
- Educate itself on the scope and intent of the WIA system/define its role.
- Solicit more local WIB representatives to serve on the board.

"I think it needs to be allowed to look at some of the issues they want to look at. I have never forgotten—I went to one of the first state workforce board meetings, and staff were telling them, 'You can't talk about this, you can only talk about this...' I mean, they really hamstrung them ... I went back and I said to my staff, 'If I ever saw any of you talk to our board the way I saw that state staff talk to their board, I would fire you.' That's how strongly—I mean, I just couldn't even believe it."

6.   Respect local autonomy.

- Take local information into account before making arbitrary local funding allocations, especially with the governor's 15% discretionary funds.
- Take care of state business and don't micromanage the local WIBs.
- Keep decision-making local/flexible.

"It is very clear in the law that this is a local program, it's not a state program. I think the state has… if they exercise their responsibility of oversight, I think that's very important for them to do that, so that we at the local level are not overstepping our bounds in terms of the law. But they should not be directing and designing local operations."

The Employment Development Department

What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from EDD?

Directors spoke positively of the many ways their regional EDD representatives have helped them —interpreting directives, researching questions of policy and procedure, offering technical assistance, and always being responsive to their needs. Most directors expressed satisfaction with local EDD representatives also, as good partners on the WIB and in the One-Stops—however hampered they might be by their state-level administration and by current funding issues of their own.

Many directors expressed appreciation for EDD's state-level assistance in certain areas. Most respondents value the local labor market information they receive, for example, even though some urban directors find the local detail not sufficiently fine to be helpful.

N	Helpful information or support from EDD	Comments
32	Regional and local EDD staff helpful[7]	• Assist in interpreting policies and procedures. • Provide technical assistance. • Exceed expectations as One-Stop partner. • Flexible programmatically. • Helped to customize CalJOBS. • Share information informally.
13	Local labor market information	
5	Particular EDD Divisions helpful	• Workforce Investment Division is "very, very good." • Training branch is terrific. • Web site is an excellent tool.
4	Provides funds	
4	Performs policy and technical assistance work in lieu of CWIB	• In the absence of a strong state board, "EDD has been the driver that gave us the initial framework for local WIBs and One-Stops." • "More of a partner than CWIB."

A few directors complained that EDD One-Stop staff has recently been told to restrict their work to Unemployment Insurance activities. As one said, "You have some members just sitting there, and the only thing they do is Wagner-Peyser activities. And what that is I have no idea, and my staff doesn't either." But we were also told that local EDD people

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[7] Some directors seemed to consider regional advisors "local" (as opposed to "state") when speaking warmly about the EDD personnel with whom they worked closely. Because this makes the boundary between truly local (e.g., EDD representatives working in One-Stops) and regional representatives indistinct, we have combined the two designations for comparison with assessments of EDD at the state level.

sometimes choose to act as integrated One-Stop partners despite conflicting official instructions or to assist WIB and One-Stop planners by releasing non-confidential statistical information.

On a more critical note, many directors described EDD in Sacramento as mired in bureaucratic detail, slow to respond to funding requests ("Three-month funding lag except Rapid Response—that's six months"), and responsible for procedures described by one director as "punitive to the locals." Some directors singled out EDD directives for criticism, noting that they are unclear, too frequent, too demanding, and require unrealistically short turnaround times. Others questioned the JTA data system, noting that it needs to be updated to provide user-friendly, useful, and timely access to information. Directors particularly dislike such non-partner-like behavior at the One-Stop as abrupt withdrawal of EDD staff, refusal to assume a fair share of infrastructure costs, insistence on setting EDD apart from the otherwise integrated service delivery, and the imposition of CalJOBS as the primary job order system.

Federal Performance Measures (FPMs)

Do the federal performance measures account for what you think is most important about what you do?

Local executive directors believe that there are too many performance measures and that they don't measure the right things, they aren't flexible enough to allow for workforce investment area diversity and change, and they don't repay the trouble of collecting them by returning timely, useful data.

N	Do federal performance measures account for what is most important?
34	No
15	Not entirely
0	Yes

Nearly all the directors made a point of telling us that the present performance measures entirely fail to capture two of the most important services that WIA mandates they provide: core or universal services and business services. They estimated that existing federal standards measure no more than 5-10% of the work that One-Stops actually do, and expressed with considerable energy their outrage that their performance should be accounted for based on so small a portion of their overall effort and that 90-95% of their work isn't even measured. As one director said,

> "To me the true story is the total number of people that are accessing the system, benefiting from the system, acquiring employment, bettering their lives, and moving on. We never capture any of that information. To me, that's the true story of what we do. The performance standards I think do a very decent job of tracking and capturing information on those people that actually filter down into intensive and training services, but at best that's probably 5% of the population. So there should be some focus and emphasis on the 95% of the population that don't get down to that level."

