

What Every Union Leader In the **Building and Construction Trades** Needs to Know About the **Workforce Investment Act**

Five Facts You Should Know About WIA

- ▶ **If unions and their employers are not accessing these public resources, low road employers may be using them by default.**
- ▶ **Accessing WIA funds can free up existing employer-worker training dollars to support new training programs and projects.**
- ▶ **Under WIA, all training providers, including Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees (JATCs), can set their own entrance standards for trainees.**
- ▶ **WIA funding can cover all or part of the cost of expanding a training program.**
- ▶ **By connecting with WIA, unions can become stronger voices for workers and help keep local communities on the economic high road.**

The Basics About WIA Funding for Union Training Programs

For decades, building and construction trades unions have worked with their employers to create world-class apprenticeship training programs.

Traditionally, union workers and their employers have funded these programs themselves through joint apprenticeship training committees (JATCs), made up of representatives from unions and industry employers. **Each year these local training trust funds spend over \$500 million on training in more than 2,000 training centers across North America.**

Recently many union-employer partnerships have found ways to stretch their private dollars and expand their training programs by taking advantage of additional resources through the Workforce Investment Act (WIA),

the federal initiative that governs the nation's public workforce investment system.

Created by Congress in 1998 and administered by the U.S. Department of Labor, WIA can support an individual's career in the building trades at every rung of the career ladder—from preparing an individual for an apprenticeship program, through the apprenticeship process itself, to upgrading skills at the journey-level.

This special insert of Connections is designed to help union leaders in the building and construction trades become more familiar with WIA and the funding opportunities WIA offers for training.

See Page 3A:
What Every Workforce Investment Board Member Needs to Know About Building Trades Apprenticeships



Support for pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs is made available at the local level through local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs). In contrast, journey-level upgrade training is more likely to be funded at the state level through what is called the "Governor's 15% Discretionary Fund." This account pools 15 percent off the top of a state's allocation for each of the three WIA funding streams (for adults, dislocated workers and youth). Incumbent worker training is specifically mentioned as an allowable activity, making it a ready source of funding for journey-level upgrade training. The Governor's 15% account can also support pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs.

"The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) has become an important new resource for many types of training in the building and construction trades including pre-apprenticeship, apprenticeship and journey-level upgrade training. It's important for every union leader in our sector to understand how WIA works and the opportunities it offers to help create and retain good jobs within our industry."

— Ed Sullivan, President, Building and Construction Trades Department, AFL-CIO



Learning the Lingo

Here are definitions of key terms to help better understand the Workforce Investment Act.

WIA, WIBs and Funding

Workforce Investment Act (WIA), created by Congress in 1998, replaced the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) and provides federal funding for workforce development nationwide.

Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) oversee the use of WIA funds and have broad leeway in determining local workforce development policies. At least two labor representatives, nominated by state and local labor federations, sit on each board.

WIA's Funding Formula allocates funds for adult, dislocated worker, and youth services among the local WIBs. Governors retain up to 15% of state WIA allocations of all three funding streams. Governors can use these funds for any allowed statewide activity under WIA. In many states, the Governor's 15% fund is the only source of WIA money for incumbent worker journey-level training.

Basic Services Under WIA

- **Core Services** refer to a universally available set of services for job seekers—regardless of their earnings history—that must be provided at all One-Stop Career Centers. Examples of these services include helping prepare resumes and reviewing local job announcements.
- **Intensive Services** are available to adults and dislocated workers who need additional assistance to gain employment. Examples include personalized skills analysis and career counseling. In some areas, pre-apprenticeship training may be considered an intensive service if it focuses on basic education and English as a Second Language (ESL) as tools to prepare a person for an apprenticeship program.
- **Training Services** can be made available to unemployed adults and employed adults whose income falls below the self-sufficiency standard. These services are primarily funded through ITAs. This is why realistic self-sufficiency standards are critical to the eligibility of apprentices for training through ITAs.

Ways of Delivering Training Services

Customized Training pays up to 50% of the cost of training workers for employers who agree to employ or continue to employ trainees once training is completed. The use of customized training under WIA varies widely from one workforce area to another.

Individual Training Accounts (ITAs) are publicly-funded training vouchers that individuals use to purchase training from a list of eligible training providers. The self-sufficiency standard set by the WIB determines eligibility for these vouchers for employed individuals.

