

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 151
November 18, 2010**

RETOOLING WASHINGTON'S WORKFORCE

Beginning at the August Workforce Board retreat, the Board and its partners have pursued an initiative to identify opportunities and ideas that can be quickly implemented to help unemployed workers and employers during these tough economic times. The initiative started with two questions:

- 1) How do we work together to help the unemployed who need to have their skills retooled for jobs now and in the future?
- 2) How do we work together to respond to needs of employers when they come to us to help them have the workforce they need now and in the future?

To help answer these questions, the Workforce Board and our partners convened regional forums in Des Moines and Spokane, solicited ideas via an online questionnaire, and conducted a virtual forum with business leaders. On October 5, the Board held a final statewide forum in Everett. (For a list of forum participants, see Appendix A.) At the Everett forum, participants fleshed out the ideas and identified the opportunities that seem to hold the most promise for quickly helping unemployed workers, and employers. Based upon this input, the Workforce Board and its partners formed three work groups to create work plans to address three issues:

- 1) Coordinated outreach to Unemployment Insurance exhaustees**—There will soon be a dramatic increase in the number of unemployed Washington residents who have exhausted, or are about to exhaust their unemployment benefits.
- 2) On the Job Training**—This work group focused on ways to expand the use of On-the-Job Training to increase job hires.
- 3) Coordinated employer outreach combined with improved job referral/skills matching**—These two issues have been combined because they involved two sides of the same operation. This work group concentrated on methods to improve job referrals and ways to make the most out of outreach to employers.

The three work groups, with state and local representatives from many workforce and related programs, developed work plans to quickly implement improvements in each of these areas. Participants included staff from the Workforce Board, the Employment Security Department, the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Economic Services Division, Department of Commerce, Labor and Industries, Workforce Development Councils, Economic Development Councils, local government, and others.

The three work plans are presented here for the Board's review and approval.

Board Action Requested: Adoption of the Recommended Motions.

BUSINESS OUTREACH AND JOB REFERRALS

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, Washington has experienced the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression and unemployment remains painfully high; and

WHEREAS, Washington's workforce development system must do the best possible job to reach out to employers with job openings and connect them with job seekers who have the skills and attributes that match the employers' needs; and,

WHEREAS, As part of the Workforce Board's initiative on Retooling Washington's Workforce an interagency work group with state and local representation has developed a work plan to improve business outreach and job referrals;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board approves the work plan of the work group on Business Outreach and Job Referrals.

ON-THE-JOB TRAINING AND DIRECT-CONNECT TRAINING

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, Washington has experienced the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression and unemployment remains painfully high; and

WHEREAS, Washington's workforce development system must do the best possible job to spur employment growth particularly among employers who are ready to hire if they receive some reimbursement for training new or incumbent employees; and,

WHEREAS, As part of the Workforce Board's initiative on Retooling Washington's Workforce an interagency work group with state and local representation has developed a work plan to improve and expand On-The-Job Training options and direct-connect training; and

WHEREAS, The Governor has directed that discretionary WIA 10 Percent Funds in 2010 are utilized to develop a competitive, merit-based grant program designed to provide training in high demand industries and administered by the Workforce Development Councils; and

WHEREAS, The Governor has directed that the training programs emphasize training that increases employment, although other types of training, such as apprenticeships, could be included; and

WHEREAS, The Governor has directed that the training programs set eligibility criteria for workers receiving training, with an emphasis on persons receiving unemployment insurance and those who have exhausted their unemployment benefits, though the program could also include those individuals who are underemployed or who are involuntarily employed part-time, as well as those who are at risk of losing jobs without training, but with a focus for the grant program remaining on job creation; and

WHEREAS, More unemployed individuals could benefit from being connected to short-term, free and online training options to help to prepare them with competitive schools that will increase their chance of being hired as the economy recovers;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board approves the work plan of the work group on On-the-Job Training and Direct-Connect Training.

COORDINATED OUTREACH TO UI EXHAUSTEES

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, Washington has experienced the most severe economic downturn since the Great Depression and unemployment remains painfully high; and

WHEREAS, Job seekers have encountered extraordinary challenges during an extended period of low job growth and high unemployment; and

WHEREAS, Thousands of Washingtonians are running out of their UI benefits each week; and

WHEREAS, Washington's workforce development system must do the best possible job to share appropriate resource and service referral information to greatly stressed UI exhaustees; and

WHEREAS, As part of the Workforce Board's initiative on Retooling Washington's Workforce an interagency work group with state and local representatives has developed a three-part work plan to coordinate outreach to UI exhaustees;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board approves the work plan of the work group on Coordinated Outreach to Unemployment Insurance exhaustees.

RETOOLING WASHINGTON'S WORKFORCE

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, The Workforce Board has approved work plans that will coordinate outreach to Unemployment Insurance exhaustees, increase On-the-Job Training and Direct-Connect training, and improve business outreach and job referrals; and,

WHEREAS, These efforts to Retool Washington's Workforce would benefit from establishing state and local steering committees to coordinate the Retooling efforts;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED That the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board will convene a state steering committee to coordinate the implementation of Retooling Washington's Workforce and the Workforce Development Councils will similarly convene partners at the local level to coordinate local efforts.