Many of the directors made a clear distinction between the importance of measuring performance, which they agree is not only reasonable but vital ("Collecting data is a necessary evil"), and being bound by the specific measures that WIA imposes. Some respondents acknowledged that certain of the existing measures are good ones, although they didn't all agree on which ones those were. Selections included entered employment rate, earnings change, placement, and job retention. Some directors singled out measures that seem particularly unrealistic, such as the replacement wage measure. Twelve directors argued that displaced workers whose highly-paid jobs vanished when entire industries close down cannot hope to find work at comparable, let alone increased, salaries. Although 3 directors included job retention among the useful existing measures, another 4 felt that it is perhaps more costly and difficult to track among some populations than it is worth. In addition, a few directors mentioned that the risk of failing to meet this

and some of the federal performance measures discourages enrolling hard-to-employ customers.

Among the negative attributes directors mentioned, performance measures also:
- are too hard to work with/require full-time staff to manage,
- discourage serving people of highest need,
- fail to measure how 'the system' works,
- fail to take area differences/economic downturns into account,
- are hard for private sector-oriented local WIBs to relate to, and finally
- drive the system: "You get what you measure!"

What criteria do you feel you should be measured by?

Forty-one directors offered highly specific suggestions for new or additional performance measurement criteria, particularly with regard to business and core services.

N	Preferred criteria for performance measures	Comments
13	Services to business customers	• Measure repeat customers—how many times they return for service in a year. • Measure referrals from satisfied customers. • Track type/number of employer partnerships. • Note which services are most used by businesses. • Measure the impact on business of using recruitment or customized training program at a One-Stop. • Measure impact of an on-the-job-training (OJT) program on long-term vitality of a company.
11	Use of core services	• The number being served. • The services they receive. • Salary levels at entry and exit.
8	Customer satisfaction	• Elevate job-seeker and business customer satisfaction to a primary measure.
6	Return on investment model	• Measure the impact of assistance to individuals (core and intensive services, training, and job placement), businesses (particularly human resources), and the local economy.
5	Include "system measures"	• How well do One-Stop components function together to serve job seekers or local businesses? • Determine how well partnerships are working together and how successful they are at leveraging existing resources and attracting new resources.
5	Real time data for management decisions	

Other specific suggestions for performance criteria we received are summarized by category below:

<u>Look at the One-Stop as a system.</u>

- If a job seeker's life improved, learn what One-Stop services were used and what assistance they received from partners.
- Determine whether there is a decrease in welfare dependency.
- Measure self-sufficiency before and after services.
- Perform random sampling among core customers.
- Determine the One-Stop's impact on/involvement with the business community.
- See if system capacity-building among partners improved.

<u>Adults/displaced workers</u>
- Retain "entered employment/employment rate"—e.g., did people get work?
- If trained, was the job they got related to training?
- Did they go back to work after not working for a year?
- Are they still employed after 6 months?
- Do they have a living wage? Is health care included?
- How does this contribute to household income?
- Was the job important for the local economy?

<u>Youth</u>
- Literacy
- Entry into education, employment, or military
- Attainment of GED/HS diploma

Additional thoughts included also applying performance standards to partners and making it possible for WIBs to take credit for partner-assisted training and placement. Four directors ended the discussion on this topic by saying that they didn't want to be over-measured by any system, old or new. One somewhat whimsical suggestion would address that issue. Calling it the library model, a director said,

> "People go there to get books, nobody measures reading proficiency as a measure of whether the library's doing a good job, they just want to know if it's been used. ... This is an economic development tool; it's not good for the economy if you have people out of work."

Another director pointed out that no other federal or state system seems to be

> "...held to the same level of scrutiny, particularly negative scrutiny. When we do perform well, we receive no kind of accolade or reward. They always accentuate the negative."

Best Thing about the Workforce Investment System

What do you like most about the current workforce investment system?

The aspects of the present system that directors value most tend to shade into one another, but five general areas emerged:

N	Best Thing About WIA System
19	Local control and local flexibility
17	The One-Stop concept
10	Universal access
10	Private sector involvement
7	The Workforce Investment Board itself

1.   Local control, local flexibility

> "Local emphasis, local control. Local control! You can put that in all caps, you can bold it...So many of the good things I see come out of the connection here locally...I think you change that dramatically for the worse if you pull away some of the local control…Under JTPA it was very proscriptive. I think the world of WIA just because of the broader, universal focus. The local flexibility to determine where we want to put our dollars."

