



Oregon

Local Workforce Boards

Strategic Planning Toolkit



Oregon

Local Workforce Boards

Strategic Planning Toolkit



Contents

Chapter 1: Getting Started

Changing Our Mindset.....	1 - 2
Defining a Vision and Mission.....	1 - 5
Planning Process.....	1 - 7
Stakeholder Engagement	1 - 11

Chapter 2: Choosing a Planning Process

Process Models.....	2 - 2
Maximum Input Model.....	2 - 3
Limited Input Model.....	2 - 12
Plan Update Model.....	2 - 22
Hiring a Consultant	2 - 31

Chapter 3: Best Practices

Apprenticeships.....	3 - 3
Business Services	3 - 6
Career Pathways.....	3 - 8
Entrepreneurship.....	3 - 10
Leveraged Resources.....	3 - 12
Sector Strategies.....	3 - 14
Youth Services	3 - 17

Chapter 4: Labor Market Intelligence

Using Labor Market Intelligence.....	4 - 2
Other Sources of Data	4 - 4
Sample Data Profile	4 - 6

Chapter 5: State Guidance

Chapter 6: Federal Guidance

Chapter 7: Elements of a Draft Plan

Framing the Strategic Plan Draft.....	7 - 2
Determining Focus Areas.....	7 - 3
Setting Goals.....	7 - 4

Identifying Strategies 7 - 5

Effective Action Steps 7 - 6

Chapter 8: Successful Implementation

Implementation Structure 8 - 2

Reporting Progress 8 - 5

Purpose..... 8 - 5

Board Meeting Agenda Framework..... 8 - 7

Appendix A: Templates



How to Use this Toolkit

This toolkit serves as a guide for the creation of strategic plans in each of Oregon's nine local workforce areas. While each local area in the state is different and has unique needs of its workforce board, this toolkit can provide a common set of processes that can get you started on the path to a strategic plan that best fits your community. Its intent is to provide a tool that can be adapted to your needs and used to guide your process in a manner that offers the best chances for success. It is not intended to dictate a specific process which must be followed word for word.

Just as each local area has different workforce development needs, the unique characteristics of each local board will require different uses of this toolkit. Not every chapter may be applicable to every Board. You may, and should, pick and choose the chapters that will be most beneficial to your planning process. If your Board is new, or is starting a new strategic plan from scratch, you may want to start from the beginning. If your Board already has a strategic plan and wants to update it, you may find the information in the Plan Update section useful. If your Board's plan is in good shape and you just need help with carrying it out, you may just be interested in the sections on action planning and successful implementation.

The planning processes themselves are designed to offer flexibility and adaptation. Local boards are encouraged to take what they need and leave the rest. Some may even develop a hybrid planning process which incorporates some elements from multiple models.

While many of the pieces of the toolkit describe processes that can be applied even as the environment changes, the toolkit should be updated regularly to make sure it is relevant. This is especially true for best practices. This toolkit can act as a repository of ideas for local boards and can be added to any time a new successful program or best practice is identified.

The toolkit should also be updated regularly as state or federal guidance is issued. This can mean updates to federal law and regulations, or guidance from state officials or any established priorities from the Governor and/or Oregon Workforce Investment Board.



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 1: Getting Started



Changing Our Mindset

The world has changed... and we must change our approach

Governor Kitzhaber has expressed a very clear vision for how the public workforce system should serve both employers and workers in Oregon. This **vision** for Oregon's workforce system should inspire strategic thinking, planning and acting:

Oregonians have the skills they need to fill current and emerging high-wage, high-demand jobs.

Employers have the skilled workforce they need to remain competitive and contribute to local prosperity.

The workforce system is aligned, provides integrated services, and makes efficient and effective use of resources to achieve better outcomes for businesses and job seekers.

While each local area has a responsibility to help achieve the overall state vision, it is important to realize that how each area reaches this status will depend on the development of strategies customized to take advantage of local assets and meet the specific needs of people and businesses served by the local board. It is also important to have a basic understanding of how we got to where we are today in workforce. Knowing where we have been and where we want to go provides us with a context for framing a successful, action-oriented strategic plan.

The Traditional Approach to Workforce Development

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 established local and state workforce investment boards and created a set of funding streams designed to assist local and state leaders with preparing individuals to develop the skills required to gain and retain employment. Although minor changes were made through administrative regulations, this act guided the way most states and local areas approached workforce development for nearly two decades with limited success.

While the intent of the act to create a public workforce "system" was admirable, the very nature of the approach created challenges to the development of a real system and eligibility requirements for the funding made available limited the populations who could be served. In effect, the act carved out a portion of the workforce system and created the impression that talent development was a social service, not a solution to the evolving needs of business and industry.

Requirements by the federal government for local boards to submit plans for their investments amounted to little more than bureaucratic compliance documents. Performance measures, which had little meaning in the private sector, were developed by the federal government and negotiated with states who in turn negotiated them with local areas. These measures often were the driving force behind policy development and the work of many boards. Many local workforce boards became managers of metrics rather than the go-to resource for solutions to the talent needs of local employers. Throughout the country, the public workforce system responded more to government regulations than the demands of business and industry.

Finally, a change in the approach. *Well, sort of...*

In 2014, Congress finally replaced the 1998 legislation with the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. This attempt to address some of the problems with its predecessor will begin to go into effect in 2015 and full compliance is required by July 1, 2016.

In the new law, some funding streams have been combined, some eligibility requirements for youth participants have been eliminated, there is more focus on strategic planning and integrated service delivery, and the leveraging of additional resources is encouraged. These are just a few of the most significant changes the act institutes.

Time will tell if these changes result in the type of system that will more effectively address the needs of businesses to find the talent they need to compete and for workers to develop the skills they need to win the family sustaining jobs they need to thrive.

Boards who simply comply with the new law may not be positioned to fully realize their potential. Those who view the law as a launch pad for looking beyond the limitations of the public workforce system to develop a more comprehensive approach to talent development may be best positioned to help drive the economic prosperity of their communities.

Changing the Culture of Workforce

Local workforce investment boards have an opportunity with the new legislation to change the identity of the workforce system from what many employers see as a social service to a highly valued talent resource that can help them solve their needs for skilled workers.

This change can only happen if the culture of the system changes from within. Marketing a new brand or telling businesses things have changed is not enough. Strategies, policies and investments made by the local boards must drive change within the system. Partner organizations must see themselves as part of a team with common goals and clear roles to play in achieving them.

A customer centric system is key to creating this environment. And, our definition of customer must include the employers who have jobs to fill. Without them, we are only pushing people through a system with no real hope of a bright and sustainable future.

Understanding the needs of business and industry is critical, but so is understanding how they want to work with the system. In most cases that does not include getting in the weeds with workforce staff from multiple agencies and learning all of their eligibility requirements. They want a problem solver who can help them find and develop talent.

They want the sausage, not to know how it's made.

Thinking outside the Silo

The makeup of a workforce board can have a dramatic impact on its effectiveness. With innovative thinkers, local opinion leaders, and leaders of business and industry playing an active role in developing strategies, a workforce board can become a powerful economic driver for a community. While boards will need to address compliance with federal regulations for certain funding streams, they **must not** be limited to developing solutions based solely on these resources, their availability, or the performance measures that come along with them. Some of the most successful strategic workforce plans only reference these federal programs as a part of the overall approach to meeting the talent and skill needs for their areas.

Many areas across the country offer examples of innovative practices that extend services beyond those typically associated with federal funding and programs.

Rhode Island

A vast majority of companies in Rhode Island have 20 or fewer employees and no human resources department. Here, the Governor's Workforce Board has begun to explore the concept of becoming the HR Department for these businesses.

Gulf Coast, Texas

Federal workforce funding streams comprise a minority of the funds in the Gulf Coast Workforce Board's budget. Instead, the Board leverages other federal, state, foundation, and private funding to achieve results beyond what traditional funding streams could produce.

Kentucky

Kentucky is in the fifth year of implementing a major culture change within the public workforce system, moving from a program administration focus toward problem solving and has garnered the full cooperation and collaboration of partners such as economic development and the community college system.

What all of these examples and others found in the Best Practices section of this toolkit have in common is that each put the federal law and guidance aside and focused on strategies to impact their communities. They viewed the federal programs as one set of tools in their toolbox, not as the drivers of their strategies. Amazingly enough, compliance and achievement of performance measures seemed to more or less take care of themselves when the focus was on strategic solutions to community needs, rather than managing programs.

With all of the creative talent, innovative leaders, and independent thinkers in Oregon, becoming a state of national best practice examples for driving to economic prosperity should be a foregone conclusion. Developing a robust strategic plan is the first step in achieving these ambitious results.

Defining a Vision and Mission

Vision and Mission statements are important governing principles for local workforce boards and provide guidance for every strategic planning process. Creating or confirming a vision and mission is a great way to kick off a strategic planning process by engaging all board members to look at the big picture, understand the maximum sphere of influence, and promote aspirational thinking. This type of thinking sets the stage for welcoming lofty and out-of-the-box ideas that can ignite innovative and transformative initiatives.

A vision statement describes how the world would be improved, changed, or different if an organization is successful in achieving its purpose. The vision takes a long-term angle, which can have different meanings depending on the needs of the organization. Some vision statements can look at “long-term” as three to five years, while others look at far out as 10 to 20 years.

To frame your vision statement, pose the following questions to board members:

- What are the top three values of the Board?
- What does success mean to us?
- What does our community look like if we are successful long-term?

Responses can be combined to create a vision statement that paints a picture of the ideal results, future, and success based on the Board’s work. The resulting vision statement should be brief, aspirational, and memorable. A great vision statement will be one your board members and partners can recite from memory, like what is commonly called an “elevator pitch.”

Here is an example of a great vision statement from Amazon.com:

"Our vision is to be earth's most customer centric company; to build a place where people can come to find and discover anything they might want to buy online."

The vision is short, to the point, memorable, and aspirational - if Amazon.com is successful in achieving its goals, it *will be* the most customer centric company on earth.

A **vision statement** describes how the world would be improved, changed or different if our organization was successful in achieving its purpose.

A **mission statement** succinctly describes an organization's purpose, business, and values.

Purpose – Why does the organization exist?

Business – What are the primary means used to accomplish the organization's purpose?

Values – What are the basic principles that provide guidance and inspiration to the organization?

A mission statement succinctly describes an organization's purpose, business, and values. This differs from a vision statement in that it is focused on the "now". It answers the questions of "Why?" and "How?" the organization addresses local needs and works toward achieving its vision for the future.

To frame your mission statement, pose the following questions to board members:

- What is the end result that you wish to accomplish as an organization?
- What are the most important services that the workforce system provides, could strengthen, and/or begin to offer?
- What do customers consider most important in the provision of services? What do they need from the workforce system?

The resulting mission statement should be one to two sentences long, describe why the organization exists.

Here is an example of a great mission statement from Trader Joe's:

"The mission of Trader Joe's is to give our customers the best food and beverage values that they can find anywhere and to provide them with the information required to make informed buying decisions. We provide these with a dedication to the highest quality of customer satisfaction delivered with a sense of warmth, friendliness, fun, individual pride, and company spirit."

Trader Joe's clearly states its purpose in the first sentence – "...to give our customers the best food and beverage values that they can find anywhere and to provide them with the information required to make informed buying decisions." The statement then describes how this purpose will be accomplished by stating the company's values and commitment to service.

Planning Process

How we plan is as important as what we plan.

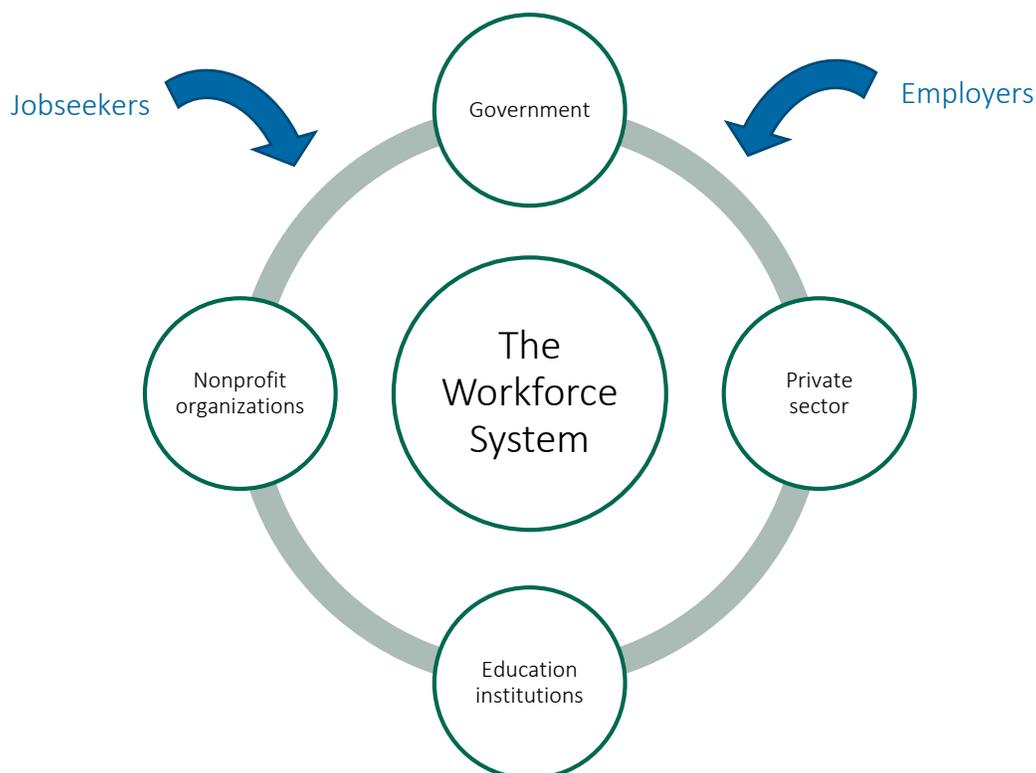
Creating a strategic plan is easy. Creating a *successful* strategic plan, especially one that depends on multiple partners with varying priorities, is not so easy.

In a private sector company, the CEO or a small group of executives can develop a plan and drive implementation through their position as leaders of the corporation.



“We are moving in this direction, you will implement these action steps or you won’t have a job here.”

In the workforce arena, things are not so simple. There many partners, including government agencies, private sector organizations, educational institutions, and nonprofits, not to mention a customer base which includes both workers and employers.



Each of these groups has its own set of goals, priorities, measures of success, and populations to serve. So how do we get them all to row the boat in the same direction?

There is no single answer to that question, but there is a wrong way and right way.

The WRONG Way

A strategic plan developed by an individual or small group with ambitions that the myriad of partners will blindly follow and implement the plan is a method that is destined to fail, even before the first word of the plan is written. The plan can be the most brilliant document ever published, but without the buy-in from those expected to implement the strategies, it is likely to languish on a shelf and collect dust, or worse, create an environment of distrust, obstructionism, and suspicion. With limited resources to implement structural and cultural change in the workforce system, we cannot afford such a risk.

The RIGHT Way

A strategic plan developed through an open and inclusive process stands a significantly better chance of successful implementation and achieving the goals and objectives expressed in the document. Levels of inclusion and participation can vary based a number of factors, including:

- Review and inclusion of information from existing plans developed by the Board or allied organizations;
- Willingness of stakeholders to have representation on a planning committee;
- Presence of existing collaborations among partners; and
- Other opportunities to streamline the input process without alienating stakeholders.

Selecting the process model that best fits the needs of the local area is the first step to success. Understanding the difference between a vision statement, goals, objectives, strategies, and initiatives, action steps, or tactics is critical. These components of an effective plan are explained in detail in this toolkit.

Even a great plan will only be effective if it is implemented and the momentum created by implementation can only be sustained if responsibility and accountability is spread among stakeholder groups, action steps are monitored, and progress is communicated to stakeholders. Techniques for successful implementation are provided in this toolkit.

Critical Success Factors for Planning

No matter which model is selected, there are several aspects of the planning process which are critical to success.

Management

Managing the planning process is not a small task. The most effective manager will be an effective communicator, critical thinker, organized time manager, and skilled facilitator.

A manager must have the strength to challenge stakeholders and the status quo. This role can be filled by a committed volunteer, a staffer with experience in planning, or an outside consultant.

Oversight

The Board needs to take an active role in overseeing the planning process and holding the plan manager accountable for progress. The Board may choose to establish an oversight committee

that could even include highly motivated non-board members with an interest in the plan. This committee can also serve as an opportunity to identify future candidates for appointment to the Board as seats become available.

Innovation

The most successful plans are those which explore innovative approaches to reaching goals.

This usually requires thinking beyond the traditional federally funded programs and taking a fresh look at the needs of local businesses and individuals. Innovative strategies can require funding from outside federal funding streams. Opportunities to add resources from other sources can energize the Board, inspire Champions, and send a message that the Board is interested in creating a truly demand-driven system.

Writing

A successful plan is cohesive and speaks with one voice. The writer must be carefully selected to translate all input into a plan. A well-written plan will be compelling and inspire action. It must be

understandable by all audiences, avoiding jargon and agency-speak. This role may be filled by a board-selected volunteer member, a staffer, or an outside consultant, and if appropriate, could be the same person filling the plan management role.

Ownership

Although the Board has the responsibility for preparing and adopting the plan, the ownership of the plan should be spread among the stakeholder groups required to implement it. Early

and frequent engagement of these groups in the process is key to creating a sense of ownership.

Endorsement

Federal law has requirements for plan approval and those approvals are important to keep things legal, but will NOT guarantee success. Seeking endorsements from other

groups is not required, but will help bring partners to the table, build allies for implementation, and provide the Board with additional visibility in the community. Target groups for these endorsements should include chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, Society for Human Resource Management chapters, business associations, target sector-related organizations, community-based organizations, etc.

Champions

Identifying champions for each strategic initiative is critical to the success of follow up and implementation. More will be discussed later in this toolkit about using champions, but the

Board should expect that individuals with a passion for certain topics, programs, or approaches will emerge during the process and should be encouraged to take on significant roles, accept accountability, and be recognized publicly for their contributions. In some rare cases, overzealous champions can become a liability and leadership must be on watch and intervene early to harness the energy and get the champion back on track.

Setting Expectations

Although varying factors will impact the process, the Board should have some expectations entering into a planning exercise.

Set a timeline with benchmarks and milestones.

The length of time required to produce an effective strategic plan can vary wildly. Depending upon the availability of stakeholders, willingness to participate in planning sessions and the ambitions of the Board, it can take anywhere from three months to a year to produce a strategic plan. Most great plans are complete in the range of six to nine months. Any shorter and the process can feel rushed and important factors may be omitted. Any longer and the plan may be less relevant due to economic, social and political changes. The timeline should be ambitious but achievable and deliberate in order to build ownership and momentum.

Expect setbacks.

Inevitably, there will be setbacks. If the Board is dedicated to changing the culture of the system, resistance from some entrenched stakeholders, discovery of new information, and even the weather can create delays in the schedule. Understand that things will happen, and sometimes you must...

Allow for course changes.

New information, changing conditions on the ground, and other factors outside the control of the Board can dictate changes in strategies and tactics during development of the plan. It is important to remember that the plan is a guide, not a decree. Flexibility of the Board, steering or oversight committee and plan manager to adapt to changing conditions will lead to a smoother process and better blueprint in the end.