On the Job Training offers participants the opportunity to be paid while learning the skills they need to do a job. These programs, which have fixed time limits, can use WIA funds to reimburse employers up to 50 percent of a participant's wage rate.

Types of Training WIA Supports

- **Pre-Apprenticeship Training** seeks to improve basic skills and prepare an individual for an apprenticeship program.
- **Apprenticeship Training** is earn-while-you-learn training that provides the work skills necessary for an individual to succeed in a craft or trade.
- **Journey-Level Upgrade Training** provides the training necessary for an individual to expand their skills in their trade and usually results in a special certification of competency in a trade or craft.

Other Key Terms

Eligible Training Provider is an organization that has been certified by a local or state WIB to provide publicly funded training under WIA.

One Stop Career Centers are local publicly-funded facilities that provide individuals with employment-related services including helping establish eligibility for training.

Self-Sufficiency Standard refers to the maximum that a working adult can earn and still be eligible for publicly funded training services. WIBs can set their own standards. If they fail to do so, the law defaults to the often inadequate Lower Living Standard Income Level determined by the federal government.

Union Checklist: How to Make the Best Use of WIA Training Funds

What can building trade union leaders do to ensure that they take advantage of funding opportunities provided under WIA? Here are three steps to consider:

1. Assess your union's needs and those of your community.
2. Identify potential partners, supporters and allies.
3. Develop a plan to navigate the application process.

1. Assess the Needs of Your Union and Community

Training Level	Funding Source	
	Local WIB	Governor's 15% Fund
Pre-Apprenticeship	✓	✓
Apprenticeship	✓	✓
Journey-Level Training		✓

For Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship Programs

Most Likely Funding Source: Local WIBs

- What opportunities are available for individuals with poor English language skills? Do your pre-apprenticeship programs offer training in a foreign language? Do they offer English as a Second Language?
- Have you considered reaching out to targeted groups in your community (e.g., women, minorities, youth) to create or expand training programs?
- Do youth in the community understand apprenticeship opportunities? Are there effective methods in place to educate youth about these programs?
- Are there large public works projects that represent real opportunities for career building for apprentices and community members?
- What are the withdrawal rates in the first or second year of your current apprenticeship programs? If they are high, do you understand why?

For Journey-Level Training

Most Likely Funding Source: Governor's 15% Fund

- Are journey-level workers missing opportunities because they do not have the necessary certification to perform work?
- Has the introduction of new technology necessitated upgrading the skills of journey-level workers?

How WIA Dollars Actually Flow

Organizations seeking funding for apprentice-level training programs through individual training accounts (ITAs) must be approved and certified by the appropriate public workforce system as "eligible training providers" under the Act. Other types of training—including all pre-apprenticeship training, all journey-level upgrade training and apprentice-level training funded out of customized training dollars—are not required to be certified as an eligible training provider. In these instances, dollars could go either to the JATC or to a similar umbrella group already experienced with managing public dollars. In either event, the Working for America Institute can provide technical assistance to the fiscal agent on how best to manage public funding streams.

WIA specifically identifies apprenticeship programs as potential providers of training to unemployed workers and adults who are in need of training to become "self-sufficient." In fact, the Act treats apprenticeship programs just like colleges and universities, providing a "shortcut" for them to become an eligible training provider. The simplified process, called "initial eligibility," requires that the apprenticeship program submit an application to the local WIB.

Application processes vary from one WIB to the next. But most applications to the local WIBs require that the JATC submit program cost and performance information—information that is usually already developed for registration of the program with the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training or a state apprenticeship council.

2. Identify Partners, Supporters and Allies Who Will Help Get WIB Support for Your Proposal

- Who are the labor representatives on your local WIB? Do they understand apprenticeships? The Institute can help you identify these labor representatives.
- Who is the local WIB's chief elected official (the official who sits on the local WIB and appoints its members)? Both your central labor council and the Institute can help identify this individual.
- Who else serves on the local WIB who might be a potential ally? Are there representatives of community organizations, local government agencies, union employers who might support apprenticeship training?
- Do you have a relationship with the leaders of the building trades council, central labor council and the state federation of labor? Do they or their nominees sit on the local or state WIB?
- Who are your potential allies among elected officials—the governor, the mayor, the county executive—on workforce development issues?

