



The Charleston Regional
Chamber of Commerce

ISSUE: WORK FORCE

BACKGROUND

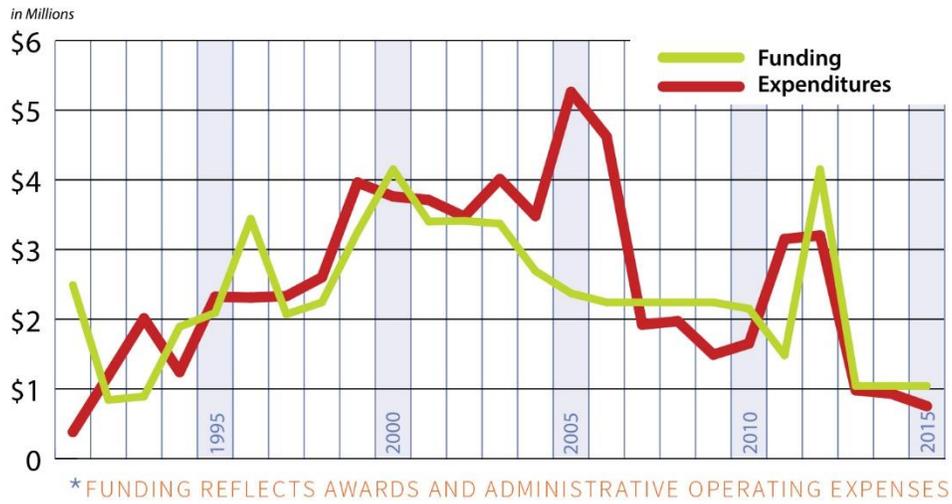
The Governor's Guaranteed Work Force Program (GGWFP) attracts new enterprises to West Virginia and encourages the growth and expansion of the state's existing companies. The program provides training and technical assistance to support effective employee training strategies. Having a skilled and ready work force is frequently the top 1-3 critical factors considered by businesses exploring the possibility of expanding or locating in West Virginia. Overall funding opportunities with the GGWFP are based on wages and benefits, location of facilities, number of employees and number of individuals needing training. Awards cannot exceed \$2,000 per trainee.

Site consultants and businesses inform the Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce that the GGWFP is one of the best and most effective in the country. Funds for this program are investments in businesses that utilize the funds to enhance the skills sets and knowledge of their employees but, most importantly, this program invests in new skill development for the individual. While businesses come and go, open and close, the individuals who train under this program are West Virginians who love their state and will stay in West Virginia even if an employer would cease operations or move out of state. An investment in advanced training and skill development increases the skill level of our overall work force, provides for more earning power for those trained, and provides a return on investment to the state.

Recommendation

Funding for the GGWFP has declined since 2000. At its peak, the program was appropriated approximately \$4,000,000 per year. After years of decreased funding, recent fiscal years have seen the fund wither to approximately \$1,000,000 per year. The Charleston Regional Chamber of Commerce encourages the legislative and executive branches to sustain or grow this program and exempt it from any further funding cuts in the next budget cycle.

Governor's Guaranteed Work Force Program FUNDING AND EXPENDITURES*



West Virginia Department of Commerce. (2015.) *The Governor's Guaranteed Work Force Program Annual Report 2015.*