Agree to disagree.

Not everyone will love everything in the plan. It will be important to create an atmosphere of listening to all while maintaining an understanding that not all ideas can be incorporated in the final document. A willingness to capture disparate opinions and acknowledging them in the narrative or including them in an appendix can help smooth over and promote acceptance or endorsement of the overall approach even if there are minor concerns about some specific items.

Commitment is essential for success.

Without a commitment to follow up, monitor progress and hold stakeholders accountable, the plan is destined to languish while staff and standing committees focus on program management at the expense of strategic transformation. Several techniques for keeping implementation on track are discussed later in this toolkit.

Stakeholder Engagement

Getting others involved in the planning process

The measure of a great strategic workforce plan is not in how well a board allocates the resources it controls, rather how well it influences others to dedicate their resources to helping the community achieve its vision.

As discussed earlier, a critical success factor in strategic planning for a multi-partner system is creating a sense of **ownership** among a wide range of individuals and organizations. Because the talent development system is much broader than a few federal funding streams, the workforce board's status as a go-to resource for talent is often more dependent on its ability to influence the decisions of others than the investments made using its own resources. When we look closely at how and when people acquire skills, both technical and "soft" or "employability" skills, we understand that a comprehensive talent development system must address:

- public and private education at the earliest levels;
- secondary career and technical education;
- high school performance and graduation rates;
- postsecondary certification and credentialing programs;
- adult education and high school equivalency;
- traditional associate and baccalaureate degree programs;
- internships, apprenticeships and other experiential learning opportunities;
- on the job training;
- alignment with economic development goals; and,
- a host of other community-based initiatives designed to help people get and keep good jobs.

In a "system" designed to serve customers, which include business and industry as well as students, workers, and unemployed Oregonians, successful implementation depends on buy-in from a variety of organizations directing numerous funding streams. The workforce board has authority over some of these, but not all. However, a great workforce board has the potential to influence the others by creating an environment of cooperation and collaboration. If our process only addresses the funding streams we control, we will not provide our customers with the comprehensive approach they want and need to succeed.

Successful implementation

depends on buy-in from a variety of organizations directing numerous funding streams purpose.

Creating buy-in

The workforce board is designed to represent various stakeholder groups, but cannot efficiently operate with everyone impacting the workforce system holding a seat on the Board. Therefore, it is necessary to adopt an inclusive approach to encourage others to “buy-in” to the strategies that the Board develops and implements. The most effective way to expand the influence of the Board is through an intensive input process. By allowing others to provide the Board with insight and recommendations, the Board can enrich its understanding and expand its influence beyond what it controls directly.

Not every idea or concept will or should make it into the final document, but providing others with an opportunity to be heard can go a long way when asking them to embrace the adopted strategies, commit their resources, and provide enthusiastic support for implementing action items.

Engagement tactics

There are a wide range of techniques for gathering input and building ownership of the strategic plan among stakeholders. Boards should consider using some or all of these engagement tactics:

Stakeholder Interview One-on-one interviews with key decision makers is an effective way to explore topics in depth and identify opportunities for collaboration in a non-threatening environment where leaders of organizations are not put on the spot in front of their peers or others. Identification of barriers to success and opportunities to align, and influence decisions are some of the outcomes to be expected from successful interviews.

Focus Group A group discussion of stakeholder representatives about a single or very small number of topics can create a dynamic exploration of common goals, promotion of collaboration and build confidence in the Board’s process of inclusion. The ideal group size is between eight and 12 individuals led by a facilitator who does not have a real or perceived agenda beyond leading the group in a productive discussion. Focus groups can reveal challenges and opportunities for collaboration. Creating group agreement is a desired outcome, but not the ultimate measure of success. In some cases, simply opening lines of communication which never existed can be a sign of success.

Stakeholder/Public Forum A large gathering of stakeholder representatives can produce input from interested parties at all levels in the system, depending upon the invitation list. In addition to the opportunity to communicate ideas and concepts to those in attendance through presentations, speeches, and panel discussions, a forum designed to gather input should also include one or more interactive exercises. Usually attendees are divided into smaller groups of 6-12 participants each. These smaller groups can then be tasked to respond to a strategic question, brainstorm innovative ideas to solve a challenge, or develop a list of concerns, resources, barriers to success, etc. Groups are then usually asked to report out to the larger group and a facilitated discussion may or may not follow.

Survey A survey, usually web-based these days, is a good way to collect both objective and subjective data if there are a limited number of questions and simple responses are desired. Response rates, distribution lists and a lack of opportunity to ask clarifying follow up questions are some of the limitations of this type of input, but it does allow for a larger number of individuals to participate in the planning process.

Follow up

When individuals volunteer their time, energy and ideas to help create a strategic plan, most will want to know how their input is used and have an opportunity to see the results of the process. Following up with these volunteers demonstrates the value the Board places on their participation, can lead to further participation in the future, and can impact the Board's ability to implement, influence, and expand its reach.

In order to achieve effective follow up, names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses should be collected at each input activity. A master list of plan contributors should be created, maintained and used to push out communications about the plan, including:

- regular updates on plan progress;
- invitations to public events, plan rollout, etc.;
- additional opportunities to participate in implementation; and
- progress updates about implementation of strategic initiatives.

Champions

Champions are individuals who take on the role of spokesperson for a specific strategy or initiative. This person is often the driving force and uses his or her influence with other people, groups, or organizations to build support, inspire action, and hold others accountable for implementation. There is no single job description for a champion. As a volunteer, each should be encouraged to define their role as their time and other commitments allow. It is, however, fair to ask the champion to establish what is expected of staff and in turn, what staff may expect of them.

Identifying Champions

During the planning process, participants in input activities will have the opportunity to express their passion, knowledge, experience and interest in certain topic areas. Paying close attention to who proposes what ideas can be an effective way to identify champions for specific strategic action items. The Board may take advantage of this interest by engaging these champions in steering committees or other structures working to implement the plan, even if the individual is not a member of the Board.

Who should be engaged?

The simplest answer is: *anyone who has an interest in the workforce system.*

Because of the nature of the system, there are some stakeholder groups which are especially important during the planning process. Those groups have knowledge, experience, and a value proposition for a better way of developing talent:

- Business and industry leaders (especially from the area's target sectors)
- Mandated agency partners
- Frontline staff
- Economic Development organizations
- Chambers of Commerce
- Organized labor
- Education and training providers
- Community-based organizations
- Parents, students
- Unemployed Oregonians
- Society for Human Resource Management
- Elected officials

If the area has developed a workforce asset map, this tool can be used to identify organizations and agencies which should be encouraged to participate in the planning process.



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 2: Choosing a Planning Process



Process Models

Selecting the right process to meet your needs

This chapter explores three different planning process models. There are an infinite number of ways to implement your planning process, either by selecting one model to follow or a more likely scenario, modifying one of these and incorporating elements from different models. These models are basic in that they are based largely on the amount of input sought from outside the Board in the development of strategies and action steps. Each model also has its own inherent level of influence on buy-in and ownership beyond the Board members themselves.

The critical success factor at this stage is designing a process that meets the needs of the Board and the community.

In some cases, the staff or members of the Board may have the required skills, experience and time needed to facilitate the planning process. In other cases time and planning experience may be limited or an outside perspective may be desired. In these instances, the Board may wish to contract with a professional planner to facilitate the process and develop the plan document. A section at the end of this chapter of the toolkit describes how to effectively hire and work with a consultant to assist the Board with this process.

The three models presented in this chapter are the Maximum Input Model, Limited Input Model, and Plan Update Model.

Maximum Input Model

As its name suggests, this model maximizes the input that is collected from community stakeholders. It helps to create ownership and buy-in among others outside the Board and can potentially have a more comprehensive and wider impact.

Limited Input Model

The limited input model also aims to gain insights from those outside the Board, but will not have as comprehensive of an input gathering process.

Plan Update Model

The final model can be utilized by boards who already have an existing and still relevant strategic plan. If the original plan has been successful, engaging in a plan update as opposed to creating a new plan can help to maintain momentum and buy-in.

Maximum Input Model

About This Model

This model is designed to maximize opportunities for stakeholder groups, community organizations, and other interested parties to participate in the planning process. This is the most robust of all of the models in terms of opportunities to create ownership and buy-in beyond the Board itself, identify champions, and develop the Board's credibility, influence, and presence in the communities it serves. This model also has the potential to result in a plan that is more comprehensive in nature, solutions-oriented, and not as narrowly focused on federally funded programs and their requirements.

This model is divided into three phases and 12 tasks. A workflow model follows the task descriptions and a customizable work plan template is provided in Excel format in the Templates chapter of this toolkit.

Advantages and Disadvantages of this Model



- Maximum participation by as many stakeholders as possible
- Greater buy-in and ownership beyond the Board
- Identification of a broader range of issues, challenges, and opportunities to have an impact
- Larger pool of ideas and innovations
- Greater opportunity create a Board identity of inclusiveness and a go-to resource for talent development
- More comprehensive view of workforce and talent development



- Longer timeline required to assure maximum participation
- Can be more expensive in staff time and/or consulting fees
- Input can be overwhelming if expectations are not managed properly.

Pre-planning Preparation

Establish a Strategic Plan Steering Committee. This committee should represent the various constituent groups which make up the Board (business, government, organized labor, etc.) and at least one member of the Board’s Executive Committee. The size of the committee should be sufficient to represent a variety of views but not so large that it becomes cumbersome to hold meetings and make decisions. The Board will have approval of the plan, so it is not necessary to have the entire Board serve as the steering committee, however that is one option. It is not necessary that all members of the steering committee be members of the Board, as expertise may exist outside the Board which could benefit the development of the plan.

The plan manager should prepare a work plan for the completion of the strategic planning process. The work plan will list all tasks to be completed (such as those listed below), with corresponding timelines, deadlines, and dates for meetings. Each task will also list the person or people who are responsible for completion. A sample of this is below. A template for a full work plan is available in the Templates chapter of this toolkit.

Strategic Planning Work Plan											
			Mar					Apr			
Task	Responsible	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	
0 Pre-planning preparation											
0.1	Establish Steering Committee										
0.2	Select plan manager										
0.3	Select plan author										
0.4	Finalize work plan										
1 Kick-off Meeting											
1.1	Schedule meeting										
1.2	Create agenda										
1.3	Create materials										
1.4	Hold meeting										
1.5	Follow up										

As discussed in the Getting Started chapter, it is also important to select an author for the plan. While the author does not need to be the same person as the plan manager/facilitator, he or she should be involved from the beginning of the planning process to fully understand the planning process and the context for the plan.

Phase I: Planning Kick-off and Information Gathering

Task 1. Kick-off meeting

Hold a meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee to begin the planning process. All members of the committee should be encouraged to attend. The sample agenda describes the items which should be covered during this meeting.

Sample Kick-off Meeting Agenda

A. Introductions

Ask members to identify themselves by name, affiliation, and how each would define success for this effort.

B. Purpose of the Plan

Describe the reason the steering committee has been established, including the legal/regulatory requirements for the plan, but also the benefits the Board hopes to achieve for the area it serves.

C. Planning Process

Provide a handout of the work plan timeline and process narrative.

D. Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Define as a group what role members will play in the process, their responsibilities, and establish accountability expectations as a group. This is also the appropriate time to discuss the use of any subcommittees and assignment of members to those committees. These can be organized in any way the Steering Committee desires. Suggestions for committees may include business customer issues, individual customer issues, partner issues, career center operations, etc.

E. Communications

Establish communication protocols, including meeting notices and progress reports. Confirm if email, phone, or another platform is the desired method of communicating and pass a list of members and their contact information to verify accuracy.

F. Meeting Dates

Set as many future meeting dates of the Steering Committee as possible for the duration of the planning process.

G. Next Steps

Walk through the upcoming activities which have been set or are being considered.

Task 2. Document review

Collect relevant documents, plans, and other materials related to workforce, economic development, education, etc. Sources may include economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community colleges, local governments, regional planning organizations, or community-based organizations and non-profits such as Goodwill, Dress for Success, etc.

Prepare a brief summary of the goals or action items from each of the relevant sources, identify areas of common interest and document contacts for each source.

	Economic Development Org.	Community College	Chamber of Commerce	Community Org. #1
Strengthen Local Economy	*	*		
Job Growth	*			
Entrepreneurship	*			
Talent Attraction	*			
Leadership Development	*		*	
Partner Alignment	*			*
Business Advocacy			*	
Quality of Place			*	
Employability Skills		*		
Demand-driven Training		*		*

Task 3. Stakeholder engagement

Based on the stakeholder engagement tactics discussed in the Getting Started chapter and those that were selected for inclusion in the planning process, focus groups, stakeholder or public forums, and interviews should be scheduled with enough advance notice to allow for participation by as many individuals as possible. In order to maximize participation in this model, it may be necessary to hold forums and focus groups in multiple locations if travel time for participants is significant.

Surveys should be designed and a distribution plan created to get the surveys in the hands of the target participants. This may involve seeking participation in the distribution of surveys by other organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, etc. to their distribution lists. Survey questions should be tailored to specific audiences such as business owners, economic developers, students, jobseekers, etc. It is important to include an opportunity for survey participants to add information they believe to be important but not covered by the questions. This can be accomplished by asking something like, “What did we miss?” or “Anything else you would like us to know?”

No matter what methods of input are selected for inclusion in the process, it is important to provide those invited to participate with:

- an estimate of the time commitment involved (including time to complete a survey);
- a brief explanation of how the results will be used;
- what to expect during the interview, focus group, or forum;
- acknowledgement of the importance of their contribution;

- recognition that although everyone has a chance to be heard, it is not possible to include every idea in the final plan; and,
- a thank you in advance for participation.

Collection of contact information during each input opportunity is critical to effective follow up. Creation of a data base or distribution list specific to the plan should be considered to facilitate easy follow up communications. Participants should be given the opportunity to opt out of further communications.

If possible, during focus groups, forums, and interviews, a commitment to help with implementation should be sought or interest in continuing to participate measured. Those exhibiting a passion for certain topics should be noted as possible champions for the implementation phase.

A summary report should be prepared to capture the input from each interview, focus group, and forum. Web-based survey tools usually provide summary reports of the results.

Phase II: Plan Development

Task 4. Steering Committee Meeting #2 – Vision Statement and Goals

In preparation for the second meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, prepare a list of big topics or issues based on the findings of the document review and stakeholder engagement summaries. The agenda for this meeting should include:

Sample Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

A. Recap of progress

Discuss progress in relation to the established work plan.

B. Summary of findings

Present the results of all activities in the information gathering phase.

C. Vision statement development brainstorming

Facilitate a participatory process to develop a draft vision statement for the plan, focused on key concepts, not wordsmithing.

D. Brainstorming of focus areas

Facilitate a participatory discussion to select the top four to seven issues or focus areas to serve as the inspiration for the plan's goals.

E. Discussion of goals

Brainstorm goals related to each identified issue or focus area.

F. Assign Subcommittees

Assign board members and other interested individuals to subcommittees to take on the development of each goal, its related strategies, and action steps.

G. Next Steps

Task 5. Best Practice Research

Based on the top issues identified by the Steering Committee, conduct a search for best and promising practices employed by other organizations throughout the country to meet the same or similar challenges. This toolkit provides a starting point for this research in the Best Practices chapter. Here is an example of a best practice summary with each of the key elements to be collected identified:

Oh-Penn Interstate Region

Serves Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties in Ohio, and Lawrence and Mercer Counties in Pennsylvania.

The Oh-Penn Interstate Region is an initiative designed to help the combined localities be more strategic about the collective economic and workforce priorities for the area. The region covers three Workforce Investment Areas, an entire MSA and 764,722 people. The goal of the Oh-Penn initiative is to enhance economic and workforce development of the five counties which share a common labor force, worker dislocations, current and emerging industries and a collective vision.

The collaboration is informally governed by a Competitiveness Council, which is comprised of five members of each WIB representing business, economic development, education, labor, and workforce development. One LWIB serves as the fiscal agent, allowing for the informal nature of its organizational structure.

Source: <http://www.ohpenn.com/>

Include the organization name and program, if applicable.

Write a short description of the program, highlighting key transferrable elements of success.

Point out where the reader can go to find more information.

Whenever possible, two to four examples for each issue or topic should be identified, researched, and summarized. Summary reports of these practices should be compiled and distributed to the assigned subcommittees.

Task 6. Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees will be made up of board members and other interested partners and individuals. These groups will be doing the bulk of the heavy lifting in the plan development phase. In order to make their time as productive as possible, prepare an agenda and list of decisions intended to be made at each meeting.

Subcommittee meetings should focus on reviewing the data related to their focus area, developing strategies to achieve the goals assigned to them, and developing action steps to implement the strategies. Subcommittee

meetings may be divided up to focus on specific tasks. For example, the first meeting of each might focus on reviewing data, document review summaries, and best practices. The second meeting might focus on developing strategies required to achieve assigned goals. A third meeting might be centered on implementation steps or initiatives.

Staff may prepare recommendations for strategies and action steps, but the subcommittee itself should make final decisions about what is submitted for the steering committee to review.

Task 7. Steering Committee Meeting #3 – Strategy and Implementation Steps

In preparation for the third meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, each subcommittee should prepare a list of recommended strategies and an outline of the implementation action steps associated with each strategy. The agenda of the Steering Committee meeting should include a review of each subcommittee's recommendation as well as a discussion to identify areas of conflict or common ground. The result of this meeting should be an approved list of strategies and actions steps to be included in the plan document. A summary report from the meeting should highlight all approved strategies and action steps with special attention to those which are modified, combined, deleted, added, or reassigned.

Task 8. Subcommittee Follow Up

The summary of the results of Steering Committee Meeting #3 should be communicated with members of the subcommittees. If necessary, a follow up meeting of each group should be scheduled to address any outstanding issues or questions from the Steering Committee.

A finalized version of the recommendations should be developed by each subcommittee.

Phase III: Plan Writing & Adoption

Task 9. Plan Writing

All materials prepared as a result of each of the preceding tasks should be provided to the plan author in preparation for the writing of the first draft of the strategic plan. Recommended components of the plan include:

- **Title Page**
- **Acknowledgements** – recognition of those volunteers and staff who contributed to the plan.
- **Table of Contents**
- **Introduction** – a very brief description of the purpose of the plan and guiding principles the Board used in developing the document.
- **Executive Summary** – a brief description of the contents of the plan, highlighting the goals, innovative strategies, etc.
- **Planning Context** – a description of the current economic, social, and political environment which influenced the plan's recommendations, priorities, etc.
- **Vision/Mission Statements & Goals**

- **Goals and Strategies** – a list of each strategy beneath the goal it supports along with any necessary explanation or context. If strategies serve multiple goals, they should be repeated and noted accordingly.
- **Implementation** – describe how implementation will be approached by the Board.
 - Action items should be organized by Goal and Strategy – describe each action item (a recommended format is included in this toolkit). These may be structured such that each acts as a stand-alone document which can be pulled from the plan and used as a blueprint by the responsible parties as a guide to implement a specific initiative.
- **Monitoring Progress** – a description of the tools and methods the Board intends to use to monitor and report progress of implementation.
- **Plan Update** – a description of how and when the plan will be updated.

