

SETTING WIOA VISION AND MISSION:

Defining Guiding Principles and Identifying Priorities

“At the heart of it, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act presents a tremendous opportunity to ensure that every resident of our state has the chance to earn a living wage and pursue a career, and that every employer has the skilled worker it needs to grow and prosper in our state.”

-Governor Inslee

GOVERNOR INSLEE’S WIOA IMPLEMENTATION CHARGES¹

- Establish a clear focus across three fundamental goals for the workforce development system:
 - Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to **economic self-sufficiency**, with a **focus on disadvantaged populations**.
 - **Close skills gaps** for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations.
 - Work together as a **single, seamless team** to make this happen.
- Explore fully the **benefits of a combined plan versus a unified plan**, including an analysis of any current barriers to accomplishing a combined plan.
- Conduct an **examination of integrating the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)** program into the workforce system, including recommendations for serving the most at-risk TANF clients. Health and human services stakeholders must be a key constituency in forming this set of recommendations. [The Department of Social and Health Services is directed] to participated fully in this analysis.
- Provide a **data-driven evaluation and recommendation for planning regions** in consultation with chief local elected officials, local workforce development boards and stakeholders, including our partners in the workforce systems in Idaho and Oregon.
- Provide **recommendations for elevating the strategic role of both state and local workforce boards** to focus on the goals above and for **changing service delivery** as needed to improve outcomes.

PLANNING PROCESS APPROACH²

1. Provide an **open an inclusive planning process** that engages a wide range of stakeholders, including but not limited to employers, labor organizations, education and training providers, economic development agencies, community and subpopulations advocates, and community service providers.
 2. **Focus on improving performance outcomes.** Demonstrate an understanding of the current level of performance in critical areas of service delivery. Describe the logic model, including available evidence about past success, and identify lead actors in moving the needle towards performance improvement.
 3. **Create a system that is responsive to both employers and jobseekers**, and describe how responsiveness will be assessed.
 4. **Describe education and career pathways that will be enhanced or made newly available** to help more individuals achieve economic self-sufficiency, and help more employers find the skilled workers they need.
 5. Recommend **strategies and tactics to improve access for underserved populations**.
 6. **Improve efficiency and effectiveness through regional planning.** Potential planning regions for the Governor’s consideration will be identified by the Workforce Board through a consultative process with Chief Local Elected officials and WDCs. The parameters for identifying planning regions will include both qualitative and quantitative data and information, for both in-state and cross-state regions.
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¹ Attachment A - October 27, 2014 Governor’s Letter

² Attachment B - “WIOA Big Picture Questions” Document

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SELECTED EVIDENCE-BASED STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

The following evidence-based strategies or practices have been shown to improve the customer experience in workforce systems. These examples are not meant as recommendations from the Steering Committee or any of its subcommittees, but as a sampling of strategies meant to encourage discussion of specific priorities our system's stakeholders hold in the WIOA implementation process.

Standardizing and Streamlining the Intake Process

*Service Model Components for Improving Outcomes for Disadvantaged Populations:*³ The Workforce Board coordinated a process with other workforce development system agencies to identify service components and design considerations of a multiple pathway model to help individuals with significant barriers to employment achieve economic security and attach to the labor market. The model assumes that a range of services, via various providers and funding streams, will be braided together according to the needs of the individual participant and that there are “no wrong doors” to the system. All routes through the system should lead to gainful employment, and skill development training activities are to be contextualized to career goals and integrated with work experience whenever possible. The service model should be viewed as a flexible interconnected set of services that can be customized to each customer. While this model was developed to improve outcomes for disadvantaged individuals, because of its flexibility, it will serve any populations, and employers who hire from the system.

The model embraces staff professional development and cross-training for effective outreach, customer choice and asset-based programming, and coaching and navigation as core values of any system that will significantly improve outcomes among barriered populations.

*Integrated Service Delivery/Common Intake:*⁴ Moving to a truly integrated system requires a willingness to look at all aspects of board and staff operations to identify where improvements would result in stronger partnerships. WIOA brings an intention for a streamlined, demand-driven, and business informed system that can support the education, training, and workforce needs of a diverse population of jobseekers and workers, including those most in need.

