



Workforce Programs

Update to 2010 Evaluation Report

Problems Identified

- **Unmet Needs.** Some groups, such as the underemployed, lacked employment and training services. Gaps in service occurred because funding was segregated by program, and workforce center programs were only partially integrated with other workforce-related programs, such as unemployment insurance.
- **Appropriations Bypass Competitive Process.** Direct legislative appropriations to specific providers of workforce programs bypassed a competitive process for selecting service providers. Accepted principles for state contracts call for widely publicizing information on grant availability and awarding grants through a competitive application process, but the legislative appropriation process had done neither.
- **Problems with Assessing Program Performance.** Measures of program performance were inadequate. As examples, federal performance measures were flawed, and the Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED) did not use standardized approaches to report performance across programs. Although DEED monitored workforce programs for compliance with laws, its on-site monitoring of recipients of direct legislative grants was inconsistent. These recipients' own performance results were not comparable, and DEED's funding for monitoring the recipients was inequitable.

Changes Implemented

- **New Approaches to Assess Performance.** The 2010 Legislature required DEED to develop standard approaches for assessing outcomes of workforce programs. In response, a 2011 DEED report describes plans to improve processes for assessing performance. One example is measuring clients' satisfaction with outcomes of workforce services.
- **Process to Identify Service Gaps.** Following a 2010 legislative requirement, the Governor's Workforce Development Council (GWDC) recommended in early 2011 that local workforce councils identify gaps in workforce services. However, the process for doing so is not yet fully designed.

Action Needed

- **Improve Process for Awarding Grants.** The 2011 Legislature is considering bills to require competitive processes for selecting providers of certain workforce services. As of mid-April 2011, agreement had not been reached on the extent and design of the processes.
- **Monitor DEED and GWDC Proposals.** DEED proposes several changes to its approach for assessing program performance. The Legislature should monitor the changes to ensure that they adequately assess performance. Similarly, the adequacy of GWDC recommendations for identifying gaps in services should be monitored.