Task 10. Public Comments

The draft plan should be posted and a notice provided in accordance with the state and local standards to allow for public review and comment on the contents of the plan. This can usually be accomplished by posting a PDF file on the Board’s website with an email address supplied for people to submit feedback. Special notices of the plan posting should be sent to those who participated in the process.

A compilation of feedback should be created with comments about content separated from those regarding grammar, punctuation, and formatting. The comments about content should be provided to the Board along with a copy of the draft plan document.

Task 11. Plan Review and Revisions

A copy of the draft plan and public comments should be provided to the Board in advance of a regular meeting. The meeting agenda should allow ample time for the plan to be presented and discussed. All board members should be encouraged to actively participate in discussion of the plan. A list of edits should be prepared so that a final draft can be submitted for adoption at the next meeting.

Presentation of the plan is most effective when led by the chair of the Steering Committee with defined roles for subcommittee chairs or members of the steering committee. This demonstrates ownership of the plan and encourages participation.

Task 12. Plan Adoption

Once all additional edits have been made to the draft document, a final version should be formatted and submitted to board members in advance of the next meeting. The meeting agenda should allow for time to discuss the plan and take action.

Once adopted, the plan should be submitted for approval in accordance with state and federal guidance and posted on the Board’s website. A special email should be sent to all participants in the process thanking them for their contribution, alerting them to the approval, and inviting their participation in implementing the plan.

Timeline

Overall, it is suggested that this model be carried out over the course of nine months to one year.

Timeline: 3-4 months

Phase I: Kick-off and Information Gathering

Kick-off Meeting

Document Review

Stakeholder Engagement



Timeline: 4 months

Phase II: Plan Development

Vision Statement
and Goals

Best Practices
Research

Subcommittee
Meetings

Strategy and
Implementation
Steps

Subcommittee
Follow-up



Timeline: 2-3 months

Phase III: Plan Writing and Adoption

Plan Writing

Public Comment

Plan Review and
Revisions

Plan Adoption

Limited Input Model

About This Model

This model is designed to provide opportunities for stakeholder groups, community organizations, and other interested parties to participate in the planning process on a more limited basis. This model provides opportunities to create ownership and buy-in, identify champions, and develop the Board's credibility and also has the potential to result in a plan that is comprehensive in nature, solutions-oriented, and not as narrowly focused on federally funded programs and their requirements. This model is preferable to the Max Input Model when one or more of the following conditions are present:

- limited time to complete the planning process
- a significant amount of input has already been gathered through other channels (partners' strategic plans, etc.)
- limited budget to hire a qualified consultant
- limited staff and/or volunteer capacity

This model is divided into three phases and 12 tasks. A workflow model follows the task descriptions and a customizable work plan template is provided in Excel format in the Templates Chapter of this toolkit.

Advantages and Disadvantages of this Model



- Participation by key stakeholder groups and partners
- Creates buy-in and ownership beyond the Board
- Identification of a limited range of issues, challenges, and opportunities to have an impact
- Shorter timeframe to complete planning process
- Keeps process contained and more easily managed by smaller team



- Not as inclusive as the Maximum Input Model for customers and community-based organizations
- Smaller pool of ideas and innovations
- Not as visible in the community
- Some may feel excluded from the process

Pre-planning Preparation

Establish a Strategic Plan Steering Committee. This committee should represent the various constituent groups which make up the Board (business, government, organized labor, etc.) and at least one member of the Board’s Executive Committee. The size of the committee should be sufficient to represent a variety of views but not so large that it becomes cumbersome to hold meetings and make decisions. The Board will have approval of the plan, so it is not necessary to have the entire Board serve as the steering committee, however that is one option. It is not necessary that all members of the steering committee be members of the Board, as expertise may exist outside the Board which could benefit the development of the plan.

The plan manager should prepare a work plan for the completion of the strategic planning process. The work plan will list all tasks to be completed (such as those listed below), with corresponding timelines, deadlines, and dates for meetings. Each task will also list the person or people who are responsible for completion. A sample of this is below. A template for a full work plan is available in the Templates chapter of this toolkit.

Strategic Planning Work Plan											
			Mar					Apr			
Task	Responsible	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	
0 Pre-planning preparation											
0.1	Establish Steering Committee										
0.2	Select plan manager										
0.3	Select plan author										
0.4	Finalize work plan										
1 Kick-off Meeting											
1.1	Schedule meeting										
1.2	Create agenda										
1.3	Create materials										
1.4	Hold meeting										
1.5	Follow up										

As discussed in the Getting Started chapter, it is important to select an author for the plan. While the author does not need to be the same person as the plan manager/facilitator, he or she should be involved from the beginning of the planning process to fully understand the planning process and the context for the plan.

Phase I: Kick-off and Information Gathering

Task 1. Kick-off meeting

Hold a meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee to begin the planning process. All members of the committee should be encouraged to attend. The sample agenda below describes the items which should be covered during this meeting.

Sample Kick-off Meeting Agenda

A. Introductions

Ask members to identify themselves by name, affiliation, and how each would define success for this effort.

B. Purpose of the Plan

Describe the reason the steering committee has been established, including the legal/regulatory requirements for the plan, but also the benefits the Board hopes to achieve for the area it serves.

C. Planning Process

Provide a handout of the work plan timeline and process narrative.

D. Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Define as a group what role members will play in the process, their responsibilities, and establish accountability expectations as a group. This is also the appropriate time to discuss the use of any subcommittees and assignment of members to those committees. These can be organized in any way the Steering Committee desires. Suggestions for committees may include business customer issues, individual customer issues, partner issues, career center operations, etc.

E. Communications

Establish communication protocols, including meeting notices and progress reports. Confirm if email, phone, or another platform is the desired method of communicating and pass a list of members and their contact information to verify accuracy.

F. Meeting Dates

Set as many future meeting dates of the Steering Committee as possible for the duration of the planning process.

G. Next Steps

Walk through the upcoming activities which have been set or are being considered.

Task 2. Document review

Collect relevant documents, plans, and other relevant materials related to workforce, economic development, education, etc. These may include economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community colleges, local governments, regional planning organizations, or community-based organizations and non-profits such as Goodwill, Dress for Success, etc.

Prepare a brief summary of the goals or action items from each of the relevant sources, identify areas of common interest and document contacts for each source.

	Economic Development Org.	Community College	Chamber of Commerce	Community Org. #1
Strengthen Local Economy	*	*		
Job Growth	*			
Entrepreneurship	*			
Talent Attraction	*			
Leadership Development	*		*	
Partner Alignment	*			*
Business Advocacy			*	
Quality of Place			*	
Employability Skills		*		
Demand-driven Training		*		*

Task 3. Stakeholder engagement

Based on the stakeholder engagement tactics discussed in the Getting Started chapter, careful consideration should be given to which should be included in the planning process. In a limited engagement model, it will be important to choose which engagement activities are most suited for the allowed timeline and budget to maximize quality feedback. With each tactic, there are different factors to consider when determining best fit.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups take a significant amount of time to organize, schedule, and carry out. Under this model, a limited number of focus groups (one to three) should be considered and the

invitees should be selected based on their ability to make a significant contribution to strategic thinking on specific topics. For example, a focus group about business services should include business representatives (both those who do and those do not use the public system), business service representatives, and some others who may have a perspective not usually considered, such as a chamber of commerce or economic development agency. Focus groups do provide an opportunity for multiple stakeholder groups to have some representation in the planning process, but some groups or agencies may feel excluded if they are not invited to participate. These individuals or groups should be included in survey activities.

Surveys

Surveys are a great tool for the limited input model as the majority of time required to implement this tactic is frontloaded in the development of the survey instrument. A number of online survey

tools can be used to deliver the instrument to individuals and will calculate results for objective answers and group subjective responses. A distribution plan should be created to get the surveys in the hands of the target participants. This may involve seeking participation in the distribution of surveys by other partner agencies and organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, etc. to their email distribution

lists. Survey questions should be tailored to specific audiences such as business owners, economic developers, students, jobseekers, etc. Depending on the capacity of those summarizing the results, an opportunity for survey participants to add information they believe to be important but not covered by the questions could be included. This can be accomplished by asking something like, “What did we miss?” or “Anything else you would like us to know?”

No matter what methods of input are selected for inclusion in the process, it is important to provide those invited to participate with:

- an estimate of the time commitment involved (including time to complete a survey);
- a brief explanation of how the results will be used;
- what to expect during a focus group meeting;
- acknowledgement of the importance of their contribution;
- recognition that although everyone has a chance to be heard, it is not possible to include every idea in the final plan; and,
- a thank you in advance for participation.

Collection of contact information during each input opportunity is critical to effective follow up. Creation of a data base or distribution list specific to the plan should be considered to facilitate easy follow up communications. Participants should be given the opportunity to opt out of further communications.

If possible, during focus groups, obtaining a commitment to help with implementation should be sought or interest in continuing to participate measured. Those exhibiting a passion for certain topics should be noted as possible champions for the implementation phase.

A summary report should be prepared to capture the input from each focus group. Web-based survey tools usually provide summary reports of the results.

Phase II – Plan Development

Task 4. Steering Committee Meeting #2 – Vision Statement and Goals

In preparation for the second meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, prepare a list of big topics or issues based on the findings of the document review and stakeholder engagement summaries. The agenda for this meeting should include:

Sample Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

A. Recap of progress

Discuss progress in relation to the established work plan.

B. Summary of findings

Present the results of all activities in the information gathering phase.

C. Vision statement development brainstorming

Facilitate a participatory process to develop a draft vision statement for the plan, focused on key concepts, not wordsmithing.

D. Brainstorming of focus areas

Facilitate a participatory discussion to select the top four to seven issues or focus areas to serve as the inspiration for the plan's goals.

E. Discussion of goals

Brainstorm goals related to each identified issue or focus area.

F. Assign Subcommittees

Assign board members and other interested individuals to subcommittees to take on the development of each goal, its related strategies, and action steps.

G. Next Steps

Task 5. Best Practice Research

Based on the top issues identified by the Steering Committee, conduct a search for best and promising practices employed by other organizations throughout the country to meet the same or similar challenges. This toolkit provides a starting point for this research in the Best Practices chapter. Here is an example of a best practice summary with each of the key elements to be collected identified:

Oh-Penn Interstate Region
Serves Columbiana, Mahoning, and Trumbull Counties in Ohio, and Lawrence and Mercer Counties in Pennsylvania.

The Oh-Penn Interstate Region is an initiative designed to help the combined localities be more strategic about the collective economic and workforce priorities for the area. The region covers three Workforce Investment Areas, an entire MSA and 764,722 people. The goal of the Oh-Penn initiative is to enhance economic and workforce development of the five counties which share a common labor force, worker dislocations, current and emerging industries and a collective vision.

The collaboration is informally governed by a Competitiveness Council, which is comprised of five members of each WIB representing business, economic development, education, labor, and workforce development. One LWIB serves as the fiscal agent, allowing for the informal nature of its organizational structure.

Source: <http://www.ohpenn.com/>

Include the organization name and program, if applicable.

Write a short description of the program, highlighting key transferrable elements of success.

Point out where the reader can go to find more information.

Whenever possible, two to four examples for each issue or topic should be identified, researched, and summarized. Summary reports of these practices should be compiled and distributed to the assigned subcommittees.

Task 6. Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees will be made up of board members and other interested partners and individuals. These groups will be doing the bulk of the heavy lifting in the plan development phase. In order to make their time as productive as possible, prepare an agenda and list of decisions intended to be made at each meeting.

Subcommittee meetings should focus on reviewing the data related to their focus area, developing strategies to achieve the goals assigned to them, and developing action steps to implement the strategies. Subcommittee meetings maybe divided up to focus on specific tasks. For example, the first meeting of each might focus on reviewing data, document review summaries and best practices. The second meeting might focus on developing strategies required to achieve assigned goals. A third meeting might be centered on implementation steps or initiatives.

Staff may prepare recommendations for strategies and action steps, but the subcommittee itself should make final decisions about what is submitted for the steering committee to review.

Task 7. Steering Committee Meeting #3 – Strategy and Implementation Steps

In preparation of the third meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, each subcommittee should prepare a list of recommended strategies and an outline of the implementation action steps associated with each strategy. The agenda of the Steering Committee meeting should include a review of each subcommittee's recommendation as well as a discussion to identify areas of conflict or common ground. The result of this meeting should be an approved list of strategies and actions steps to be included in the plan document. A summary report from the meeting should highlight all approved strategies and action steps with special attention to those which are modified, combined, deleted, added, or reassigned.

Task 8. Subcommittee Follow Up

The summary of the results of Steering Committee Meeting #3 should be communicated with members of the subcommittees. If necessary, a follow up meeting of each group should be scheduled to address any outstanding issues or questions from the Steering Committee.

A finalized version of the recommendations should be developed by each subcommittee.

Phase III – Plan Writing & Adoption

Task 9. Plan Writing

All materials prepared as a result of each of the preceding tasks should be provided to the plan author in preparation for the writing of the first draft of the strategic plan. Recommended sections of the plan include:

- **Title Page**
- **Acknowledgements** – recognition of those volunteers and staff who contributed to the plan.
- **Table of Contents**
- **Introduction** – a very brief description of the purpose of the plan and guiding principles the Board used in developing the document.
- **Executive Summary** – a brief description of the contents of the plan, highlighting the goals, innovative strategies, etc.
- **Planning Context** – a description of the current economic, social, and political environment which influenced the plan's recommendations, priorities, etc.
- **Vision/Mission Statements & Goals**
- **Goals and Strategies** – a list of each strategy beneath the goal it supports along with any necessary explanation or context. If strategies serve multiple goals, they should be repeated and noted accordingly.
- **Implementation** – describe how implementation will be approached by the Board.
 - Action items should be organized by Goal and Strategy – describe each action item (a recommended format is included in this toolkit). These may be structured such that each acts as a stand-alone document which can be pulled from the plan and used as a blueprint by the responsible parties as a guide to implement a specific initiative.
- **Monitoring Progress** – a description of the tools and methods the Board intends to use to monitor and report progress of implementation.
- **Plan Update** – a description of how and when the plan will be updated.

Task 10. Public Comment

The draft plan should be posted and a notice provided in accordance with the state and local standards to allow for public review and comment on the contents of the plan. This can usually be accomplished by posting a PDF file on the Board's website with an email address supplied for people to submit feedback. Special notices of the plan posting should be sent to those who participated in the process.

A compilation of comments should be created with comments about content separated from those regarding grammar, punctuation, and formatting. The comments about content should be provided to the Board along with a copy of the draft plan document.

Task 11. Plan Review and Revisions

A copy of the draft plan and public comments should be provided to the Board in advance of a regular meeting. The meeting agenda should allow ample time for the plan to be presented and discussed. All board members should be encouraged to actively participate in discussion. A list of edits should be prepared so that a final draft can be prepared for adoption at the next meeting.

Presentation of the plan is most effective when led by the chair of the Steering Committee with defined roles for subcommittee chairs or members of the steering committee. This demonstrates ownership of the plan and encourages participation.

Task 12. Plan Adoption

Once all additional edits have been made to the draft document, a final version should be formatted and submitted to board members in advance of the meeting. The meeting agenda should allow for time to discuss the plan and take action.

Once adopted the plan should be submitted for approval in accordance with state and federal guidance and posted on the Board's website. A special email should be sent to all participants in the process thanking them for their contribution, alerting them to the approval, and inviting their participation in implementing the plan.

Timeline

Overall, it is suggested that this model be carried out over the course of six to nine months.

Timeline: 1-2 months

Phase I: Kick-off and Information Gathering

Kick-off Meeting

Document Review

Stakeholder Engagement



Timeline: 3 months

Phase II: Plan Development

Vision Statement
and Goals

Best Practices
Research

Subcommittee
Meetings

Strategy and
Implementation
Steps

Subcommittee
Follow-up



Timeline: 2-3 months

Phase III: Plan Writing and Adoption

Plan Writing

Public Comment

Plan Review and
Revisions

Plan Adoption

Plan Update Model

About This Model

This model is designed for use by boards who already have an existing strategic plan that is deemed to be highly relevant to the role of the Board over the ensuing three to five years; especially if the plan was originally created using one of the other models included in this toolkit. If the existing plan is deemed to be largely irrelevant or if the state or federal guidance is such that the existing plan in large part does not comply, the Board should consider creating a new plan, rather than updating the existing document.

This model is designed to provide opportunities for stakeholder groups, community organizations, and other interested parties to participate in the planning process, but the level of engagement can be adjusted based on the Board's assessment of the relevance of the existing plan and the amount of input sought for the original document.

This model is divided into three phases and 13 tasks. A workflow model follows the task descriptions and a customizable work plan template is provided in Excel format in the Templates Chapter of this toolkit.

Advantages and Disadvantages of this Model



- Begins process from a strong, pre-established baseline
- Takes advantage of momentum from previous strategic plan
- Leverages those involved in the implementation of the previous plan to continue buy-in
- Requires less discussion around creating new goals, strategies, and actions from scratch



- Not applicable if there is not a previous plan that is a strong foundation
- May not be possible if the regulatory environment has changed since the writing of the previous plan
- Could overlook new and innovative ideas that come from the energy surrounding a "new" plan

Pre-planning Preparation

Establish a Strategic Plan Update Committee. This committee should represent the various constituent groups which make up the Board (business, government, organized labor, etc.) and at least one member of the Board's Executive Committee. The size of the committee should be sufficient to represent a variety of views but not so large that it becomes cumbersome to hold meetings and make decisions. The Board will have approval of the plan, so it is not necessary to have the entire Board serve on the update committee. It is not necessary that all members of the update committee be members of the Board, as expertise may exist outside the Board which could benefit the update of the plan.

Summarize progress of implementation of the existing plan. The summary should include the plan's vision, goals, strategies, and action steps or initiatives. If the Board has employed a progress monitoring activity (described in the Implementation Chapter of this toolkit) throughout the implementation, this summary can be derived from the latest version of that document.

The plan manager should prepare a work plan for the completion of the strategic planning process. The work plan will list all tasks to be completed (such as those listed below), with corresponding timelines, deadlines, and dates for meetings. Each task will also list the person or people who are responsible for completion. A sample of this is below. A template for a full work plan is available in the Templates chapter of this toolkit.

Strategic Planning Work Plan			Mar					Apr			
Task	Responsible		2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27
0 Pre-planning preparation											
0.1	Establish Steering Committee										
0.2	Select plan manager										
0.3	Select plan author										
0.4	Finalize work plan										
1 Kick-off Meeting											
1.1	Schedule meeting										
1.2	Create agenda										
1.3	Create materials										
1.4	Hold meeting										
1.5	Follow up										

As discussed in the Getting Started chapter, it is important to select an author for the plan. While the author does not need to be the same person as the plan manager/facilitator, he or she should be involved from the beginning of the planning process to fully understand the planning process and the context for the plan.

Phase I: Kick-off and Information Gathering

Task 1. Kick-off Meeting

Hold a meeting of the Strategic Plan Update Committee to launch the process. All members of the committee should be encouraged to attend. The sample Agenda below describes the items which should be covered during this meeting.

Sample Kick-off Meeting Agenda

A. Introductions

Ask members to identify themselves by name, affiliation, and how each would define success for this effort.