3. Plan in Advance How to Navigate the WIA Process

The Working for America Institute can help you follow up on all the issues raised by the questions below.

- Is your apprenticeship program certified as an eligible training provider?
- What cost and performance information will be required to become an eligible training provider?
- Has your local WIB established its own self-sufficiency standard? How does it compare with apprentice-level wages?
- Does your state have a formal solicitation process for allocating workforce development funds? How does the governor distribute funds from the state's 15% set-aside?
- Do other building trades' apprenticeship programs in your area access public training dollars? If so, could they help you navigate the process?

Under WIA, One Size Doesn't Fit All

Under WIA, states and local communities have considerable flexibility in developing workforce investment policies and practices that can impact building and construction trades training programs

Some states operate under "grandfathered" systems and have rules that differ from the basic WIA structure. Others have state laws in the area of apprenticeship that may come into play in structuring your program. And some apprenticeship trust agreements may have provisions that will require different structures for receipt of public funds.

Labor representatives serving on Local WIBs or your Regional Coordinator at the Working for America Institute may be able to assist you with the process. To contact your regional coordinator, send an e-mail to info@workingforamerica.org.



What Every **WIB Member** Needs to Know About **Apprenticeship Programs in the Building Trades**

The U.S. Department of Labor's Employment and Training Administration supports Workforce Investment Boards taking steps to expand and improve apprenticeship programs. Here is a quick review of how jointly administered union-employer apprenticeship programs operate, the benefits of the model, and a checklist for WIB labor representatives to use in promoting the expansion of these union-sponsored apprenticeship programs in their communities

How These Programs Work

Through union-supported apprenticeship programs, new entrants to the building and construction trades industry are employed and receive wages while training on the job under the tutelage of master craftworkers.

The sponsoring joint apprenticeship training committee (JATC) pays the costs. This "earn while you learn" feature of apprenticeship makes it affordable for all.

Union-supported apprenticeship programs operate under standards registered and certified by the Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training of the U.S. Department of Labor or by a state apprenticeship agency. In practice many local unions set training standards that

exceed the minimum required for selection procedures, training content, wage progressions and completion requirements.

All union-supported programs encourage women and minorities to apply. The number of apprentices accepted for training can vary according to the trade or craft and local market conditions.



The Benefits of the Apprenticeship Model

For workers:

- Opportunity to "earn while you learn"
- Progressive wages over the term of training
- Nationally (and often internationally) recognized credentials upon completion
- Documented skills that are transferable
- Higher earning potential and greater financial security
- More opportunities for future training and advancement
- Many programs offer college credit

For employers:

- Skilled workers trained to industry specifications and needs
- Reduced turnover
- Pipeline for new skilled workers
- Reduced costs due to worker productivity and safety

For the workforce system:

- Placements with higher wages
- Built-in performance accountability because apprenticeship programs are registered with Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training/State Apprenticeship Council (BAT/SAC)
- Highly-skilled workforce
- Placements with a career path and long-term financial security

College Credit

An innovation in the apprenticeship programs of the unionized building trades combines apprenticeship with college study. In some programs, apprentices are "dually enrolled" in the apprenticeship program and in a college degree program. These programs recognize the academic achievement of those who successfully complete their apprenticeship and offer participating apprentices expanded career options.

CHECKLIST:

How to Make Sure Unionized Apprenticeship Programs Are Included in Workforce Development Plans

Here is a checklist of questions that WIB board members can use to assess how apprenticeships fit into their WIB's overall program and how to advocate for expanding and improving these programs with federal funds.

1. Assess local area needs

- Does the local workforce system have enough eligible training providers so that individuals can choose training, not just go to a community college or university?
- Do your local training programs seek to provide skilled jobs that can lead to careers or do they focus on creating low-paying jobs with little chance of advancement?
- Do recipients of current training services find employment at the completion of their training?

2. Identify partners and supporters

- Do you know the principal officer of the building and construction trades council in your area?
- Do you have a relationship with the chief elected official who appointed you to the local WIB? Does that elected official manage large public works investments that might lead to apprenticeship programs? How can you work with local building trades unions to take advantage of that relationship?
- Do other unionized building trades' apprenticeship programs in your area access public training dollars?
- Are there non-union apprenticeship programs that are eligible training providers in your local WIB?
- Does a community college or other training provider deliver training in the construction industry?
- Do union contractors sit on the WIB?
- Do you have a relationship with the leaders of the central labor council and the state federation of labor? Do they sit on the WIB?

