

**WASHINGTON STATE
WORKFORCE TRAINING AND EDUCATION COORDINATING BOARD
MEETING NO. 163
JUNE 28, 2012**

***HIGHS SKILLS, HIGH WAGES 2012-2022*
DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES**

This tab contains draft Goals, Objectives, and Strategies for *High Skills, High Wages 2012-2022: Washington's Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*. The draft is based upon environmental scans, and the input of stakeholder workgroups and the Interagency Committee. The draft is presented to the Board for the Board's review and direction. Following the June meeting, staff will complete the draft based upon the Board's direction and then disseminate it to obtain wider input electronically and via public forums across the state. Final adoption is planned for the September Board meeting.

Board Action Requested: Adoption of the Recommended Motion.

RECOMMENDED MOTION

WHEREAS, RCW 28C.18.060 directs the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to “Develop and maintain a state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education, including but not limited to, goals, objectives, and priorities for the state training system,” and

WHEREAS, RCW 28C.18.080 directs that “Every four years by December 1st, beginning December 1, 2012, the board shall submit an update of the ten-year state comprehensive plan for workforce training and education to the governor and the appropriate legislative policy committees.”

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, That the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board approves the dissemination of the draft *High Skills, High Wages: 2012 - 2022: Washington’s Strategic Plan for Workforce Development*, with edits identified at the June 28, 2012 Board meeting, for public review and comment.

HIGHS SKILLS, HIGH WAGES 2012-2022
DRAFT GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND STRATEGIES

Goal I

Washington’s Multiple Pathways for Initial Careers Provide Many Paths to Economic Self-Sufficiency and Career Satisfaction

Objective 1: Improve the availability and quality of career and education guidance for students in the secondary and postsecondary systems.

Strategies:

- a. Enhance career guidance for students.

Career guidance should begin at an earlier age, involve parents and guardians, and value all career paths. Schools should have comprehensive guidance programs (comprised of the 5 critical elements) such as Navigation 101. Like the Navigation 101 program, career guidance should be brought into the classroom, which both enhances student engagement and makes guidance more accessible. There should be professional development for faculty to prepare them to perform this role. Students and their families should have access to extensive information about career pathways and education and career opportunities, including opportunities that require a bachelor degree and opportunities that do not. Guidance should also include information about entrepreneurship. Students at postsecondary institutions should also have greater access to guidance information.

- b. Engage the private sector in providing career guidance.

Schools and colleges should increase the engagement of private sector partners—businesses, unions, community-based organizations—and public sector employers in counseling students about career opportunities. Partners should be brought into the classroom and students should have the opportunity to explore workplaces. Schools should leverage private and other public resources.

Objective 2: Identify, assess, and certify skills for successful careers.

Strategies:

- a. Increase workplace and life skills development for students.

In addition to academic skills and skills for specific careers, students also need to develop workplace and life skills. Workplace skills (also known as soft skills, SCAN skills, and employability skills) include such things as problem solving, positive work habits, team work, and many other skills. Life skills include the skills required to manage lives and careers; for example, financial literacy and living healthfully.

- b. Increase utilization of industry-based skill standards, assessments, and credentials.

The education system should partner with industry to identify skill standards and assessments, and enable students to obtain industry recognized credentials. The standards should range from general workplace skill standards to standards for specific occupational clusters. The standards should emphasize transferable skills that are useful across many occupations, and that “stack” towards career progress. Whenever possible, standards should be selected for their relevance to hiring and promotional practices within the targeted industry cluster. Program advisory committees should consult regularly with industry members to ensure continued relevance of standards.

Objective 3: Expand Programs of Study that map course sequences in career clusters through the secondary and postsecondary education systems.

Strategies:

- a. Expand the use of Programs of Study.

Programs of Study (POS) provide a sequential road map of the courses required for a career pathway; including multiple points for students to stop out and re-enter without losing momentum, and to take branches leading to various more specific careers. POS should be a more regular way that education is organized.

- b. Improve the articulation and transfer of credits earned in a student’s Program of Study.

POS should include opportunities for high school students to earn credits for both high school and college. Dual credits should more easily transfer among postsecondary institutions. Articulation should also improve between two-year colleges, and between two-year and four-year institutions. Open source curriculum and common course numbering could assist in the transfer of credits for students.

