

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 133
MARCH 12 , 2009**

**EXPLORING THE CONCEPT OF A
“GI BILL” FOR WASHINGTON WORKERS**

Introduction

At the August 13, 2008, Workforce Training and Education Board annual retreat, Board members discussed future policies that could lift a greater number of Washingtonians above the 200 percent poverty level (\$42,000 for a family of four). The concept of a “*GI Bill*” for Washington Workers emerged as an important topic—worthy of further examination.

At the January 22, 2009 meeting, the Board held a brief discussion on the concept of the Workers’ “GI Bill.” Board members agreed to participate in an on-line survey to gather opinions on design criteria for an initiative whose goal would be to increase incumbent worker access to postsecondary education.

The results of the survey are presented under this tab. Individual comments to a number of survey questions are also included. These survey results will help the Board frame and expedite its March 12 discussion.

Board Action Required: None. For discussion purposes only.



Workers' "GI Bill" Survey

Martin McCallum

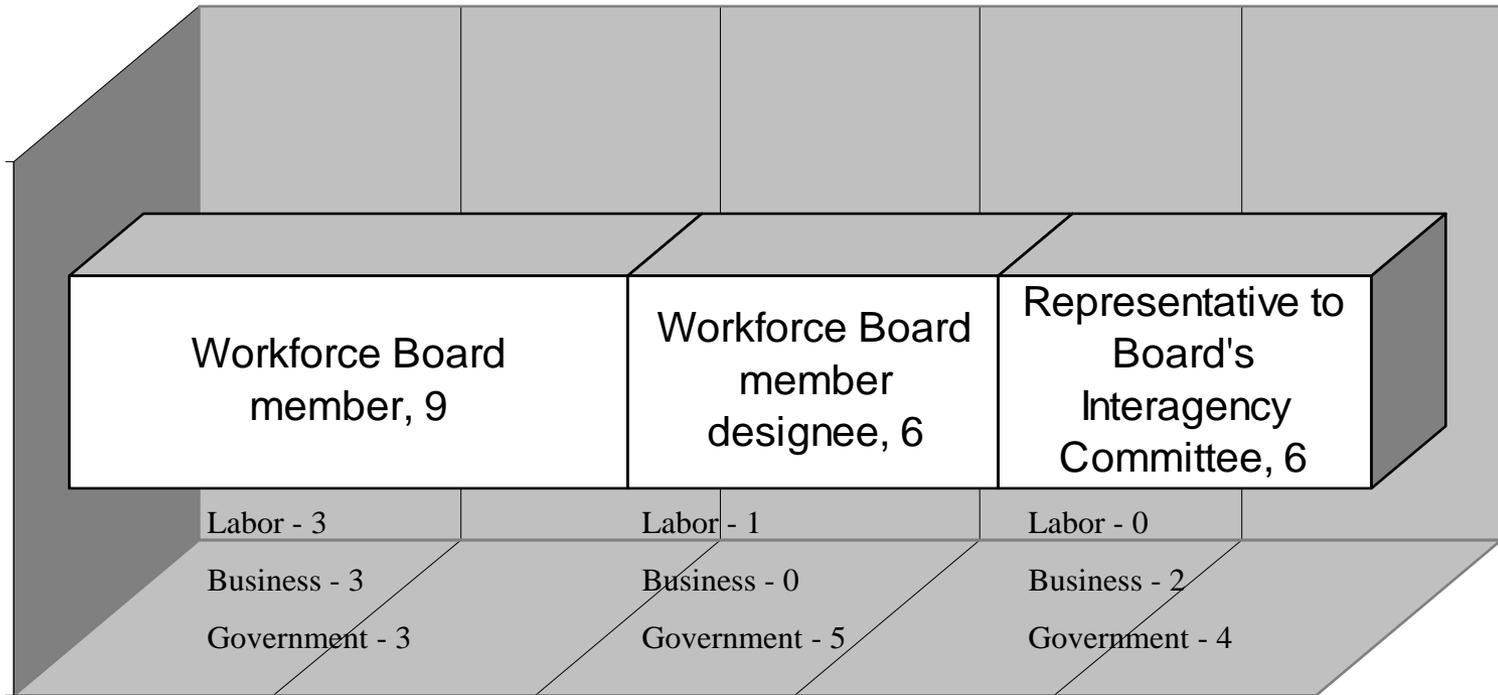
Workforce Board

March 12, 2009



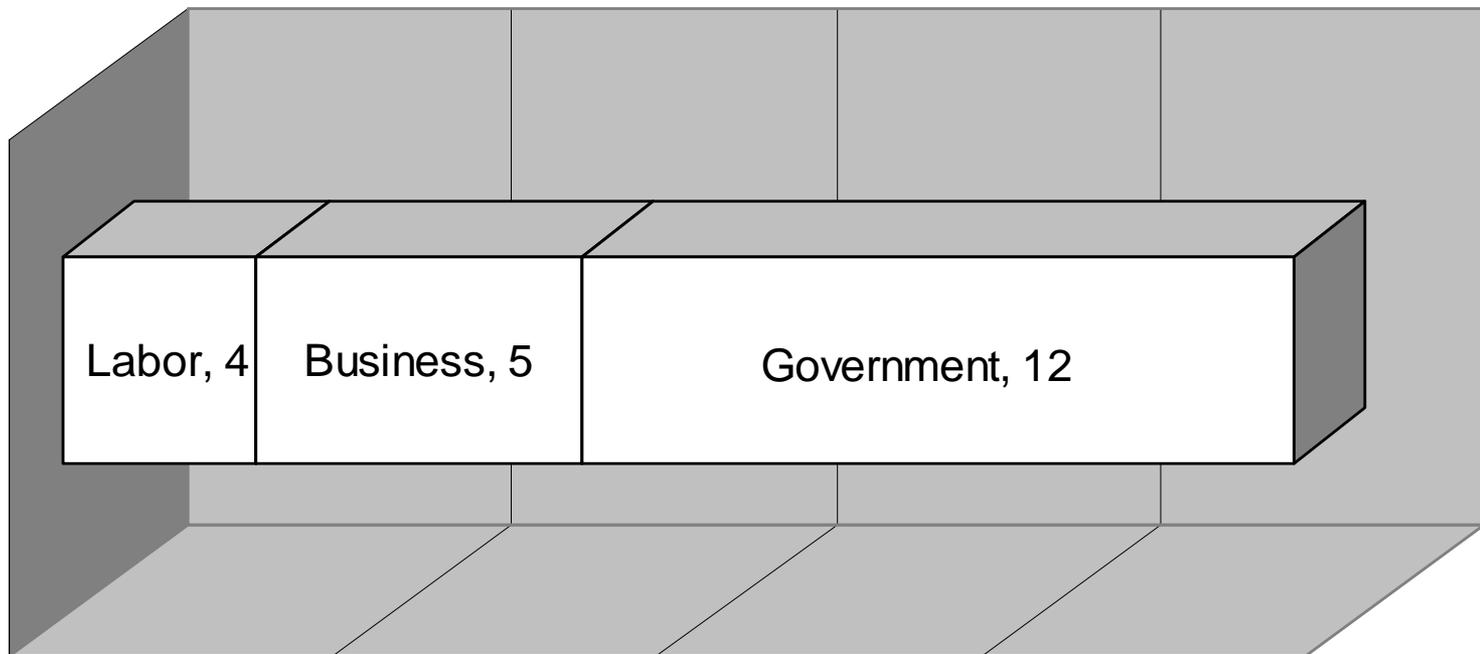
Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board