Directors found many different ways to express their belief that local control and local flexibility is the key to making the system work. No matter where their WIBs are located—although they are serving different populations under different economic conditions—directors feel that they are able to adapt the provisions of the Workforce Investment Act to their own situations. Directors assert that the connections among stakeholders built through years of negotiating and interacting for the good of the community, as well as connections provided by the membership of the local WIB, facilitate the most advantageous use of scarce resources.

2.   The One-Stop concept

> "...the One-Stop system ... is a key feature that was so innovative and revolutionary, and has allowed us to be doing miraculous things every day. Now this many years into it, it's no longer a miracle, but the juxtaposition of how we used to do things, versus what we're doing now, where the partners are all together, working on a common good for a common clientele. That's great."

Even while they point out gaps between the One-Stop conceptual model and its realization in the present economic climate, directors embrace the concept. It provides the infrastructure and opportunity for partners to come together to leverage resources, to work together to serve the same customers, to identify and avoid duplication of effort, and ultimately to build a collaborative, strategic system.

3. Universal access

> "It allows publicly-funded investment in the local economy. I really think that's fantastic. I think the career centers offering services to <u>any</u>body and <u>any</u> business is a tremendous service to our nation."

Directors who have been engaged in workforce development since before WIA are particularly happy being able to serve all job seekers without needing to be concerned about jurisdiction or eligibility issues. One director mentioned this as an advantage to their business customers as well because it provides them with a broader cross-section of potential employees, and another liked the core/intensive/training approach "...so that it's not all about training, which is really kind of what JTPA really was. So I like the universal focus of it." On the subject of training, another director appreciated the fact that training can now be extended to incumbent workers and the working poor.

4. Private sector involvement

> "I like the fact that the mandatory business majority on the board puts pressure on us. We should be doing it anyway, actively engaging the business community."

Many directors see the business community as the vital component in the effort to develop a skilled workforce, and value the fact that WIA mandates continual interaction with employers in ways that make them partners in short- and long-range planning. Some directors took the time to explain how aligning workforce development and economic development benefited the community as a whole, crediting WIA with providing the necessary impetus for breaking down historic barriers between the two.

5. The Workforce Investment Board

> "...the WIB made such a difference to us. Our PIC (Private Industry Council) was dying.... The concept of the WIB I think was actually a good one. Everyone was carrying on about 'my God, it's too big a board, you can't possibly do anything.' But I think you can do quite a bit. Well, our WIB was smart and realized we're not going to try and micromanage this thing, and do it as a full board. We'll never get any work done. So, they figured out a good way to handle it through their committee process."

Directors who selected this as one of the best elements of the workforce investment system appreciated the board composition, particularly the emphasis on private sector involvement. Two noted the value of the collaboration and commitment that developed through having so many vital players at the table. Others focused on the importance of local control of the board and the practical advantages of having connections throughout the community: the board's effectiveness makes it more attractive to local employers. One director told us, "It's a great system" and another said, "It's a great vision."

Worst Thing about the Workforce Investment System

What do you dislike most about the current workforce investment system?

One director didn't respond to the question and another had nothing negative to say, but few of the remaining 47 directors confined themselves to a single worst thing when we reached this point. Although many of the responses we received echoed those registered in our separate sections on EDD and federal performance measures, they are worth recapping here because they represent a significant proportion of opinion.

N	Worst thing about current WIA system
15	Bureaucratic issues
15	Partner participation issues
14	Funding issues
11	Measurement issues

1.   Bureaucratic/administrative issues

> "The excessive bureaucracy, I would say... I've been in this long enough to know that these block grant programs start off with a promise of minimal federal and state involvement, and then across the years, it creeps in. So we're seeing that. As you near the end of the life of a program, now 5 years in WIA, we're ever more burdened with more federal prescription, more state prescription, etc."

While 6 directors assailed the bureaucracy as a monolithic enemy, 7 more pinpointed particular requirements—especially paperwork and tracking—as disproportionately time- and staff-consuming when the object is supposed to be focusing on customers. There are too many deadlines, too much oversight, too much disorganization at the state level, and "too many stupid rules."

2.   Partner participation issues

> "I dislike the disconnect ... between we are the brokers for everything, but nobody else really has to play. ...when you say I need you at the One-Stop otherwise I'm not going to be in compliance, and they don't have any reciprocal state legislation to do that or any line item in their budget to account for that, then I get two hours a week from [community college]."

There are many facets of this issue that draw fire from directors, chief among them being the fact that, as WIA recipients, they are responsible for establishing and operating the One-Stop infrastructure for all mandated partners, yet none of the partners are required by their own administrations to contribute anything. Separate funding silos are only one part of the problem; the less quantifiable sense of commitment toward the common goal of serving customers is another. We learned that the actual nature of partnerships varies widely among workforce investment areas. Some partners do pay for space and work

hard to turn the One-Stop ideal of seamless service delivery into reality. Other partners refuse—or are unable, due to their own bureaucracies—to cooperate in one or more areas, and at present there is no mechanism by which they can be compelled to do their share. Directors suggest that this is an area that needs to be debated and codified at the state level.

