

they see fit, provided that the intended beneficiaries are progressing toward the right outcomes (there are now 23 separate federal programs for dislocated workers). We would make individuals, their families and whole communities the unit of service, not agencies, programs, and projects. Wherever possible, we would have service providers compete with one another for funds that come with the client, in an environment in which the client has good information about the cost and performance record of the competing providers. Dealing with public agencies—whether they are schools or the employment service—should be more like dealing with Federal Express than with the old Post Office.

This vision, as I pointed out above, is consistent with everything Bill proposed as a candidate. But it goes beyond those proposals, extending them from ideas for new programs to a comprehensive vision of how they can be used as building blocks, or a whole new system. But this vision is very complex, will take a long time to sell, and will have to be revised many times along the way. The right way to think about it is as an internal working document that forms the background for a plan, not the plan itself. One would want to make sure that the specific actions of the new administration were designed, in a general way, to advance this agenda as it evolved while not committing anyone to the details, which would change over time.

Everything that follows is cast in the frame of strategies for bringing the new system into being, not as a pilot program, not as a few demonstrations to be swept aside in another administration, but everywhere, as the new way of doing business.

In the sections that follow, we break these goals down into their main components and propose an action plan for each.

MAJOR COMPONENTS OF THE PROGRAM

The preceding section presented a vision of the system we have in mind chronologically from the point of view of an individual served by it. Here we reverse the order, starting with descriptions of program components designed to serve adults, and working our way down to the very young.

HIGH SKILLS FOR ECONOMIC COMPETITIVENESS PROGRAM

DEVELOPING SYSTEM STANDARDS

Create National Board for Professional and Technical Standards. Board is private not-for-profit chartered by Congress. Charter specifies broad membership composed of leading figures from higher education, business, labor, government and advocacy groups. Board can receive appropriated funds from Congress, private foundations, individuals, and corporations. Neither Congress nor the executive branch can dictate the standards set by the Board. But the Board is required to report annually to the President and the Congress in order to provide for public accountability. It is also directed to work collaboratively with the states and cities involved in the collaborative Design and Development Program (see below) in the development of the standards.

Charter specifies that the National Board will set broad performance standards (not time-in-the-seat-standards or course standards) for college-level Professional and Technical certificates and degrees in not more than 20 areas and develops performance examinations for each. The Board is required to set broad standards of the kind described in the vision statement above and is not permitted to simply reify the narrow standards that characterize many occupations now. (More than 2,000 standards currently exist, many for licensed occupations—these are not

the kinds of standards we have in mind.) It also specifies that the programs leading to these certificates and degrees will combine time in the classroom with time at the work-site in structured on-the-job training. The standards assume the existence of (high school level) general education standards set by others. The new standards and exams are meant to be supplemented by the states and by individual industries and occupations. The Board is responsible for administering the exam system and continually updating the standards and exams.

Legislation creating the Board is sent to the Congress in the first six months of the administration, imposing a deadline for creating the standards and the exams within three years of passage of the legislation.

COMMENTARY

The proposal reframes the Clinton apprenticeship proposal as a college program and establishes a mechanism for setting the standards for the program. The unions are adamantly opposed to broad based apprenticeship programs by that name. Focus groups conducted by JFF and others show that parents everywhere want their kids to go to college, not to be shunted aside into a non-college apprenticeship "vocational" program. By requiring these programs to be a combination of classroom instruction and structured OJT; and creating a standard-setting board that includes employers and labor, all the objectives of the apprenticeship idea are achieved, while at the same time assuring much broader support for the idea, as well as a guarantee that the program will not become too narrowly focussed on particular occupations. It also ties the Clinton apprenticeship idea to the Clinton college funding proposal in a seamless web. Charging the Board with creating not more than 20 certificate or degree categories establishes a balance between the need to create one national system on the one hand with the need to avoid creating a cumbersome and rigid national bureaucracy on the other. This approach provides lots of latitude for individual industry groups, professional groups and state authorities to establish their own standards, while at the same time avoiding the chaos that would surely occur if they were the only source of standards. The bill establishing the Board should also authorize the executive branch to make grants to industry groups, professional societies, occupational groups, and states to develop standards and exams. Our assumption is that the system we are proposing will be managed so as to encourage the states to combine the last two years of high school and the first two years of community college into three year programs leading to college degrees and certificates. Proprietary institutions, employers, and community-based organizations could also offer these programs, but they would have to be accredited to offer these college-level programs. Eventually, students getting their general education certificates might go directly to community college or to another form of college, but the new system should not require that.

COLLABORATIVE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The object is to create a single comprehensive system for professional and technical education that meets the requirements of everyone from high school students to skilled dislocated workers, from the hard core unemployed to employed adults who want to improve their prospects. Creating such a system means sweeping aside countless programs, building new ones, combining funding authorities, changing deeply embedded institutional structures and so on. The question is how to get from where we are to where we

want to be. Trying to ram it down everyone's throat would engender overwhelming opposition. Our idea is to draft legislation that would offer an opportunity for those states—and selected large cities—that are excited about this set of ideas to come forward and join with each other and with the federal government in an alliance to do the necessary design work and actually deliver the needed services on a fast track. The legislation would require the executive branch to establish a competitive grant program for these states and cities and to engage a group of organizations to offer technical assistance to the expanding set of states and cities engaged in designing and implementing the new system. This is not the usual large scale experiment, nor is it a demonstration program. A highly regarded precedent exists for this approach in the National Science Foundation's SSI program. As soon as the first set of states is engaged, another set would be invited to participate, until most or all the states are involved. It is a collaborative design, rollout and scale-up program. It is intended to parallel the work of the National Board for College Professional and Technical Standards, so that the states and cities (and all their partners) would be able to implement the new standards as soon as they become available, although they would be delivering services on a large scale before that happened. Thus, major parts of the whole system would be in operation in a majority of the states within three years from the passage of the initial legislation. Inclusion of selected large cities in this design is not an afterthought. We believe that what we are proposing here for the cities is the necessary complement to a large scale job-creation program for the cities. Skill development will not work if there are no jobs, but job development will not work without a determined effort to improve the skills of city residents. This is the skill development component.

PARTICIPANTS

Volunteer states, counterpart initiative for cities.

15 states, 15 cities selected to begin in first year. 15 more in each successive year.

5 year grants (on the order of \$20 million per year to each state, lower amounts to the cities) given to each, with specific goals to be achieved by the third year, including program elements in place (e.g., upgraded employment service), number of people enrolled in new professional and technical programs and so on.

A core set of High Performance Work Organization firms willing to participate in standard setting and to offer training slots and mentors.

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION

Strategies for enriching existing co-op tech prep and other programs to meet the criteria.

Commitment to implementing new general education standard in legislation.

Commitment to implementing the new Technical and Professional skills standards for college.

Commitment to new role for employment service.

Commitment to join with others in national design and implementation activity.

CLIENTS

Young adults entering workforce, dislocated workers, long-term unemployed, employed who want to upgrade skills.

PROGRAM COMPONENTS

Institute own version of state and local labor market boards. Local labor market boards to involve leading employers, labor representatives, educators, and advocacy group leaders in running the redesigned employment service, running intake system for