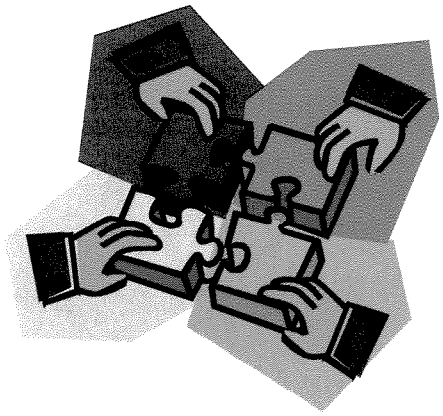

Partnering for Performance:

Washington's Workforce Compact

September 2007

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

Partnering for Performance: Washington's Workforce Compact

Preamble

The partners of the Workforce Development System commit to working together to close employer skill gaps in Washington.[1] We must prepare all Washington residents to attain lifelong successful attachment to the workforce, especially individuals whose innate talents and abilities have not been fully developed in the past.

Employers are facing a long-term trend toward greater skill shortages as the baby-boom generation retires. To fill these skill shortages, businesses must develop their current workforce and employ new workers from formerly underutilized populations. In order to prepare these populations for successful and long-term labor market participation, the Workforce Development System must go beyond previous efforts to coordinate our services and work in complementary ways.

We must be effective partners in: identifying employer skill gaps, recruiting individuals to receive valuable training, offering guidance that leads individuals down career paths, providing wrap around support services that enable individuals to participate in and complete education and training, placing job seekers in quality jobs, and collaborating in meeting employer needs.

By doing these things we will improve our performance in meeting our individual and mutual goals for our customers. We will be in a better position to prevent students from dropping out of school and to retrieve those who have dropped out. We will be more effective in transitioning students from secondary to postsecondary education and work. We will offer training that is more in tune with the needs of employers and the economy. We will offer better services for those previously left behind, raising the skill levels of all Washingtonians. We will provide greater economic security and grow a more inclusive and dynamic economy.

Our vision is a workforce development system that offers every Washington resident access to high-quality academic and occupational skills education throughout his or her lifetime, effective help to find work or training when unemployed, the personalized assistance to make progress in the labor market, and Washington employers access to the skilled workforce they need.

I. Goals

1. Youth: Ensure all Washington youth receive the education, training, and support they need for success in postsecondary education and/or work.
2. Adults: Provide Washington adults (including those with barriers to education and employment) with access to lifelong education, training, and employment services.
3. Industry: Meet the workforce needs of industry by preparing students, current workers, and dislocated workers with the skills employers need.

[1] The Workforce Development System is defined in RCW 28C.18.010 and Executive Order 99-02 section 5.

4. Integration: Integrate services provided by separately funded workforce development programs so that we provide the best possible service to our customers.

II. Guiding Principles

The partners to this Compact commit to working together to create and sustain a workforce development system that fulfills these principles:

- The workforce development system focuses on the needs of employers, individual students, workers, and job seekers. The needs of our customers are always more important than the needs of the system or any individual partner agency or program.
- It is only by meeting the needs of employers that the workforce development system can accomplish its goals for individuals, increasing employment opportunities for those who have been previously left behind and raising the overall standard of living for Washington residents.
- The workforce development system strives to meet the employment and training needs of all Washington residents by providing universal and lifelong access to workforce services.
- Through collaboration, each partner will be better able to fulfill its own mission to serve the partner's customers.
- The workforce development system provides coordinated customer services even when the services are funded through and provided by different programs.
- The workforce development system takes advantage of the services of partner programs and avoids wasteful duplication of services.
- The workforce development system is accountable for results.
- The workforce development system's decision-making is evidence-based.
- The partners commit to investing resources to achieve the four goals of the workforce development system.
- The partners commit to removing barriers that stand in the way of meeting employment and training needs of Washington residents and employers.
- The partners commit to striving for consensus decision-making.
- This state compact is intended to compliment, not supplant, local agreements.
- The partners acknowledge that full implementation of this compact requires the provision of the necessary resources for the workforce development system.

