



**Testimony of Deputy Secretary Sheila Ireland  
Department of Labor & Industry, Workforce Development  
Before House Labor & Industry Committee Subcommittee on  
Employment and Unemployment  
June 2, 2021**

Good morning, Chairwoman Klunk, Chairman Dellosso, and members of the Labor & Industry Committee's subcommittee on employment and unemployment. Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today about the workforce development deputation at the Department of Labor & Industry and our work with our partners in the workforce development system across the commonwealth.

I have with me today the Executive Director of the State Workforce Development Board, James Martini, and Deputy Policy Director, Tom Foley. We look forward to your questions.

**Overview of the Workforce Development Deputation**

The Department of Labor & Industry (L&I) is the lead state agency in administering interagency employment and training programs for Pennsylvania's youth and adult, dislocated worker labor force and for its businesses.

Our workforce development system offers a range of employment, training, and labor market information programs and services.

These programs help businesses with workforce planning and with filling job vacancies.

They also help individuals – including those who are unemployed and underemployed - look for work and to develop the occupational and professional competencies needed to gain and retain employment.

The workforce development deputation includes four entities.

- The Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations,
- the Bureau of Workforce Development and Administration,
- the Center for Workforce Information and Analysis, and
- the Apprenticeship and Training Office.

Each of these operations play both separate and complementary roles in administering our statewide programs and services.

Let me take a minute or two to describe the functions of each of these entities.

### **Apprentice and Training Office (ATO)**

The ATO primary responsibility is to help employers, schools, organized labor, community-based organizations, and associations develop talent pipelines via the apprenticeship process. Apprenticeships help bridge the skills gap and offer a paid job with a competitive wage from day one, while simultaneously providing the education and credentials needed for employment in the industry. Nearly 9 out of 10 apprentices are employed after completing their apprenticeship, with an average annual salary of \$70,000.

The ATO registers new pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs across a variety of occupations in the state.

The goal of the ATO is threefold:

1. To increase both apprentices and registered apprenticeship programs' capacity, in PA.
2. To increase registered apprenticeship programs in non-traditional industries and reach a larger audience.
3. Lastly, through our Ambassador Network to both facilitate and better communicate the value of apprenticeships in PA.

### **Bureau of Workforce Partnership and Operations (BWPO)**

BWPO supports Pennsylvania's job seekers and businesses through the PA CareerLink® system. These are federally funded American Job Centers (AJCs) coordinated by the US Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration (ETA). They are rebranded here in Pennsylvania as the PA CareerLink®.

In the 62 PA CareerLink® locations across the state, as well as the PA CareerLink® website, we support business needs by providing workforce needs analyses, job postings, screenings, and referrals, and we help job seekers achieve their career goals through assessment, employment programs, and referrals to training opportunities.

Our staff's main function is to ensure legislative compliance through programmatic oversight, data analysis, staff training, and research.

It is also helpful to understand that the PA CareerLink® is a collaboration of multiple agencies including 22 local Workforce Investment Boards, OVR, UC, and DHS among others. L&I is responsible for oversight while the local workforce development boards are responsible for execution.

### **Bureau of Workforce Development Administration (BWDA)**

BWDA manages public workforce development funds at the state and subrecipient levels.

It does this by:

- Processing the operating budgets for each of the sixty-two PA CareerLink® locations,
- Guiding the development of local workforce development boards' strategic plans,
- Developing policies to ensure regulatory compliance and alignment with agency objectives,
- Evaluating risks, controls, and governance to limit possibly negative effects on the public workforce development system.

While the workforce development system in the commonwealth is composed of a mixture of federal (91.94%) and state funding (8.06%), it is largely supported by federal statutory formula grants.

The principal funding contributors are the

- Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) at 44.80%,
- Trade Adjustment Act (TAA) at 13.34%,
- Wagner-Peyser Act Employment Service Program (WP) at 10.16%, and
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) at 9.8% of the total funding.

In addition to these larger pools of funding, L&I also receives federal funding under the

- Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC),
- Jobs for Veterans Staffing Grant (JVSG),
- Foreign Labor Certification (FLC), and
- Reemployment Services and Eligibility Assessment Grants (RESEA).

L&I applies for these federal statutory formula grants as well as other competitive federal grants. The balance of the funding is provided through the state budget.

### **Center for Workforce Information and Analysis (CWIA)**

CWIA provides labor market information (LMI) and career exploration tools of interest to students, employers, jobseekers, economic and workforce developers, and the public.

Perhaps more importantly CWIA draws on federal and state labor market statistics and data sets produced in cooperation with the Bureau of Labor Statistics, as well as on its research and analysis, to develop diverse products covering employment data, hiring trends, and other economic indicators.

In addition, CWIA certifies the federally mandated common measures of performance and employment outcomes under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), provides data and research services to the agency's unemployment compensation and workers' compensation organizations, supports workforce and economic development initiatives with other agencies, and jointly administers (with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services) the New Hire Reporting program.

Thank you, and I look forward to your questions.