



## **Recommendations for the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009**

As Congress considers the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act, MALDEF and NCLR express our concern that the legislation will not adequately address the needs of the Latino workforce or provide the necessary targeting that will ensure long-term economic recovery. Though we are supportive of many of the provisions in the package, we recommend inclusion of the following items in order to ensure that full economic recovery reaches our community.

### **Workforce Development**

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes \$43 billion in funding for job training programs, which includes funding for the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and job training set-asides for green and infrastructure projects. MALDEF and NCLR are concerned that the funds allocated will not reach workers facing multiple barriers to employment. 13% of native-born and 73% of foreign-born Latinos of working age speak English “less than very well.” Despite the vast need, only 4.9% of individuals served through the current public workforce system are limited English proficient (LEP). Furthermore, most of the nation’s 1.6 million farmworkers earn less than \$10,000 per year and have extremely limited access to education and training opportunities. Targeted investments are necessary to ensure that LEP workers and farmworkers have an opportunity to compete for newly created jobs.

### **Recommendations for Improving Workforce Development Provisions:**

- Investment of \$50 million for Sec. 167 Migrant & Seasonal Farmworker Programs under WIA
- Investment of \$50 million for Sec. 171 Demonstration, pilot, multi-service, research, & multi-state projects under WIA with reporting language directing funds toward integrated job training
- Reporting language for non-WIA job training programs to ensure that funds are used for programs that reach low income and LEP workers

### **Education**

The American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009 includes \$30 billion in investments in education. This investment focuses solely on Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). MALDEF and NCLR are concerned that, in light of state budget shortfalls, available funding for programs that benefit youth and adult English language learners (ELL) are at risk. K-12 ELLs are underperforming on every measure of academic achievement and tend to be concentrated in urban and underperforming schools. Title III funds are necessary to supplement Title I because of the high cost of educating these students. In addition, because of the growing demand among adult ELLs, Congress must provide funding for WIA Title II adult education programs in order to assist these adults develop their skills. It is critical that Congress invest in the education of youth and adult ELLs.

### **Recommendations for Education Funding:**

- Investment of \$500 million in Title III of NCLB, which provides state grants for language instruction for LEP and immigrant students.
- Investment of \$250 million in WIA Title II adult education programs with a priority for programs that provide English as a Second Language