B. Purpose of the Plan Update

Describe the reason the update committee has been established, including the legal/regulatory requirements for the update, the context in which the original plan was created, and the benefits the Board hopes to achieve for the area it serves (continued momentum, new initiatives, course corrections, etc.).

C. Plan Implementation Progress

Provide an overview of the vision, goals, strategies, and action steps or initiatives in the original plan and progress to date implementing each. This should not be a detailed review as there will be an opportunity to explore the details later in the process.

D. Update Process

Provide a handout of the work plan timeline and process narrative.

E. Roles, Responsibilities, and Expectations

Define as a group what role members will play in the process, their responsibilities, and establish accountability expectations as a group. This is also the appropriate time to discuss the use of any subcommittees and assignment of members to those committees. These can be organized in any way the Update Committee desires. Some other areas have established committees for business customer issues, individual customer issues, partner issues, career center operations, etc.

F. Communications

Establish communication protocols, including meeting notices and progress reports. Confirm if email, phone, or another platform is the desired method of communicating and pass a list of members and their contact information to verify accuracy.

G. Meeting Dates

Set as many future meeting dates of the Update Committee as possible for the duration of the planning process.

H. Next Steps

Walk through the upcoming activities which have been set or are being considered.

Task 2. Document Review

Collect relevant documents, plans, and other materials related to workforce, economic development, education, etc. Sources may include economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, community colleges, local governments, regional planning organizations, or community-based organizations and non-profits such as Goodwill, Dress for Success, etc.

Prepare a brief summary of the goals or action items from each of the relevant sources, identify areas of common interest and document contacts for each source. If the Board has influenced partner organizations to create alignment, highlighting these areas should be included in the summary.

	Economic Development Org.	Community College	Chamber of Commerce	Community Org. #1
Strengthen Local Economy	*	*		
Job Growth	*			
Entrepreneurship	*			
Talent Attraction	*			
Leadership Development	*		*	
Partner Alignment	*			*
Business Advocacy			*	
Quality of Place			*	
Employability Skills		*		
Demand-driven Training		*		*

Task 3. Data Update

Identify data included in the plan and provide an update of all relevant data. Identify areas where additional data is available and inclusion could positively impact the relevance of the plan.

Task 4. Stakeholder Engagement

Based on the stakeholder engagement tactics discussed in the Getting Started chapter, careful consideration should be given to which should be included in the update process. There are several factors to consider when deciding which engagement tactics to utilize.

Focus Groups

Focus Groups take a significant amount of time to organize, schedule, and carry out. Under this model, a limited number of focus groups (one to three) should be considered and the invitees should be selected based on their ability to make a significant contribution to strategic thinking on specific topics. For example, a focus group about business services should include business representatives (both those who do and those do not use the public system), business service representatives, and some others who may have a perspective not usually considered, such as a chamber of commerce or economic development agency. Focus groups do provide an opportunity for multiple stakeholder groups to have some representation in the planning process, but some groups or agencies may feel excluded if they are not invited to participate. These individuals or groups may be included in interviews or survey participation activities.

Stakeholder or Public Forums

Stakeholder or Public Forums take time to organize, schedule, promote, prepare, facilitate, and summarize results. Under this model, use of the existing plan as a framework to build participatory exercises is highly recommended. If the forums are conducted as an Open House type of event, displays should be created to allow participants to react to the relevance of existing goals, the effectiveness of implementation activities, and provide new insights about issues or changes to conditions which may have occurred since the plan's adoption. If the event is organized as a planned meeting with small and/or large group participatory exercises, a professional facilitator is recommended to develop the exercises, conduct the meeting, and summarize the results.

Interviews

Interviews take significant time to schedule, prepare questions, and summarize results. Interviewees should be limited to high-level decision makers whose input is critical (approximately six to eight), but may not be able to participate in a focus group. Because of the scheduling challenges often faced by this level of decision maker, interviews should be scheduled with as much advance notice as possible. Generally, interviews are most productive if limited to 30-45 minutes. Scheduling a one hour interview will allow the interviewee an opportunity to explore issues relevant to them which may not have been included in the preplanned list of topics and questions.

Surveys

Surveys are a great tool for the limited input model as the majority of time required to implement this tactic is frontloaded in the development of the survey instrument. A number of online survey tools can be used to deliver the instrument to individuals and will calculate results for objective answers and group subjective responses. A distribution plan should be created to get the surveys in the hands of the target participants. This may involve seeking participation in the distribution of surveys by other partner agencies and organizations like chambers of commerce, economic development organizations, etc. to their email distribution lists. Survey questions should be tailored to specific audiences such as business owners, economic developers, students, jobseekers, etc. Depending on the capacity of those summarizing the results, an opportunity for survey participants to add information they believe to be important but not covered by the questions could be included. This can be accomplished by asking something like, "What did we miss?" or "Anything else you would like us to know?"

No matter what methods of input are selected for inclusion in the process, it is important to provide those invited to participate with:

- an estimate of the time commitment involved (including time to complete a survey);
- a brief explanation of how the results will be used;
- what to expect during the interview or focus group;
- acknowledgement of the importance of their contribution;
- recognition that although everyone has a chance to be heard, it is not possible to include every idea in the final plan; and,
- a thank you in advance for participation.

Collection of contact information during each input opportunity is critical to effective follow up. Creation of a data base or distribution list specific to the plan update should be considered to facilitate easy follow up communications. Participants should be given the opportunity to opt out of further communications.

If possible, during focus groups and interviews, obtaining a commitment to help with implementation should be sought or interest in continuing to participate measured. Those exhibiting a passion for certain topics should be noted as possible champions for the implementation phase.

A summary report should be prepared to capture the input from each interview and focus group. Web-based survey tools usually provide summary reports of the results.

Phase II: Plan Update

Task 5. Update Committee Meeting #2 – Vision Statement, Goals, Strategies

In preparation of the second meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, prepare a summary of findings based on the document review, data update, and stakeholder engagement activities. The agenda for this meeting should include:

Sample Steering Committee Meeting Agenda

A. Recap of progress

Discuss progress in relation to the established work plan.

B. Summary of findings

Present the results of all activities in the information gathering phase.

C. Vision statement and goals discussion

Facilitate a participatory process to review and edit the existing vision statement and to determine appropriateness and relevance. Finalize the vision statement and goals.

D. Assign Subcommittees

Assign board members and other interested individuals to subcommittees to take on updating of the strategies and action steps associated with each goal.

E. Next Steps

Task 6. Best Practice Scan

A review of the best or promising practices incorporated in the original plan should be conducted by staff to assure continued relevance, update any results or modifications made to the practice by the originator, and incorporate any new, more relevant examples if available.

Prepare a summary report of existing, edited and new best practices.

Task 7. Subcommittee Meetings

Subcommittees will be made up of board members and other interested partners and individuals. These groups will be doing the bulk of the heavy lifting in the plan update phase. In order to make their time as productive as possible, prepare an agenda and list of decisions intended to be made at each meeting.

Subcommittee meetings should focus on reviewing the existing strategies and action steps in the context of information gathered in Phase I and how they relate to the goals as drafted during Update Committee Meeting #2. Subcommittee meetings may be divided up to focus on specific tasks. For example, the first meeting of each might focus on reviewing data, document review summaries, best practices and progress made on implementation of existing action steps. The second meeting might focus on updating, deleting and adding strategies required to achieve the goals. A third meeting might be centered on implementation steps or initiatives.

Staff may prepare recommendations for strategies and action steps, but the subcommittee itself should make final decisions about what is submitted for the Update Committee to review.

Task 8. Update Committee Meeting #3 – Strategy and Implementation Steps

In preparation of the third meeting of the Strategic Plan Steering Committee, each subcommittee should prepare a list of recommended updated strategies and an outline of the implementation action steps associated with each strategy. The agenda of the Update Committee meeting should include a review of each subcommittee's recommendation as well as a discussion to identify areas of conflict or common ground. The result of this meeting should be an approved list of strategies and actions steps to be included in the plan update document. A summary report from the meeting should highlight all approved strategies and action steps with special attention to those which are modified, combined, deleted, added, or reassigned.

Task 9. Subcommittee Follow Up

The summary of the results of Update Committee Meeting #3 should be communicated with members of the subcommittees. If necessary, a follow up meeting of each group should be scheduled to address any outstanding issues or questions from the Update Committee.

A finalized version of the recommendations should be developed by each subcommittee.

Phase III: Plan Writing & Adoption

Task 10. Plan Writing

All materials prepared as a result of each of the preceding tasks should be provided to the plan author in preparation for the draft update of the strategic plan. Recommended sections of the plan include:

- **Title Page**
- **Acknowledgements** – recognition of those volunteers and staff who contributed to the plan
- **Table of Contents**
- **Introduction** – Very brief description of the purpose of the plan and guiding principles of the Board used in developing the document

- **Executive Summary** – A brief description of the contents of the plan, highlighting the goals, innovative strategies, etc.
- **Planning Context** – A description of the current economic, social and political environment which influenced the plan’s recommendations, priorities, etc. Also, include a summary of how conditions have changed which influence the modifications made in the update.
- **Progress Report** – A summary of achievements since adoption of the original plan document.
- **Vision/Mission Statements & Goals**
- **Goals and Strategies** – A list of each strategy beneath the goal it supports along with any necessary explanation or context. If strategies serve multiple goals, they should be repeated and noted accordingly. If desired, new strategies can be highlighted using bold or colored text to call attention to new or modified content.
- **Implementation** – Describe how implementation will be approached by the Board
 - Action items organized by Goal and Strategy – describe each action item (a recommended format is included in this toolkit), these may be structured such that each acts as a stand-alone document which can be pulled from the plan and used as a blueprint by the responsible parties as a guide to implement a specific initiative.
- **Monitoring Progress** – A description of the tools and methods the Board intends to use to monitor and report progress of implementation.
- **Plan Update** – A description of how and when the plan will be updated again.

Task 11. Public Comment

The draft plan update should be posted and a notice provided in accordance with the state and local standards to allow the public to review and comment on the contents of the plan. This can usually be accomplished by posting a PDF file on the Board’s website with an email address supplied for people to submit feedback. Special notices of the plan posting should be sent to those who participated in the process.

A compilation of comments should be created with comments about content separated from those regarding grammar, punctuation, and formatting. The comments about content should be provided to the Board along with a copy of the draft plan document.

Task 12. Plan Update Review and Revisions

A copy of the draft plan update and public comments should be provided to the Board in advance of a regular meeting. The meeting agenda should allow ample time for the plan to be presented and discussed. All board members should be encouraged to actively participate in discussion. A list of edits should be prepared so that a final draft can be prepared for adoption at the next meeting.

Presentation of the plan is most effective when led by the chair of the Update Committee with defined roles for subcommittee chairs or members of the Update Committee. This demonstrates ownership of the plan and encourages participation.

Task 13. Plan Adoption

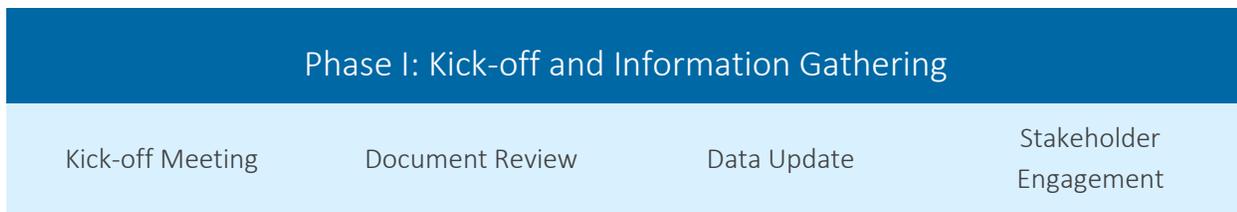
Once all additional edits have been made to the draft document, a final version should be formatted and submitted to board members in advance of the meeting. The meeting agenda should allow for time to discuss the plan and take action.

Once adopted the plan should be submitted for approval in accordance with state and federal guidance and posted on the Board's website. A special email should be sent to all participants in the process thanking them for their contribution, alerting them to the approval, and inviting their participation in implementing the plan.

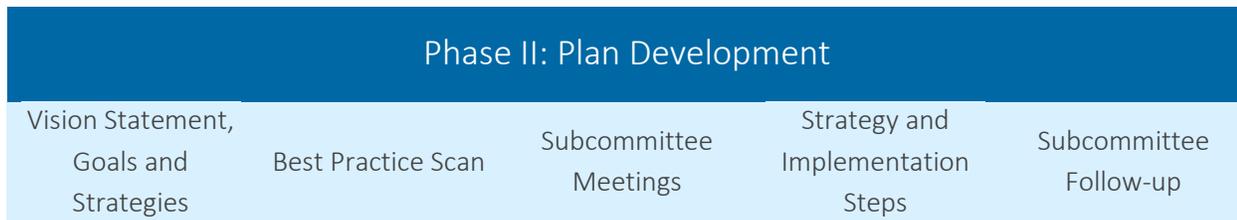
Timeline

Overall, it is suggested that this model be carried out over the course of three to six months.

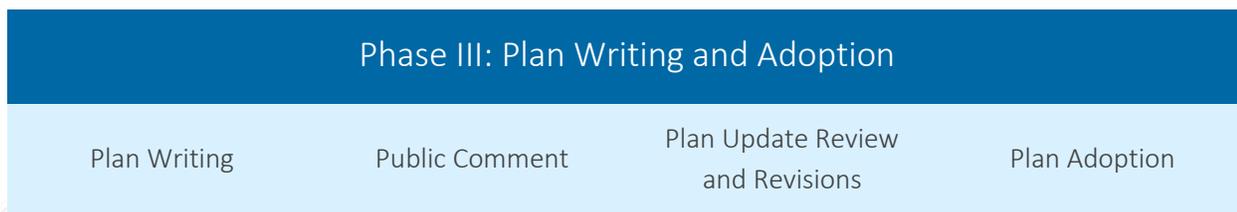
Timeline: 1-2 months



Timeline: 3 months



Timeline: 2-3 months



Hiring a Consultant

To Hire or Not to Hire?

Deciding to hire a consultant to assist the Board with developing a strategic plan can have a significant impact on the process, quality, contents, and credibility of the plan. Hiring a consultant does not necessarily assure a better plan and in some cases, staff capacity and skills may be sufficient to produce a quality plan without the use of a consultant. It is also important to remember that a consultant can be engaged to produce the entire plan or a limited number of components where capacity or skills may be enhanced with an outside expert. Limited involvement from a consultant could include facilitating public or stakeholder sessions, assisting only with action or implementation planning, or focusing on a specific strategy area such as business services, youth services, sector strategies, etc.

Here are some questions to consider when deciding if hiring a consultant is the right choice for your board:

- Do the Board and staff have the experience and skills to manage and facilitate the planning process without assistance?
- Is there sufficient Board and staff capacity available to dedicate to the planning process?
- Do you have an assigned committee focused on guiding the strategic planning process?
- Is there funding available to hire a consultant to provide strategic planning services for all or some of the plan?
- Would an outside consultant add credibility to the process?

The Procurement Process

If you have decided that hiring a strategic planning consultant is the right approach for your board, here are the key steps you will want to take to guarantee a good return on your investment:

1. Determine the role you want the consultant to play (see services and tasks described in the Process Models chapter)
2. Develop a Request for Proposals (RFP) or Request for Qualifications (RFQ)
3. Issue the RFP or RFQ and collect proposals
4. Select a consultant
5. Negotiate a contract

Determining the Role of the Consultant

Once you have selected the type of planning process that is required to produce the results the Board desires, determine if you want to have a consultant take responsibility for the entire process or specific elements. If the consultant is not to be responsible for the entire process, determine if the Board and staff or the consultant will manage the process. Typical tasks in the planning process are identified in the Process Models chapter.

RFP vs RFQ

Determine if you want to select a consultant based solely on their qualifications or a mix of their qualifications, proposed scope of services, project approach, fee, and other factors which are specific to your project. Here is a comparison of some of the key characteristics of a Request for Qualifications and Request for Proposals:

Component or Characteristic	RFQ	RFP
Includes information about the firm, experience, similar projects, references	*	*
Includes profiles of the individuals assigned to your project	*	*
Provides detailed description of task-by-task approach		*
Describes a specific proposed scope of services/tasks and deliverables or products included		*
Includes hourly rates for proposed services	*	
Includes a proposed budget or fee for the proposed services		*
Includes a proposed schedule for major tasks or phases and completion of the project		*
Selection process primarily based on “most qualified” firm	*	
Requests packages to build a list of pre-qualified consultants and for services as needed	*	
Evaluation process based on weighted criteria across multiple categories including approach, methodology, fee, and qualifications		*

Legal Requirements

Some organizations have specific legal requirements for procuring professional services. It is advisable to check with the Board’s legal counsel in advance of preparing the RFP/RFQ to obtain a list of these requirements. The requirements can be quite extensive or as simple as adding a statement such as, “We reserve the right to reject all proposals.”

Writing an Effective Request for Proposal or Qualifications

The most important aspect of writing an effective request is to be as specific as possible about your expectations for what information is to be submitted. Set realistic deadlines for responses and don’t be afraid to set page limits. Keep in mind that firms will invest hundreds or thousands of dollars to compete and win your contract. They want to provide a clear, concise response that is compliant and meets your expectations. Identify a set time period for submittal of questions so any items where additional clarity is needed can be addressed. If you intend to hold a pre-proposal meeting to answer questions, that information should be included as well. Depending upon the organization issuing the RFP/RFQ, there may be some specific requirements for all such solicitations. Including those requirements in the RFP/RFQ is critical. One such requirement may be the order in which you want the components of the final proposal. This will avoid multiple proposal versions and streamline the review process. Focus on the most relevant items you value for making a selection. Asking for items that you know will not impact

your decision is a waste of paper and time for the staff and/or volunteers serving on a consultant selection committee.

Technical Submittal Requirements – Include a section which conveys all of the details about how you wish to receive submission packages, including:

- Deadline
- To whom the submittal is to be addressed
- Format of the submittal (hard copies or electronic via email or website upload)
- Page formatting requirements like margins, fonts, minimum or maximum point sizes, line spacing
- Page limits, if applicable
- Additional marketing materials, if applicable
- Any special instructions for fee proposals
- Any policies regarding questions or contact with the organization and selection committee members prior to selection.

Selection Process – Describe the process you will use to select the consultant. If proposals or qualifications are to be scored, a list of the possible points for each component of the submittal will help the consultants focus on the parts most important to you and/or your selection committee. If you are using a selection committee and contact with those members during the process is prohibited, state that policy and list the dedicated point of contact who is permitted to respond to inquiries.

Project Background/Description – Consultants can provide a better submittal if you provide them with a brief description of why the Board is looking for assistance and the purpose of the project. Provide background on the Board, its service area, and current initiatives to give context. Also, identify any previous plans and/or reports that have been completed.

Qualifications – Typical RFP/RFQ documents require the consultant to submit specified information describing why they are qualified to provide the requested services. These usually include a firm history and/or description, list of services provided, a list of firm principals or key staff, experience on similar projects, example or case studies for similar projects, client references, and resumes or bios of the team members assigned to the project.