Survey members



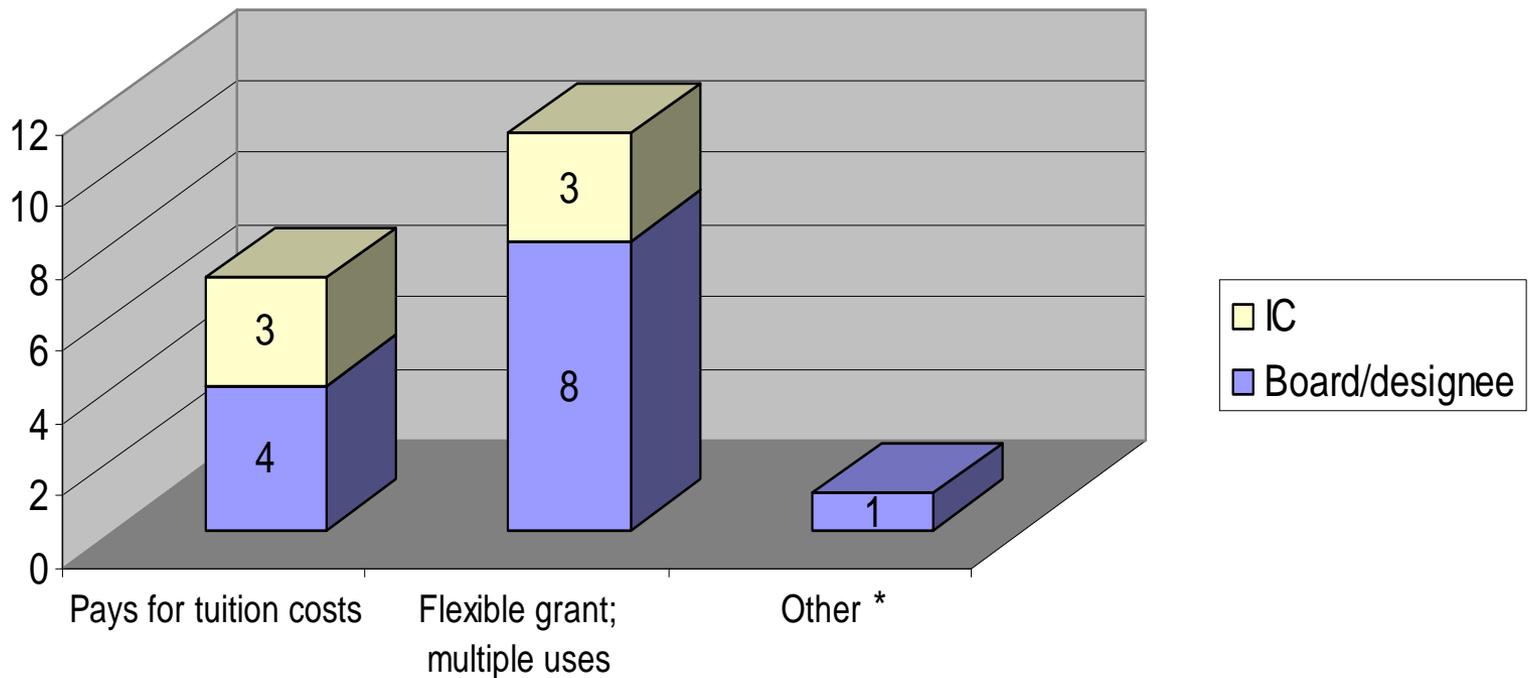
**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Representation



