

# STATE OF THE WORKFORCE REPORT

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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### PURPOSE

The purpose of the *State of the Workforce Report* is to provide the Workforce Investment Board (WIB) and Elected Officials with information they need to make informed decisions regarding policy, funding, and future directions for the workforce development system in Cayuga and Cortland Counties. The report focuses on job seekers and their characteristics, businesses, how work is changing, and the response of the WIB to the needs of job seekers and businesses. References are made to page numbers in the report which accompanies this executive summary.

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### WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT JOB SEEKERS

- An educated, skilled workforce is growing older and it appears there are insufficient numbers of qualified applicants to take their place. (Pages 3-4)
- The age of the population, at least in Cayuga County, is getting older. (Pages 3-4)
- Out-migration is perceived to be the cause of an aging population as many youth do not return from college to work in the area and many with marketable skills secure higher incomes in other counties. (Page 4)
- Earnings are not as high in Cayuga and Cortland Counties as in some of the contiguous counties and the poverty level of Cortland County was higher than both New York State and National rates in 1999. (Pages 5 and 6)
- Youth and other job seekers must develop the basic skills necessary to compete and be successful in the workplace. (Pages 7-9)
- Dislocated workers and older workers will need to document their skills and invest in training in order to re-engage and keep working in a changing workforce. (Pages 9-10)
- The decrease in the number of youth entering the skilled trades could lead to severe shortages in these occupations. (Pages 10-11)

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### WHAT WE KNOW ABOUT BUSINESSES AND HOW WORK IS CHANGING

- There is an increase in economic activity. (Page 12)
- Businesses cannot always find employees with the skills required. (Pages 12-16)
- Businesses are adapting to shifts from manufacturing to the service industry, retail trades, and agriculture. (Pages 13-16)
- Businesses are transitioning from static information and processes to an environment of constant change. (Pages 13-16)
- Training will be fundamental to businesses as they continue to adapt to change and try to secure and retain a high quality workforce. (Pages 16-18)
- Many businesses still are not aware of the WIB and how to connect to it. (Page 18)

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## **THE RESPONSE OF THE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD**

**T**he Cayuga-Cortland WIB has carefully reviewed and considered all of the issues identified in this *State of the Workforce Report*. The deliberation required the WIB to balance the compelling, unmet needs of job seekers and businesses against current resources and initiatives. As a result, the WIB has identified issues and developed a corresponding action plan to address their priorities as follows. The expected outcome of these actions is an increase in job retention.

- The WIB will continue to ensure funding for training is leveraged in the most effective way, in part, by keeping the updated list of demand occupations current and assisting additional businesses with applying for training funds through the New York State Department of Labor. (Pages 19-20)
- The WIB will move forward with pursuing the options available to create portfolio assessments for youth served through the One Stop Career Centers. Sample portfolios and criteria to be included will be reviewed. (Pages 21-22)
- The WIB will investigate developing a youth credential for youth programs that have business and WIB member endorsement. (Pages 21-22)
- Members of the WIB will seek to participate in a meeting of School Board Superintendents to engage them in the dialog and continue the work that resulted from the Barlow event. (Pages 21-22)
- New marketing materials for businesses will include a one-source contact for each One Stop Career Center. (Pages 23-24)
- Upgrades will be made to the website to actively promote One Stop Career Center activities and services. (Pages 23-24)
- The WIB will attempt to connect educators, parents, and businesses, by participating in meetings with school groups to identify how they can best work together. (Pages 21-22)
- The Business Service Team will increase marketing efforts for businesses and jobseekers. (Pages 23-24)

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