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Focus on jobs programs that work

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DESPITE STUDIES showing that turnover rates for welfare recipients are no different from those for other employees, the state's plan to persuade companies to hire welfare recipients is not working ("[Job program for welfare recipients falls flat](#)," Page A1, Jan. 15). It is time to refocus our efforts on programs that do work. Rather than sending untrained employees to do jobs for which they are unprepared, we need to listen to employers and expand our efforts to provide workers with the skills employers seek. Ask any employer -- a \$2.50 wage subsidy is no match for the appeal of a well-trained, committed employee.

Programs that bring community organizations and groups of employers together to train low-skilled workers for high-paying jobs are succeeding nationwide. The Legislature identified the promise of these so-called sectoral initiatives last year in the Workforce Solutions Act, when it invested \$11 million in a new Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund. The key now is to listen to employers and make this trust fund an annual line item, a permanent investment in fulfilling the needs of our employers while giving workers the skills, child care, and transportation they need to reach self-sufficiency.

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