3.   Funding issues

> "Everybody talks a big game about the fact of how important having a workforce is for our sustainability and for our quality of life, and nobody wants to pay the bill."

Budget reductions and not having enough funding in general received 4 mentions, with special emphasis on the lack of dedicated funding for One-Stop and universal services. Compared with the funds allocated for JTPA with its narrowly focused agenda, we were told that WIA is desperately underfunded for tackling an almost unlimited population. Another 6 directors targeted unstable funding since it makes any kind of planning difficult-to-impossible. Separate funding silos for partners came in for 3 mentions, and other comments included the length of time it takes to receive funds.

4.   Measurement issues

> "I'll go back to the performance measures. They're just too rigid. They're just…driving the program. The people should drive the program. ... Human need should drive the program, not performance measurements, and that's exactly what's driving it."

Six directors were unhappy with existing performance measures, saying that there are too many and that some are unrealistic or irrelevant, and 4 were unhappy that some performance measures don't exist, leaving the vital core and business services unreported altogether. Another concern we heard frequently was the inability to use measurement results to inform current operations. As one director describes:

> "[T]he problem with the current performance measures, it's hard to make changes in your system when it takes you a year and a half to find out how you did. And then, if you make a change today, you're not going to know how you did until a year and a half from now. I don't know what business could actually stay in business without having an idea where it's at, at the moment..."

We were told that earlier measurement systems didn't suffer from this failing to such an extent.

Other significant areas of concern were expressed, as summarized below:

- The way performance measures are constructed promotes "cherry-picking" or "creaming" among job seekers. Directors all across the state recognize that there is a clearly defined trade-off between being in compliance with certain standards and serving the hardest-to-employ populations in their areas. This constant tension affects every level of service delivery.

- A related issue is the way WIA skews long-term workforce development by rewarding "...getting the workforce employed over building a skilled workforce."

- Because WIA requires investing in a system for delivering services, the enormous expenditures some WIBs have made in infrastructure—buildings, equipment, trained staff—ought to be recognized by measuring and rewarding use of that system. Instead, directors listened with disbelief to criticism at the federal level that:

> "WIA is a failure because fewer people have been trained, when this was not the job training partnership but a Workforce Investment Act, and they've never developed performance measures to measure workforce investment or even system performance. It's incredibly frustrating."

- There could be considerably more focus on helping businesses advance incumbent workers.

- While restrictions on serving adults have been relaxed, youth are still targeted so that only a certain portion can be served.

Finally, several directors expressed frustration and dismay at the lack of interest in workforce development at both the federal and state levels. Calling it a "step-child system" and a "political football," one director pointed out that the system seems to need to sell itself at every turn. Another director said, "California, in my mind, still has no coherent employment policy. What do we want to do, for God's sakes?"

One Thing to Change about the Operation of the Workforce Investment System

If you could change one thing about the operation of the workforce investment system in your area, what would it be?

Among the directors who concentrated upon the local aspect of this question, 3 told us no changes are called for in their operations and 2 more made it clear that they don't sit around hoping for change. As one remarked, "When changes in the local system are indicated, we make them—that's what we *do*." Otherwise, the answers were so local and individual that they are difficult to aggregate for reporting. Most directors addressed issues outside their immediate control, such as local politics, partner collaboration, adjusting One-Stop configurations, more local control in general, and flexibility in spending WIA dollars in particular.

N	One thing director would change
11	Better cost-sharing arrangements among partners; Mandate that partners have to work together
5	More money
4	Better funding for training programs, especially for incumbent workers
4	Better integration of EDD job service function into the One-Stop system
3	Dedicated funding for One-Stop infrastructure
2	Streamline tracking and reporting procedures

Advantages of Current WIB Boundaries

Thinking about your WIB, what would you say are the advantages of the current WIB boundaries?

Of the 49 directors who responded to the survey, 43 prefer to keep the current WIB boundaries. Six directors felt that existing boundaries should be changed. Of these, 4 indicated logistical reasons based upon their own situations, most of which would require only relatively small alterations, and 2 indicated agreement with the recommendations announced by the California Performance Review about the time our interviews began.

This question called forth greater eloquence on the part of the 43 directors who believed WIB boundaries should remain unchanged than anything else in the interview. Two main lines of thought were presented in defense of current WIB boundaries. The first concerns the importance of maintaining local partnerships that have been developed over time, particularly business partnerships. The second concerns how well the WIB coincides with the boundaries of the city, county, or other service area within which it resides.

