

WIOA RETREAT – SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The Workforce Board held its retreat in Walla Walla July 30 and 31. The primary goal of the retreat was to outline the state strategic plan for workforce development, and provide direction for the interagency staff team of plan writers to undertake their work. The state currently has two plan-writing obligations, *High Skills, High Wages* (required by state statute), and the WIOA state plan. The Board had previously directed the development of a single plan if at all possible. At the juncture of the retreat, the Board was considering goals, objectives, and strategic priorities for both plans. The following is the summary of results from the retreat, which, as one commenter suggested, is consistent with and advance the work of the WIOA Steering Committee and subcommittees.

Guiding Principles

- Continuous Improvement of the state’s workforce development system is core responsibility of the Board and program administrators.
- Act as if it’s our “last chance” to operationalize a systemic approach.
- Hold each other accountable for progress towards goals.
- Remain mindful that the Board’s role is performance accountability and defining the “what,” while implementers at the state and local level should define the “how.”
- Establish norms and expectations for ongoing input after the plan is finalized.
- The plan must be flexible and all strategies must map back to the primary goals: “Are more people finding and keeping jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency?” “Are more employers able to hire the workers they need when they need them?”
- Ensure that disadvantaged populations can access and benefit from the system.

Next Generation Performance Accountability System

- Build on our successful history in workforce development performance accountability.
- Use WIOA measures to drive and evaluate system integration as core strategy for meeting state’s goals.
- Collective effectiveness—whole is worth more than sum of its parts.
- Track targeted subpopulations as well as entire service population for system.
- Must understand baselines of subpopulations.
- Work through data sharing hurdles.
- Use technology to make Management Information System and reporting easier.

Employer Engagement

Employer Engagement (EE) is the means to achieve other goals for the system. Therefore, we must:

- Establish **true regional partnerships with industry.**
- Work with industry via combined worker/employer **skills assessment** processes to **obtain consistent and ongoing input on the system’s effectiveness.**
- Map and analyze the multiple points of contact with employers across the system. We need to understand what is happening at the state and local/regional level. Then establish the appropriate roles and connections necessary to **make the Worksource centers facilitators of relationships between employers and the various individual programs comprised in the system.**
- Analyze funding currently available to **leverage and optimize resources for enhanced and expanded employer engagement.**
- Map and analyze actual services and programs for employers – integrated service delivery/single point of contact.

- In order to create the experience of a **single point of contact for employers**, we need to understand the actual services and programs available for employers.
- **The system needs a way to share information about our contact and outreach with employers.** How do we do common intake/tracking of our interactions with employers and how do we better track/share our success stories?
- **Define and develop professional development** related directly to EE.

Integrated Service Delivery

Integrated service delivery leads to a better aligned, efficient, and effective system. This will require:

- Implementing a portfolio model vs. a referral model.
 - System’s available services and programs should reflect the full continuum of individual needs.
 - Common intake and triage process (no wrong door).
 - Keep people enrolled longer—to point of economic self-sufficiency (need to define).
 - Co-enroll whenever possible.
 - Start with interests/strengths (person-centered identification of goals and aspirations vs. program).
- Mapping and analyzing services and programs for individuals – both employers and job seekers.
 - Create a **menu of services**.
 - Identify **opportunities for shared functions**.
 - **Create professional development** for frontline and case managers.
- Defining elements of **coaching and navigation**.
- Sharing information across programs, possibly through **common intake** and tracking, telling shared success stories.

Technology and Access

Recommendation on Accessibility: **A standing Board committee on accessibility issues** would help build consensus on strategies to make systemic improvements to the system informed by local advisory committees that assess accessibility issues at the ground level.

- The committee will **help local area boards prioritize projects and track progress** toward improved customer service for those populations.
- The state standing committee will additionally **serve as a forum for sharing best practices and strategies to improve access**, and as an advocate for resources and policy development that will improve services for all populations with barriers.
- The technology component of the state WIOA plan will scan & analyze where technology could be better utilized in the system, by eliminating redundancy or making investments/improvements that facilitate access.
 - *Where is access and best use of technology NOT happening?*
 - *Where does it happen?*
 - *Interagency committee will explore use of new worksourcewa.com website as a central access point for system services. How will it work with existing technology systems of other agencies? How can it be enhanced to be highly effective for all participant types?*
- We must work toward common reporting system across programs—will support our new performance accountability framework and federal reporting obligations.
 - Build on and learn from existing systems. Don’t throw babies away with bathwater.
 - Likely little to no new funding. Leverage what we have.
 - The Board will convene meetings of technical experts.

- We must continually map our technological improvements back to WIOA requirements and the state’s vision for collective effectiveness.
 - We cannot neglect the next phase: technology can improve access to the system itself, but must then make the connection to education and training seamless.
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Professional Development

The need for professional development on all three WIOA strategic priorities is acute, and resources are limited.

Four Target Audiences for Professional Development

1. **Management**-level staff at One-Stops.
2. **Frontline staff** at One-Stops.
3. System clients – **employers/jobseekers**.
4. The system itself.
 - a. **Leaders of agency partner programs** and other system leadership (the Board will play a critical role in bringing together these people).

Professional development track will include a shared message to the field; commit to a facilitated process; create a new version of the “broker covenant”; create the tools for ISD and feedback loops.

Training must be consistent and based on promising or best practice models in WA and from across the US/World.

Parting Thoughts

- Stay at strategy level—operational considerations are important, but always bring back to goals and strategy.
- Remember in true continuous improvement process planning is never finished. “Plan, Do, Check, Act” is a cycle, not linear.
- Stay open to innovation and be flexible.
- Focus on the “I” and the “O”—don’t let federal silos dictate.
- Be crisp, crisp, crisp!
- Be aspirational; plan should lay out a path to where we want state to go, doesn’t have to have all the answers, allow room for course corrections along the way.
- Huge opportunity if we map each piece of the plan back to real change and outcomes.
- Continue to leverage power house combo of NGA and Sen. Murray, and now Gov. Inslee’s leadership role.
- Retreat results totally consistent with work of subcommittees, but moves that work forward.