





*The new regional MC2STEM High School will provide students with a dynamic, real-world learning environment with a foundation rooted in science, technology, engineering and mathematics.*

## INITIATE A DEMAND-DRIVEN TALENT SYSTEM

### Workforce Investment Act

Federal government reform of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) program should support state and local efforts to align systems and resources with the needs of key industry sectors that are critical to regional economic growth. The U.S. Department of Labor's Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development (WIRED) initiative has shown promise as a way of making these important linkages. The WIRED initiative should be carefully evaluated for broader application. Recognizing that the effectiveness of existing WIA programs can be greatly enhanced, in general, efforts to improve regional workforce development systems should be supplemental to programs aimed specifically at training disadvantaged populations or dislocated workers.

**GOAL: Support efforts to reform the Workforce Investment Act (WIA)**

## Immigration Policy

Since the markets for highly skilled talent are now global, federal immigration policies should promote easy access to the international talent pools to fill positions in shortage occupations that cannot be readily filled by American workers. To help U.S. companies compete in the global marketplace for high-skilled and entrepreneurially inclined talent, the U.S. and Ohio need fundamental reform of our immigration system. The GCP strongly supports movement toward a merit-based point system that expeditiously grants permanent residency status to immigrant talent such as those systems already used in Canada, Australia, New Zealand and proposed in the European Union. The federal government should move toward this type of national system.

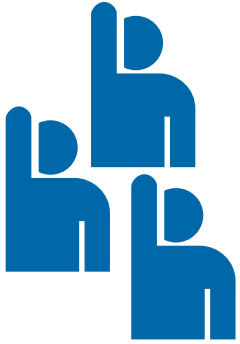
In order to accelerate the development of emerging industries such as renewable energy, biomedical technology and nano-technology, we need to quickly build deeper pools of talent. The GCP will advocate for the federal government to establish High Skill Immigration (HSI) zones in metropolitan areas such as Greater Cleveland. Such zones would allow the federal government to lift current limits on granting certain classifications of visas, such as H1-B visas that are awarded to employers who need to import educated foreign workers to occupy high-technology positions that cannot be filled by American workers.

Until fundamental immigration reform is enacted, the federal government should consider alternative approaches that build on the unique assets and respond to the critical and particular needs of the Great Lakes region, including Ohio. Workforce demographics, coupled with population outmigration in recent decades, have depleted the indigenous talent pools and damaged economic competitiveness in many Great Lakes metropolitan areas such as Greater Cleveland. This situation has resulted in serious workforce shortages in the manufacturing and services industries, our world-class health care institutions and institutions of higher learning. Finally, immigration policy should be the province of the federal government alone.

**GOAL: Support efforts to establish HSI zones that:**

- Exempt H-1B visas from national caps and allow H-1B spouses to become employed
- Eliminate EB-2 and EB-3 quotas, which are granted to foreign national professionals with advanced degrees and an offer of employment from a U.S. company
- Re-establish the H-1A visa program for registered nurses
- Encourage U.S. Embassies and Consulates to expedite the issuance of F-1 and J-1 exchange visas issued to students and exchange visitors participating in programs approved by the State Department or working at universities and colleges within an HSI zone
- Provide matching funds to metropolitan areas that establish “Welcome Centers” or equivalent capacities within their communities that connect and facilitate employer and community engagement with immigrants

## Demand-Driven Workforce and Talent



At the state level, the Governor is working to realign the state's workforce development programs to improve their effectiveness and responsiveness to the needs of Ohio's businesses. Under Executive Order 2008-05S, the Ohio Department of Development (ODOD) assumed responsibility for all workforce programs available to employers, including the Targeted Industries Training Grant Program and the Ohio Workforce Guarantee. Building on these efforts, the ODOD released its Strategic Plan, "Ohio, Home of Innovation & Opportunity" with a commitment to develop processes to deliver customized training solutions to Ohio's employers. The GCP will assist the Governor and the ODOD with these efforts to ensure Ohio businesses have the tools they need to compete globally.

In addition, through the Ohio Skills Bank initiative, the Ohio Department of Development and the Ohio Board of Regents have taken important steps toward implementing a demand-driven workforce and talent development system that aligns the state's higher education resources with the regional needs of employers in key industry sectors. This approach should eventually be broadened to include regional alignment of WIA resources with the needs of high-priority industry sectors.

At the same time, the state legislature and educational institutions should expedite their efforts to increase the educational attainment of our current and future workforce. While educational attainment in Cuyahoga County closely mirrors the nation, with 85 percent of County residents 25 years and over graduating from high school and 27 percent holding a bachelor's degree or higher, the City of Cleveland is not as fortunate. About one-fourth of Clevelanders 25 years old and over are high school dropouts. Only six percent of Cleveland's adults hold an associate's degree, and only 13 percent have a bachelor's degree or higher.

