

Written Testimony of Roderick “Rick” Beasley

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d/b/a CareerSource South Florida

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Chairman Owens, Ranking Member Wilson, and distinguished members of this Subcommittee: My name is Rick Beasley and I have the distinct privilege to serve as the Executive Director of the South Florida Workforce Investment Board d/b/a CareerSource South Florida. We are the Regional Workforce Board that serves the residents and business community of Miami-Dade and Monroe Counties.

As Congress considers the reauthorization of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), it is my honor to highlight key specific programmatic and administrative areas to support Congress in fulfilling its mission to increase opportunities, enhance accountability, reduce administrative waste and improve outcomes across the public workforce system.

As the largest local workforce development board in the state of Florida, CareerSource South Florida has implemented programmatic and administrative initiatives to expand employment and training services, improve performance outcomes and enhance administrative accountability. The following are some of the initiatives implemented to strengthen to the local workforce service delivery system:

- **Support Services Expansion** – CareerSource South Florida provides support services to participants to aid them in reaching economic self-sufficiency through the WIOA career and training services. The cost of living has surpassed the support limits that were previously set to assist individuals participating in Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act career and training services. Based on the United Way Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed report, CareerSource South Florida increased the current limits of support services and incentives to help meet the economic demands.
- **Access Points & Mobile Assistance Centers** – Meeting the needs of job seekers and strengthening relationships with other community organizations is an integral part of our strategic plan. CareerSource South Florida initiated the creation of Access Points to increase access to our services and to engage Faith-Based and Community-Based Organizations as committed and active partners in the workforce development system. Additionally, CareerSource South Florida operates five Mobile Workforce Assistance Centers. These Mobile Centers are equipped with technological resources that include: 13 communication computer workstations with satellite internet connection, an interactive SMART board for instructional purposes, and a state-of-the-art audio-visual system.
- **Digital Access and Broadband** – CareerSource South Florida has launched three TechHire Centers and TechHire boot camps to offer digital access and IT training to targeted communities and populations within Miami-Dade County. In partnership with Big Brothers Big Sisters of Miami, CareerSource South Florida has opened a TechHire center focused on at-risk youth. A second center was launched in partnership with the Opa-Locka Community Development Center to expand digital access and focus on offering technology to the underrepresented community of the City of Opa-Locka. The third center was launched in partnership with the YWCA of Miami to increase the number of women entering into technology occupations. In addition, CareerSource South Florida has launched an annual

TechHire Boot Camp targeting youth to offer IT training in network administration, gaming, web-development, computer programming and cyber security.

- **Pre-Apprenticeship / Apprenticeships** – CareerSource South Florida is committed to promoting Registered Apprenticeship (RA) opportunities as a career pathway for job seekers. CareerSource South Florida works with the Florida Department of Education Division of Career and Adult Education to assist in the expansion of existing or development of new apprenticeship programs based on employer demand in the region. Apprenticeship programs are promoted to employers as a solution to the challenges of finding workers with the skills required to fill essential positions. Working to increase the prosperity of workers and employers, CareerSource South Florida continues to invest in registered apprenticeship programs.
 - **Miami-Dade County Public Schools Pre-Apprenticeship Program** – CareerSource South Florida approved the development of the Miami-Dade Youth Pre-Apprenticeship Career and Technical Training Program. The pre-apprenticeship training is a 23-month specialized program that targets WIOA eligible Miami-Dade County Public Schools 11th and 12th grade students. The training also includes a Paid Summer Internship that provides 150 hours of paid work experience in the construction field. The program is designed to fill the employment gap by exposing students to the various trades.
 - **Bean Automotive Apprenticeship** - A Miami Dade College Apprenticeship Program, the Bean Automotive Group Apprenticeship blends classroom instruction and on-the-job training (OJT) to successfully prepare participants to become Automotive Technician Specialists. CareerSource South Florida and Miami Community Ventures were key partners in this program providing 220-clock hour training at the Bean Automotive Group West Kendall location. Upon program completion, apprentices will have earned an Apprenticeship Certificate of Completion.
- **Layoff Aversion Fund** - In order to support small business employers and Community-Base Organizations (CBOs) facing financial impacts and potential layoffs from the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, CareerSource South Florida established the COVID-19 Layoff Aversion Fund. The fund provided grants to small business employers and CBOs experiencing economic stresses in order to prevent potential layoffs or to minimize the duration of unemployment resulting from layoffs due COVID-19.
- **On-Line Performance Indicator Tool** – The innovative and locally developed Performance Indicator Tool assists CareerSource South Florida and American Job Center (AJC) staff in monitoring WIOA Performance in real time for the entire Local Workforce Development Area. The tool affords AJC staff the ability to see which cases have exited the system, with or without employment, using information generated from various employment data sources. The Performance Indicator Tool allows AJC staff to ensure all follow ups required by WIOA