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

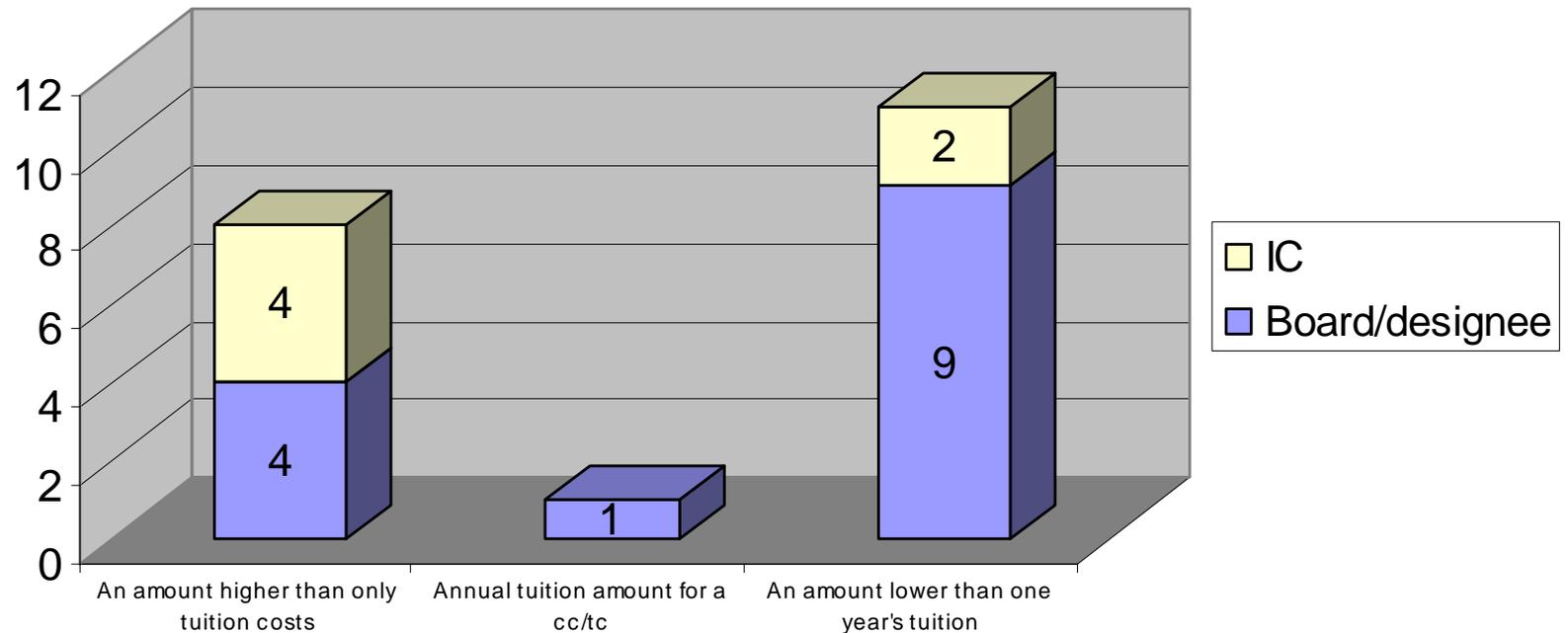
What benefits package for incumbent workers do you prefer?



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

* Other: Include living expense (like Pell).

What level of funding are you considering for this grant?



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Written comments related to level of funding considering for this grant:

Board Members/Designees

- It should be tied to a community service requirement.
- Tuition fee plus a % to be determined.
- The goal is a 13th year, at least.
- This grant should be available in addition to other forms of financial aid.
- This is a good place to start the discussion.
- This should be easy to administer, easy to track and easy to report on. Focusing the funding on tuition helps achieve that.
- The \$2,400 is a starting point as long as the \$\$ is flexible and living expenses are allowed, just like the GI bill \$\$.
- Recognition that the money could go to registered apprenticeship programs and not just restricted to Community and Technical colleges.

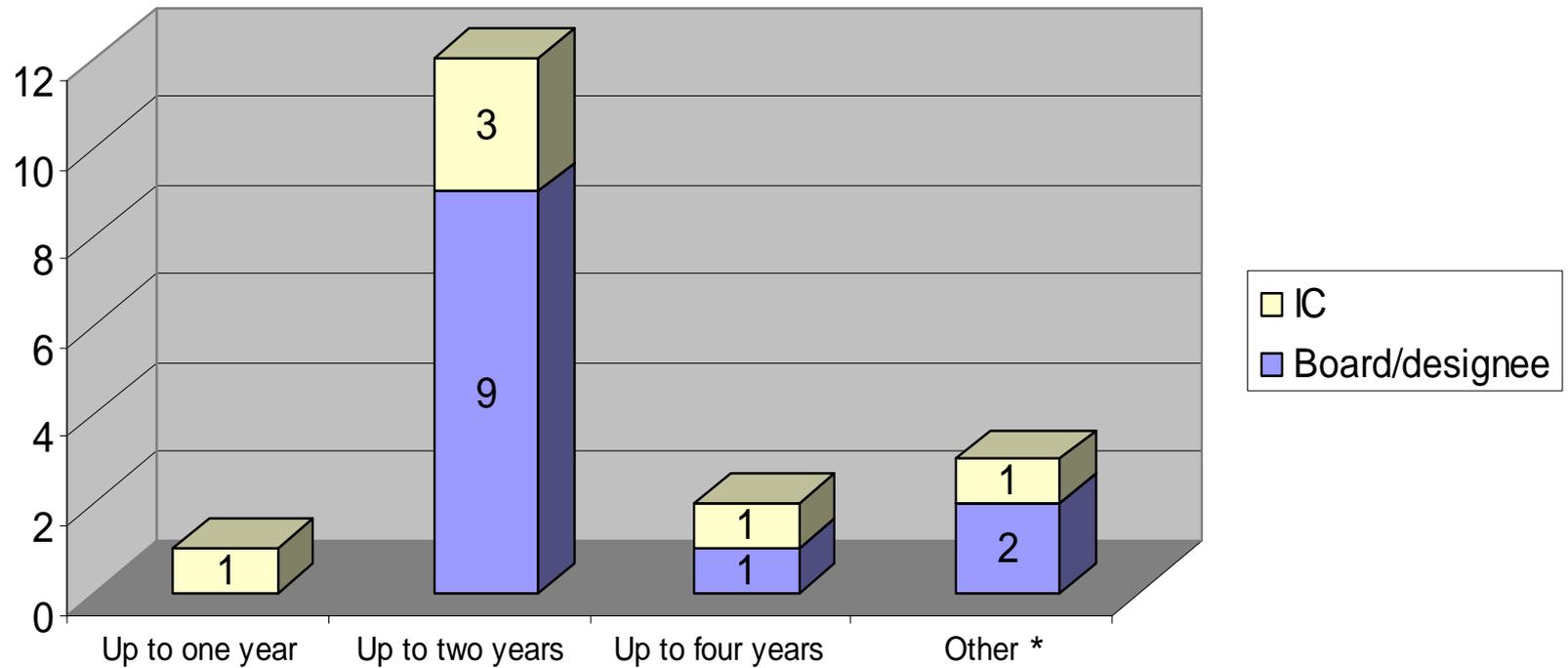
IC

- It would be most cost effective (and fair) to administer a single, uniform amount of funding that goes for a specific purpose.
- There should be sensitivity to the total tuition costs when recognizing the FTE plus self-paid tuition amount. The FTE and the self-paid tuition should be considered for funding education outside the community college system.
- Take into consideration potential child care costs for funding.