The following items pertain only to a Request for Proposals:

Scope & Deliverables – Clearly communicating expectations with as much detail as possible in the section of the RFP is the most critical area of focus in developing the request. The proposer rely on this section heavily to craft an approach to the work, write a concise scope of services, and provide an accurate budget or fee estimate. Copying and customizing the process models in this toolkit with the Board’s expectations is one method of developing the scope. It is also critical to specify the required deliverables and the desired format for the final products.

If you wish to allow the proposer to recommend modifications to your scope based on their experience, innovation, and to better control costs, it is important to convey that message as well as identifying any tasks or deliverables which are non-negotiable.

Budget/Budget Range – Establishing the budget for a consultant should consider travel costs if out of town consultants are desired, the number of in-person meetings required, willingness to use conference calls, video conferencing or web-based collaboration to replace in-person meetings, and most significantly, the amount of and type of public/stakeholder participation events. Some organizations do not allow the publication of a budget or not-to-exceed cost in their RFPs. In those cases, the RFP should include a statement indicating this policy. These policies usually result from a belief that the organization will get a “better price” if they do not disclose this information. In some cases, this may be true, but in most, allowing consultants to understand the limitations will allow them to tailor a scope and fee that falls within the budgeted amount for the project in a manner that meets the expectations of the Board. Projects which are underfunded may generate fewer proposals or proposals which include a more limited scope.

It is also recommended that you specify how you wish the fee proposal to be structured. You may provide a form or spreadsheet or simply request the budget be submitted as a lump sum cost, itemized fees by phase or task, etc.

Selecting the Right Consultant

If proposals not meeting all of the Technical Submittal Requirements are to be disqualified, a staff review for compliance with these objective criteria should be completed before forwarding submittals to content reviewers and scorers. All disqualified submittals (including the reason for disqualification) should be retained pending any protests from proposers.

Instructions, score sheets, and scoring criteria should be provided to content reviewers (selection committee) along with a deadline for submitting their scores. As these will likely be volunteer members of the Board, sufficient time should be allotted for thorough review and scoring.

Based on the selection process defined in the RFP/RFQ, the specified number of top scoring firms should be identified and notified of the next step in the process. Although interviews with the shortlisted firms is not a required part of the process, in-person, video, or telephone interviews offer the selection committee an opportunity to interact with the proposed team and ask questions to further clarify their approach and learn more about their qualifications. Shortlisted firms will be qualified to do the work based on their proposal scores and the interview will help you decide who you want to work with.

Consultants who are not selected will sometimes ask for feedback about their proposal and/or interview. Providing this feedback is a courtesy and should be viewed in the same light as the Board’s requests for feedback from the individual and business customers it serves.

Contracting with a Consultant

Once agreement has been reached with the selected consultant on the scope of the project and the fee to be paid, a legally binding contract should be prepared and signed by both parties. If the organization has its own contract format, the consultant can be required to use this. Most consultants can provide a contract template, if necessary. Regardless of whose contract is used, legal review by the Board’s counsel and the consultant is encouraged.

Contents of the contract generally include basic legal language governing all standard professional service contracts in the state where the Board is located. In addition, the scope should be integrated into the body of the contract or attached. Other matters to consider for inclusion are:

- A process to handle modifications or supplements to the scope and fee
- Specific requirements for communication or collaboration (e.g., monthly progress reports accompanying invoices)
- Other special requirements not covered elsewhere in the contract

Communications between the Board's representative and the consultant and each party's legal counsel is critical throughout the contract negotiation process.

End of Chapter

This page intentionally left blank



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 3: Best Practices



Find inspiration for programs and strategic initiatives.

The following chapter presents a sampling of best practices from across the country in a variety of practices and initiatives. As will be discussed later in the Action Planning portion of this toolkit, there is no need to reinvent the wheel when planning strategic initiatives. There are numerous examples of boards doing achieving success through innovative work that can be adapted and replicated to meet the needs and unique conditions of your area. Many of your counterparts at boards across the county would be happy to share their successes, so when you hear stories of other programs that are working well, reach out and ask any questions you have that could assist you in implementing a similar initiative in your own community. Simple internet searches using key words from your identified goals and strategies can lead you to finding some of these boards and initiatives.

The areas of best practices represented in this chapter include:

Apprenticeships

Business Services

Career Pathways

Entrepreneurship

Leveraged Resources

Sector Strategies

Youth Services

Apprenticeships

WIOA reinforces and promotes the use of Registered Apprenticeship as a proven strategy to prepare workers for jobs through the combination on-the-job and classroom training. Apprenticeship programs are built in close collaboration with employers to offer work-based learning opportunities and ensure that training programs are aligned with industry needs. Through the programs, apprentices are able to move through a seamless progression of education and work-based opportunities that lead to more targeted skill development and high wages for the apprentice, and increased productivity and decreased turnover for employers. Apprenticeship programs can be directed by a single employer or serve a coalition of employers, making them a logical training option for sector partnerships (also promoted by WIOA).

Vermont HITEC

Vermont HITEC is a nonprofit organization that provides educational programs for employers within healthcare, information technology, and advanced manufacturing throughout the state of Vermont. Vermont HITEC programs are only open to the employees or invited guests of employer-partners. Individuals are able to combine academic programs with applied learning to pursue a chosen career pathway, while employers have access to a pool of workers with proven competencies. HITEC programs offer industry recognized certificates such as advanced machine tool technology, information technology, medical coding, medical billing, and phlebotomy. After completing the program, employees or invited guests of the employer are enrolled in a state-registered apprenticeship with the sponsoring employer and can earn a Certificate of Apprenticeship Completion from the US Department of Labor.

Vermont HITEC programs are an example of innovative workforce development practices that use rigorous academic standards to meet employer and workforce demands within targeted industries—in this case health care and information technology.

<http://www.vthitec.org/index.html>

Partners for a Competitive Workforce

Partners for a Competitive Workforce is a partnership in the Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana tri-state region working to address regional workforce challenges. A competency based manufacturing apprenticeship program has been developed along with the Southwest Ohio Region Workforce Investment Board and Ohio Means Jobs Centers of Hamilton and Butler Counties. Eight employers sponsor welder and machine operator apprentices. Progression through the training program is determined by the student demonstrating specific competency standards that have been developed and recognized by local industry, as opposed to being set by the amount of time spent in training.

This apprenticeship program fully aligns with the larger priority objectives of Partners for a Competitive Workforce by simultaneously connecting businesses with qualified workers and aligning education with employer needs.

<http://www.competitiveworkforce.com/>

Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee; Washington

The Aerospace Joint Apprenticeship Committee (AJAC) is statewide, nonprofit apprenticeship program created by the Washington State Legislature. This committee has developed 11 unique programs for aerospace and advanced manufacturing occupations to address employer and workforce needs.

AJAC is an example of a public-private partnership that also builds in flexibility for students with varying career goals. The program has a short term, 10 week Manufacturing Academy, in which participation gives graduates hiring priority with participating employers. Longer term, the AJAC programs allow apprentices to earn transferrable, industry recognized certificates during the first two years of the program, while the full Journey-level certificate is earned after four years in the program.

<http://www.ajactraining.org/>

Apprenticeship Carolina

The Apprenticeship Carolina program is a free resource for employers provided by the South Carolina Technical College System to assist in the development of new apprenticeship programs. Apprenticeship Carolina provides technical assistance and consultation services. As an added incentive, a \$1000 tax credit per apprentice and job matching services are also provided to employers.

This is one model at the state level used to encourage business and industry to engage in apprenticeship programs.

<http://www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com/>

SEIU Healthcare NW Training Partnership

SEIU Healthcare NW Training Partnership is an apprenticeship program that engages many employers around one targeted program built around the training needs of one specific occupation. Located in Washington State, the SEIU Healthcare NW Training Partnership is a nonprofit organization formed by a group of employers and the State of Washington, and is the largest home care workforce training provider in the nation with approximately 40,000 individuals trained each year. The goal is to meet the growing needs for long term home health care workers.

<http://www.myseiubenefits.org/>

TRACK – Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Education

The TRACK program is a partnership between the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education and The Kentucky Labor Cabinet to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities to high school students. The industry driven program helps to develop a pipeline for students to enter post-secondary apprenticeship training. Students receive an industry certification upon completion and all the on-the-job hours can be counted towards the apprenticeship. The program also requires involvement and participation of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

The TRACK program is a best practice because it involves employer and education partnerships, which accelerate youth employment and entry into career pathways, providing more opportunities for youth and combining elements which are essential for the state's future workforce.

<http://education.ky.gov/cte/cter/pages/track.aspx>

Business Services

Business and employer services is an integral part of the workforce system. Local areas need to connect with businesses to understand their employment needs, including training for new and incumbent workers, recruitment assistance, and other support for business retention, growth, and attraction. The workforce system connects to local businesses through business service representatives. As local representatives establish relationships with employers, they become a go-to resource for all workforce needs. Business services can help prevent or avert layoffs and closures by being involved and proactive in assisting employers before it is too late.

Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Center, City of Phoenix Community & Economic Development Department

The City of Phoenix Community and Economic Development Department has created the Phoenix Business and Workforce Development Center as a go-to location for businesses' workforce needs. Conveniently located in downtown Phoenix near the transit center and a METRO Light Rail Station, the center is the home of business services activities and offers talent acquisition, training and development, and business solutions services for businesses looking to locate, expand, and grow in Phoenix. Specific services available through the Center include:

- Promotion of available jobs
- Candidate screening
- Organizing hiring events
- Creating partnerships with education and training institutions for customized solutions
- Financial assistance for training employees
- Linkages to economic development resources
- Employer seminars
- Space for workforce and economic development events
- Access to LMI

<https://www.phoenix.gov/econdevsite/Pages/businessesindex.aspx>

Manufacturing Layoff Aversion and Business Assistance Initiative, San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board

The business services team of the San Bernardino County Workforce Investment Board recognized that more in-depth assistance was needed to prevent layoffs. In order to better serve struggling businesses, the WIB procured a service provider to deliver business services that would improve efficiency and reduce costs for small and midsized manufacturers. California Manufacturing Technology Consulting (CMTc) was selected and formed a partnership that included the Business Services Team, Inland Empire Women's Business Center, and several employers from the manufacturing sector.

The core elements to the Manufacturing Layoff Aversion and Business Assistance Initiative were:

- Streamlined data collection – a brief, yet effective intake form was developed for employers interested in services to capture information.
- Single point of contact – a single consultant is assigned to each company to provide customized services.
- Industry knowledgeable staff – the procured service provider – California Manufacturing Technology Consulting – is familiar with the opportunities and challenges facing manufacturers.

The services that the program has been able to provide to manufacturers include:

- Streamlining operations and finding efficiencies through Lean and Six Sigma processes;
- Providing marketing assistance;
- Achieving specific industry certifications required by certain customers; and
- Addressing workforce issues, particularly through incumbent worker training.

<http://www.csb-win.org>

The Business Resource Network

The Business Resource Network (BRN) is a unique approach to helping businesses survive and grow by helping them identify and access a host of critical business services with as little red tape as possible. A collaboration of chambers of commerce, workforce and economic development organizations, universities and career and technical centers, and state and local government agencies in Northeast Ohio and Western Pennsylvania, the BRN partnership strategically targets businesses with growth potential as well as those facing challenges, and then conducts extensive interviews with leaders of those businesses.

This close coordination with businesses allows the partnership to identify, among others factors, workforce needs that local businesses must have met to maintain and grow operations. This open communication and information gathering is critical to inform career pathways and local training programs that can ensure a pipeline of talent is being developed.

<http://www.thebrn.net/>

BusinessU, South Bay Workforce Investment Board

To address the workforce needs of employers, the South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB) held a strategy session with regional city economic development stakeholders, chamber of commerce executives, and elected officials to develop strategies for a cohesive and unified approach to business retention and engagement.

The event was facilitated by the founders of BusinessU, the Continuing Education & Training Division of Full Capacity Marketing, Inc., which helps to create capacity and sustainability for initiatives combining workforce development, economic development, and education services. Local elected officials, representatives from chambers of commerce and economic development organizations were in attendance. The event focused on creating a collaborative, market responsive, customer centric framework to reengineer business engagement strategies to result in regional business growth and retention.

<http://www.business-u.net/> , <http://www.sbwib.org/>

Career Pathways

Career pathways document progressive levels of education and employment opportunities and align education and training programs with business needs. The pathways help ensure job seekers receive the credentials valued by employers, obtain employment, and understand the next steps to advance in education or employment. They coordinate many programs, providers, and partners into a seamless process, offering different on- and off-ramps for individuals at different places in their education and careers.

Minnesota FastTRAC, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development

Minnesota FastTRAC (Training, Resources, and Credentialing) program integrates basic skills education and career-specific training in high-demand fields. Each local Adult Career Pathways program consists of a series of connected educational and training programs that allow students to advance over time to successively higher levels of education and employment in a given sector. By focusing on high-demand fields, the program meets the needs of business while ensuring that participants find well-paying jobs with opportunities for advancement. FastTRAC is a collaboration between a number of state, local, and national partners and part of a broader career pathways movement.

Local programs have braided FastTRAC grants with other state and federal funds. Locals have braided funds from TANF, WIA Incentive grants, Adult Basic Education Leadership funds, Perkins funds, foundation funding, Pell grants, and other sources.

<http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/minnesota-fast-trac/>

Peninsula Council for Workforce Development and Thomas Nelson Community College

Funded by the Ford Foundation and the Virginia Community College system, a partnership between 14 manufacturers, public schools, labor unions, and community partners came together to create a career pathways program that offers training that leads to industry recognized credentials in a number of key industries and incorporates Registered Apprenticeships in some of its pathways. To identify the needs that would be addressed in the career pathways, the collaborative conducted a comprehensive labor market study that included two surveys of major manufacturers and in-depth interviews with business leaders. The results of the survey led to the creation of 11 career pathways in Advanced and Precision Manufacturing Technologies. The results were used to engage businesses and education institutions in discussions about how to best prepare students and workers for the emerging in-demand occupations, and how to create career pathways that will ensure a pipeline of workers for future demands.

<http://www.virginiapeninsulacareerpathways.com/>

Partners for a Competitive Workforce

Partners for a Competitive Workforce in Cincinnati, Ohio coordinates career pathways in three of the region's targeted sectors, focused on in-demand occupations. Career pathways are defined in Healthcare, Advanced Manufacturing, Information Technology, and Construction. They are led by employers who provide insight into their future workforce needs and integrate education and training, employment opportunities, and wraparound services that reduce barriers to employment and advancement.

Partners who work together to create the career pathways system include:

- Employers: identify and articulate needs
- Education Institutions (Including Adult Basic & Literacy Education, K-12 Education, Career & Technical Education, Community Colleges, and Universities): design curriculum with employer input and provide education and training
- Community-based Organizations: provide wrap around services and refer client to the pathways
- Workforce Investment Boards: assist with recruitment and provide financial support
- Public and Private Funders

<http://www.competitiveworkforce.com/Career-Pathways.html>

Entrepreneurship

Entrepreneurship is a key driver of the economy. When considering workforce development and economic development, local areas must consider entrepreneurship strategies. Areas cannot be reliant only on expanding existing business and attracting new business, but also need to consider growing new business through encouraging entrepreneurship activities. Wealth and jobs are created through small businesses started by entrepreneurially minded individuals. By supporting entrepreneurship strategies, boards can not only promote skill development, but also business and job creation.

Workforce Investment Board Mid-Ohio Valley, West Virginia

The Workforce Investment Board Mid-Ohio Valley (WIBMOV) identified entrepreneurship as a focal point of its 2014-2019 strategic plan. The Board set up an Action Team around entrepreneurship with the goal of connecting students and adults with small business development programs, mentors, and other support and resources. To accomplish this, the following strategies were developed.

- Identify resources and services available in the region
- Introduce entrepreneurship to students and adults in the region
- Support entrepreneurship in the region

The Entrepreneurship Action Team meets monthly to continue progress on its identified action plan.

<http://www.movrc.org/Programs/Workforce-Investment-Board.aspx>

<http://www.movrc.org/MOVRc/media/WIB-Files/Action-Planning-Matrix-Entrepreneurship-revised-6-24-2014.pdf>

VETEC: Virginia Employment Through Entrepreneurship Consortium

VETEC is funded by the US Department of Labor, providing funds to the Northern Virginia, Richmond, and Hampton Roads workforce areas to assist WIA-eligible individuals, dislocated workers, and veterans in entrepreneurial endeavors. This consortium utilizes the current workforce system, with local One-Stop Operators offering an entrepreneurship “training program” through eligible training providers, such as the Business Development Assistant Group and the Tidewater Community College. Any WIA eligible individual has access to these entrepreneurship programs.

<http://www.myskillsource.org/page/id/25/entrepreneurs>

GATE: Growing America Through Entrepreneurship

The GATE program in North Carolina is a partnership between the North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Workforce Solutions and Division of Employment Security, North Carolina Community Colleges, the North Carolina Small Business Center Network, NC REAL Entrepreneurship, and spearheaded by the Rural Center. GATE is a scholarship program that serves dislocated workers in rural counties. Services provided include business coaching, entrepreneurial readiness assessments, training scholarships, job-search waivers for individuals to receive unemployment insurance benefits, and access to capital to start a business. The entrepreneurship courses and support are available on community college campuses or virtually.

http://www.ncruralcenter.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=601&Itemid=313

Leveraged Resources

With many areas facing decreasing or diminishing resources along with increased need and demand it is necessary for organizations to leverage resources. Local areas cannot be dependent on one funding stream or funder. It is necessary to understand programs, services, and funding across multiple agencies and organizations in an area and to identify areas of overlap so that efforts may be coordinated and resources maximized and leveraged for all participating groups. Diversifying funding streams also includes incorporating fee-for-service activities to increase the resources available for service delivery.

WorkForce Central

WorkForce Central in Tacoma/Pierce County, Washington uses several methods to leverage resources beyond federal dollars. For every \$1 of federal workforce investment funds that WorkForce Central receives, at least \$10 is matched with other public and private funds. Strategies for generating these funds include:

- Grants: WFC has been awarded grant funding from federal sources (e.g. U.S. Department of Labor Workforce Innovation Fund) as well as private foundations (e.g. Milgard Family Foundation) to support the creation and operation of targeted programs.
- Fee-for-service menu: The business services team offers low-cost services to employers for assistance with recruitment, pre-employment screening, training, seminars, and employee development.
- Partnerships: WFC leverages the resources of other organizations with targeted partnerships, including the Manufacturing Academy, the Pierce County Health Careers Council, and the Pierce County Construction Partnership. Partnerships have also provided an advantage for obtaining grant funding.

<http://www.workforce-central.org/>

Kinexus

Kinexus is an umbrella development non-profit organization that includes business development, community development, and workforce development divisions that bring together regional organizations to work collaboratively to maximize investments that contribute to economic growth. The workforce development division serves as the Workforce Development Board for Berrien, Cass, and Van Buren counties and oversees the Michigan Works! Centers. The formation of Kinexus has allowed for some innovative methods of revenue generation, including:

- Social Enterprise – Kinexus opened Beach Bites, a social enterprise within the organization’s Bridge Academy which provides training year-round by replicating the workplace and using project-based learning. Beach Bites is a concession stand that operates at a local beach, generating revenue to reinvest in vocational training programs while providing individuals with training and work experience.
- Providing low-cost courses on business development, including starting a small business, writing a business plan, marketing, and financial management.