have been conducted as the tool will identify cases with incomplete employment data per quarter.

- **CareerSource South Florida Automated Monitoring Tool (AMT)** – The AMT was developed to meet the CareerSource South Florida’s strategic goal to strengthen the One-Stop delivery system. The automated tool is designed using the Florida Department of Commerce’s programmatic monitoring tool for each workforce program. Federal law requires the state to monitor all workforce programs receiving federal funds. The purpose of the monitoring is to periodically assess and evaluate whether the Local Workforce Development Boards are complying with federal and state laws, regulations, and administrative policies in administering publicly funded workforce programs.

The AMT evaluates 100 percent of program data elements of allocated funding to allow the user to see a snapshot of each program’s caseload and corresponding error rates. Furthermore, the tool allows the user to review existing errors in specific cases and correct them, thus lowering the error rate. Finally, the tool provides a variety of reports to assist the users in determining trends and evaluating performance.

The submission of this written testimony proffers best and promising practices to serve as a foundation for recommendations to address challenges to increase access to services in our public workforce system. I have identified the following areas for consideration to enhance services.

1. **Reduction of Eligibility Barriers** – In reauthorizing WIOA, Congress should authorize the Secretary of Labor to utilize Opportunity Zones to further determine WIOA eligibility. Opportunity Zones are areas that have been designated “economically underserved” based on past census data. Some opportunity zones are low-income neighborhoods in cities. Others are rural areas that are geographically far away from larger concentrations of jobs and resources. Potential WIOA participants living in an Opportunity Zone should automatically qualify for WIOA services. The new eligibility standard would allow local workforce development boards to expand services to under-served communities, eliminate eligibility barriers to job seekers and reduce administrative paper work.
2. **Individual Training Account / Training Goals** – In an effort to increase participants obtaining training services, Congress may establish an Individual Training Account / Training Goals for WIOA funding. Based on the economic conditions of a Local Workforce Development Areas, States could implement Individual Training Account / Training goal for a Local Workforce Development Areas. The Individual Training Account / Training Goals will establish a percentage of the WIOA funding targeted for training services. The definition of allowable Individual Training Account / Training should be inclusive of classroom training, On-the-Job Training, Apprenticeships, Customize Training, Incumbent Worker Training and Program Cost supporting Individual Training Account / Training participants (i.e., case management, support services, facility cost, etc.).

3. **Promotion of Support Service** – WIOA supportive services are services that are necessary to enable an individual to participate in activities authorized under WIOA section 134(c)(2) and (3). To address the financial barriers to economic mobility, the expansion of WIOA support services could address issues regarding the benefits cliff. The service may include, but should not be limited to the following services:

- Assistance with transportation
- Assistance with child care and dependent care
- Housing and needs-related payments

As I conclude, I applaud the Subcommittee’s efforts and commitment to hold hearings such as this one to shine a light on the opportunities to improve our public workforce system. I look forward to the question-and-answer session at which time we will have a greater opportunity to discuss actions Congress and other workforce partners and stakeholders must take to drastically improve the level of skill development across the country and the public workforce system’s outcomes.

I welcome the opportunity to provide technical assistance to Congress on these legislative issues. Thank you for your commitment to building a “stronger workforce system by listening to the needs of job creators, delivering upskilling opportunities to workers, and holding skills education programs accountable for their performance.” I am happy to answer any questions you may have.