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

How many years of training should this grant pay for?

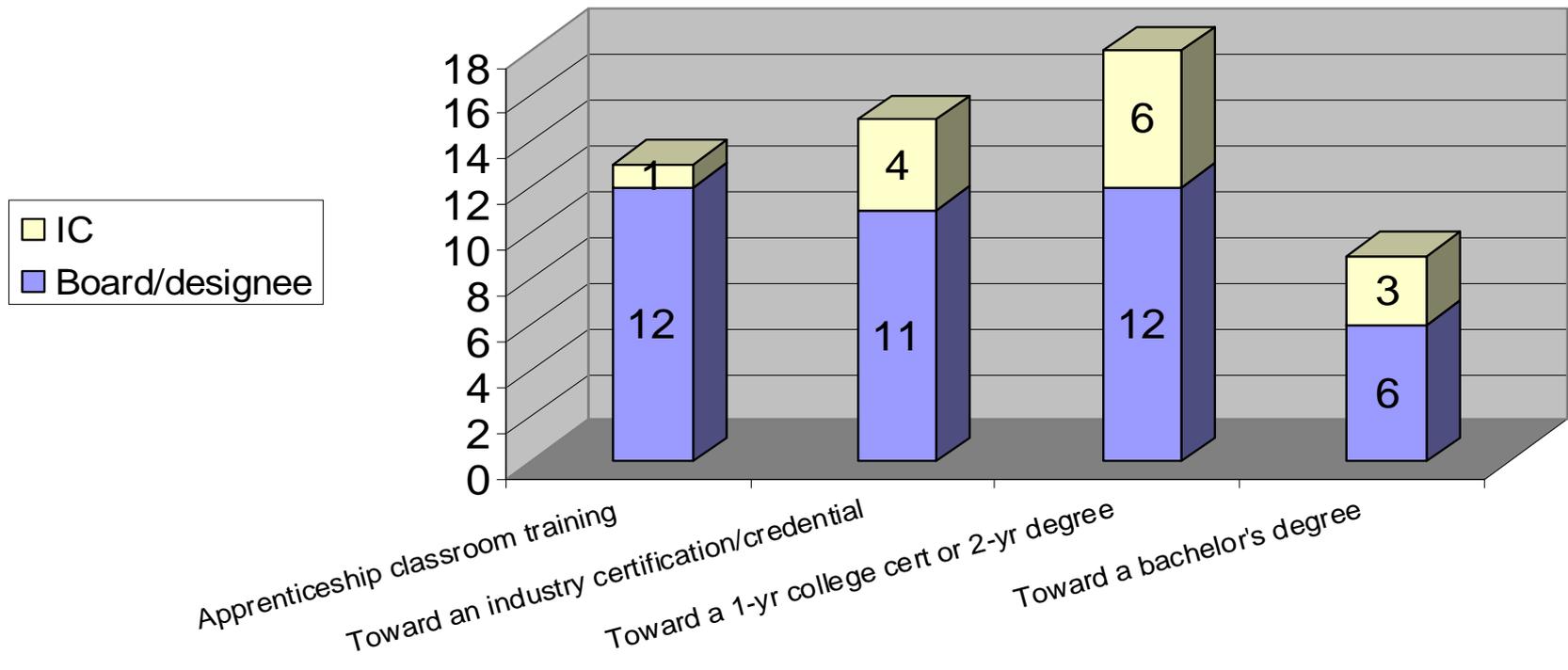


**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

* Other:

- A longer period--disability factors could require student to attend less than full time.
- Up to four years equivalent education.
- Sliding scale based on service given to received grant.

What type and level of training should be covered?

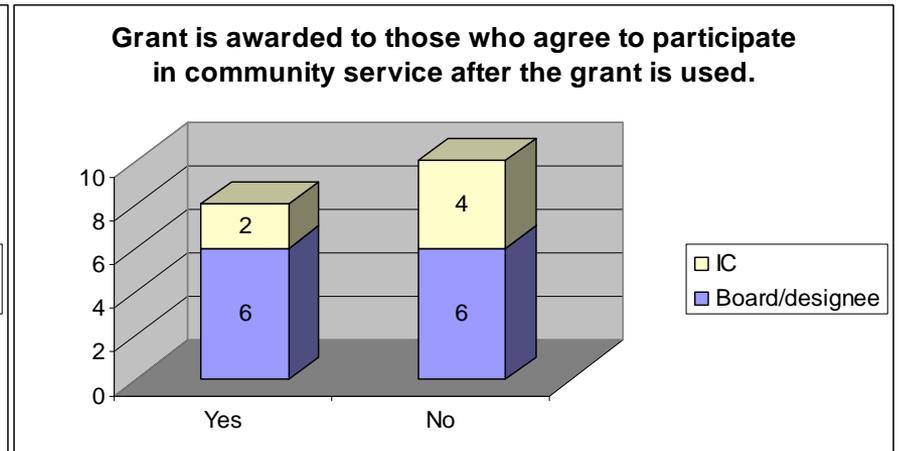
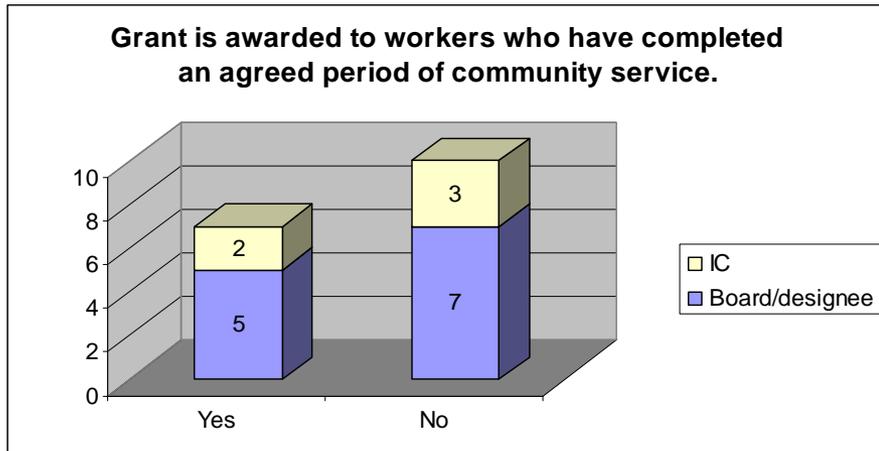


**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Comments:

- Longer than four years when disability factors require attending less than full time.
- Up to four years equivalent education.
- Sliding scale based on service given to receive grant.