III. Roles and Responsibilities

The following statements identify key roles and responsibilities of the partners to this Compact. It is the goal of the partners to carry out these roles and responsibilities in an exemplary manner, creating the best workforce development system in the world, and producing high skills and high wages.

Roles

Key roles of system partners include, but are not limited to:

- The core business of secondary career and technical education, community and technical colleges' adult education and workforce education programs, apprenticeship programs, and private career colleges is education and training.
- The core business of the WorkSource System is to meet the needs of employers and individuals through assessment, career and education counseling, training referral, job search assistance, job development, and job referral.
- The core business of the Employment Security Department is to fill employer job openings with well qualified job seekers and to mitigate the negative consequences of unemployment.
- The core business of the Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) and the Department of Services for the Blind (DSB) is assessment, career and education counseling, training referral, job search assistance, physical and mental restoration services, assistive technology, job development, and job referral for individuals with the most significant disabilities who require vocational rehabilitation services in order to be employed.
- The core business of the Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) is to convene workforce development partners and stakeholders at the regional level in order to assess skill gaps, to develop the region's workforce development system plan in coordination with economic development, to serve as the regional performance management entity for workforce development, and to facilitate interagency projects and programs.
- The core business of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Workforce Board) is to coordinate policy and planning for the workforce development system, to evaluate results, and to facilitate demonstration projects testing new ideas.
- The core business of the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council and the Labor & Industries Office of Apprenticeship is to foster the apprenticeship training system in Washington State by developing and monitoring registered apprenticeship programs, promoting apprenticeship as a skills development system for employers as well as a postsecondary training choice for individuals.
- The Association of Washington Business will participate through representatives on the Workforce Board to provide a voice for business in guiding the policies, plans, and programs of the workforce development system.
- The Washington State Labor Council, AFL-CIO will participate through representatives on the Workforce Board to provide a voice for labor in guiding the policies, plans, and programs of workforce development system.

Responsibilities

Key responsibilities of system partners include, but are not limited to:

- Partner programs will collect and track information on program participants so that performance and outcomes can be measured for all participants and appropriate information can be shared among partners.

- Partners will integrate partner program services, where appropriate, at the state and local level—for example, by DVR providing rehabilitation services for eligible participants at WorkSource Centers.
- Partners providing case management services will work together to reduce duplication and expand the availability and reach of case management services—for example, by integrating case management of WorkFirst TANF recipients, Workforce Investment Act (WIA) eligible participants, and other low-income populations requiring case management services.
- Partners providing support services to common populations of program participants will work together to expand the availability and reach of support services—for example, by WIA Title I providing support services for WIA Title I eligible students in training at community and technical colleges and private career colleges.
- Partners issuing applications or requests for proposals for workforce development services will encourage service integration among partners at the state and local levels, which will be reflected in the proposal review and selection process.
- Partners will assess the skill needs of the system's employees in order to meet the four goals and work together to raise the competency levels of staff and managers.
- K-12, the WDCs, and WorkSource systems will work together and with other partners to serve youth who are at risk of dropping out of school or who have already dropped out of school—for example, through the "Building Bridges" program.
- The K-12 and community and technical college systems, and the Workforce Board will work together to facilitate student transitions between secondary and postsecondary career and technical education.
- The WorkSource System will recruit and provide referrals to training for individuals who need training in order to obtain suitable employment or to improve future employment options.
- WorkSource System services will include support services for many of the WorkSource participants placed into training in order to improve training retention and completion rates.
- The WorkSource System will provide referrals to jobs for individuals who seek immediate employment.
- The WorkSource System will provide staff-assisted access to information on apprenticeship programs and private career colleges.
- The WorkSource System will offer its core business services to community and technical college and private career college students, including through a physical presence on as many community and technical college campuses as possible.
- Partner programs commit to supporting the WorkSource system's efforts to carry out the core business functions of WorkSource.

- Partners will provide information to support WDCs in the development of accurate and useful regional strategic plans.

- DVR at the Department of Social and Health Services and DSB will offer their services to individuals with disabilities who are eligible for vocational rehabilitation services at as many WorkSource locations as are practicable.

- The community and technical colleges will endeavor to maintain a physical presence at each WorkSource Center.