<http://www.kinexus.org/>

The WorkPlace Connecticut

The WorkPlace operates a fee-for-service division called the bluegreen Research Institute. This group acts as a consultancy, providing services along all aspects of creating and launching a program in workforce and economic development. This can include research, model development, program management, grant development/fundraising, marketing, and evaluation.

The WorkPlace also seeks private investment to supplement public job training funds, soliciting donations from companies, foundations, and individuals. Potential donors have the option to make contributions on The WorkPlace website, and are able to see the kinds of services that will be funded by this money:

- Dress for Success Mid-Fairfield County for professional attire and career services
- WorkPlace Scholarships for job training resources for adults and youth
- CareerConnections-CT.com, a college and career resource for youth
- Platform to Employment to assist the long-term unemployed and those who have exhausted their benefits
- Specialized workforce development programs

<http://www.workplace.org>

<http://www.bluegreenresearch.org/>

Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions

As the Gulf Coast Workforce Board realized that it was a small part of a much bigger workforce development system in the Houston, Texas area, its strategic focus became leveraging its resources in combination with the larger regional system to best serve businesses and jobseekers. The first step to doing this was changing the Board's mindset from managing programs to one of system leadership. The Board invested resources in establishing collaborative ties, as opposed to spending all funds on programs, leading to an expanded pool of resources and influence. The Board tapped into existing networks to leverage the resources and relationships of other organizations, including the Greater Houston Partnership, chambers of commerce, Councils of Governments, and industry associations. By positioning itself as a leader in the community, the Board was able to focus on innovative solutions through new partnerships, moving into new markets that it was previously unable to reach.

<http://www.wrksolutions.com/>

Sector Strategies

Sector strategies allow a region or local area to be strategic in meeting a skills challenge by coordinating workforce, education, economic development, and support services and aligning with the needs of business and industry. A sector strategy creates a framework for multiple organizations to work together to identify common issues, challenges, and opportunities for employers within an industry. The partners can then work together to collectively address industry needs through coordination of limited resources, developing training programs, and implementing responsive policies and strategies.

EmployIndy; Indiana

EmployIndy has taken a sector-focused approach to determine where the jobs in Marion County are today and through 2018. This sector approach has allowed EmployIndy to target training and education of job seekers to industries and occupations where jobs will be available locally upon completion. Working closely with the Indiana Department of Workforce Development, EmployIndy engaged in a multi-level return on investment analysis to identify current and projected employment opportunities in Marion County for the purpose of identifying high-demand, high-wage occupations for many types of workers. Using Marion County data available through multiple public sources including detailed industry and state-of-the-workforce analysis, EmployIndy identified industries with occupations that meet the following, general parameters:

- Economic Development Job Creation Capacity
- High Demand Occupations
- Provide Career Pathways
- Provide Self-Sufficiency
- Educational Requirement Consistent with EmployIndy Eligibility

<https://www.employindy.org/OneFlow/home.aspx>

Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County

The Workforce Development Council of Seattle-King County recently developed a Talent Pipeline Study that shows workforce supply and demand through 2019 in six key sectors, plus occupations in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math). Phase 1 included Health Care, Manufacturing, and Transportation/Logistics while phase 2 included Information Technology, Business Services, Finance/Insurance, and STEM. They have also identifies three “watch” sectors that could have a potential impact on the local economy, including Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Transportation and Warehousing, including Logistics and Supply Chain Management; and Financial Services and Insurance.

The Workforce Development Council’s primary goal is to meet business needs and get people into jobs. Using sector strategies streamlines this process, centered on those occupations and industries with large economic size and scope, in demand jobs, supply and demand alignment, and with a significant potential for impact.

<http://www.seakingwdc.org/sector-initiatives/>

Gulf Coast Workforce Board

Workforce Solutions helps area employers address current and future labor shortages in key industries by producing regular industry and occupation reports. This also includes information on companies, jobs, salaries, and educational requirements. Currently energy, education, and health services have been identified as target industries due to a combination of rapid growth and current and projected labor shortages in high-wage, high-skill occupations. Workforce Solutions assists in the matching process to place qualified applicants into open positions, restructures education and skills training, and helps businesses address future labor shortages, serving as the uniting force between the individual seeking a job and the business seeking an employee.

One example of a successful sector strategy catalyzed by the Gulf Coast Workforce Board is the partnership between ExxonMobil Chemical Company and nine Houston area community colleges. In an effort to better recruit high school graduates and military veterans, the company has developed a Community College Petrochemical Initiative.

<http://www.wrksolutions.com/for-employers/key-industry-sectors>

Colorado SECTORS Initiative

In an effort to support both workforce and economic development, the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment in partnership with the Colorado Workforce Development Council created a pilot planning grant to support sector initiatives. Driven by employer needs, goals of the pilot programs centered on up-skilling the Colorado workforce, creating targeted, industry specific career pathways, increasing training opportunities, and streamlining the process for individuals utilizing the system. To ensure sustainability and economic growth, CWDC is developing a business-led talent system. The selection of key industries stemmed from the Colorado Blueprint and the Governor's "bottom up" economic development plan. Through labor market data analysis, 14 key industries have been highlighted. Each has a steering committee made up of business and industry executives to lead the specific initiatives at the state level. Currently, the Key Industry Initiative (KIN) focuses on the following industries: Manufacturing, Information & Technology, Electronics, Energy & Natural Resources, Bioscience, Food & Agriculture, Defense & Homeland Security, Aerospace, Health & Wellness, Creative Industries, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation, Transportation & Logistics, Infrastructure Engineering & Construction, Financial Services.

<https://www.colorado.gov/cwdc>

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board

As part of a larger goal identified in the WORK Smart Kentucky strategic plan to align all education, economic development, and workforce development resources across the state of Kentucky, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board has adopted sector strategies as a means of transformation. A process of labor market data analysis, identification of potential key industries, and further refining these key industries to top critical sectors is defining workforce development alignment strategies moving forward.

As a result, regional workforce boards are redefining their operations, with some moving to sector focused case management and business services. Since this sector identification was driven by data analysis, now that industries have been identified, the task moves to building employer support. To facilitate this, KWIB has released Sector Strategies Toolkits that outlines critical factors to a successful sector strategy system, which include:

- Selection based on real-time data
- Selected by regional consensus
- Employer's assessed talent needs are clear
- Partners' plans and organizations support sectors
- Curricula strategies are aligned
- Business services are aligned
- Ongoing continuous improvement and sustainability planned

<http://kysectorstrategies.com/>

Youth Services

Youth services are an integral component of any workforce development system. Youth are the future workforce and it is essential that as the talent pipeline, they are provided opportunities to prepare for employment. Valuable work experiences are essential for preparing youth to transition to adulthood. With the WIOA legislation, local areas must use 75% of funds for out-of-school youth. This population is often hardest to serve since they are frequently disconnected and have numerous barriers to employment. In addition, local areas must spend 20% of youth funds on work experience activities such as summer jobs, pre-apprenticeship, on-the-job training, and internships so that youth are prepared for employment. Youth services should focus on work experiences for out-of-school youth.

Youth Build

In Youth Build programs, low-income young individuals ages 16 to 24 work full-time for six to 24 months toward high school diplomas or credentials while learning job skills by building affordable housing in their communities. Emphasis is placed on leadership development, community service, and the creation of a positive mini-community of adults and young adults committed to each other's success. At exit, they are placed in college, jobs, or both.

<https://youthbuild.org/>

TRACK – Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky, Kentucky Department of Education

The TRACK program is a partnership between the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education and The Kentucky Labor Cabinet to provide pre-apprenticeship opportunities to high school students. The industry driven program helps to develop a pipeline for students to enter post-secondary apprenticeship training. Students receive an industry certification upon completion and all the on-the-job hours can be counted towards the apprenticeship. The program also requires involvement and participation of the Kentucky Community and Technical College System.

The TRACK program is a best practice because it involves employer and education partnerships, which accelerate youth employment and entry into career pathways, providing more opportunities for youth and combining elements which are essential for the state's future workforce.

<http://education.ky.gov/cte/cter/pages/track.aspx>

WorkINdiana – Adult Education and Workforce Development, Indiana Department of Workforce Development

In Indiana, the Adult Education system is within the Indiana Department of Workforce Development (IDWD); therefore, the two systems work closely together by maximizing resources and providing integrated delivery of services. Indiana has changed the structure of adult education service delivery, added basic occupational training opportunities, enhanced student support, and implemented new data systems to better track clients in the workforce and education training system.

IDWD invested federal and state funds to support the WorkINdiana program. Indiana created the program to raise the skill level of the adult population and to meet workforce demands for middle skills attainment. Participants can earn a High School Equivalency and an industry-recognized occupational certificate at the same time through the WorkINdiana program. Students can choose from over 30 certifications in Advanced Manufacturing, Business Administration and Support, Health Care, Hospitality, Information Technology, or Transportation and Logistics.

http://www.in.gov/dwd/adulted_workin.htm

Project Rise and Learn to Earn Program, Full Employment Council, Inc. of Kansas City, Missouri

Project Rise seeks to re-engage youth ages 18-24, who have not worked or gone to school in at least six months, by placing them in paid internships and encouraging them to continue their education. The goal is to prepare them to enter the workforce. Successful completers receiving high school diploma or high school equivalency will receive scholarship funding to attend post-secondary in-demand occupational training.

The FEC's Learn to Earn Program helps to empower youth in the Kansas City community to make positive life choices that enable them to maximize their potential. The program, funded by the Kansas City Chiefs, the Kansas City Royals, and the Jackson County Sports Authority, provides economically disadvantaged young adults, 18-24 years old, that live in Jackson County, MO, with internships and scholarships in occupations that support professional baseball and football athletics. Those selected in the competitive application process are provided a six-week internship and are eligible to receive up to \$3,000 in scholarships to attend a community college or vocational school. Participants will be enrolled in a post-secondary institution; the Learn to Earn Scholarship will be used to match Pell Grant funds.

<https://www.feckc.org/Programs-and-Services/Young-Adult-Services.aspx>

Youth Career Café, Peninsula Council for Workforce Development

The Peninsula Council for Workforce Development runs a program called the Youth Career Café which focuses on working with youth to develop workplace readiness skills, set career goals, and identify post-secondary opportunities available to reach those goals. The program teaches youth how to navigate the business world and find real world applications for their education and the skills they are learning.

Program services include:

- One-on-one career services
- School group visits
- Workplace readiness training
- Secondary or post-secondary career related program resources
- Work-based learning activities including internships, job shadowing, part- and full-time employment and service learning
- Cluster workshop with industry, business, governmental and non-profit professionals
- Tutoring services
- Career interest assessments

<http://pcfwd.org/youth-programs/youth-career-cafe/>

End of Chapter

This page intentionally left blank



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 4: Labor Market Intelligence



Using Labor Market Intelligence

To create a truly demand-driven talent development system, it is important to understand the dynamics of the local labor market, the state of the local economy, and the needs of local businesses. Analysis of labor market and industry data can provide the insight needed to form a more robust and strategic plan.

Labor market *information* refers to quantitative or qualitative data that is available on a specific area or labor market, including employment and unemployment statistics, educational attainment indicators, and industry and occupational information. Labor market information becomes labor market *intelligence* when it is analyzed and interpreted within the context of the local economy and used to draw conclusions and create policy recommendations.

In strategic planning, it is important to understand the meaning behind the information that is available and to add local intelligence through conversations with employers, partners, and education institutions. For most publicly available data, there is a lag in publishing based on reporting and compiling timelines. Changes in the economy can occur more rapidly than this data can capture, so verification and additional information is necessary. Understanding that a community has a large number of unemployed workers in the construction industry and that there are many construction job openings is important. However, it is even more valuable to understand why construction employers are not finding these unemployed workers suitable for the jobs they are struggling to fill. Labor market intelligence facilitates this deeper (and more relevant) understanding.

Labor Market Information vs. Labor Market Intelligence

Labor market information refers to quantitative or qualitative data that is available on a specific area or labor market.

Labor market intelligence refers to an analysis and interpretation of data to draw conclusions and create policy recommendations.

Examples of leveraging labor market information include:

- Utilize demographics and labor force participation rates to understand the dynamics of the current labor force and identify potential retirement trends
- Examine commuting patterns to understand where workers are coming from, and where residents are working
- Analyze industry and supply chain data to understand target industries that are ripe for sector strategies initiatives
- Identify in-demand occupations and compare with education and training programs that exist to determine if they meet employer needs
- Compare in-demand occupations and wage data with career pathways that lead to advancement and family-sustaining wages

Local intelligence should also be used to explain trends and events that will not show up in the data, or may even contradict what the data is showing. For example, when a local manufacturing plant has closed, data may show a sharp decline in employment. However, speaking with the employer and other local organizations could reveal that the plant is shutting down for a year to retool, with plans to increase employment levels upon reopening.

Though this is not shown in the data, it can have important implications for the workforce needs of the community and must be considered in planning for hiring events, training and skills development, and identifying targeted local industries.

This intelligence should be shared with your Board to provide context for the planning process, serve as a baseline for focus areas, and foster goal development.

The State of Oregon’s Workforce and Economic Research Division is a great resource for labor market information and maintains an on-line platform through which you can access information about your local area at www.qualityinfo.org.

The division also has dedicated staff for each local area, should you have questions or need to discuss any specific data needs. Contact information for these staff members is listed in the following table:

Workforce Area	Counties	Research Contacts	Email / Phone
Central Office	Statewide	Nick Beleiciks	nick.j.beleiciks@oregon.gov (503) 947-1267
Northwest	Benton, Clatsop, Columbia, Lincoln, Tillamook	Erik Knoder	erik.a.knoder@oregon.gov (541) 574-2306
		Pat O’Connor	patrick.s.oconnor@oregon.gov (541) 812-8639
Portland Metro	Multnomah, Washington	Amy Vander Vliet	amy.s.vandervliet@oregon.gov (971) 804-2099
Clackamas	Clackamas	Dallas Fridley	dallas.w.fridley@oregon.gov (541) 645-0005
Mid-Valley	Linn, Marion, Polk, Yamhill	Pat O’Connor	patrick.s.oconnor@oregon.gov (541) 812-8639
Lane	Lane	Brian Rooney	brian.t.rooney@oregon.gov (541) 686-7703
South Coast	Coos, Curry, Douglas	Guy Tauer	guy.r.tauer@oregon.gov (541) 776-6060 x240
		Brian Rooney	brian.t.rooney@oregon.gov (541) 686-7703
Southern Oregon	Jackson, Josephine	Guy Tauer	guy.r.tauer@oregon.gov (541) 776-6060 x240
Central	Crook, Deschutes, Gilliam, Hood River, Jefferson, Klamath, Lake, Sherman, Wasco, Wheeler	Dallas Fridley	dallas.w.fridley@oregon.gov (541) 645-0005
		Damon Runberg	damon.m.runberg@oregon.gov (541) 388-6442
Eastern	Baker, Grant, Harney, Malheur, Morrow, Umatilla, Union, Wallowa	Andrew Crollard	andrew.r.crollard@oregon.gov (541) 519-0315
		Dallas Fridley	dallas.w.fridley@oregon.gov (541) 645-0005

**Contact information as of December 2014*

Other Sources of Data

Public Data Sources

Stats America Counties in Profile: http://www.statsamerica.org/profiles/us_profile_frame.html

Stats America provides free economic and workforce data for all U.S. states and counties. Includes data on population, housing, income, and labor. It is a quick summary resource that draws from federal data sources (Census, BLS, BEA).

US Census Bureau: <http://www.census.gov/>

The US Census provides data and information about people and the economy and offers a variety of tools for the extraction, analysis, and visualization of this data. Several of these tools that may be beneficial to your strategic planning process are listed below.

The American FactFinder: <http://factfinder.census.gov/>

Provides data tables about many of the Census Bureau's surveys, including the American Community Survey, on the nation's communities, economy, and housing market.

OntheMap: <http://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>

Visually depicts the distribution of population and employment in any area of the United States. Also provides insights into commuting patterns of workers.

County Business: <http://www.census.gov/econ/cbp/>

Provides data on businesses by industry, including number of establishments, employment, and payroll (also available by state).

US Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS): <http://www.bls.gov/>

The BLS measures labor market activity, working conditions, and price changes in the economy.

Local Area Unemployment Statistics: <http://www.bls.gov/lau/>

Offers monthly and annual employment, unemployment, and labor force data for many different levels of geography.

Alternative Measures of Labor Underutilization for States: www.bls.gov/lau/stalt.htm

Gives non-standard unemployment rates, such as the unemployment rate if we took into account discouraged workers, marginally attached workers, and/or workers who are employed part-time not by choice. For states and the nation only.

Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages (QCEW): www.bls.gov/cew

Provides employees, establishments, total wages, average weekly wage, and average annual pay for states, counties and metropolitan areas throughout the U.S. There is a Multi-Screen Data Search available that functions the same as that of the LAU database.

Occupational Outlook Handbook: <http://www.bls.gov/ooh/>

Provides summary pay, education level, and job outlook data points for five-digit SOC occupations, along with descriptions of work environment, career path, and similar occupations.

O*NET: <http://www.onetonline.org/>

Provides occupational information through a skills-based database that describes knowledge, skills, and abilities of workers.

US Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA): <http://www.bea.gov/>

The BEA provides national, international, and regional economic data, including Gross Domestic Product (GDP), international trade and investment statistics, industry-specific GDP, economic impact information, and others.

Proprietary Data Sources

A variety of labor market data services are available for a one-time or subscription fee. These services include, but are not limited to:

- EMSI: Economic Modeling Specialists Intl.: <http://www.economicmodeling.com/>
- Burning Glass: <http://www.burning-glass.com/>
- WANTED Analytics: <https://www.wantedanalytics.com/>
- Monster Government Solutions: <http://monstergovernmentsolutions.com/>
- TORQ: <http://www.torgworks.com/>
- Chmura Economics and Analytics: <http://www.chmuraecon.com/>

Creating a Data Profile

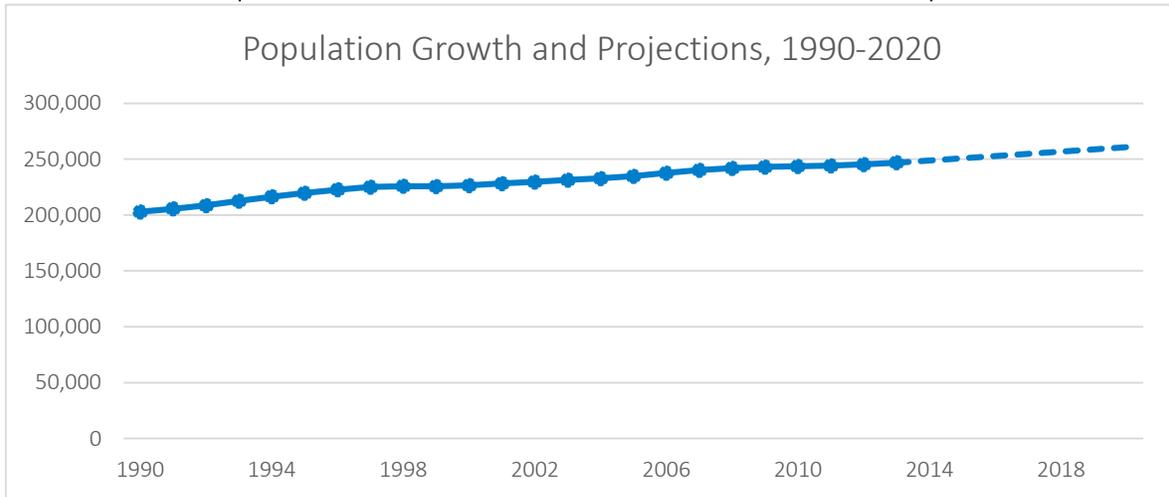
A sample data profile is provided on the following pages. Due to the shifting nature of the economy and labor market, any data profiles used in your area should be updated at least annually, or even quarterly. Having a profile on hand not only helps when strategic planning, but can also be useful for orienting board members or speaking with employers.