N	Advantages of current WIB boundaries
24	WIB is embedded in local partnerships that would be disrupted by change
22	WIB coincides with physical and service area boundaries

1.   **WIBs are embedded in local partnerships.**

> "This really is our community and we do think we kinda know best as to what works best in our community."

All but one of the present workforce investment areas pre-date WIA by many years. Addressing the importance of this historical background to present-day operations throughout the state, one director told us:

> "[I]n our state all the boundaries in the programs have been decided through decades of discussion. They're based on the fact that some are run by social service models or 501(c)(3)s or economic development entities and that's why in certain areas cities run programs or counties run programs or they're run independently. Small jurisdictions integrate services with housing, redevelopment, other types of resources. Different models and different things have germinated on Petri dishes throughout this state that are in existence for very specific local reasons, and the state and the federal government and the governor should not monkey around with local influence and control over what they do, especially in workforce development or in education or in economic development.

These things are more locally driven and the people here locally are the ones that have to live with their decisions... By dismembering an existing system and spending the next 5 or 10 years trying to work out new bylaws, new WIB construction, new administrative rules and regulations, etc., government will basically take money away from participants and those who most need services and make it more autocratic."

Again and again we heard how fundamental long-standing community connections are to effective coalition-building and how combining workforce investment areas would inevitably attenuate or sever these connections. Directors make the point that WIBs have worked hard to develop firm alliances, particularly with their private sector members, and that these alliances are deeply parochial and non-transferable:

"And if you're talking about combining counties, that would be disastrous. Yeah, because we've established good relationships with our own people and those relationships would very likely crumble if we start combining with others."

"Some of the business volunteers on my WIB care dearly for our county, and are more than willing to roll their sleeves up and be active as volunteers on our board. When I ask them, 'Would you want to be on a board for 4 or 5 counties that might come together and be a consortium?' their interest wanes. One of them said, 'I like [a neighboring] County, but frankly, I don't care about the workforce issues of [that] County, I care about them in our county.' So, again, I think volunteerism and that extra investment that these businesspeople make exists in their own backyard."

Another director confirmed this opinion about private sector involvement at the local level, with an additional caveat about leadership:

"I think the most tangible thing that makes it work is that the business people that volunteer their time are helping their community, and they really do volunteer a lot of their time. Whereas, if the boundaries were bigger…Why would they show up? They'd probably have quarterly meetings. And then, you don't have *business-led*, you have *bureaucracy-led*."

Directors warned that any attempt to consolidate workforce investment areas would be a political nightmare. As one told us:

"So, when you start talking about consolidating Workforce Investment Areas, I think you are opening a Pandora's box. Because not only are you trying to create financial efficiency the wrong way, but you're going to create one really interesting political battle. Because you've got all these local mayors, city councils, and county boards of supervisors that would just love to take on the state on this issue of local control. And they've all

worked out their arrangements. Now some of them are happy with their arrangements and some aren't, but they at least worked them out themselves, and they're not going to be real happy when the governor, or anybody else from the state, comes in and says, 'Well no, we're going to consolidate you with Timbuktu...'"

Several directors saw little merit in the California Performance Review's reasoning that having fewer WIBs would result in major cost savings. Typical comments included:

"It's a fixed number of dollars that's coming through, and administrative costs are capped at 10%. That's still the cost. There isn't a net cost savings to anybody."

"Most entities are not out there wasting dollars because there's 50 of them. I keep referring back to the fact there's a 10% admin cap. Even if you had some cost savings by reducing the number of Workforce Investment Areas, how much of a 10% cap are you going to save? And what kind of difference does that make when you compare it to the turmoil that's going to be created by trying to re-establish boundaries?"

One director believes that performance measure evidence can be brought to bear in demonstrating that bigger isn't necessarily better:

"I looked at the performance standards yesterday for years '01, '02, and '03 and I broke it up by size. Those over 500,000 population and those less. And oddly enough, the smallest ones, in the 200,000, performed the best. I wouldn't have thought that. I would have thought the middle ones would have performed [better]. But the smaller ones performed the best if you used the standard as something that means something... So it's ridiculous. The boundaries should be whatever the locals want the boundaries to be."

We wondered how the existing WIB directors of consortia that comprise multiple cities, multiple counties, or combinations thereof, would address the issue of local control, particularly the rural WIBs that span large geographical areas. In 7 of 8 cases, we found that they too value their hard-won interdependence and are prepared to defend their current configuration.

2.   WIBs coincide with physical and service area boundaries.

"We are the whole county and that's one of the advantages. There is just one political unit to deal with..."

"Well, I think it's a tremendous advantage to work within a city as well defined as [this one] is. And that's large enough to attract attention and to be considered a

significant city, but small enough where geographically and population-wise it's somewhat manageable."

