

## **The American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (The Recovery Act): *What it means for South Central Michigan and You***

Submitted by Christine Quinn, President, South Central Michigan Works!

The Recovery Act was signed into law by President Obama on February 17, 2009. This Act is intended to preserve and create jobs, promote the nation's economic recovery, and assist those most impacted by the recession. Within this Act is funding through the Department of Labor – Employment and Training Administration that will provide additional funding to South Central Michigan (Hillsdale, Jackson and Lenawee Counties) under the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and Wagner-Peyser which currently provides employment, re-employment, training and education activities through the Michigan Works! System including<sup>i</sup>:

- Adult employment and training activities;
- Youth activities, including a summer employment component;
- Dislocated worker employment and training activities; and
- Re-employment activities for unemployment insurance claimants

Also included will be additional [Weatherization and] YouthBuild<sup>ii</sup> funds, Senior Community Service Employment Programs<sup>iii</sup> funds, additional funds for Unemployment Insurance and nationally competitive grants for worker training and placement in high growth and emerging industry sectors for research, labor exchange and job training projects that prepare workers for careers in energy efficiency and renewable energy.

Within our workforce system, we will be expected to implement and act on this law to fulfill a critical role in the economic recovery effectively and with accountability toward the letter and spirit of the law. To do this we will be working closely with our communities to identify demand for and from our businesses, municipalities, education and economic development Partners so we can identify and create opportunities for workers.

As South Central Michigan Works! moves forward with our strategies to address federal, state, and local plans, we will post updates on our website to better communicate our activities and progress for you to view over the next year. If you have questions about the Recovery Act and its many components as it relates to education and workforce you can go to <http://www.doleta.gov/recovery/> or overall information at <http://www.recovery.gov/>.

### **Our Workforce Development System Background**

The South Central Michigan Works! Workforce Development Board is authorized by the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 and is responsible for helping communities and regions respond to the changing economy by overseeing the federal government's investments in promoting effective labor market functioning, including support for job training, career development and reemployment-related services. South Central Michigan Works! ([www.scmw.org](http://www.scmw.org)) is one of twenty-five Regions in the State of Michigan ([www.michiganworks.org](http://www.michiganworks.org)).

To help restructure the effect of the economy transition we are making every effort to<sup>iv</sup>:

- Anticipate labor market and economic trends
- Coordinate workforce investment activities with economic development and education strategies

- Bring relevant parties together to address workforce and competitive challenges in a sustainable and collaborative way
- Promote the participation of employers in the public workforce development system
- Ensuring the effective provision of connecting, brokering, and coaching activities, through intermediaries to help employers meet hiring needs and competitiveness concerns
- Developing linkages with economic development activities including available state and local business retention and recruitment activities
- Devising and overseeing strategies for incumbent worker training
- Developing layoff aversion strategies
- Exchanging information about potential dislocation
- Exploring early intervention and pre-feasibility studies for alternative ownership/financing
- Delivering effective rapid response to ease transition for laid-off workers to new industries and occupations

South Central Michigan Works! also has adopted a bigger agenda:

- Take a broader perspective beyond simply managing a single federal categorical program that provides workforce development services to job-seekers
- Delivers services and achieves results that make a difference to employers by “going the extra mile” beyond traditional workforce services to win the confidence of business customers
- Interprets and applies the WIA statute and regulation with confidence and uses their authority to promote innovative program strategies and entrepreneurial endeavors
- Uses WIA funding to penetrate new markets, to communicate with new and existing business customers, to work successfully beyond the established WIA performance metrics, and to seek opportunities and new relationships

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<sup>i</sup> South Central Michigan Works! currently offers these activities through its One Stop Centers located in each of our three counties. Additional information about these and out Centers can be found at [www.scmw.org](http://www.scmw.org).

<sup>ii</sup> Local YouthBuild is through the Community Action Agency <http://www.caajlh.org/> and nationally you can get further information at [www.youthbuild.org](http://www.youthbuild.org)

<sup>iii</sup> The Senior Community Services Employment Program (SCSEP) is designed to provide and promote useful part-time opportunities in community employment for low-income persons age 55 and older. It also assists them in receiving experience and training necessary for employment in the private sector. More information on this program in our communities is available at [www.michigan.gov/miseniors/](http://www.michigan.gov/miseniors/)

<sup>iv</sup> Responding in a Turbulent Economy: Creative Roles for Workforce Investment Boards  
[http://colosus.ncee.org/pdf/wfd/Churning\\_Final\\_Report.pdf](http://colosus.ncee.org/pdf/wfd/Churning_Final_Report.pdf)