Service Integration means to facilitate collaboration among community partners to provide coordinated resources and information for individuals and families - Agency and community partners expediting solutions by matching resources to clearly defined needs, while avoiding duplication of service.

State and Local Boards, one-stop center operators and partners must increase coordination of programs and resources to support a comprehensive system providing integrated seamless services to all job seekers and workers and effective strategies that meet businesses' workforce needs.

- Adopt a common intake system
- Single point of contact for employers
- Straightforward equitable and simple access for dual customers (employers/employees/clients)
- Provide navigators to assist client with choices
- Service that has no visible silos for the client (services and resources work together in a blended/braided manner)
- Partner with Employers to create a truly one-stop experience for recruiting job seekers

³ Attachment C - “Improving Outcomes for Disadvantaged Populations”

⁴ Attachment D – “Integrating Intake among Workforce Programs - Integrated Intake Continuum” and supporting research.

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Improving Employer Engagement

Upskill/Backfill Training for Incumbent Workers:⁵ The upskill/backfill approach brings together training programs and employers as partners to advance incumbent workers to higher-skilled positions and open entry-level positions for unemployed job seekers. A recent National Governors Association paper highlighted several states with successful upskill/backfill approach programs, including North Carolina’s State Energy Sector Partnership, which partnered with construction companies to upscale entry-level workers into specialized positions and doubled the number of employment opportunities available to job seekers.

The NGA report noted that workforce development systems can encourage employer co-investment by “making the business case that upskill/backfill partnerships can improve employers’ profits through increased worker productivity, decreased turnover and recruiting costs, new revenue streams, and stronger ties to local economies.”

Promoting Work-Based Learning Opportunities for Youth: WIOA places a new priority on work-based learning by providing that at least 20 percent of local youth formula funds be used for work experiences such as summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship training, on-the-job training and internships that have academic and occupational education as a component. WIOA also links services to the attainment of secondary school diplomas, entry into postsecondary education and career readiness, and to the attainment of postsecondary credentials aligned with in-demand industry sectors or occupations.

Studies have demonstrated that early work experience positively correlates with future labor-market success and earnings. An analysis released by the Center for Labor Market Studies at Northeastern University in Boston has suggested that cumulative work experience has very substantial effects on the wages and annual earnings of young men and women. The report found that expected economic returns from work experience influence the decision of men and women to actively participate in the labor force. The study concluded that those who have only limited work experience in their late teens and early twenties cannot command high wages in the labor market, and their limited wage prospects reduce the economic incentive for them to participate in the labor market.⁶

A random assignment evaluation of *Career Academies*, a high school-based model in which students took classes as part of a small learning community and participated in a career-themed track connected to job-shadowing, internships, and other work-based learning opportunities, found that it produced statistically significant increases in earnings over an eight-year follow-up period. Men in the program group earned about \$30,000 more than their control group counterparts over the eight years, even though they were no more likely to graduate from high school or go to college. Impacts were particularly large for the subgroup of students deemed most at risk. The researchers suggest that the program’s use of “career awareness and development activities,” may have contributed to the earnings gains.⁷

Wenatchee Learns:⁸ The Wenatchee Learns Connect community partnership provides workforce based learning opportunities for K-12 students. The partnership center, located in town, serves as a liaison between schools and the community in an effort to personalize learning by expanding the role of education to citizens, parents, and business partners. The project includes a brick and mortar physical location and an online resource for volunteers and business partners to connect with the Wenatchee school districts. The online portal allows business and organizations to create company profiles that are linked to the school district’s web-based career exploration

⁵ Attachment E – NGA Study on “Upskill/Backfill Strategies: Advancing Incumbent Workers and Opening Opportunities for Job Seekers”

⁶ Attachment F – “Still Young, Idle, and Jobless: The Continued Failure of the Nation’s Teens to Benefit from Renewed Job Growth

⁷ Attachment G – “Career Academies: Long-Term Impacts on Labor Market Outcomes, Educational Attainment, and Transitions to Adulthood”

⁸ Attachment H – “Wenatchee Learns PDF”

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system for high school students. Through these profiles business can share information about their products, services, or careers, or offer work-based learning opportunities, company tours, classroom presenters, and answer questions on a virtual message board.