"We've had our own recipient of funding, if you may, for the last 40 years and that was for obvious and very good reasons, and that is the needs of this community."

Asked for the advantages of their own WIB boundaries, most directors indicated how well the workforce investment area fits into, or is defined by, the boundaries of the city, county, or special social or economic niche they serve.

"For the most part, the geographic boundaries match the physical and political separations, and I think that's very valuable. The clear, clean following of political boundaries makes us a lot more effective. I'm not co-mingled with other entities, so my ability to function and deliver the best results with the least overhead and the fewest complications is actually greatly enhanced."

We have natural boundaries based on geography...and with that we have natural transportation systems...It makes it easy for our clients and employers to get around. We have matching unified school district boundaries, community college boundaries. We're able to leverage training because we work closely and have long-term relationships with school districts and education systems. Our EDD service boundaries are the same as our jurisdiction. We serve the same areas and population. Our municipal services are well coordinated....Our fire districts work closely and overlap and so do police. We have a number of municipal services that are very well coordinated. In addition, we have consumer, cultural, and recreational exchanges that fit well together...All this makes for a cohesive and well-situated jurisdiction. This is why our WIB board has been so able to work well with the business community and have a strong sense of community. It also fosters positive working relationships between workforce and economic development."

Many other reasons for maintaining current WIB boundaries were advanced, turning what might seem like disadvantages into advantages by celebrating diversity and the use of Internet technology to off-set social, economic, and spatial disconnects within a workforce investment area. For example, the director of one rural WIB maintained that representing diverse populations builds WIB flexibility.

Throughout our interviews, and particularly in this section, directors described how they work together with other WIBs in regional groups that have common characteristics and issues. We turned up at least 4 such alliances—East Bay Works Partnership, North Bay Employment Connection, Central Valley Administrators, and Capital Area Investment Zone—and there may be more. It is clear that directors are well aware of the advantages to be gained through the use of regional programs—applying for grants together, sharing

training opportunities, and otherwise acting collectively for mutual benefit. Directors believe these advantages of regional cooperation can be seized without the need for a regional reconfiguration:

> "Even in that large configuration, so when we apply for a grant together, we have to go back in our communities, and use our relationships to accurately assess the need, and realistically develop a response. So… we are never inhibited by being small."

> "And you need regional programs to work together but you don't have to create regional boundaries."

Disadvantages of Current Boundaries

Thinking about your WIB, what would you say are the disadvantages of the current WIB boundaries?

Of the 45 directors who answered this question, 23 said that there are no disadvantages. Ten of those who acknowledged disadvantages mentioned issues associated with the size and complexity of their workforce investment areas—geographical locations that involve major distances, different regional needs, extreme diversity in growth and employment rates and in socioeconomic/cultural groups, and the difficulties involved in working with multiple political units. Five mentioned that, being small, they lack the advantages of scale that some other WIBs enjoy. These comments related to issues such as commute patterns, locations of training services, or problems helping mobile populations. Four others noted that their current boundaries leave them vulnerable to being arbitrarily consolidated with another local workforce area in the future. Two directors of urban WIBs mentioned that they are serving a considerable number of job seekers from outside their jurisdictions without extra compensation, and one director would like to see a particular jurisdiction added to their current configuration.

N	Disadvantages Of Current WIB Boundaries
23	None
10	Size and complexity
5	Lack advantages of scale present in larger WIBs
4	Leave WIB vulnerable to being consolidated with another local workforce area
2	Serve job seekers from outside their jurisdictions without extra compensation
1	A particular jurisdiction should be added to the current configuration

Sources of Best Program Ideas

We asked directors which other WIBs or other organizations they considered to be the best source of ideas and information about running their own programs. We found that directors singled out 21 different WIBs as providing inspiration, an indication that peer learning is occurring broadly across the statewide system. Often the directors mentioned nearby WIBs; others look to WIBs that are administratively nested like they are. Many directors borrow good ideas from wherever they can get them:

> "I don't think you can be insular in this business. We are competitors—when we're going up for those competitive grants, we are competitors. So you want to be the best you can be, the more we're able to steal good ideas from people and places, the better off we are."

> "I pick the brain of everybody I can. If I hear somebody doing a good idea we'll probably steal it and I'm sure plenty steal from me; that's fine."

WIB directors generally spoke of one another with respect; for example,

> "And then, you know, there's a lot of smart people around here, all the WIB directors. They're a crowd of thinkers. The reason I like them is because they have an extraordinary balance of the high, above-the-ground vision, and a really grounded sense of program reality."