Objective 4: Increase work-integrated learning.

Strategies:

- a. Increase the number and types of workplace experiences available to students and out-of-school youth.

Create more opportunities for students and out-of-school youth to have work experiences. Experiences may include, among other things, paid or unpaid internships, workplace mentorships, pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeships, cooperative education, and work study. The work experiences should align with the student’s Program of Study, and should include transferable academic credit whenever possible.

- b. Integrate more work experiences into the classroom.

Through such experiences as project-based learning, classroom visits by business people, contextualized learning, and applied learning, bring more aspects of the world of work into the classroom.

Objective 5: Improve student access and retention.

Strategies:

- a. Expand high school dropout prevention and retrieval programs.

The state should continue to expand programs to prevent students from dropping out of high school and retrieve those students who have dropped out. This should include programs that leverage the resources of secondary schools, social service agencies, Workforce Development Councils, community-based organizations, and other partners.

- b. Increase non-traditional opportunities to obtain postsecondary certificates and degrees.

Methods of reducing the time to postsecondary credentials should be expanded including competency based learning programs and credit for prior learning. More “upside-down” degree programs should be available—programs that first provide vocational-technical training so that students who leave college after a year or two have marketable skills, followed by general education leading to a Bachelor’s Degree. Community and technical colleges should continue to grow the number of Applied Bachelor’s Degree programs. More “earn and learn” models should be developed, such as those that integrate apprenticeship training and college degrees and certificates.

- c. Provide wrap-around and new models of support and employment services including special services for diverse populations with multiple barriers to education.

Support services for diverse populations with multiple barriers to education and employment should be enhanced. The services include traditional support services, but also rethinking how we serve people with barriers by creating new partnerships with employers, and with social service agencies and community-based organizations—better leveraging resources.

Objective 6: Job search and placement for people into initial careers.

Strategies:

- a. Assist students to locate and obtain jobs.

Strengthen partnerships between the education and WorkSource systems to share job-finding information and resources. Increase the use of the successful navigator model that provide brokers to assist students in understanding and connecting with employers. Assist students in learning to identify their knowledge, skills and abilities and how to package themselves to meet the needs of the job. Students should be taught the skills needed to acquire employment such as how to search for a job, create a resume, fill out a job application, and impress in an interview. Students should also be encouraged to learn networking skills. Schools and colleges should partner with business and labor organizations to assist students in searching for a job.

Goal II

Washington's Multiple Pathways Provide Many Opportunities for Employers and Workers to Engage in and Benefit from the Workforce Development System

Objective 1: Increase employer engagement with the workforce development system.

Strategies:

- a. Improve outreach to employers.

Improve communication with employers using materials that are designed and written in a manner understandable and accessible to the business community, including the use of virtual communication. The materials must identify products and services that are of high value to employers, including small businesses. Coordinate outreach among public agencies, and cross-train staff to be familiar with the full range of services available. Partner with private sector organizations, and employer consortia. Utilize existing resources for outreach such as Industry Skill Panels and business organizations such as Chambers of Commerce.

- b. Engage employers in identifying skill standards and the development of training programs that meet the standards.

Involve employers in identifying skill standards and industry-based certifications of workers who meet the standards. Also involve employers in helping to develop and keep training programs current so that the programs prepare workers to meet the standards.

- c. Increase industry involvement in work-integrated learning.

Develop more opportunities for students to learn at workplaces and to provide classroom experiences connected to the world of work. Examples include industry mentors, apprenticeships, cooperative education, and paid internships. Where possible, work-integrated learning should be tied to students' Program of Study.

- d. Increase employer investment in workforce training.

Employer investments in workforce training include, but are not limited to employer matches to public sector or employee investments, and providing faculty or equipment for training programs.

Objective 2: Promote economic development by connecting workforce development with job creation and growth.

Strategies:

- a. Provide and market business services to employers.

Market services to existing employers and those looking to locate into the region. Business services include customized training for specific employers or groups of employers; recruitment and assessment of job applicants, and job match and placement services; early intervention services to prevent layoffs or closures; and employment retention services for employees such as efforts to connect employees with social services to address personal and family issues that can affect continual employment.