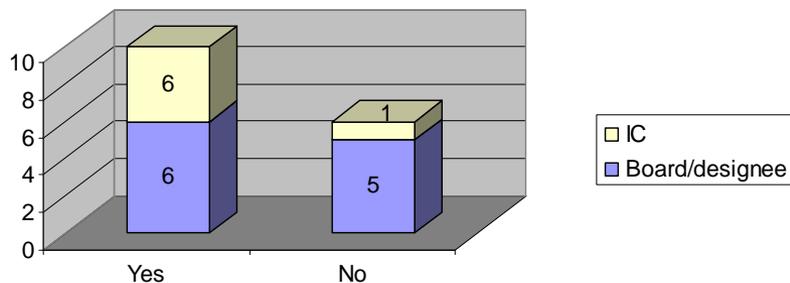
How grant benefits should be earned.



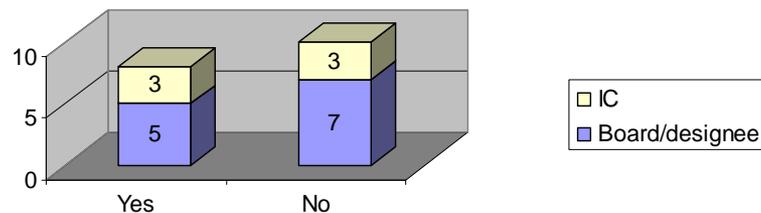
**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

How grant benefits should be earned.

Grant is awarded to only those who are working or seeking work in occupations with more job openings than graduating students.



Grant award is based on the length of employment. For example, to be eligible an individual must have worked for a certain number of years in Washington, and/or the value of the award is based on the number of years of employment.



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Comments on how grant benefits should be earned.

Board member/designee

- Possibly an upper age limit to encourage people to enter early in their work career.
- I do not like the structure of either one or the other in these options, should be a variable path that will take you to the starting line.

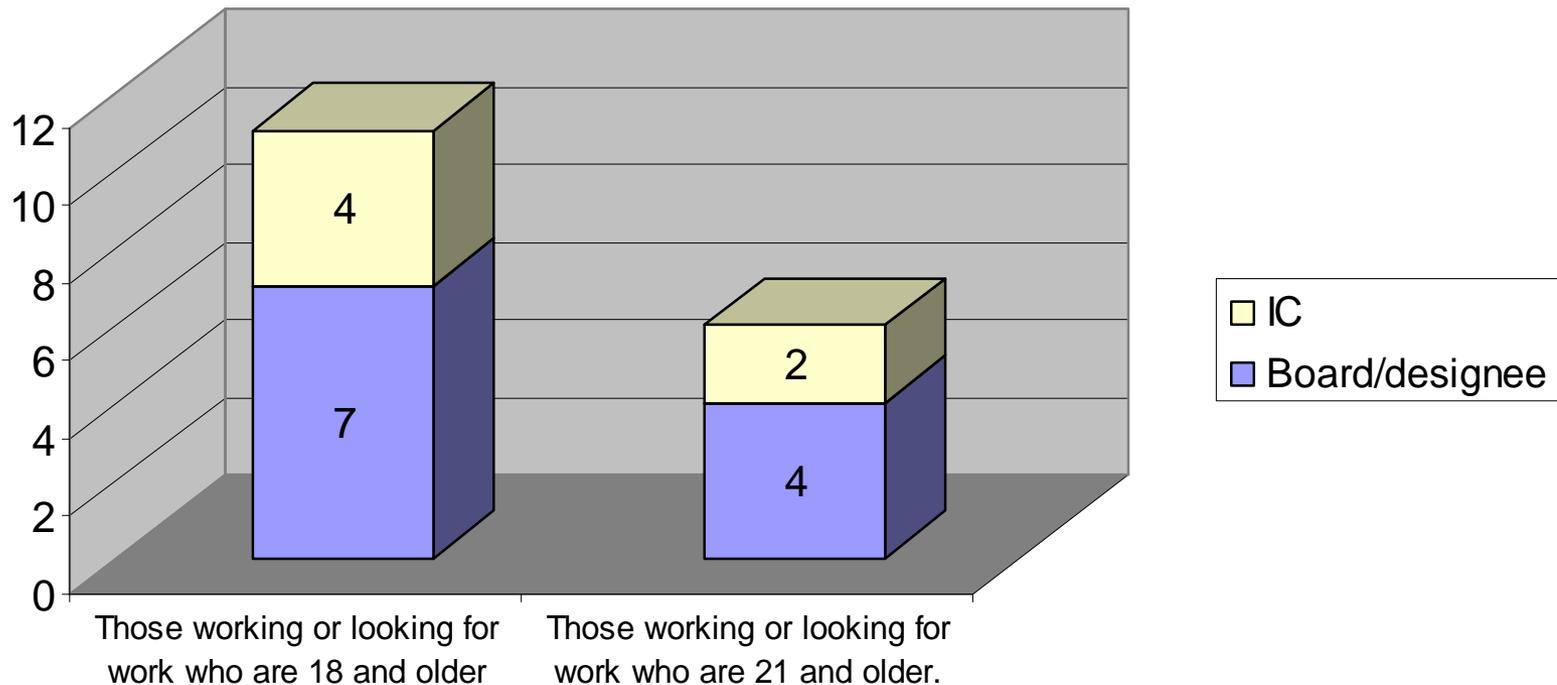
IC

- Should be some residency requirements
- Tie the grant to a developed career path plan for low and moderate income individuals.
- Link to high demand occupations/programs of study. I like the idea of community service.



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Who should be the target population?