Northwest Area

*Unless otherwise noted, all data displayed is for the local area.

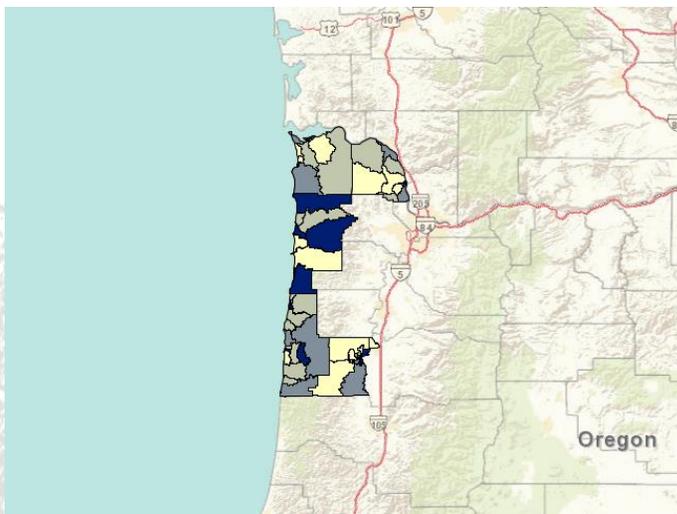
Demographics

2013 Population		Compound Annual Growth Rate	
Area Total	% of Oregon Total	2000-2013	2014-Projected
246,780	6.3%	0.7% (Oregon = 1%)	0.8% (Oregon = 1.2%)



Median Household Income	Poverty Rate
\$47,334 (Oregon = \$50,306)	17.7% (Oregon = 15.5%)

Poverty Rates Displayed by Census Tract*



- Up to 10%
- 10.1% to 15.5% (State rate)
- 15.6% to 20%
- Greater than 20%

*Subject to margin of error. Due to small sample sizes, margins of error vary widely.

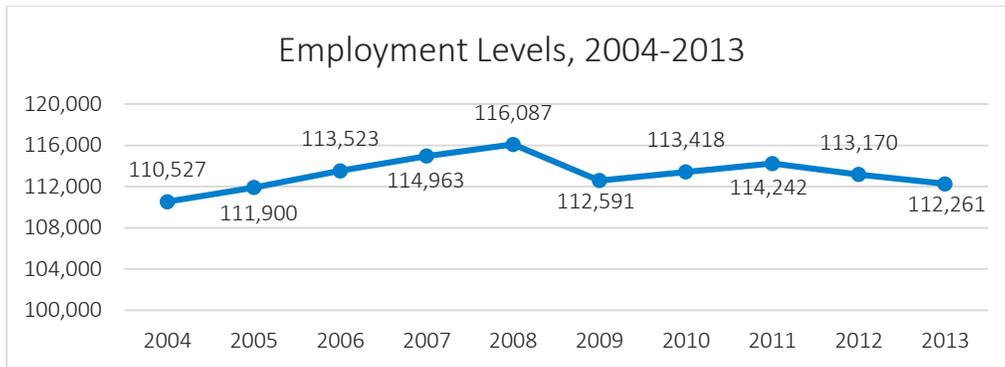
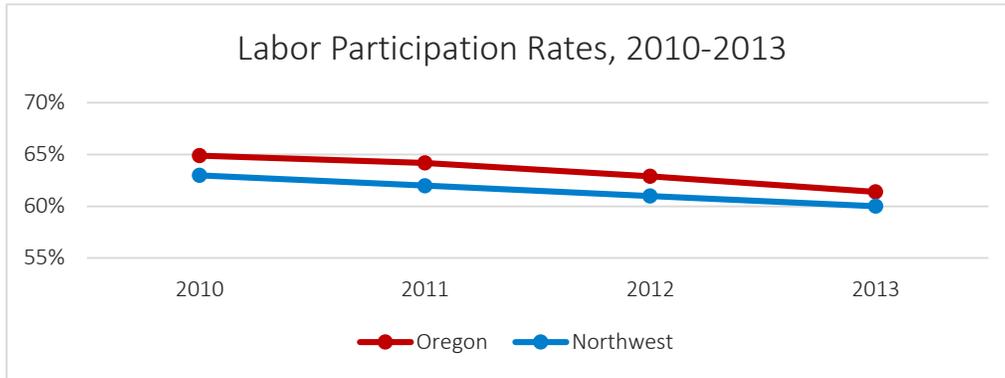
Labor Force

Size, 2013

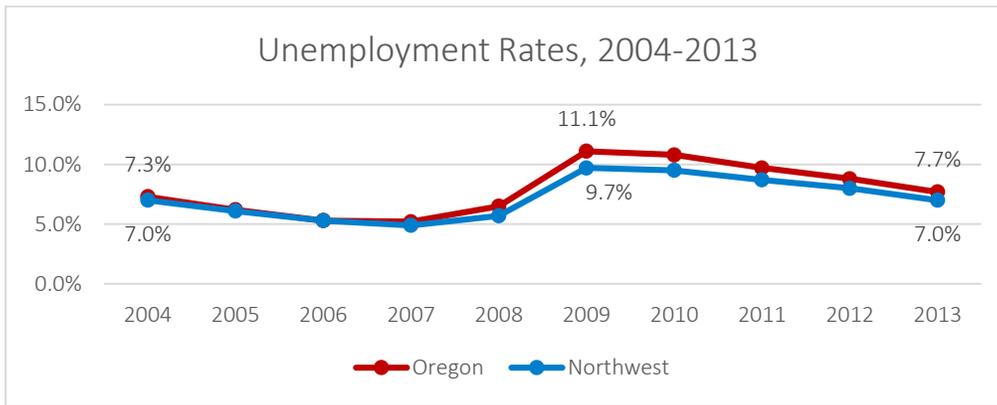
120,741 workers (6.3% of Oregon labor force)

Participation Rate, 2013

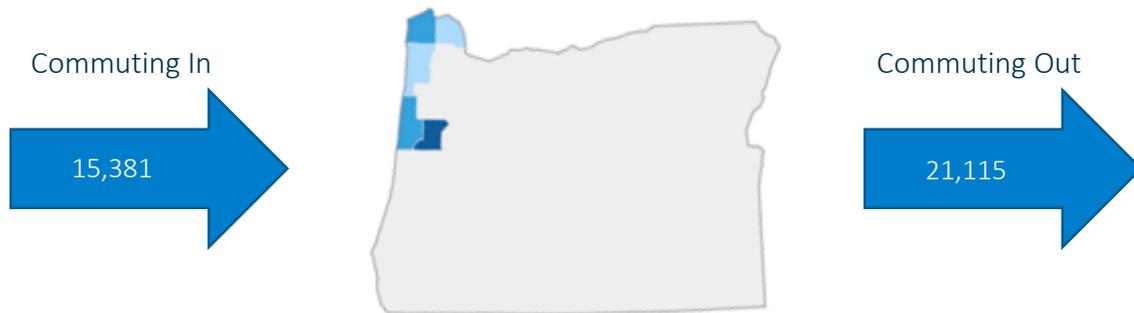
60.0% (Oregon = 61.4%)



Unemployment Rate, 2013	Unemployment Rate, Ages 16-24, 2013		
7.0% (Oregon = 7.7%)	County	16 to 19	20 to 24
	Benton	26.2%	8.4%
	Clatsop	22.8%	18.4%
	Columbia	42.0%	18.7%
	Lincoln	28.0%	24.5%
	Tillamook	13.6%	14.8%
	<i>Oregon</i>	<i>29.1%</i>	<i>16.4%</i>



Commuting Patterns

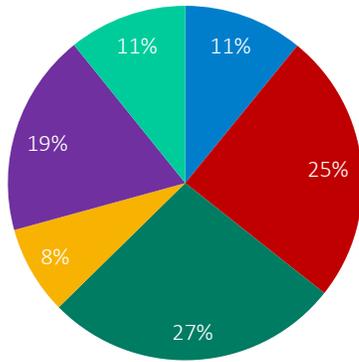


Top Destinations for Out-Commuting Workers, 2006-2010

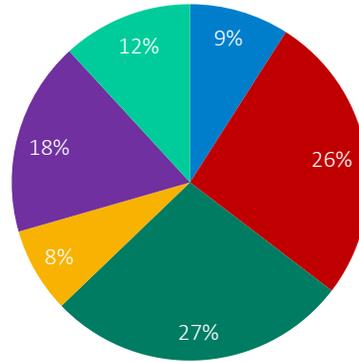
County	Number of Workers
Multnomah	5,709
Linn	4,845
Washington	3,510
Marion	1,657
<i>Out of State</i>	<i>2,687</i>

Educational Attainment, Ages 25+

State of Oregon



Northwest



- Less than high school
- High school diploma or GED
- Some college, no degree
- Associate's degree
- Bachelors degree
- Graduate or professional degree

Industries

Top Industry Groups by Employment, 2013

Industry	Employment 2013	Change since 2010	Business Establishments
Food services and drinking places	9,324	526	740
Hospitals	3,917	86	8
Accommodation	3,711	189*	301
Professional and technical services	3,101	523	659
Ambulatory health care services	3,028	238	379
Food and beverage stores	2,761	44	182
General merchandise stores ³	2,148	186	34
Administrative and support services	2,147	-15*	285
Nursing and residential care facilities	2,080	-271	146
Membership associations and organizations	2,015	29	405

*represents change in employment due to non-economic changes in the administrative industry classification of firms.

Occupations

Top Occupations by Employment, 2012

Occupation	Employment 2012	Total Openings*	Median Wage	
			Clatsop, Columbia, Tillamook	Benton, Lincoln, Linn ¹
Retail Salespersons	4,650	2,187	\$11.09	\$10.45
Education, Training, and Library Workers, All Other	4,112	765	\$19.44	\$12.84
Cashiers	3,319	1,591	\$10.17	\$9.60
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	3,167	1,865	\$9.58	\$9.37
Office Clerks, General	2,598	782	\$12.79	\$14.12
Waiters and Waitresses	2,522	1,492	\$9.41	\$9.33
Truck Drivers, Heavy and Tractor-Trailer	2,225	687	\$17.53	\$18.54
Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,040	613	\$10.72	\$10.15
Registered Nurses	1,944	635	\$39.69	\$37.26
Postsecondary Teachers, Except Graduate Teaching Assistants	1,863	463	\$43,534	\$77,661

*Includes growth and replacement openings

¹Linn County is included since projections for previous workforce areas do not aggregate perfectly to new workforce areas



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 5: State Guidance







Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 6: Federal Guidance







Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 7: Elements of a Draft Plan



Framing the Strategic Plan Draft

Translating ideas and input into a plan

This chapter introduces the four components that all planning processes should consider when writing a clear and comprehensive strategic plan draft. The contents of a plan should provide an outline for the Board’s work at all levels – from a more broad and visionary view, down to a list of specific tasks to be accomplished. Including information at multiple levels of detail and depth ensures that there will be aspects of the plan that are suitable and appealing for multiple audiences – those who are only interested in the broad areas addressed by the Board, and those who are detail oriented, interested in action, and responsible for promoting the implementation of the plan.

The four components included in the following chapter are **Focus Areas, Goals, Strategies, and Action Steps**.

- Focus Areas** Focus areas define the most important, priority areas in which the Board wants to conduct its work. These can be very broad and result from brainstorming discussions about the greatest needs of the community.
- Goals** Goals explain the Board’s aim and outline the desired results within each focus area. They are comparable to writing several, more focused vision statements for the work of the strategic plan.
- Strategies** Strategies are more action-oriented than focus areas or goals, but take a long-term view on the Board’s work. They describe a continuing plan of action that builds upon itself to achieve a goal.
- Action Plan** The action plan is the most detailed portion of a strategic plan and is essential for tracking implementation. It serves as a step-by-step guide of tactics that string together to form strategies that board champions can use to drive those strategies forward.

When the planning process is complete and a strategic plan is finalized, these four components will serve several different purposes. Having defined focus areas and goals can assist with communicating and marketing the work of the Board, as they are more broad and easier to understand by a wider audience. This positions the Board as the go-to resource for talent development in the community and builds credibility and visibility of the Board’s work, facilitating greater levels of cooperation and collaboration from partner organizations.

Strategies and action plans can help communicate in more detail to board champions, partners, or staff who will help with implementation, driving the work toward tangible results.

Each is described on the following pages, including facilitation strategies for board discussions, and examples of each element.

Determining Focus Areas

Where do we start?

The first step to defining a strategic plan is to determine the top areas of need for your area around which your goals and strategies can be created. These areas of need should be related to and support progress toward your vision statement. To frame this discussion, present the Board with all relevant data and information gathered during the initial phase of the planning process. This will include any review of existing plans from the Board as well as other allied organizations, analysis of labor market information, and stakeholder input through surveys, interviews, focus groups, or public forums.

Based on the information presented, the Board should begin to identify issues and opportunities for its strategic work. During a facilitated session, have board members divide into groups and answer the following questions:

- What are the top three to five issues to address through your strategic plan?
- What are the most important services that the workforce system should continue to provide, change or begin to offer in the next three years?
- How can the system be more effectively aligned to promote the common vision and mission statements?

After allowing for discussion within groups, have each group report out, with one person available to capture all thoughts and ideas. As feedback is being captured, begin to arrange ideas into themes that emerge to help the Board see where commonalities exist. All ideas may fit into two to four common areas, however, if there are more than four that emerge, prioritize them to choose those that are most important to address in the strategic plan. At this point the areas can be very broad and may focus on external or internal operations. Examples include:

Youth Programs

Board Orientation

Business Services

Career Pathways

Soft Skills

Community Outreach

Service Delivery

Sector Strategies

**Marketing and
Communications**

One way for the Board to prioritize the list of ideas that is created is to use a simple voting method. Using flip chart paper, or a chalkboard or white board, post the focus area options on the walls around the room. Give each board member three dot stickers or sticky notes to vote for the three areas they see as highest importance. After all voting is complete, add up the number of votes each has received and rank the areas. Share the ranking with the Board to confirm the results.

After choosing two to four focus areas as priorities for the strategic plan, use these to provide guidance for the goal setting phase of planning.

Setting Goals

Explain why we are here.

Upon identifying the Board's top two to four focus areas, set at least one goal for each area. Goals should explain the Board's aim and outline the desired results within each focus area. Goals are a tool to stretch the Board to reach beyond its current accomplishments and continually strive for more. They should be visionary, reflecting the ideal picture of desired outcomes and how the Board is positioned within each focus area. They should also be in line with your Board's vision and mission. Great goals are aspirational, but attainable.

A goal answers the questions:

What do we want to see happen?

What does success look like?

To set goals, think about them as separate vision statements for each focus area that has been chosen. To frame this discussion, use the same questions outlined for creating a vision statement, however, evaluate them through a more focused lens. Those questions include:

- What are the top three values for this focus area?
- What does success mean to us?
- What does our community look like if we are successful long-term within this focus area?

Another strategy is to ask participants to think about the big picture. Take a moment to imagine that it is 10 years in the future and you have three minutes to tell someone from outside your area about the work your Board has been doing in the community for the last 10 years. What are the things you want to be able to tell them? These big picture thoughts and visions should make up your Board's strategic goals.

Through this brainstorming process, many ideas may emerge. Be careful not to set too many goals, as the more goals you have, the thinner your efforts will be spread. It may be easy to lose focus if there are too many goals to work toward.

The following are examples of goals set by several companies. While the content of your goals may differ, the tone, structure, and depth of these goals are good guidelines.

Attain a standard of organizational excellence by aligning our products, services, processes and culture with stakeholder expectations to improve financial performance and overall business results.

Amtrak

Increase access to and consumption of fresh, nutritious, whole foods in schools.

Whole Kids Foundation

Identifying Strategies

How do we get where we want to go?

While goals and focus areas define *what* the Board wants to do, strategies begin to get into the *how*. They are where the rubber begins to meet the road.

“How do we achieve this goal?”

Strategies are critical to success, as they begin to outline the actual work of the Board to promote accomplishments toward a defined mission, vision, and goals. They usually have a long term focus with higher ambitions than any one task could complete. Their implementation refers to a coordinates series of actions that will take place over a specified period of time. Without a concentrated effort to identify effective strategies, the Board’s mission, vision, and goals will fall flat.

To begin to identify strategies for each goal, pose questions to the Board, such as:

- What are areas that need improvement to achieve our goals?
- How can we strengthen our services to reach our goals?
- Are there new initiatives that need to be created to meet our goals?

Examples of strategies include:

Corner the fledgling mobile image sharing market, and hedge our bets for future growth.

Facebook

resulted in acquisition of Instagram

Build a strong brand community and social image.

Bass Pro Shops

As goals are visionary and sometimes broad, there may be multiple strategies outlined for each defined goal. Each strategy should be accompanied by a coordinated set of actions, as described in the next section.

Effective Action Steps

A strong, detailed action plan is essential for a strategic plan to produce results and be truly successful. An action plan should provide a “how-to guide” or a “road map” for board champions to lead the implementation of the goals and strategies that have previously been identified.

While goals and strategies can be visionary, somewhat broad, and often focused on the long-term, action steps should be specific and direct tactics that build toward accomplishing strategies. Actions answer the question,

“What needs to be done?”

Every action included in a plan should have a purpose. For each step created, you should be able to answer “why?” to connect the action all the way to its corresponding goal. **Why** are we completing this action? The answer should point to the strategy. **Why** are we completing this strategy? The answer should point to the larger goal. Asking these “why?” questions helps to ensure that your actions are always pointing back to your goals and your work is focused on achieving the desired results.

What makes an effective action step?

An effective action step clearly states what the individual task is, who is responsible for completing the task, and when the task will be completed. Taken together, action steps create the step-by-step “road map”. Specificity is the key to ensuring they are effective and each action step should be clear, concrete, and comprehensive.

Action Description

Of course, creating the action itself is the first element of an action step. Begin by creating a “to-do” list to answer the question “What needs to be done?” from which action items can be formed. Each action item should use a simple command statement beginning with an action verb, such as:

Contact	Compare	Create	Determine
Draft	Evaluate	Identify	Produce
Recruit	Report	Select	Synthesize

Each action item should consist of one task. Items that consist of multiple steps should be broken into individual action items. To maintain clarity and concreteness, both quantitative and measurable information should be included whenever possible.

Responsible Party

The next step in creating an effective action item is assigning responsibility for each item to an individual person. This individual will be primarily responsible for completion of the task, though portions of the task may ultimately be delegated to another individual or shared by a group. Assigning responsibility aids in task follow through and

internal accountability. By assigning task responsibility during the action step creation process, there will also be a shared understanding of exactly what needs to be accomplished.

