



## **SELF-SUFFICIENCY STANDARD FOR THE PHILADELPHIA WORKFORCE INVESTMENT AREA**

Adopted by the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board

March 9, 2000

On March 9, 2000, the Philadelphia Workforce Investment Board (PWIB) *The Self-Sufficiency Standard for Pennsylvania* as the local standard for economic self-sufficiency as it related to the City's workforce investment system. This adoption of this standard – the creation of which was led by the Women's Association for Women's Alternatives, Inc. – demonstrates the PWIB's belief that true self-sufficiency involves not just a job with a certain wage and benefits, but rather income security for a family over time.

### **Application of the Standard**

Initially, this standard will be applied in the local CareerLink system using an internet-based tool that helps individuals calculate how much income they need to meet their basic expenses and, further, reach their long-term goals. This tool will help individuals make informed choices when deciding among job opportunities and/or training options. It includes helpful assistance to customers who may be eligible for cash assistance, food stamps, health care assistance, the Earned Income Tax Credits, and other public subsidies to meet their family's basic needs while moving along the path to economic independence. Also, the tool will be used to provide employers with information to help them examine their own wage and benefit policies as they related to employee retention.

Further, the concept of economic self-sufficiency, as embodied in the standard, is a strategic principle of the PWIB, will have a broad impact in the work of the PWIB is it sets policy and outcomes for Philadelphia's multi-faceted workforce investment system.

### **Priority of Service**

Prior to the adoption of the self-sufficiency standard, the PWIB set a service policy that gave priority to "anyone not making a self-sufficient wage or who is not on a career path that will reasonably lead to self-sufficiency in the local economy." Recognizing that the adoption of this economic self-sufficiency standard may have the consequence of creating a demand for services that cannot be currently met, the WIB further delineated this priority service policy. Therefore, should a shortage of funds necessitate a further delineation of priority of service, the follow guidelines – in the order they are listed – will be in effect:

- Customers receiving TANF or other supplemental public supports.
- Customers who fall below the Lower Living Standard Income Level (a federal standard that is equal to 70 percent of the poverty guideline).
- Customers who earn less than 75 percent of the income necessary to reach self-sufficiency as defined by the PWIB.
- Customers who earn between 76 and 99 percent of the income necessary to reach self-sufficiency as defined by the PWIB.

These guidelines are in addition to the Philadelphia residency requirement already adopted by the PWIB.