

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 178
MAY 8, 2014**

**CONSENSUS FEEDBACK FOR AN INTEGRATED
JOBS-DRIVEN WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION SYSTEM**

Background

During the January 2014 State of the Union address, President Obama outlined his Action Plan for the coming year. He called for a comprehensive review of all federally funded programs to make our nation's workforce training system more integrated, jobs-driven and effective. The review, to be conducted by Vice President Joe Biden, will take place through consultation with policy councils, Secretaries of Labor and Education, business and labor leaders, educators, mayors and governors, as well as congressional officials.

While the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) will be a focal point for the federal review, a much larger range of funding streams is on the table. The Carl Perkins Act, federal financial aid, and programs housed within the U.S. Departments of Health and Human Services, Department of Agriculture and Economic Development Administration will be included in the review.

The Workforce Board received a request from members of Washington's congressional delegation to provide a consensus document from system partners and stakeholders, which they may use to develop a delegation position.

As a follow-up to the Board's discussion at the March meeting, staff convened a Consensus Workgroup on April 11, 2014. The following stakeholders were invited to participate in this process:

Association of Washington Business	Gary Chandler/Amy Johnson
Department of Vocational Rehabilitation	Andreas Aguirre
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Kathleen Lopp/Betty Klattenhoff
Washington Workforce Association	Steve Frazier
Workforce Development Councils	Mark Mattke/Cheryl Fambles
Business Representatives	Creigh Agnew/Lee Anne Caylor
Employment Security Department	Dale Peinecke/Tim Probst
Department of Commerce	Sally Harris
Washington Student Achievement Council	Randy Spaulding/Daryl Monear
Washington Department of Health & Human Services	David Stillman
Washington State Labor Council	Jeff Johnson/Lori Province/Kairie Pierce
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Marie Bruin/Jim Crabbe
Adult Basic Education	Jon Kerr/Kathy Cooper
Impact Washington	John Vicklund
Representative Derek Kilmer	Rohan Shrikhande
Workforce Board	Eleni Papadakis/Terri Colbert/Martin McCallum

The meeting was used to define the objectives and to determine the best way to gather feedback from the diverse system groups. Since a 'one-size-fits-all' survey did not make sense, each member of the Workgroup was tasked with defining their audience, with determining 3-5 questions that would provide feedback relevant to their audience. The Workgroup gathered input during the week of April 21-25.

Following the survey period, the feedback was forwarded for compilation and analysis. This information was shared with the Consensus Workgroup at a second meeting on April 28. Their recommendations were to develop a consensus document (see Attachment A) for the Board's discussion, and to inform the federal review process through a letter to Vice President Joe Biden. (Attachment B)

Board Action Required: Discussion and approval of consensus recommendations to be included in a letter to the Vice President and copied to Washington's congressional delegates to provide input for the federal review of the national workforce development system.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board understands President Obama's intention to reform federal, jobs-driven training programs; and

WHEREAS, the President has directed Vice President Joe Biden to consult with numerous policy advisors and workforce system stakeholders to learn ways to improve federally funded workforce training programs to be more integrated, jobs-driven and effective; and

WHEREAS, Some Washington congressional delegates have requested input to inform a bipartisan consensus of recommendations for workforce system improvements;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board hereby approves of the letter addressed to Vice President Joe Biden, providing a consensus voice that provides recommendations for administrative implementation to improve the workforce training system to be more integrated, jobs-driven and effective; and

THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, The Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board hereby approves copies of the letter to be sent to all members of Washington's congressional delegation to inform their opinion on improving our nation's workforce training system to be more integrated, jobs-driven and effective.

Jobs-Driven Integrated System

Recap – Workgroup Meeting

April 28, 2014

Efficiency and Access

Program administrators are challenged with limited time and resources due to funding cuts, yet the demands for public services have steadily increased. To meet the increasing demands, administrators are trying to leverage across federal resources. The following recommendations would provide efficiency and access for those trying to navigate the federal funding systems' requirements:

- Create standardized report tools across federal agencies and funding streams, where the reporting periods are reduced from quarterly to annually or semi-annually.
- Wherever possible, federal agencies and funding streams should use common definitions, measures, and planning time frames.
- Develop and staff a technical support, online chat service for grantees or grant applicants, making it available during standard work hours across the U.S., not just EST or EDT.
- Waiver requests and approval process should be streamlined--working across systems to grant waivers when it makes sense to implement a program.
- Provide flexibility for mid-grant changes (eliminate rigidity that does not allow modification based on circumstance or findings).
- Do not create duplicative structures that can also destabilize existing systems. The state and local Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) were established to be the convening body to make partnerships happen, per the Workforce Investment Act, and should be used whenever such partnerships are expected or desired in federal grant programs.

