

Women Work!



POLICY BRIEF

October 2006

Displaced Homemakers and Single Parents: Changes Under the Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006

The Carl D. Perkins Career and Technical Education Improvement Act of 2006 (Perkins IV) reflects a renewed commitment to improving the participation of displaced homemakers and single parents in career and technical education by requiring each local recipient to provide activities that prepare displaced homemakers, single parents, and other special populations enrolled in career and technical education (CTE) programs for high wage, high skill, or high demand jobs that lead to self-sufficiency.

Services to displaced homemakers and single parents in CTE have declined dramatically in recent years.

Changes to federal funding under the 1998 reauthorization of Perkins law (Perkins III) dramatically reduced the availability of services to CTE students who are single parents or displaced homemakers. In a 2001 survey of displaced homemaker/single parent programs, 71 percent reported that their ability to provide necessary services had decreased.¹

Perkins IV renews the commitment to improving the participation of displaced homemakers and single parents in CTE.

Perkins IV requires every local recipient of federal Perkins funding to:

- Provide activities that prepare special populations, including single parents and displaced homemakers, for high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations that lead to self-sufficiency.²
- Describe those activities in their local plan.³

Examples of such activities include: outreach, recruitment, counseling, life skills development, vocational assessment and testing, supportive services, financial literacy training, and job readiness preparation.

Under Perkins III, providing activities and programs for special populations was a permissible, but not required, use of local funds.

¹ National Coalition on Women and Girls in Education. "Invisible Again: The Impact of Changes in Federal Funding on Vocation Programs for Women and Girls." October, 2001.

² §135 (b) (9)

³ §134 (b) (8) (C)

States should play a leadership role in implementing the new requirement.

States should clearly articulate this new requirement to locals to ensure displaced homemakers and single parents receive the support they need to advance into high skill, high wage, and non-traditional employment that leads to economic self-sufficiency. Also, States should also be sure that local applications seek detailed information on the programs, services, and activities that will be provided to displaced homemakers and single parents in compliance with the new requirement.

In addition, States should consider providing locals with additional financial support to better meet the full intent of the new provision. Like Perkins III, Perkins IV provides States with several mechanisms to target funds to locals for specific purposes:

The Reserve Fund

States may reserve 10 percent of the local allocation for institutions in rural areas or areas with high percentages or numbers of CTE students. States may set programmatic priorities for this funding – including targeting funds to support local displaced homemaker/single parent programs.

Since 1998, Montana has been highly successful in utilizing the reserve fund option to support programs that prepare special populations for high skill, high wage careers. Montana uses reserve funds to provide competitive grants awards of up to \$35,000 to approximately ten two-year colleges each year. The grant funding is used to support programs that serve special populations, especially displaced homemakers, single parents and single pregnant women, and economically disadvantaged students.

The Non-traditional Set-Aside

Perkins IV continues the requirement that States spend \$60,000 to \$150,000 on statewide non-traditional training services. Several States have created competitive grant programs for non-traditional training support and counseling at the local level. Special consideration can be given to grant proposals that support non-traditional training initiatives housed out of single parent/displaced homemaker programs.

State Leadership Funds

Providing support for programs for special populations (including displaced homemakers and single parents) that lead to high skill, high wage, or high demand occupations continues as a required State leadership activity under Perkins IV. States can fulfill this requirement by providing support to local displaced homemaker/single parent programs either directly, or through competitive grant programs.

Women Work! The National Network for Women's Employment is a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that advances economic justice and equality for women through education, advocacy and organizing. Since 1978, the Network has assisted more than 10 million women to successfully enter, re-enter and advance in the workforce. Through supporting, advocating and increasing women's economic self-sufficiency, Women Work! members strengthen families and communities.