

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 173
SEPTEMBER 26, 2013**

DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS WORKGROUP

Throughout the development of the *High Skills, High Wages 2012* strategic plan, Board members and stakeholders expressed concern that, depending on implementation, Washington's most vulnerable populations might be left behind. Therefore, at the 2012 Workforce Board Retreat, the Board asked that David Stillman and Eleni Papadakis co-facilitate a workgroup to develop a strategy aimed at improving economic outcomes for disadvantaged populations.

The workgroup has developed a draft of a comprehensive, optimal service model, which will be vetted by a variety of field practitioners. A copy of the draft model is included in this tab. Mr. Stillman will present information on the model and the progress of the workgroup.

Board Action Requested: For discussion only.

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR DISADVANTAGED POPULATIONS

Service Model Components

The following are the service components and design considerations of a multiple pathway model to help individuals with significant barriers to employment achieve economic security and a satisfying attachment to the labor market. The model assumes that an intervention of some sort is needed to achieve these goals, including interventions that prevent an individual from going off course from a track towards success (i.e., preventing dropping out of high school or college). Intervention, therefore, also includes risk assessment and early detection of risky characteristics.

The model also assumes that a range of services, via various providers and funding streams will be braided together according to the needs of the individual participant; that there is “no wrong door”—an individual will be gently lead to the appropriate entry point; that all roads lead to gainful employment; that the right pathway is available for each participant to access, persist and succeed; that all skill development activities are contextualized to career goals, integrated with real world work experience wherever possible, and include income earning whenever possible; and that industry (employers and labor) views itself at least as a true partner in the model and optimally as a co-investor.

Service Model Components and Considerations

Outreach/Awareness: For participants to be availed of the opportunity to achieve meaningful attachment to the labor market and economic security using a multiple pathways approach, the first requirement is for front-line service delivery staff at all intake points to be thoroughly knowledgeable of the programs and services available across the system and to understand the combination of programs and services to call upon for every career pathway in order to effectively support participants first at intake and subsequently during triage and follow up. To that end, initial and ongoing orientation (even cross-training) of front-line staff to the programs and services available across the system is critical.

Customer Choice: The model honors the assets and interests of each potential and enrolled participant, at every stage of service delivery. Guidance is provided about the full range of possibilities available to each individual at the point in time for which they are seeking services. The model takes into account that participant desires may change as they engage in services, learn more about their abilities and interests, and about new career options. Service plans are designed with the participant to achieve the participant’s desired outcomes, with adequate periodic check-ins and adjustments to ensure continued plan appropriateness and effectiveness.

Intake: First interview to determine individual’s immediate needs; initial thoughts of participant on career interests; compile information on educational and job history; any information on barriers to employment, accessing education and training, and persisting in either education or

employment; determine eligibility for all services, funding and other resources. If possible, identify evidence to select potential effective learning modalities (learning styles or successful prior learning experiences).

Triage and Follow-up: Based on intake information, make immediate determination about need for support services, readiness to pursue education, training, employment, or a combination, and make appropriate referrals based on determination. Triage agent will follow-up with participant or referral site to ensure smooth transition, or to re-direct the individual when warranted.

Assessment of Academic Levels, Interests, Aptitudes, Learning Needs/Accommodations, and Learning Styles: An individual should be able to enter a career pathway program at whatever stage is appropriate to the individual's level of functioning at that time, and be able to move up and down the line as either skill development is achieved or additional or remedial skill development is needed. Assessment may take on various forms, such as standardized tests, criterion referencing, personal interviews, hands-on skill trials, and portfolio development, and should be tied to a credentialing process that is accepted by the targeted industry.

Career and Educational Exploration and Guidance: All participants, but especially those with little or no prior work experience, need sufficient information with which to make career decisions and appropriate educational choices. A well-formed career and educational exploration component will enable an individual to select an occupation based on his or her interests, needs and capabilities. Career exploration modules should include information on the viability of non-traditional occupations for women.

Participant Pathway and Outcome Plan: Every participant will work with staff to develop a service plan with clearly articulated and measureable outcomes. Staff will facilitate a conversation with the participant that leads to understanding of the participant's interests; passions; assets, including current capabilities and experience; learning style; immediate needs; and career goals. Staff then facilitates the participant's development of his or her pathway and outcome plan, providing necessary information and guidance along the way. The plan is considered to be a "live" document, subject to change as the participant learns about new career and education options and/or discovers new areas of interest and capacity.

Counseling/Case Management/Coaching: The counselor helps the participant to interpret information that she or he obtains upon entrance to and throughout participation in the program in both career and life domain terms. For the disadvantaged individual, career counseling/case management is also the thread that runs throughout the multiple stages of program participation, assisting with transition points, and overcoming barriers to persistence. At a minimum, the counselor/case manager provides a continuing point of reference or program identification throughout participation, and motivates through acknowledgement of milestones, small or great, that the participant achieves. The system will avoid assigning multiple case managers for one

participant, but if this becomes necessary, case managers will work as a team to provide support to the person in order to streamline and expedite services.