3. Plan in advance how to navigate the process

- Have you identified union employers involved in providing "customized training" in which employers pay for half the training and agree to hire trainees? Are these employers interested in additional training? Do they have ties to WIB members?
- Are the apprenticeship programs in your local area certified as eligible training providers?
- What cost and performance information will be required of the apprenticeship program to become an eligible training provider?
- Has your local WIB established a self-sufficiency standard? How does it compare with apprentice-level wages?

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About This Publication

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Three WIA Success Stories

West Virginia:

Journey-level upgrade training

“We’re pleased that Governor Wise has continued investing precious workforce dollars in our members – and in family-wage jobs for the community. It doesn’t make sense to contribute tax dollars to train people for minimum-wage jobs with no benefits.”

—Roy Smith, Secretary-Treasurer, West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council

In 2001 Construction Works of West Virginia, run by the West Virginia State Building and Construction Trades Council, AFL-CIO, helped upgrade the skills of more than 150 of its members after receiving support from statewide WIA funds. Noting that the trades council had trained 50 more workers than the initial grant had sought, Governor Bob Wise this year renewed the program for another two years with \$600,000 in additional funds for journey-level upgrade training.

Construction Works has also coordinated with the trade unions’ Joint Apprenticeship and Training Committees around the state to ensure that the JATCs are certified as “eligible training providers.” While qualifying as an eligible training provider is not legally required to receive money from the Governor’s 15% Discretionary Fund under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), it gives the workforce system confidence in the quality of the training and it makes the JATCs eligible for other workforce dollars from Local Workforce Investment Boards.

California:

Pre-apprenticeship training

“You can’t believe the transformation we see in our students over the course of the six-week pre-apprenticeship program. It’s a win-win for the building trades and the community.”

—Xema Jacobson, Business Manager, San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council

In the spring of 2002 the State Building and Construction Trades Council of California (SBCTC) was awarded a one-year grant of \$581,988 for a new Construction Opportunities Program. The funding came from Governor Gray Davis’s 15% Discretionary Fund. The campaign will help develop greater capacity among 6 to 10 local Building Trades Councils to establish successful pre-apprenticeship programs in coordination with their local Workforce Investment Boards.

This program will also develop an extensive public relations and outreach campaign to promote careers in construction to young people, as well as adults who are unemployed or working in low-wage industries. Elements of the campaign will include a public service announcement, a video, an interactive CD, a website, written materials and training for job referral counselors, and linkages to community-based organizations.

Another recent recipient of support from the Governor’s 15% Discretionary Fund is the San Diego Building and Construction Trades Council, which operates a pre-apprenticeship program called JobLinks, which connects students to a variety of careers in the trades.

The program consists of 96 hours each of classroom instruction and hands-on, paid training that prepares students for exams and interviews necessary to enter an apprenticeship program. A master craftsman from the Sheetmetal Workers provides the instruction. The students are also certified in OSHA safety, First Aid and CPR.

Launched with a grant from its local Workforce Investment Board, San Diego Workforce Partnerships, the program has continued its operations through grants made available through the Governor’s 15% statewide resources. The program has placed graduates in every affiliate of the Council.

Georgia:

Apprentice-level training

“A perfect fit—That’s how we would describe the partnership between our Workforce Investment Board and our building trades apprenticeship programs.”

—J.J. Johnson, UA Local 177 and WIB Representative and Joe Walker, IBEW Local 508 and WIB Representative

The trades’ training programs along the coast of Southeast Georgia have accessed the public system to get training dollars for their apprentices. Once the Coastal Workforces Services Board, the Local WIB covering Savannah and Brunswick, Ga., learned about the opportunities to invest in world-class training, they moved quickly to invest in building and construction trades unions’ and their employers’ apprenticeship programs.

It started when the joint labor-management committees of the UA and IBEW connected their apprenticeship programs to the workforce system to enhance their training — paying for books, instructors and equipment, and covering the out-of-pocket expense for apprentices.

It has been a great partnership that has been expanding beyond the two trades that got the ball rolling. Through contracts that rely on a system of “participant training vouchers” — similar to ITAs but based on contracts for service — the Board has agreed to cover half of the apprentices annually admitted into the JATC programs; the JATC finances the other half.

