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# Aging Worker Initiative: Strategies for Regional Talent Development



## Background

The United States is in the midst of a demographic metamorphosis. Currently, 22.6 percent of the U.S. population is over the age of 55. The graying of America will be reflected in its workforce: between 2006 and 2016, the number of workers 55 and over is projected to increase by 36.5 percent, a significant jump when compared to younger populations. The local workforce investment system is America's primary means of delivering publicly-funded employment and training services to workers and businesses. Because of demographic changes, the number of older workers who desire and need its services is expected to rise dramatically. Similarly, due to possible labor shortages in some regions and high-growth industries, many businesses will seek out qualified, trained older workers as a labor pool.

## Aging Worker Initiative Overview

The Aging Worker Initiative (AWI) seeks to expand the workforce investment system's understanding about how to best serve the older worker population and develop models to share with all local workforce investment areas. Its ultimate goal is to provide better, more expansive services to older Americans for many years to come. Grants awarded under the AWI focus on providing training and related services for individuals age 55 and older that result in employment and advancement opportunities in high-growth sectors. The proposed strategies take place in the context of regional talent development efforts, and each is implemented by a strategic regional partnership.

Ten awards of approximately \$1 million each were made to organizations in Indiana, Louisiana, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, Pennsylvania, Texas, Vermont, Washington and Wisconsin (complete list on page 2). The grants target older individuals who have been laid off and are seeking re-employment; who need to stay in the workforce beyond the traditional retirement age, but need training to increase their skills; and who face other barriers to employment such as disabilities or low levels of English proficiency. Industries that grantees have chosen to focus on include: Healthcare, Energy, Advanced Manufacturing, Specialized Construction/Skilled Labor, Green Construction, Engineering, Architecture, Transportation, Information Technology, Accounting and Financial Services, and Administrative Support Services.

## AWI Partners

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has launched a unique public-private partnership for this effort, with The Atlantic Philanthropies investing an additional \$3.6 million for technical assistance to grant winners. The Atlantic Philanthropies have funded the Council for Adult and Experiential Learning (CAEL) and the Council on Competitiveness (CoC) to provide this assistance to grantees and document and disseminate effective strategies to promote career opportunities for older workers. CAEL

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and CoC will provide data and technical assistance options, ranging from plan development to implementation. Assistance will be provided at no cost to grantees. Additionally, they will facilitate annual project-wide learning institutes to share ideas, challenges, progress, and strategies nationally.

## AWI Evaluation

ETA has funded Social Policy Research Associates (SPRA) and Mathematica Policy Research (MPR) to conduct a process evaluation, which will provide detailed information on how grants were used and identify key issues for future policy, administrative guidance, and technical assistance. The SPRA/MPR team will report on topics such as the types of training and services offered; number of older workers served; types of employers involved; integration with regional economic development; relationships among partnering organizations; measurement systems; and the sustainability of demonstration activities after grants expire.

## Grantees

<b>Award-Winning Organization</b>	<b>Location</b>
Tecumseh Area Partnership, Inc.	Indiana
Quad Area Community Action Agency, Inc.	Louisiana
Coastal Counties Workforce, Inc.	Maine
Baltimore Country Office of Workforce Development	Maryland
Macomb/St. Clair Workforce Development Board, Inc.	Michigan
South Central Workforce Investment Board	Pennsylvania
Goodwill Industries of Houston, Inc.	Texas
Vermont Associates for Training and Development, Inc.	Vermont
Seattle-King County Workforce Development Council	Washington
Fox Valley Workforce Development Board	Wisconsin