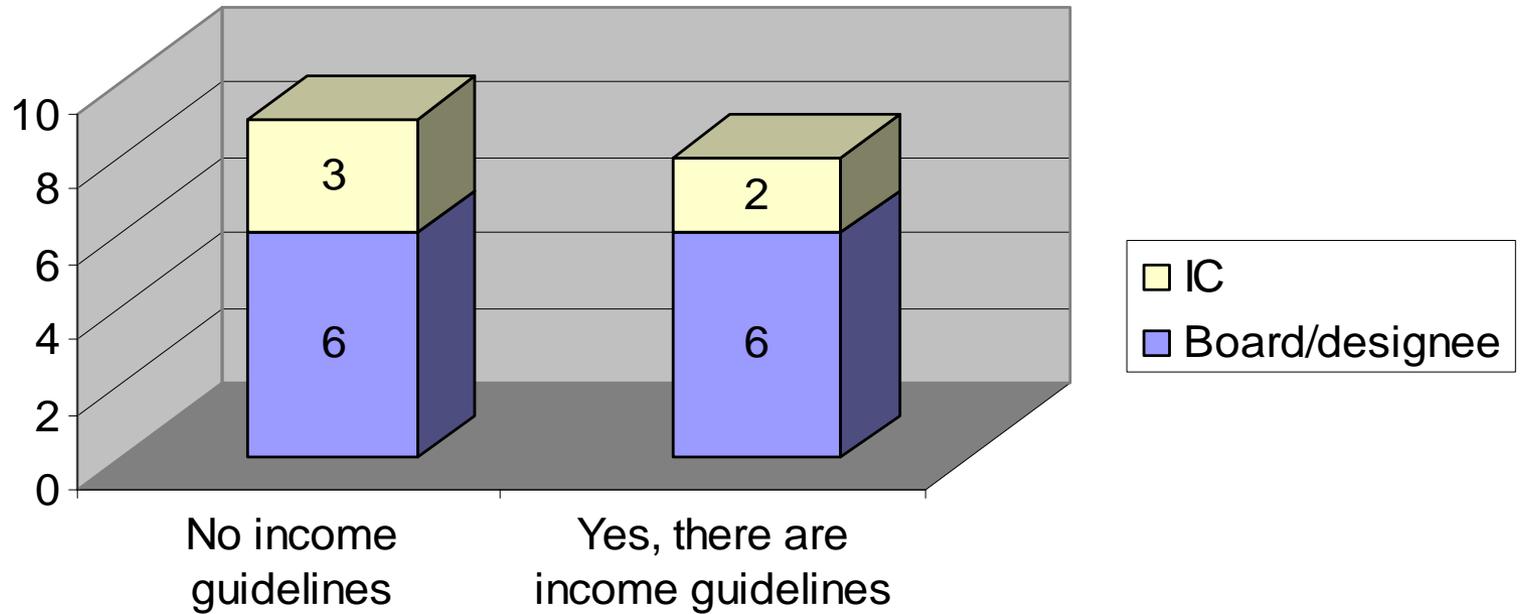


**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

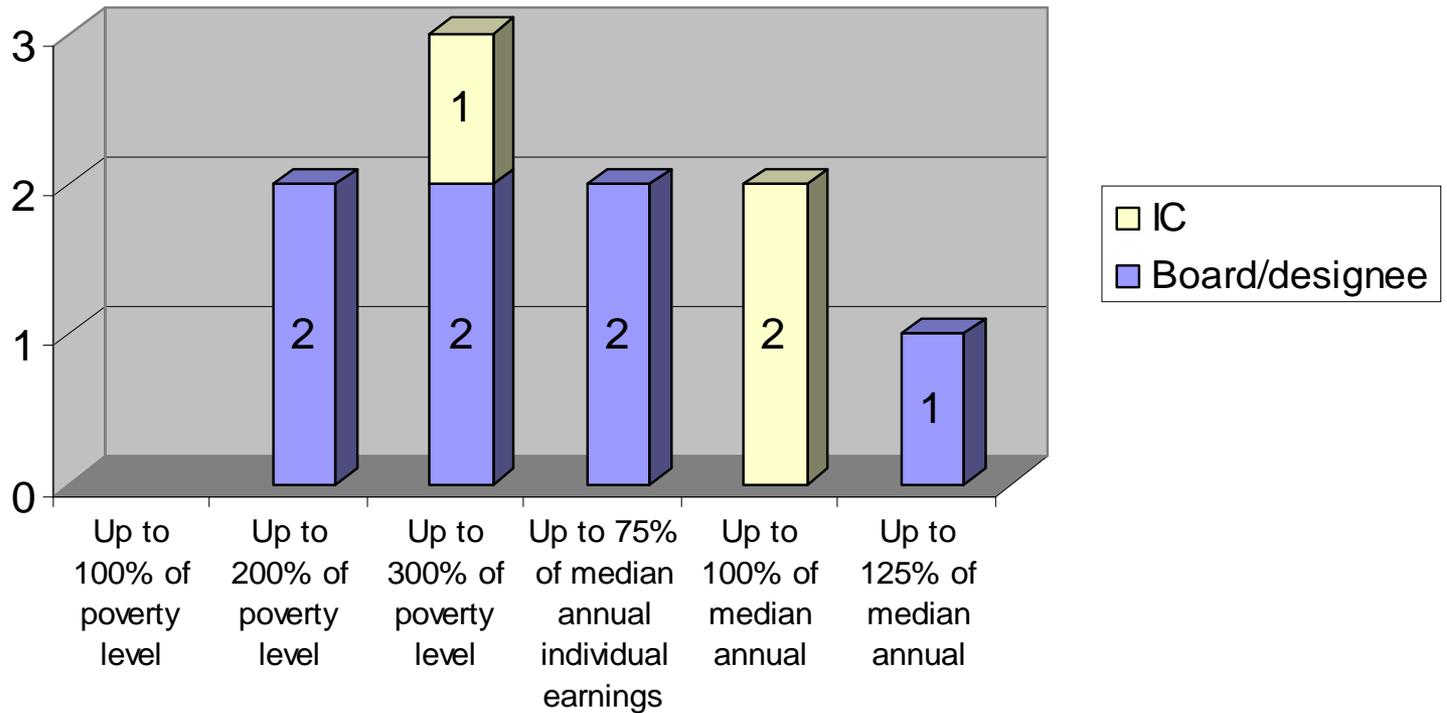
Comments:

- If we want to focus on building the skills of our incumbent workers, I'd like the target population to be 21 and older.
- There doesn't seem to me to be any real rationale for setting 21 as the age limit.
- Target low and moderate income individuals (under 80% of median income?).
- There doesn't seem to me to be any real rationale for setting 21 as the age limit.