Aligning Services to Existing Sector Strategies

Aligning our System to Commerce's Industry Sector Strategy Approach: Additional suggestions include the following strategic direction for aligning WIOA coordination efforts to sector strategies:

- A seamless transition to services across all WIOA partners, with a virtual one-stops to enhance delivery;
- A single point of entry for all clients and programs to include intake and eligibility screening;
- Case management to meet each client's needs at their level, in order to create success for the individual (this may include a navigator);
- Funding should be prioritized for workforce development programs in key industry sectors across the state; and
- Workforce Development prioritization and other decision-making should be done in consultation with industry through organizations such as the Washington Aerospace & Advanced Manufacturing Workforce Pipeline Advisory Committee.

SPECIFIC FEEDBACK RECEIVED FROM SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS

Adult Education Advisory Council

Staff received a request from the Adult Education Advisory Council that the Steering Committee formulate guidance around four concepts:

- 1. Ensure a comprehensive commitment to seamless and accelerated access among relevant services**
 - a. Establish clear roles for each partner
 - b. Eliminate duplication of services and repetition of paperwork for participants (intake, application for resources, etc.)
 - c. Simplify and streamline the intake process. Consider a shared intake process so that clients provide information once in way that can be used by multiple providers, or as for a means for clients to evaluate eligibility for multiple agency benefits in one application.
 - d. Create and retain student electronic portfolios to ensure portability of student information, services provided, progression, achievements, and completions
- 2. Guarantee access to relevant services**
 - a. Utilize an asset-based approach to customized, college/career focused pathways (prof-tech; academic; apprenticeship; on-the-job training; work based learning, etc.)
 - b. Implement relevant assessments to identify each individual's barriers
 - c. Require standardized/common assessment tests across the system
 - d. Provide strategic educational and life support resources that eliminate identified barriers (especially for hardest to serve)
- 3. Expand access to relevant services**
 - a. Develop and implement an application "App" for smart phones that identifies and locates relevant services, connects all clients to system services, and provides contacts for entry information
 - b. Co-locate One-Stop centers on community and technical college campuses
 - c. Increase targeted, user-friendly virtual One-Stop services
- 4. Provide access for Basic Education for Adult (BEEdA) students to participate in integrated learning and work experience activities with competencies counting toward high school completion (e.g., paid and unpaid internships, job shadowing, employer-led class projects, and employment)**

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State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

The following draft WIOA Guiding Principles were submitted for the consideration of the Steering Committee by SBCTC and AEAC.

Vision

All Washingtonians, particularly those with barriers to employment, will have access to innovative, high quality 21st Century workforce training and education programs and support services that provide the knowledge, skills and credentials necessary for securing living-wage employment that strengthens the state and local economies and meets the needs of employers.

Mission

Washington state's workforce investment system improves the quality and labor market relevance of workforce investment, education and economic development to provide the state's workers with the skills and credentials necessary to secure and advance in employment with living-wages and provides the state's employers with the skilled workers needed to prosper in the global economy.

Goals

- Meet the needs of employers by implementing and scaling guided college and career pathways that provide targeted, accelerated workforce investment activities through a state-wide workforce development system that increases the employment, retention, and earning of participants, and increases attainment of recognized industry and postsecondary credentials by participants, and as a result improves the quality of the workforce, reduces welfare dependency, and increases economic self-sufficiency.
- Align investments in workforce, education and economic development to regional in-demand jobs by providing access to a high quality statewide system of one-stop centers which directly provide navigational and targeted employment services and connects customers to work-related training and education.

Expand opportunities for employers and participants to engage in integrated learning and work experience activities that provide paid and unpaid internships, job shadowing experiences, apprenticeships, employer led class projects and training a part of workforce education experiences.