- b. Target investments for strategic economic opportunities.

Develop funding mechanisms to adequately resource and sustain high demand occupational training. Continue to improve the quality of labor market information in order to identify high demand occupations and Programs of Study, and to identify strategic economic clusters. Continue to develop and maintain special initiatives to address critical economic opportunities (e.g., aerospace workforce).

- c. Encourage and support entrepreneurship.

Offer entrepreneurial training and mentorship programs.

Objective 3: Expand and support learning opportunities for workers at all stages of their education or career paths.

Strategies:

- a. Offer greater career and education guidance for adults.

Provide navigators to assist adults in identifying and accessing education and training opportunities and financial aid and other support services. Widely disseminate consumer information on training programs.

- b. Increase the accessibility of training programs for adult workers and reduce the time it takes to complete training.

Increase the use of credit for prior learning, competency-based programs, stackable and portable credentials, direct connect training (e.g., OJT and Individualized Certificate Programs), and online and hybrid learning programs. Offer training at times and locations designed to reach underemployed workers. Expand financial assistance co-investment models such as Lifelong Learning Accounts (LiLAs).

- c. Improve training for adult workers with barriers to advancement.

Increase use of programs such as I-BEST that integrate basic or developmental education with skills training. Provide support services that fit the needs of diverse populations including veterans returning to the civilian labor force and long-term unemployed workers. Offer bridge programs for adults with barriers to postsecondary education. Increase partnerships with community based organizations and the Department of Social and Health Services programs that focus their services on vulnerable populations to provide needed supports for adult workers with barriers.

Objective 4: Improve job search and placement services for unemployed and underemployed workers.

Strategies:

- a. Improve the quality of job matching and referrals between job seekers and employers with job openings.

Improve the technology used to make job matches and the job referral process so that the skill sets that job applicants have match the skill sets that employers want. Assist job seekers and employers to recognize transferable skills and where the skills can be applied in the workforce. Assist veterans to cross-match their transferable skills gained in the armed forces to civilian employment opportunities.

- b. Make job search and placement assistance more widely available.

Improve access and marketing for job search and placement assistance to students, workers, and employers.

Goal III

Washington's Workforce Development System is a Model of Accountability and Co-Investment.

Objective 1: Strengthen performance accountability across all workforce development partners, by focusing on employment and earnings outcomes.

Strategies:

- a. Workforce partners should use the Washington Workforce Core Measures as the dashboard by which the system is evaluated.

The Washington Workforce Core Measures—measures of skill attainment, employment, earnings, customer satisfaction, and return on investment—have been in place for a number of years. However, state and local operating agencies, often driven by funder derived metrics, do not use the core measures consistently and, some not at all. A large number of staff in the system are unfamiliar with these metrics for the workforce development system. There should be renewed efforts to familiarize the system with the Washington Workforce Core Measures and to use the metrics for outcome accountability, so that the system collectively aims towards a single set of performance outcomes.

- b. Reduce administrative burdens and improve performance outcomes through a focus on outcome rather than input measures.

The requirement to measure inputs is often a tool to ensure that services are delivered in the same way, and at an adequate quality level regardless of geographic location or service provider. Yet, the workforce development system relies on the local governance to ensure that services are designed to meet the specific needs of each region's employers and job-seekers. The focus of performance measurement should be on outcomes rather than inputs.

Objective 2: Establish cost-effective co-investment models, across government funding streams and across the tri-partite spectrum (employer, worker, and government).

Strategies:

- a. Reduce barriers to sharing or splitting funding across funding streams.

At the service level, it is often difficult for staff working directly with customers to alter how funds are used or how services are provided. Creative front line staff work in the best interest of the customer to leverage the resources of other organizations. Efforts should be made to normalize practices that leverage resources across agencies and that enhance customer performance outcomes. Technology should be used to make data sharing and customer tracking easy and effective.

- b. Establish cost-sharing practices and policies that stretch public dollars to serve the largest number of participants to the highest performance outcome levels.

While there have been numerous attempts and pilots, Washington needs a common practice framework across all operating agencies that bring private resources into the system. This co-investment framework should ensure that customer-partners have input into service design, evaluation of service quality, and access to objective information about the return on their investment.