Moneyball for Workforce Development

The next reauthorization of WIOA can catalyze improvement in our public workforce system by pushing to rigorously and regularly build, test, and use evidence and data; increasingly shift dollars toward evidence-based interventions; and ensure evidence-based services are reaching unemployed and underemployed residents, job seekers, incumbent workers, and businesses across the country. In our Moneyball for Workforce Development paper, RFA offers specific recommendations that, if implemented, could enable the reauthorization of WIOA to catalyze a truly evidence-driven public workforce system. Specifically, RFA recommends:

1. **Build Evidence for What Works**
   - Set aside at least 1 percent of WIOA funds for rigorous evaluations.
   - Require and support states to develop longitudinal data systems that integrate administrative data across agencies and allow for a single point of entry.
     - Integrate data from early childhood, K–12 and postsecondary education, and judicial, public health, and benefits agencies.

2. **Invest in What Works**
   - Define evidence of effectiveness.
     - Strong Evidence for programs shown, in well-conducted RCTs, to produce sizable and sustained effects on outcomes.
     - Promising Evidence for interventions that have been evaluated in RCTs and found to have sizeable positive effects that are not yet conclusive.
     - Preliminary Evidence for models that have a reasonable hypothesis and supported by credible research findings.
   - Prioritize evidence of effectiveness in WIOA grants and contracts.
   - Create a Workforce Innovation and Research Fund to expand strong evidence-based interventions and evaluate promising and preliminary approaches to build evidence.

3. **Improve Workforce Planning, Data Collection and Procurement**
   - Increase the comprehensiveness of state WIOA plans, including streamlined integration with other relevant systems from a person's cradle to career.
   - Enhance workforce performance reporting to measure job quality and social outcomes.
   - State and Local Workforce boards should engage in at least 20% of external fixed-price performance-based contracts to link funding to high outcomes for program participants.
   - Allow states to use longer contract performance periods based on program evidence.