Should grant recipients meet certain income guidelines to receive this grant?



Choose an income guideline for grant recipients.



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Comments on income guidelines for grant recipients.

Board members/designees

- Concern that income guidelines may leave out middle income folks (too poor to afford school - - too “rich” to qualify).
- It would be helpful to know how many incumbent workers currently fall in each of the above categories; our goal should be to help a person achieve a “livable” wage. How do we get there using the GI Bill concept?
- No Income Guidelines, I am emphatic.

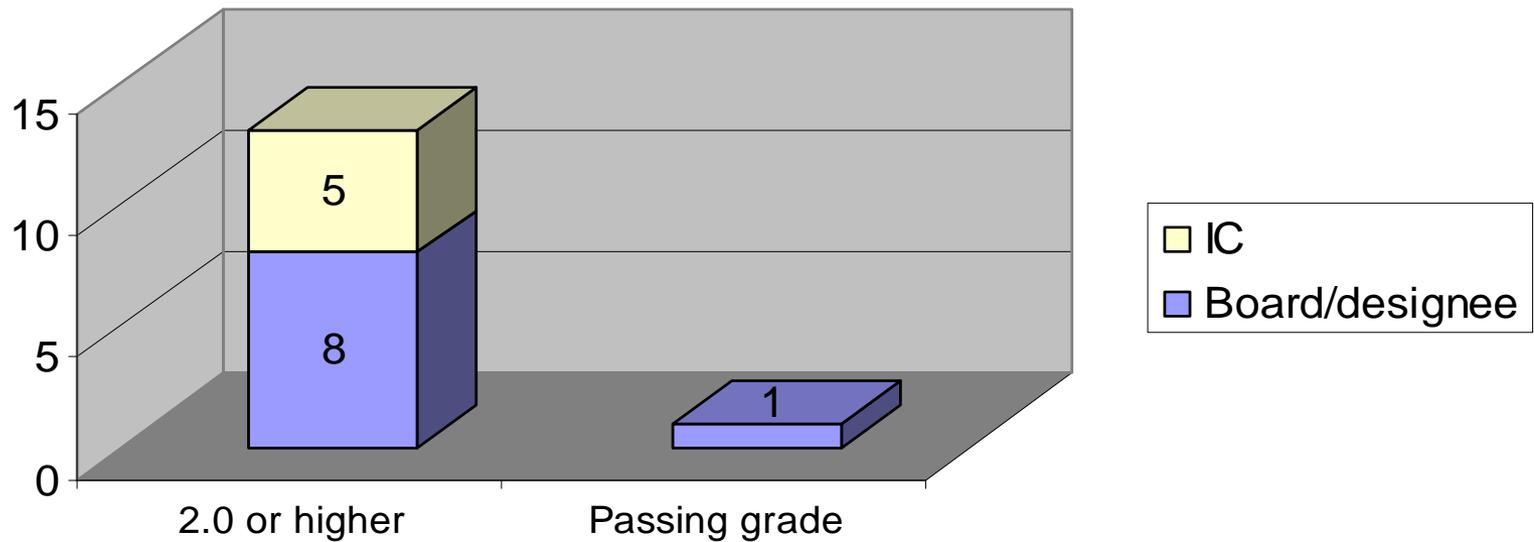
IC

- The individual who has worked and paid taxes for years should have the benefit of participation in the program.
- The ceiling should be high enough to cover those who won’t qualify for any student financial aid, but who lack discretionary income for education.
- Rather than income guidelines, how about basing eligibility on current employment in a declining/dying industry? Workers in these occupations need training in a growth industry in order to continue to earn living wages and continue to positively impact Washington’s economy. These workers are technically not dislocated so they are often not eligible for typical DW benefits until it is too late.



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

What grade point average should be required of grant recipients to qualify for continued funding for the next school quarter?



Comments related to grant recipients qualifying for continued funding.

Board members/Designees

- 2.5 or higher
- Some grade exceptions for individuals with disabilities and those with language barriers.
- Nothing less than an 2.5
- 2.0 Average, not per class. Not in favor of quarter by quarter funding, fund for the entire year or people won't make a commitment to do this.