Engaging Industry in Workforce Development

Every government program can have an objective of enhancing employment opportunities for U.S. residents. The following recommendations can help achieve this objective:

- Programs in federal agencies that provide funding directly to businesses should direct businesses to consult with local WIBs to help build that their workforce. The state and local WIBs have been established by statute to coordinate with education, training, and employment services providers that can help any business develop their workforce.
- Allow federal funding streams to be used to incent employers to loan experts to local programs. Incentives can be in various forms, but may include: wages, stipends, and the ability to back-fill the expert's time in the program.

- All federal offices should work with local WIBs, not just to list jobs, but also to help create work experience opportunities for local residents and engage in career exploration for young people.
- Federal investments in education and training should encourage and support skill development of students toward industry standards; training should follow industry standards, not single employer need.
- Federal programs should encourage and support increased usage of industry-recognized credentials where possible/available.

Transitions / Jobs Connections

If the objective of training a workforce is connecting to a job, it is important to reduce the barriers that challenge or inhibit job attainment. The following recommendations can minimize the artificial barriers facing job seekers and job providers:

- Keep the focus on getting more people into jobs, then help the client navigate a pathway lattice that moves them into a family wage job and beyond.
- Increase the use of navigators to create links: Education-to-Employer; Industry-to-Education; Education and training-to-support services (No one federal funding stream fully supports the navigator role. This requires working across all federal agencies and braiding of the funding streams.)
- For dislocated workers, the Individual Training Accounts can be the best (and sometimes only) resource to support skill development for reemployment at a suitable wage. Recent trends demonstrate an increasing preference for on-the-job training and short-term skill-matching tools, but these must not come at the expense of options that lead to degrees, credentials and certificates and ultimately, transferable job skills.
- If the goal is economic self-sufficiency--keep people enrolled until the goal is met and acknowledge that participants receive services from multiple funding streams.
 - As long as a client is progressing through the system toward meeting their goals, programs from all of the relevant funding streams should get credit for positive outcomes. (Recognize that the outcome goal of one program may be an interim goal of another.)
 - If there is nothing in statute that limits time or duration of services, do not develop policies that discourage long-term training or other services required to meet participants' goals.
- Goal-setting targets should be established that do not dictate the length of a program or the services received.

Investment in Alternative Learning Options

There is no cookie cutter approach to learning. Multiple pathways should be available to every learner. The following recommendations can provide opportunities for a learning workforce:

- Apprenticeships are recognized as successful earn-and-learn and jobs-driven training models, ensuring workers are trained in transferable skills that translate across a broad job market. Engagement within apprenticeships should not be difficult. Identify and remove barriers that discourage schools and service providers from working with apprenticeship programs.
- Encourage federal workstudy investments, aligned with a student's career pathway program, as an allowable work experience.
- Open AmeriCorps (an earn-and-learn experience) to support long-term unemployed to transition to gainful employment and to create opportunities for unemployed youth.

Youth

Youth unemployment has reached an unprecedented crisis. Federally funded programs can create more opportunities for students and out-of-school youth to have work experiences. These experiences may include opportunities such as: paid and unpaid internships, workplace mentorships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, cooperative education, summer employment, and work study. The following recommendations would help states address the needs of connecting youth to employment:

- It is difficult to find consistent, reliable data about youth employment. The Department of Labor website should provide drilled-down youth employment data that provides useful data sets that can be analyzed at the state and local levels.
- The ARRA Summer Youth program successfully engaged youth, connecting them to the workforce. There is no longer a single funding stream focused on summer youth employment. Where federal funding streams allow for summer youth employment, encourage connections with the local WIBs, as they can expedite program start-up and coordinate and leverage across funding streams.
- All federal programs should be directed to develop and offer work-integrated learning opportunities, whether internships, classroom-based projects, or career exploration.

May 2014

Vice President Joe Biden
Old Executive Office Building
Washington, DC 20501

Dear Mr. Vice President:

During the January 2014 State of the Union address, President Obama called for you to conduct a comprehensive review of all federally funded employment and training programs. Your review, through consultations, will identify ways to make our nation's workforce development system more job-driven, integrated and efficient, focusing on evidence-based best practices and identifying barriers to effectiveness.

Washington's state and local public partners have worked at length with business and labor stakeholders to ensure that these two customers are always clearly in focus for all public investments in workforce development. The benefits to and satisfaction of Washington's employers and its residents are the outcomes that we measure and use to shape continuous improvements to our strategies, programs and services. For this reason, we are usually quite clear on what is working well, and can identify when investments are not working as they should. Most often, the hurdles we grapple with are structural: statutory parameters, administrative policies or practices, or funding limitations.

Washington's Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board convened state stakeholders to provide informed input to your review. The process asked, "How can we better meet the needs of employers and improve employment results for job seeker participants?" The following recommendations have received consensus approval and can be instituted administratively:

Insert recommendations here

Washington state's stakeholders thank you for the opportunity to participate in your review of the federally funded workforce education and training programs. Providing streamlined opportunities to better serve our nation's workforce is a key component in economic and workforce development.

Sincerely,

Cindy Zehnder, Chair
Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

cc: Washington's Congressional Delegation