- The Labor & Industries Office of Apprenticeship and the Washington State Apprenticeship and Training Council will partner with community and technical colleges, the WorkSource system, and WDCs to promote registered apprenticeship to individuals as a postsecondary training choice and to employers as a skills development training system.

- The WDCs will provide for a coordinated and responsive system of outreach to employers.

- The Workforce Board will analyze demographic and economic trends, programs, and outcomes of the workforce development system in order to identify significant problems, best practices and ways of improving outcomes.

- The Workforce Board will work with partners and stakeholders to develop and maintain the state comprehensive plan for workforce development that will identify the goals, objectives, and strategies for the workforce development system.

- The Workforce Board will look for evidence of collaboration among workforce development programs and services when reviewing plans for consistency with the state comprehensive plan.

State Actions to Better Coordinate Services

Removing Barriers

Sometimes, the barriers that stand in the way of our customers achieving their goals are of our own making. Not that they are intentional. But sometimes, following individual program objectives bump up against the policies or practices of another program in a way that is less than optimal for our customers. For example, the administrative rules of one program may make sense in the context of that program, but when put together with the administrative rules of another program, customers may be faced with conflicting sets of procedures.

The partners to this Compact commit to a collective effort to identify and remove government or other barriers that stand in the way of serving our customers. Such barriers may include, but are not limited to policies, practices, regulations, or performance measures. What appear as barriers may exist for a good reason. This must be considered. But we commit to identifying and removing those barriers that don't make sense from the perspective of the goals we are trying to achieve for our customers.

Providing Incentives

In order to advance collaboration at the local level, the state partners commit to using the following and other tools of their workforce development programs in order to encourage

partnerships. In applying these tools, the state programs will incorporate ways to encourage local organizations to coordinate the complementary services of partner agencies and programs when that is in the best interest of our customers. As an example, state requests for proposals will encourage applicants to include partner services as appropriate.

- Planning requirements and approval
- Allocations
- Application requirements
- Requests for Proposals
- Contracts
- Policies and procedures
- Performance measurement
- Conferences and other opportunities for information sharing and professional development
- Marketing and communication
- Awards for Best Practices

Conclusion

The Workforce Development System consists of 18 programs to prepare individuals to meet employer workforce needs. If we collaborate effectively in serving our customers, the product of our efforts can be much greater than the sum or our individual efforts. The partners signing this *Compact* commit to making this happen. We will review the *Compact* every two years in order to assess its usefulness and to keep it current.

Process for Identifying and Removing Barriers

Partnering for Performance: Washington's Workforce Compact states:

> The partners to this *Compact* commit to a collective effort to identify and remove government or other barriers that stand in the way of serving our customers. Such barriers may include, but are not limited to policies, practices, regulations, or performance measures. What appear as barriers may exist for a good reason. This must be considered. But we commit to identifying and removing those barriers that don't make sense from the perspective of the goals we are trying to achieve for our customers.

This paper outlines the initial process the *Compact* partners will use to identify and remove barriers.

1. Each partner to the *Compact* will obtain information from the partner's constituency as to significant barriers they are aware of that stand in the way of serving the customers of the workforce development system. This information will include the nature of the barrier, why the barrier is important, the apparent reasons why the barrier exists, and who would need to do what in order for the barrier to be removed.

2. At *Workforce and Economic Development 2007 Leadership Conference,* Board staff will obtain the same type of information from conference attendees regarding barriers to serving customers.

3. Following the conference, the IC will discuss which barrier(s) to target initially. Workforce Board staff and the appropriate partners will develop a workplan(s) to address the barrier(s), and present the workplan to the IC for discussion and developing recommendations for the Board.

4. At the January 2008 meeting, the Workforce Board will discuss and take action on the process for the Compact partners to work together to remove barriers. The Board will decide which barrier(s) to initially target and the steps that should be taken to address the barrier(s).

5. After enough information is available from the first round of barrier removal, the Board will consider the lessons learned from the process and make any improvements to the process that are warranted for the future, and regular rounds of barrier removal.

Partnering for Performance: Washington's Workforce Compact

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