Support Services: The role of the counselor/case manager includes assisting the participant in learning about and obtaining support services when needed by individuals to overcome barriers to employment that may be encountered along their career pathway. For many who make up disadvantaged populations their success along a career path is inextricably linked to their ability to overcome significant barriers and obstacles that require a variety of social, medical, behavioral, economic and other support services. These services, in tandem with occupational skill development and other components of the career pathway, enable individuals with barriers to employment to become and remain attached to the labor market.

(Contextualized) Basic Education Skills: Generally, the literacy and numeracy skills required to function adequately in day-to-day living, including in unskilled employment. Basic skills are also a foundation for entry into and progress within the chosen occupation, they are a platform of skills and knowledge on which career-specific education and training is built. Because evidence clearly indicates that contextualized basic skills education improves and quickens the attainment of desired learning outcomes, this model only includes a contextualized option.

(Contextualized) English as a Second Language: The level of English proficiency, including speaking, reading, writing, and listening, that is required to enter or progress within the selected occupational area. Because evidence clearly indicates that contextualized ESL improves and quickens the attainment of desired learning outcomes, this model only includes a contextualized option.

Work Readiness Instruction and Assessment: Preparation on how to get a job and how to keep a job. Work readiness instruction informs individuals about the structure and culture of the workplace, and about what makes an individual a valuable employee—beyond specific occupational skills. Topics in this component may include, but are not limited to, communication skills, decision-making/problem-solving, team building/team work, quality practices, following instructions, relationship with authority figures, leadership skills, personal growth, stress management, health and hygiene, and dealing with difficult people/situations. Assessment should include behavioral demonstrations of material learned and not rely solely on standardized test formats. Therefore, work readiness is best addressed when embedded into education or training program, not as a stand alone component. If at all possible, work readiness of each participant should be validated by an employer, an endorsement which will be more favorably accepted by a hiring employer.

Development of Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities for Job Entry: Skill development here refers not just to those skills needed to enter the field, but also to the building of a foundation of skills to prepare for advancement within the field. Wherever possible, skill development activities should be work-integrated, which may include work-relevant project-based learning in the

classroom or on-line, industry guest lecturers, or participant experience in the workplace of any type, from job-shadows to mentorship, through paid internships and apprenticeships. Paid work experience or earn and learn models are the optimal design, but understandably the most difficult to achieve and sustain. Skill development activities will be appropriate to the learning styles, interests and capabilities of each participant. Early intake and assessments will help determine the appropriate pathway and point of entry for each individual. Development options may include education, training, on-the-job training, or any combination thereof.

Skills Upgrading for Occupational Progress: Skills development beyond the point of occupational entry (first employment during program participation). Skills upgrading should be tied to a credentialing process that is accepted by industry employers. In cases where a credentialing process doesn't already exist, establishment of a process that will be recognized by local employers should be established. Employer engagement on skills standards and credentials is described in the next section.

Employer Engagement/Job Development/Job Placement: Working with employers to determine which jobs are currently available, which jobs are projected to become available, and what the skill requirements are for available jobs. Employers should be engaged to help inform curriculum design, to ensure that skill development activities are work-integrated, to enhance program offerings, and to evaluate the effectiveness of the program in meeting industry's needs. Staff responsible for job development/job placement and faculty responsible for curriculum development and delivery will work closely with industry representatives to ensure that curriculum and materials for skill development are directly applicable to the workplace, and that participants are adequately prepared to meet employer skill demands once on the job. This is an on-going process as curriculum may need to be altered or enhanced as new jobs become available and/or if participants demonstrate an inability to perform effectively on the job.

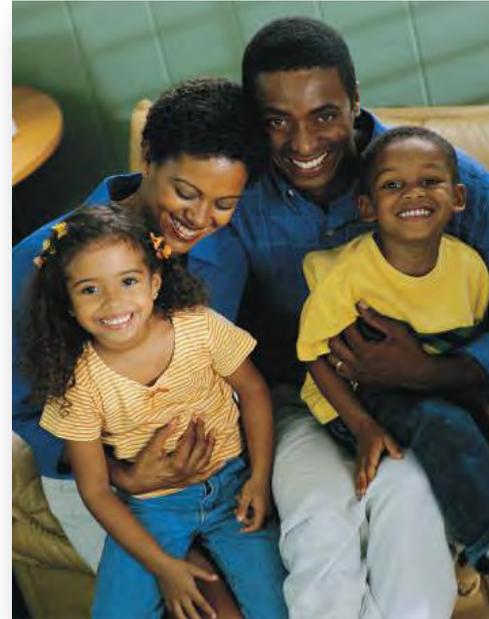
Post Job Placement Support for the Participant and Hiring Employer: Once an individual enters employment who has had little or no previous work experience, and regardless of effective pre-placement services, any number of factors can influence continued employment status: daycare, transportation, required accommodations, interpersonal issues, family difficulties, medical needs, and court involvement are some examples. Or an individual may require additional skill development in particular areas in order to do the job well. Support services for program participants will involve periodic contact, information and referral for necessary services, and, when necessary, advocacy for the individual on the job. For the hiring employer, a relationship should be established with the supervisor or human resources director to periodically check on the employer's satisfaction with the new employee, identify any issues that might threaten the worker's success on the job, and find solutions to ensure continued employment, employer satisfaction and employer willingness to hire again from the program.