Several directors look outside California for proven ideas and programs; states and cities specifically mentioned were North and South Carolina, Florida, Michigan, Texas, Baltimore, Boston, and Chicago. One director provided us with an excellent list of national resources and others mentioned favorite Internet sources. Twenty-two recognized the California Workforce Association as the most important source of information and assistance available to them:

> "(CWA) is by far the best capacity-builder and agent for new thoughts and new ideas that we participate with. That's because it really is the coalition of so many different boards that come together about things in common rather than things that would tear them apart."

> "The California Workforce Association, for us, is a real lifeblood. ... sometimes you kind of have to break out of the familiar, and break out of the box, and that's what the CWA conferences are for."

> "That network is extremely useful; we can put out questions, or request assistance, to the entire Workforce network within the state with a single e-mail. We get a great deal of responsiveness from the group. It's very diverse, so no matter what it is that we may be thinking of, somebody's probably done it, or dealt with it, and somebody else is probably saying, 'Hey, we're thinking about that, too. Let's share notes.'"

Anything Else?

Before ending our interviews, we always ask whether we have missed anything that would help us understand the workforce investment system. Directors sometimes tell us what they are most proud of or add points to a description or argument made earlier in the interview. Some of these reveal the identity of the speaker and must be omitted, but we will close with an observation made by this director:

> "One last comment that I would like to underscore also, and that is that you will sense the dramatic differences between the 50 WIBs. That's OK with me. That's the beauty of the system; its flexibility to be responsive to the unique nature of each community. I know that drives certain people crazy. They see that not as the beauty but the bane of the system. That, again, is held by those people who like monolithic, singular, one-size-fits-all kind of approaches. So that's often the battle we have, is those that would like to impose additional requirements on us, those who would like to get away from 50 and get to 20. I think they're all moving in the direction of their comfort level, that bigger is better, and monolithic singular approaches are better. Well, I disagree with that. I don't think that's the way to go."

Appendix 1. Survey protocol

This telephone survey is designed to provide a snapshot of the statewide workforce development system based on the views of WIB executive directors (or their designees). It should take approximately 45-60 minutes, depending on how many open-ended comments you would like to provide. In reporting the results of this survey, we will be aggregating responses, such that **your individual responses will not be revealed at any time**. We encourage you to be candid about both successes and failures, so that this survey can meet our goal of providing a realistic basis for future efforts to improve the state workforce investment system.   Your support during the evaluation process is critical. We especially appreciate your participation in this survey.

About Your Workforce Investment Board (WIB)

1. What is your title(s) and role(s)?
2. When did you start in this position?
3. How many executive directors of your Workforce Investment Board have there been since WIA was implemented in July 2000?
4. Is your WIB a government, private, or nonprofit organization? If government, where is the WIB administratively situated (e.g. within what department or agency)?
5. How many members are currently on the WIB?
6. How many business representatives are on the Board?
7. How would you describe the level of business involvement in WIB decision-making?
8. How would you describe the level of labor union involvement in WIB decision-making?
9. Do you have an active Youth Council? Has the WIB delegated any decision-making responsibilities to the Youth Council?
10. Some WIBs see their role primarily as being a catalyst for community wide workforce planning, and others see their role primarily in terms of overseeing WIA funded programs. Where does your WIB fall?
11. What would you say is the primary value your WIB provides to the community?

Mission and Direction

12. From your perspective, what are the 2-3 most important workforce development challenges in your local area?
13. From your perspective, what are the most important goals of your local Board?
14. How difficult has it been for the strategic goals set by the WIB to be carried out throughout the system? Why?

Operation and Management
15. How many One-Stop centers currently operate in your local area?
16. How many of these are considered comprehensive or full-service?
17. Are all mandated partners co-located in your One-Stop centers? If not, which are missing and why?

18. Who manages each of the currently operating comprehensive/full or partial service One-Stop Centers in your area? For each different operator, are they a government, private, or nonprofit organization?
19. Do any of your One-Stops (or the WIB itself) have business services units or business information centers? If yes, how many individuals (FTE) work in those units?
20. If you could start from scratch and design the system without concern for the past or for politics, how many One-Stops would you operate in your local area?

Job Seekers
21. Does your WIB have a system for collecting data on individuals using One Stop services who are not enrolled in WIA?

      If yes: a) What is the system name, and what other WIBs, if any, use it?
                            b) How many customers used any of your area One-Stop services in FY 2003- 04? (unduplicated count)
      If no: a) What is your best estimate of how many customers used any of your area One-Stop services in FY 2003-04?

22. How much demand is there for your One-Stop services? Is there a backlog for training?
23. Do the One-Stop centers in your area encourage job seekers to use CalJOBs? How useful is the CalJOBs system?

Training
24. How many WIA formula enrollees received training services in the past year? What is your best estimate of the total number of individuals who are receiving training in your local area because of WIB partnerships that leverage other public or private dollars?
25. From where you sit, how effective are existing training opportunities in meeting local needs? What policy or program changes would help the training system work better?