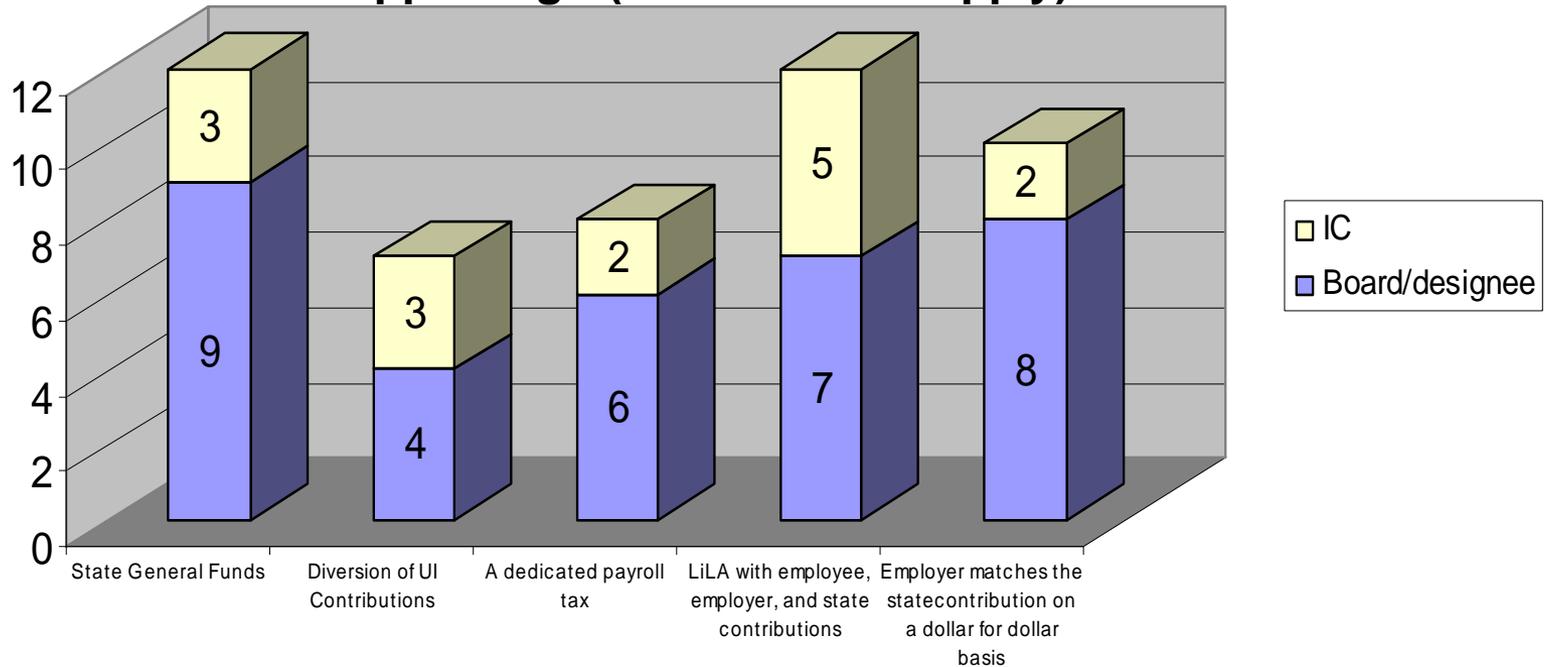
IC

- 2.5 or higher
- If someone has only a “D” average, they're not very serious about school (or unsuited to the subject matter) and the taxpayers shouldn't be supporting them further until they bring up that average at their own expense.
- We need to have the expectation that students are gaining academically – not just squeaking by.



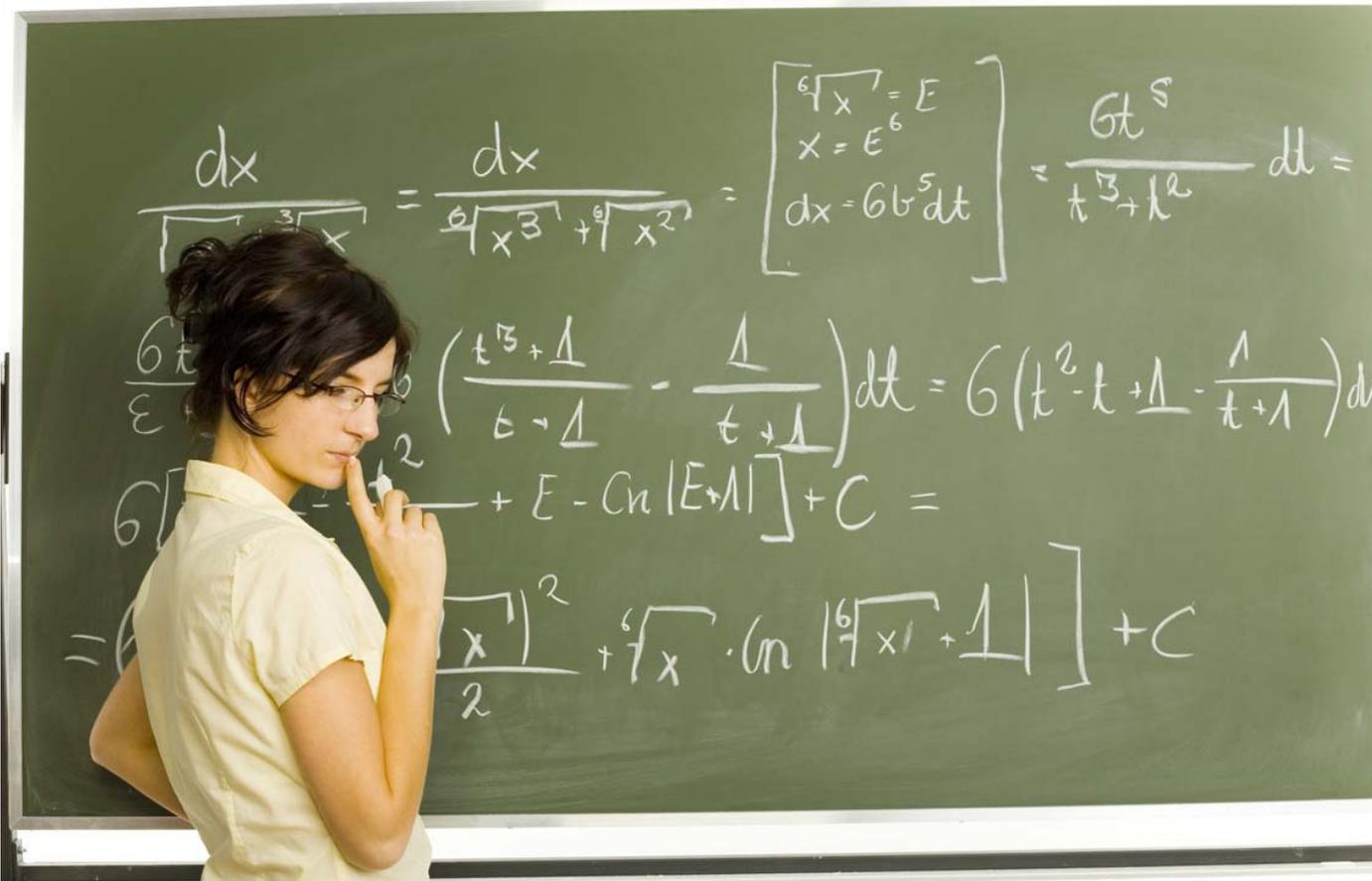
**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Which grant funding source(s) would you consider supporting? (check all that apply).



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**

Next steps?



**Workforce Training
and Education
Coordinating Board**