Washington Workforce Association

June 15, 2015

Dear Workforce Board Members and Staff:

The Washington Workforce Association is deeply appreciative of the dedicated service of outgoing WETCB Chair Cindy Zehnder. Cindy came into the Chair position committed to listening to the needs of the system and has been a steady voice in asking about the impacts actions will have on the local systems and specifically on the work of the Workforce Development Councils. Through efforts like Retooling WA Workforce she became familiar with the needs of the workforce system and worked to tear down the silos that keep us from greater efficiency and effectiveness. She asked our opinions and acknowledged our struggles. Through it all, her priority was improving services for both job seekers and businesses who seek talent to grow and expand. Cindy leaves behind a legacy system known for its innovation and achievements. The new possibilities embodied in the new federal legislation will advance the course she helped set. We thank her for all she contributed.

As Cindy leaves and another WETCB Board leader emerges to take us through the remaining years of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), the Association offers some thoughts about continued partnerships and achievement. First, this State has undertaken herculean effort to review WIOA and respond to the State's required elements. This has been critical work, and we are pleased to have been able to contribute to

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our State's progress. Each of our local agencies need that policy direction to continue provision of services and to meet local required leadership elements.

Washington State's workforce system has a long-standing history of partnerships and successes. As the system progressed under the Workforce Investment Act, our State's workforce development system was strengthened through the establishment of the "Partnering for Performance: Washington's Workforce Compact" entered into in September of 2007 by all the eighteen workforce development programs authorized under the Workforce Investment Act. This document outlined and committed each of the partners to mutual goals, guiding principles, roles and responsibilities, and actions to better coordinate services. In 2009, the Workforce Board furthered the development of the Compact in its discussion of WIA Roles of the Workforce Board and the Employment Security Department.

While we do not want to add to the already heavy planning and policy development burden of the Board, we are requesting the Board, similar to its work with the Compact, include two additional focal areas for which we have not yet heard significant discussion:

1. **How and when will the three other mandatory core Titles of the Act (Wagner-Peyser Employment Services, Adult Basic Education and Voc. Rehab) be examined and discussed?** These are essential and critical pieces of the legislation and of the workforce system. We believe they deserve similar attention and support to meet the requirements of the law and to capture the best thinking of this policy body. Some the questions of interest to us include, but are not limited to:
 - a. What are the specific Wagner Peyser, Adult Basic Education, and Vocational Rehabilitation accountabilities of interest to the Workforce Board?
 - b. Are there specific resources afforded the Workforce Board to carry out those performance accountabilities and are they adequate?
 - c. What statewide integration expectations and policies need to be adopted?
 - d. How will these core partners track and report common federal performance measures?

2. **What opportunity will there be for discussion of the overall operational design of this State's workforce system?** Over the years at the state level we have evolved a workforce system that assigns certain responsibilities and authorities to the Workforce Board and to Employment Security in its role as the Administrative Entity. Under the Workforce Investment Act, these responsibilities were originally detailed in a letter released from Governor Locke's Chief of Staff. It was furthered detailed and updated in a joint document prepared by the staffs of the Board and Employment Security and presented to the Workforce Board. Those are not cast in stone and the new legislation asks we consider better ways to conduct the business of workforce. As we consider the systems in other states and the wonder out loud we ask questions like:
 - a. Are there other models or modifications we want to make to the roles and relationships of the two statewide, workforce specific, entities?
 - b. How do workforce policies of Employment Security Department differ from those of the Workforce Board?
 - c. What clarity exists to assure the WIOA grant/administrative oversight responsibilities of Employment Security Department do not represent a conflict of interest?
 - d. Does the Workforce Board have an opinion about the role WDCs should play in the ongoing design and leadership of the system?

The local workforce systems overseen by the Workforce Development Councils rely heavily upon the partnerships and capabilities of our partners at Employment Security Department and the Workforce Board. We care deeply about a system design that is customer centric, comprehensive, and broadly supported by local, state and federal partners. In addition, we care about a system design that takes into account local economic, workforce and partnership dynamics. As the new program year is upon us and the Workforce Board begins designing your upcoming Retreat we hope you will consider these questions and perhaps use part of that time to strategize next

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steps that might provide some answers to the questions we raise. We do not have programmed answers, but believe open and full engagement of the questions will allow us to maximize the *innovation and opportunity* embodied in the new legislation.

Respectfully,

Cheryl B. Fambles
WWA Board Chair