Resources Needed

Some action steps may require resources to complete. Most commonly, these resources include the expertise of specific individuals, financing for activities, or simply staff time devoted to the task. Detailing the resources needed for each action step further clarifies the task and is helpful in planning to ensure it can be completed within the assigned timeline.

Timeline

To be effective, it is critical for each action step to have a deadline. Finding balance between ambitious deadlines and realistic expectations is very important to support an individual's ability to accomplish an action step. Too much time to complete a task can cause implementation to lose steam, while too little time assigned to a task can cause missed deadlines and derail the process moving forward.

Keep in mind that certain action steps can be ongoing. For example, regularly scheduled communication throughout the implementation of the strategy can help facilitate progress. As an action step, however, this task will have multiple deadlines and should be kept on a predetermined schedule.

Outcome

The outcome and impact of each action step should be linked directly back to the overarching strategy. This returns to the “*why?*” concept. If each action step has a clear answer to “why are we completing this step” and “how does this align to the overall strategy”, the action step will have an outcome by design. Articulating the desired outcome for each step can help provide clarity for the detailed action description, person responsible, and resources needed. On the other hand, if the action step has no clear outcome, is it strategically important to fulfill the vision and goal? This can help pare down action steps to only those that are necessary for success.

Also consider what the impact will be if there is no action. Will there be a shift in the timeline? Will you run into availability issues with partners or others involved? Will it prevent progress on other actions? Documenting these consequences can be valuable in providing an incentive to keep up with implementation. If there is little or no impact of no action, the step may not be necessary to include in the plan.

Continuous Monitoring and Improvement

When determining each action step, it is also important to consider possible problems that could stall progress. Possible problems will be unique to each task and could stem from issues such as a lack of resources, lack of follow through, or lack of buy in from stakeholders. Proactively addressing problems can strengthen the timeline, outcomes, and individual action steps. This, in turn, maximizes effectiveness of the action steps.

No matter how proactive you are throughout implementation, however, there will always be unexpected issues that emerge and may require an adjustment to the action plan. This should be expected and the plan should be monitored to determine if new actions are appropriate or if timelines and responsible parties need to be shifted.

There's no need to reinvent the wheel.

While creating all of these elements of a strategic plan, and identifying detailed action steps may seem like a lot of work, the upfront effort is essential to promoting the Board's work and mission, ensuring efficiency in implementation, and making effective use of volunteers' time. However, there is no need to create everything from scratch. Adapting best practices from other areas of the country can be an efficient and effective way of shaping some areas of your strategic plan, while still putting your own local spin on things.

Adapting Best Practices for Action Steps

If, during the best practice research early in the planning process, you have identified programs or projects implemented by others in the state or nationally, you can put a local spin on someone else's idea and make it your own. Projects designed and implemented using federal funds are in the public domain and most of your counterparts around the country will provide you with details about their implementation tactics and lessons learned. Contact them and ask lots of questions; they will probably be flattered that you have targeted their innovation as a best practice.

However, it is not usually advisable to adopt someone else's project in full, as there are likely to be different local conditions, political considerations, and resources available for implementation. Taking an idea from somewhere else will only be effective if it is put in the context of local conditions, needs, and resources available to implement. Use best practices as a starting point, and adapt as necessary to make it fit your community.

Example - Kentucky Work Ready Communities

One of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board's identified strategies was to demonstrate the skill of its workforce to economic developers and business owners. After researching what other states were doing around this concept, the Board decided to borrow the idea of creating a certification for counties that would validate the skills of their workforce based on a model from Oklahoma and Georgia called Work Ready Communities. In so doing, the team assigned to create a program in Kentucky went directly to economic developers and business owners and asked the question, "If we told you that Woodford County had a labor force that was 'work ready', what would that mean to you?"



Based on the responses, the Kentucky program included four criteria that were not present in the Oklahoma and Georgia models. These additional criteria are educational attainment (associates degrees and higher), soft skills development, broadband access, and community commitment to maintaining the pipeline of skilled workers.



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Chapter 8: Successful Implementation



Implementation Structure

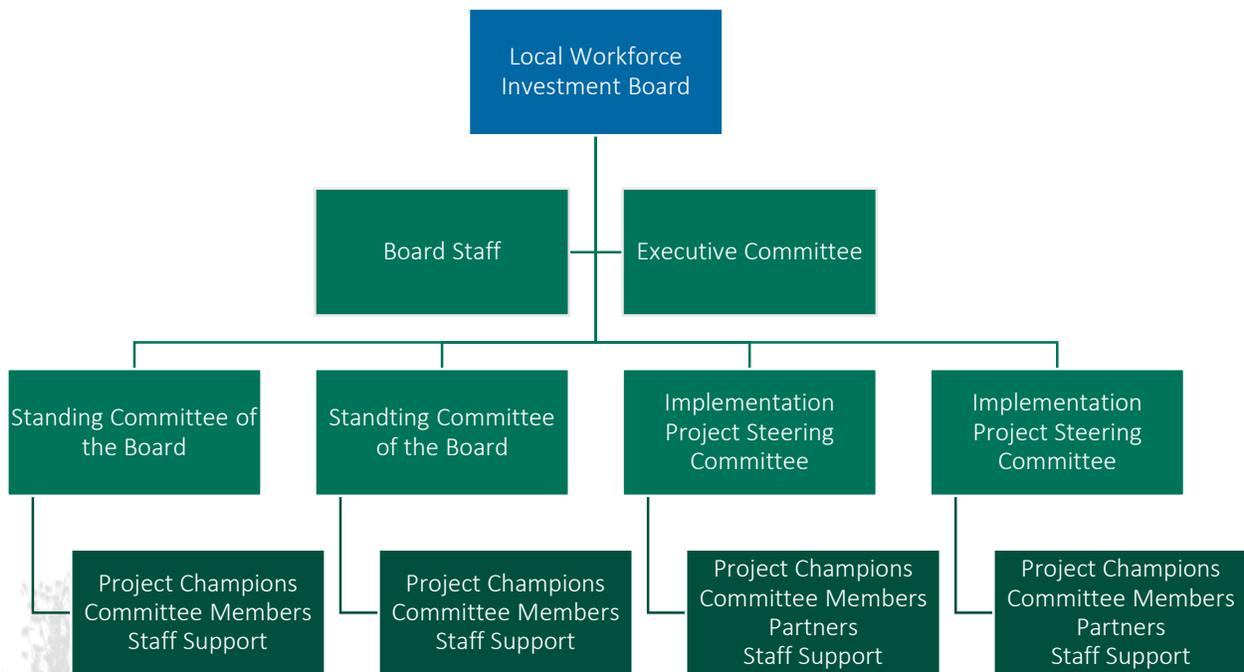
The Importance of Having Structure

The workforce system envisioned by the strategic plan will only become a reality if it is implemented. Implementation takes time and organization and, most importantly, broad community buy-in, especially from business and industry.

This chapter deals with creating an implementation framework and expectation that will help the Board succeed in realizing its vision. The structure put in place will clarify roles and responsibilities and spread the work among a wider group of stakeholders, not only to build capacity to transform the system, but also to create and maintain ownership of the workforce system among a broader base of constituents.

Now that you are ready to put your plan into action, it is even more critical to have the private sector providing leadership that will transform the system and give the community and the state the competitive edge it must have in the new economy. The system’s staff will provide the leg work, but leadership must come from the Board and its Champions.

Below is an example of an organizational chart and descriptions of corresponding roles and responsibilities. The Board should adapt this structure to meet its own unique needs and local conditions.



Defining Roles and Responsibilities

The Board

The Board has the responsibility to oversee and monitor implementation of all action items described in the strategic plan. It is also the responsibility of the Board to report implementation progress and results to the Chief Local Elected Official on a regular basis. If included in the by-laws, the Board may, at its discretion, assign some of the responsibilities for monitoring to the Executive Committee, including authorizing the Executive Committee to make time sensitive decisions on behalf of the Board if necessary between regularly scheduled meetings of the full Board.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee will act on behalf of the Board when authorized to do so. Its decisions should be reported to the full Board at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

Committees of the Board

Implementation projects (strategic action steps or initiatives) which do not require a specialized Steering Committee may be assigned to one of the Board's standing committees for oversight. The Committee will be responsible for monitoring implementation, providing input and guidance to the staff and partners involved, and reporting on progress at regular meetings of the Board.

Champions

A Champion is usually a member of the Board, although it could be his or her designee, or another member of a stakeholder group who takes a personal interest and the responsibility for advancing a particular implementation project. Champions may be identified during the planning process.

This individual acts as a cheerleader to rally buy-in from partners and stakeholders and as an advocate to build support from elected and appointed officials that are key to the success of the project. The Champion can be as involved as he or she chooses in the technical oversight of implementation, but will serve as spokesperson to the Board on behalf of the project. The Champion may also be called upon to make presentations from time to time about the project to stakeholder and other groups.

Steering Committees

Steering Committees are designated to provide input, oversight and monitoring for specific implementation projects. These projects are generally larger in terms of budget and anticipated results or involve the use of a contractor or consultant who requires regular access to specific individuals or groups to fulfill their obligations to the contract. Composition of a Steering Committee should be based on the requirements of the project. These committees will vary in size and should include representatives of the Board as well as others engaged in the implementation process. Steering Committees should be chaired by a member of the Board, which may or may not also serve as the Project Champion. These committees will report directly to the Board on their progress and results.

Partners

Partners are agencies, organizations, and stakeholder groups both within and outside government. Partners identified in the strategic plan are those whose participation is considered necessary for successful implementation of a particular project. Partners serve as technical experts, consensus builders, and links to

individuals and groups impacted by the project. A designated individual from each Partner should serve as the primary contact with that group and be provided all appropriate communications and project development materials. It is anticipated that Partners will have varying levels of involvement depending on factors such as available time, benefits of the project to their group, etc.

Staff

The Board's staff should be assigned responsibility for providing support services for each of the Steering Committees. These individuals should develop and keep all contact information and files related to each project, organize meetings and event logistics, develop reports, and create or coordinate all necessary documents. They should also serve as the conduit for communicating information between Steering Committees, Champions, or consultants on matters of common interest or where efficiencies can be achieved.

Time Commitments

The amount of anticipated time each member should expect to spend as a Project Champion, Steering or Board Committee Chair, or member should be established with that individual at the beginning of the implementation process.

As these are largely volunteer assignments, the level of time commitment will depend on the nature of the assignment, available volunteer time, and other factors. Successful implementation will require varying amounts of time depending on the project itself and the engagement of others.

Reporting Progress

Purpose

While the development of a strategic plan answers the question “where are we going?”, progress reporting gives a clear answer to “are we getting there, and how?” once implementation has moved to the next stage.

Regular progress reporting during the implementation of a strategic plan can often be overlooked, yet is one of the most important means to success. The main purpose of reporting progress is to keep all stakeholders engaged throughout the implementation process. Progress reporting can include simple status updates or big milestone reports on both implementation tasks and larger initiatives.

Once a strategic plan is created, action steps have been assigned, and work has begun, regular progress reports measure advancement towards full implementation. This is unique from measuring the impact of implemented projects. Measuring the impact of implemented projects is a separate step that the Board can focus on as initiatives are rolling out. The goal with reporting progress on the initial implementation is to build the buy-in to ensure the strategic plan takes hold from the beginning. This effort will be reflected in the later impact analysis.

Transparency

There is no better way to keep stakeholders engaged than by maintaining transparency through every step of the implementation process. With regular updates, there is space created for feedback and input. If problems arise with specific action steps or initiatives, noting this in a progress report can also create an opportunity to request additional assistance or to engage in some creative problem solving before bad news must be delivered. Lessons learned from early action steps can inform later ones to improve implementation as time goes on. Transparency in progress reporting can also help to create a sense of a team. Those who may not be a part of a particular steering committee or action team will hear about others’ progress and can still feel some ownership over the work that is contributing to the larger goal.

Another benefit to reporting progress systematically is the bread crumb trail that it creates. In other words, there is a written track record documenting the steps that have been taken and what will be done moving forward. While the action plan lays out how the implementation is intended to be carried out, progress reports can document any adjustments or changes that were made when the tasks were actually undertaken. When evaluating the process later on, the lessons learned and recorded in these documents can inform updated strategic plans and initiatives moving forward.

Consistency

The longer the process, the more important it is to be consistent with progress reporting. Even if these are short status updates on action steps instead of large implementation milestones, demonstrating steady progress can build momentum and increase support. This can be seen as a benchmarking process that fuels qualitative and quantitative data-driven decisions. For example, if an action step has not been completed by a certain date, the progress report can provide the information needed to either alter the plan or improve the process. Most importantly, consistent progress reporting requires accountability. As the saying goes, “what gets measured gets done”.

Impact on Results

Research has shown that success begets success in many different spheres. With transparency and consistency, successful implementation can fuel itself as the process moves forward. Demonstrating progress at the early stages through transparency and consistency can have a huge impact on progress over the long term. Documenting all of the actions and demonstrating all of the moving parts of the plan can help to create further buy-in and rally others to join in during the later stages of implementation. Everyone wants to be associated with a winner, so as others see the Board following through with the strategic plan and achieving results, they will be even more interested in getting involved.

Process

Who?

A staff member should create a format for consistency across progress reports. The Champion or another individual who is deeply involved in a particular action step or an initiative should oversee the completion of the information that will be required for the update.

What? (Content)

The content of the progress report should be tied directly to action steps. Elements reports could include:

- Initiative or action step concerned
- Date of the progress report
- List of tasks completed and yet to be completed
- Name and role of individuals involved
- Status on any resources used or needed
- Schedule—whether behind, ahead, or on track
- Issues or key concerns
- Decisions needed by the Board
- Changes or amendments to the initial plan
- Next steps

In general, the more specific and concise the report is, the better. While the level of detail will change if the report is about a significant milestone or simply a status update, it should take only a few minutes to get through.

Where? (Channel)

When designing the progress reporting procedures, consider the medium that will be used for presenting the progress reports. This could be anything from a short announcement during a board meeting, a regularly scheduled email blast, or a more formal system. The reports could also be posted on the Board's website to promote accountability and transparency. The process can be streamlined by designating an individual to compile and disseminate the progress reports if there will be several on the same timeframe.

When? (Timing & Frequency)

Much like the deadlines associated with action steps, determining a consistent time and frequency for reporting progress will improve accountability. These may differ based on the type of project or task, but should be determined at the onset.

Board Meeting Agenda Framework

Concept

The Board can use the implementation of its strategic plan to guide the framing of meeting agendas. Inclusion of implementation updates not only serves to remind all involved with the Board that the plan is guide for the Board's work, but also provides members serving as Champions with the opportunity to recognize the accomplishments and progress being made on their initiatives.

Each implementation project will have a unique schedule. Establishing milestones along the timeline of each project's implementation will also provide the Board with an opportunity to schedule presentations at a point in time when progress toward or achievement of a milestone is expected.

Once implementation begins, the Board should request a project plan or schedule from the Champion or Steering Committee Chair. This schedule should indicate implementation milestones and dates to allow the Board to monitor progress and request presentations, discussions, or updates.

Depending on the particular milestone, the Board may request a quick update or a formal presentation. In either case, sufficient time should be allotted to encourage questions and discussion of the progress. Not every project must be discussed at every meeting. Focus should be placed on those which have reached an implementation milestone since the last meeting or last update to the Board.

Sample Agenda

Sample Board Meeting Agenda

Mission and Vision of the Board

- A. Welcome
- B. Roll Call
- C. Approval of Minutes
- D. Financial Report
- E. Consent Agenda
- F. Updates on Strategic Plan
 - a. Soft Skills Certification Initiative Update – 10 minutes
Fred Johnson – Champion
 - b. Work Ready Communities Initiative Update – 30 minutes
Mary Smith – Champion
Board Action Requested – Approval of Recommended Policy
- G. Other Business
- H. Next Meeting
- I. Adjourn



Oregon
Local Workforce Boards

Appendix A: Templates



Strategic Planning Work Plan



Strategic Planning Work Plan

Task	Responsible	Month				Month				Month									
		[list weeks]																	
0	Pre-planning preparation																		
0.1	Establish Steering Committee																		
0.2	Select plan manager																		
0.3	Select plan author																		
0.4	Finalize work plan																		
1	Kick-off Meeting																		
1.1	Schedule meeting																		
1.2	Create agenda																		
1.3	Create materials																		
1.4	Hold meeting																		
1.5	Follow up																		
2	[TASK 2]																		
3	[TASK 3]																		
4	[TASK 4]																		
5	[TASK 5]																		

Action Planning Tools

GOAL:

STRATEGY:

ACTION #1:

Partners Needed

*Who should be involved in implementation?
Who should lead/champion the strategy?*

Resources Needed

*What financial or non-financial resources
will be needed?*

Timeline

Please circle one.

Short-term
(Less than 1 year)

Mid-term
(1 – 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ years)

Obstacles to Address

*Do any barriers to success exist? If so, what
needs to be done to overcome them?*

Notes:

ACTION #2:

Partners Needed

*Who should be involved in implementation?
Who should lead/champion the strategy?*

Resources Needed

*What financial or non-financial resources
will be needed?*

Timeline

Please circle one.

Short-term
(Less than 1 year)

Mid-term
(1 – 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ years)

Obstacles to Address

*Do any barriers to success exist? If so, what
needs to be done to overcome them?*

Notes:



ACTION #3:

Partners Needed

*Who should be involved in implementation?
Who should lead/champion the strategy?*

Resources Needed

*What financial or non-financial resources
will be needed?*

Timeline

Please circle one.

Short-term
(Less than 1 year)

Mid-term
(1 – 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ years)

Obstacles to Address

*Do any barriers to success exist? If so, what
needs to be done to overcome them?*

Notes:

ACTION #4:

Partners Needed

*Who should be involved in implementation?
Who should lead/champion the strategy?*

Resources Needed

*What financial or non-financial resources
will be needed?*

Timeline

Please circle one.

Short-term
(Less than 1 year)

Mid-term
(1 – 3 years)

Long-term
(3+ years)

Obstacles to Address

*Do any barriers to success exist? If so, what
needs to be done to overcome them?*

Notes:



FOCUS AREA:						
GOAL #1						
Strategy	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Resources Needed	Start Date and Target Completion Date	Date Completed
Strategy #1						Champion:
		IMMEDIATE				
		MEDIUM-TERM				
		LONG-TERM				
Strategy #2						Champion:
		IMMEDIATE				
		MEDIUM-TERM				
		LONG-TERM				
GOAL #2						
Strategy	Action	Priority	Responsible Parties	Resources Needed	Timeline	Date Completed
Strategy #1						Champion:
		IMMEDIATE				
		MEDIUM-TERM				
		LONG-TERM				
Strategy #2						Champion:
		IMMEDIATE				
		MEDIUM-TERM				
		LONG-TERM				

Progress Reporting



Goal:

Strategy:

Champion:

Date:

<i>Actions completed since last report:</i>
<i>Actions behind schedule:</i>
<i>Issues or concerns:</i>
<i>Have any changes or amendments been made to the action plan?</i>
<i>Are there any additional resources needed at this time?</i>
<i>Are there any decisions that need to be made by the Board at this time?</i>
<i>Next Steps:</i>