Employer Services/Employer Engagement: Employers must be engaged at all stages of service design, delivery, and evaluation. The average employer will view participants with significant barriers as risky hires, although may also view involvement with programs as a moral obligation. Employer services for this model require that the employer liaison develop a relationship based on the employer's actual business needs, and the system's ability to help the employer meet those needs. The liaison will work with the employer to determine which business needs can be addressed wholly or partially through workforce development interventions, and make appropriate connections/referrals for workforce development professionals to develop an effective solution. Such business needs generally include, but are not limited to, issues of worker productivity, high error or rework rates, workplace accidents, customer dissatisfaction, high employee turnover or absenteeism, or high cost of recruitment and hiring. Solutions generally include some combination of worker or new hire education and training, customized curriculum development, supervisor training, development of new workplace or hiring practices, including career pathway development, exploration of new technology options and accompanying worker training. When issues are identified that are important to the employer and solutions are outside of the realm of workforce development, the employer liaison should make every effort to make an appropriate referral for relevant public business services (to economic development or business service organizations, or specific service providers such as Innovate Washington and Impact Washington). In either case, the employer liaison should follow-up periodically to ensure that the employer is satisfied with the referral and solution, and if not, to seek higher satisfaction options.

Improving Outcomes for Disadvantaged Populations Workgroup

A Progress Update

September 2013



Workforce Board Retreat, 2012

Key considerations discussed for advancing the goals of the new High Skills, High Wages plan:

- Is there really a pathway for every Washingtonian to achieve economic self-sufficiency?
- Does “all” really mean “all”?
- Can we work differently across agencies and resources to improve economic outcomes for Washington’s most disadvantaged or vulnerable populations?

Purpose

- Advance the goals of High Skills, High Wages 2012
- Work across organizations and funding streams to create a service model that will improve economic outcomes for disadvantaged individuals

Workgroup Composition: Represented Organizations

Employment Security	Association of Washington Business
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Washington State Labor Council
State Board for Community and Technical Colleges	Workforce Board
Department of Commerce	<u>DSHS Components</u>
Washington Workforce Association	Economic Services
NW Career Colleges Federation	Vocational Rehabilitation
Commission for National and Community Service	Juvenile Justice
Services for the Blind	Behavioral Health
Governor Inslee's Policy Office	Developmental Disabilities

Juvenile Justice Subgroup

- Improve education and employment outcomes for JRA youth
- Connect to home-community services while in detention
- Create strategies for work-integrated learning
- Improve career guidance and planning

TANF Youth

- New 'whole family' assessment for TANF that addresses well-being of children and youth in the home
- New TANF performance metrics that focus on:
 - School enrollment and progress
 - Timely high school completion
 - Treatment needs (mental health & chemical dependency) of TANF children and youth
- TANF Rapid Rehousing Initiative with goal of reducing number of homeless children and youth in Washington State
- Discussions underway with OSPI on strategies to improve graduation rates of TANF youth

The Optimal Service Model: An Asset or Strength-based Approach

All components coordinated across partner organizations (no wrong door):

Outreach/Awareness	Customer Choice
Intake/Triage	Assessment (academic, interests, aptitudes, learning needs and styles)
Career Exploration and Guidance	Participant Pathway & Outcome Planning
Counseling/Coaching	Support Services
“I-BEST-like” ABE & ESL	Work-readiness Preparation/Work-integrated Learning
Skill Development (Career Entry)	Skill Upgrading (Incumbent Worker)
Employer Involvement/Engagement	Job Development/Job Placement
Employer Services	Post Job Placement Support

Testing the Model

- Scalability
- Identify which resources can be braided
- Which policies or practices are barriers
- Recommendations for shifting resources
- Narrowed focus for pilot: disadvantaged 16- to 24-year olds

No-Money RFP

- Identify community partnerships (CPs) already working to improve outcomes for 16-24 year-olds
- CPs apply to partner with state workgroup to test optimal service model with existing resources
- State agencies commit to:
 - Provide technical assistance
 - Be as flexible as possible
 - Apply for federal waivers when warranted
 - Compile recommendations for statutory and regulatory change

Process Flow



- *Educational achievement*
- *Workforce readiness*
- *Soft skills*
- *Mental health*
- *Physical health*

State agency and community partner work with participants to develop a Career Blueprint:

- *What services are needed to address barriers?*
- *Who is working with them now?*
- *Who is paying for the services?*
- *What outcomes are being sought?*

Case management provided by Community Partner and State Agency

Connects participants to services they need

- *No longer engaging in risky behaviors*
- *Educational success*
- *Employment*

Current Status

- Gathering commitment of all stakeholders
- Joint invitation letter will go out to community-level stakeholders across the state
- Bidders conference and launch forum (TBD)
- Baseline research begun
- Support from U.S. Department of Labor

Next Steps

- Establish implementation team and protocols
- Create reporting system
- Develop communications strategy
- Decide on Stage 2 projects
- Develop recommendations for system improvement