In an effort to assure the General Assembly that the Governor and the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents are united in the direction they seek to take higher education, under H.B. 2 and H.B. 119 of the 127th General Assembly, the Chancellor became a member of the Governor's cabinet. In 2008, the Chancellor presented a 10-year strategic plan for Ohio's higher education system to the Governor and the Ohio General Assembly, with the ambitious goal of raising the overall level of educational attainment in Ohio by enrolling 230,000 more students, keeping more graduates in the state and attracting more talent from other states to Ohio. The plan's objectives include making post-secondary education more accessible and affordable; linking adult workforce centers with community college credit; preparing adult workers participating in Ohio's Adult Basic and Literacy Education centers for the rigors of higher education; and establishing a Center to study factors leading to success for African-American males.

The GCP supports all of these objectives while noting that achieving the 10-year goal of enrolling 230,000 more students will be especially challenging. Although the state has emphasized that it is incumbent upon public colleges and universities to use their existing resources efficiently and to constantly seek new ways to lower costs and improve productivity, the state will still need to make a major financial investment in higher education. This will be difficult because of a significant decrease in state revenue, which is expected to continue throughout 2009 and perhaps beyond. The GCP encourages the Governor and Chancellor to ensure that funding for higher education is viewed as a strategic investment in Ohio's economic future and to provide the resources necessary to achieve the plan's goals.

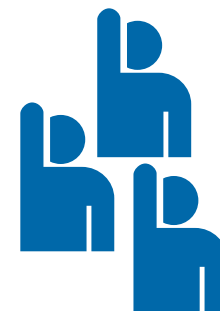
**GOAL: Assist with the realignment of Ohio's workforce development programs to ensure the programs are more responsive to the needs of Ohio's businesses and support the Chancellor of the Ohio Board of Regents' 10-year strategic plan**

At the local level, increased collaboration is needed to improve the effectiveness of workforce and talent development systems. While the creation of the Cleveland/Cuyahoga County Workforce Investment Board (WIB) has greatly improved the community's ability to administer WIA funds, these funds have strict limits on their use and represent only a fraction of the resources needed to build a quality workforce for Northeast Ohio. Therefore, the State of Ohio, Cleveland's mayor, city council members, Cuyahoga County commissioners, the WIB, the Regional Talent Network and higher-education leaders should work with the GCP and its partner organizations to design a talent development system that goes beyond the current WIA-funded program to meet the expectations of Northeast Ohio's businesses.

**GOAL: Support adequate funding for "One Stop" Workforce Centers and ensure that a wide range of services are available to job seekers and employers**

Improving primary and secondary education should be considered a key objective of the community's talent and workforce development system. In particular, the community's leadership should encourage and support efforts to address future talent needs by ensuring that the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) can provide best-in-class vocational and technical education to its students. Sufficient state and local resources to achieve this goal should be made available to current high schools, such as the new Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) high schools, the Science and Math Academy on the John Hay campus, and the Technology, Engineering and Advanced Manufacturing (TEAM) Academy at Max Hayes High School. In addition, the CMSD should work with employers and other community partners to ensure that the vocational and technical education facilities and programs to be offered at new high schools, such as the new Max Hayes High School, reflect the needs of current and future employers.

**GOAL: Support funding to address future talent needs by ensuring that the Cleveland Metropolitan School District can provide best-in-class vocational and technical education to its students**





## Mixed Sources

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The Higbee Building  
100 Public Square, Suite 210  
Cleveland, Ohio 44113-2227

P: 216.621.3300  
F: 216.621.6013  
[www.gcpartnership.com](http://www.gcpartnership.com)

Printing sponsor: Consolidated Graphics Group, Inc.

## GCP Staff Contacts

Carol Caruso  
Senior Vice President, Government Advocacy  
(216) 592-2471  
[ccaruso@gcpartnership.com](mailto:ccaruso@gcpartnership.com)

Nick Gattozzi  
Vice President, Government Advocacy  
(216) 592-2306  
[ngattozzi@gcpartnership.com](mailto:ngattozzi@gcpartnership.com)

Gary Smith  
Director, Government Advocacy  
(216) 592-2244  
[gsmith@gcpartnership.com](mailto:gsmith@gcpartnership.com)

Deanne Dixon  
Manager, Government Advocacy  
(216) 592-2342  
[ddixon@gcpartnership.com](mailto:ddixon@gcpartnership.com)