Other crafts are accessing public resources that contribute to a high road economy in coastal Georgia. The WIB has invested in a two-year program to train 14 apprentices in the Brunswick local of the Plumbers and Pipefitters to become journey-level workers. The IBEW-National Electrical Contractors Association JATC also is receiving WIA funds from the WIB to train apprentices in the area.

Building a Stronger America

Unions affiliated with the Building and Construction Trades Department of the AFL-CIO are responsible for building and maintaining America’s infrastructure—the places where we live, work and gather together in community. Here is a brief description of the affiliated trades unions and their websites. All the unions listed below sponsor apprenticeship training programs.

International Union of Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers (BAC) BAC represents an array of skilled workers who practice the crafts of bricklaying, plastering, tile setting, plastering, stone, marble and cement masonry, and terrazzo and mosaic work. **Website:** www.bacweb.org

International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, Blacksmiths, Forgers and Helpers (Boilermakers) The Boilermakers build and repair all types of seaworthy vessels as well as cranes, boilers, tanks, pressure vessels, heavy plates and structural fabrications. **Website:** www.boilermakers.org

United Union of Roofers, Waterproofers and Allied Workers (Roofers) Members of the Roofers union install new roofs and remove old roofs using a variety of materials. Waterproofers install moisture-resistant products on below-grade structures and other surfaces to prevent water intrusion into buildings. **Website:** www.unionroofers.com

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) The IBEW represents workers in the electrical industry, including construction, gas and electric utilities, telecommunications, railroads and government agencies. **Website:** www.ibew.org

International Association of Heat and Frost Insulators and Asbestos Workers (Asbestos Workers) Members apply insulation to pipes, tanks, boilers, ducts, refrigeration equipment and other surfaces requiring thermal control of temperatures. Asbestos workers also do removal of asbestos-containing material. **Website:** www.insulators.org

International Association of Bridge, Structural, Ornamental and Reinforcing Iron Workers (Iron Workers) Iron Workers assemble and erect steel framework and other metal parts in buildings and on bridges, dams, skyscrapers, factories and other steel structures. **Website:** www.ironworkers.org

International Union of Operating Engineers (IUOE) IUOE members work as stationary engineers in building and industrial complexes. As operating engineers, they use heavy construction equipment, such as cranes and bulldozers in constructing buildings, dams, airports and highways. **Website:** www.iuoe.org

Laborers’ International Union of North America (LIUNA) LIUNA is a diverse union that includes workers in construction and environmental remediation. Members help lay down new highways, build bridges, dig tunnels and subways, build new plants, factories, dams and power plants and erect new schools, churches, hospitals and houses. **Website:** www.liuna.org

Sheet Metal Workers’ International Association (SMWIA) Members work in several industries. They fabricate, install and service heating, venting and air-conditioning systems; blowpipe and industrial systems; metal roofing; coping and flashing; and stainless steel work for restaurants, kitchens and hospitals. **Website:** www.smwia.org

Operative Plasterers’ and Cement Masons’ International Association of the United States and Canada (OP&CMIA) The union represents skilled plasterers, cement masons, and shophands who work on a variety of engineering projects including office buildings, bridges, canals, dams, reservoirs and roads. **Website:** www.opcmia.org

United Association of Journeymen and Apprentices of the Plumbing and Pipefitting Industry of the United States and Canada (United Association or UA) UA is a multi-craft union that represents plumbers and pipe, sprinkler, and refrigerator fitters, as well as service technicians. All of these jobs require the installation, remodeling or maintenance of systems that carry water, steam, air and other liquids or gases. **Website:** http://www.ua.org

International Union of Elevator Constructors (IUEC) IUEC members assemble, install and replace elevators, escalators, dumbwaiters, moving walkways and similar equipment in new and old buildings. Elevator constructors also maintain and repair this equipment. **Website:** www.iuec.org

International Union of Painters and Allied Trades (IUPAT) IUPAT members work in one or more of several crafts: painting, wallpaper hanging, glazing (glass work), drywall and taping, floor covering, and sign and display work. **Website:** www.iupat.org

International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) The Teamsters union has several divisions, including a Building Material and Construction Trades Division. Most members in this division are truck drivers who transport and haul material. **Website:** www.teamster.org

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