State/Federal Connections
26. How would you describe the state Workforce Investment Boards current role in the system? What do you think its role should be?
27. What are the most helpful types of information or support that you receive from the state WIB? From EDD?
28. Do the federal performance measures account for what you think is most important about what you do? If not, what criteria do you feel you should be measured by?

Funding
29. What was your total budget in 2003-04?
30. What is your best estimate of the % of that total budget for each of these categories:

Source   % of total
            WIA formula
            WIA discretionary
            Other public
            Private
            In-kind by partners
            Other

31. What are your two largest sources of funding?
32. How have reductions in WIA formula funds affected your programs?

Summing Up

33. What do you like/dislike most about the current workforce investment system?
34. If you could change one thing about the operation of the workforce investment system in your area, what would it be?
35. Thinking about your WIB, what would you say are the advantages and disadvantages of the current WIB geographic boundaries?
36. Which other WIBs or other organizations do you consider to be the best source of ideas and information about running your own programs? Why?
37. Is there anything we haven't asked that you feel we should know to get a better picture of your local workforce investment system?

Appendix 2. Local Areas by Unemployment Rate (EDD, based on 2003 state avg. of 6.7%)

Groupings	WIB	Unemployment
Group 1 High Unemployment N=8	Imperial	19.4%
	Tulare	15.5%
	Merced	14.8%
	Kings	14.6%
	Fresno	14.2%
	North Central Counties	13.1%
	Madera	12.6%
	Kern/Inyo/Mono	12.0%
Group 2 Above Average Unemployment N=11	Stanislaus	11.5%
	Oakland	10.6%
	Monterey	10.4%
	Richmond	10.4%
	San Joaquin	10.1%
	San Benito	9.6%
	San Jose/Silicon Valley	9.0%
	Santa Cruz	8.4%
	San Bernardino City	8.3%
	NORTEC	8.1%
	LA City	8.0%
Group 3 Average Unemployment N=7	Mendocino	7.1%
	LA County	6.9%
	San Francisco	6.8%
	Santa Ana	6.8%
	Mother Lode	6.7%
	Humboldt	6.5%
	NOVA	6.5%
Group 4 Below Average Unemployment N=14	Riverside	6.1%
	Solano	6.0%
	South Bay	5.8%
	Verdugo	5.8%
	Sacramento	5.6%
	San Bernardino County	5.5%
	Alameda	5.4%
	Ventura	5.3%
	SELACO	5.2%
	Yolo	5.2%
	Foothill	5.1%
	San Mateo	5.1%
	Contra Costa	5.0%
	Golden Sierra	5.0%
Group 5 Low Unemployment N=9	Carson/Lomita/Torrance	4.9%
	Sonoma	4.9%
	Napa	4.6%
	Anaheim	4.4%
	San Diego	4.3%
	Santa Barbara	4.0%
	Marin	3.9%
	San Luis Obispo	3.4%
	Orange	3.3%

Appendix 3. Local Areas by Area Population (EDD; based on 2000 Census information)

Groupings	WIB	Area Population
Group 1 1 million + N=9	LA City	3,694,820
	LA County	3,646,707
	San Diego	2,813,833
	Orange	2,180,298
	Riverside	1,545,387
	San Bernardino County	1,524,033
	Sacramento	1,223,499
	San Jose/Silicon Valley	1,178,221
	Alameda	1,044,257
Group 2 500,000 to 999,999 N=10	Contra Costa	849,600
	Fresno	799,407
	San Francisco	776,733
	Ventura	753,197
	San Mateo	707,161
	Kern/Inyo/Mono	692,443
	NORTEC	571,397
	San Joaquin	563,598
	NOVA	504,364
	Golden Sierra	501,494
Group 3 300,000 to 499,999 N=12	Sonoma	458,614
	Stanislaus	446,997
	SELACO	445,491
	South Bay	417,861
	Monterey	401,762
	Oakland	399,484
	Santa Barbara	399,347
	Solano	394,542
	Tulare	368,021
	Santa Ana	337,977
	Anaheim	328,014
	Verdugo	315,607
Group 4 150,000 to 299,999 N=9	Foothill	280,275
	Santa Cruz	255,602
	Carson/Lomita/Torrance	247,722
	Marin	247,289
	San Luis Obispo	246,681
	North Central Counties	242,715
	Merced	210,554
	San Bernardino City	185,401
	Yolo	168,660
Group 5 50,000 to 149,999 N=9	Mother Lode	147,285
	Imperial	142,361
	Kings	129,461
	Humboldt	126,518
	Napa	124,279
	Madera	123,109
	Richmond	99,216
	Richmond	86,265
	San Benito	53,234