

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM REVIEW  
 FOCUS GROUP—WDC DIRECTORS AND CHAIRS (10/16/09)

STRATEGIC DIRECTION	
<p>1. State and local partners are responsible for strategically positioning the workforce development system to respond to a changing environment. <b>How should the system be organized to improve its ability to identify future needs?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local responsive leadership is the key, about most effective partnership between business and government, wealth of knowledge on boards helps to meet needs of the region effectively</li> <li>• There exists a good mechanism, can convene CTC. CBOs, business, and labor, invest more authority or resources to implement the decisions being made</li> <li>• Re: forward thinking, need to talk to the ground level, business community local workforce development</li> <li>• Local data does help to customize services, regional economists in the local areas</li> <li>• Business services teams allow partnership to update labor predictions and openings on a quarterly basis</li> <li>• Different strategic perspectives, where does it come from, strategic planning comes from state AND local level, how does it flow back and forth; disconnect between the two systems; what is the purpose of WIA—is universal and shared, we should have specific objectives we are trying to achieve; there are some state objectives, but we don't all operate in the same vane, don't know where the leadership should come from. More intensive, more comprehensive approach to strategic planning. More integrated cooperative system</li> <li>• Difficult to take broad perspective given individual vantage point, needs to be an inclusive process; state can't do everything from above and local can't do it from below; strategic planning inherently different at each level</li> <li>• How should we go through strategic structured planning process; need a structured process where people could put pieces together, state WTECB needs to put together strategy, needs to get input from locals; each one of us has more than one role, strategy and activities are provided by state and local; state doesn't take full advantage of policy role of locals</li> <li>• Never clear if functioning policy or management</li> <li>• Clearly identify how we work together and functions we each take</li> <li>• Everybody has access or the opportunity to acquire knowledge and communicate that</li> </ul>
<p>2. Substantial research and policy recommendations have been developed to guide the system. <b>What literature and/or research do you find especially useful? What lessons can be learned from this literature? How can the system build on work already completed?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WA Works, Next WA, Compact, NASWA</li> <li>• WWA, alternative governance in WIA Reauthorization</li> <li>• ESD has been responsive in providing info</li> <li>• Learn from actual local experience, recognize trends, share, and allows for maximum flexibility, critical to share info</li> <li>• Having a structure to adapt to change once recognized, any delays to implement is a threat</li> </ul>
<p>3. The expertise of state and local workforce development system partners is essential in determining future strategies. <b>What do stakeholders want to accomplish over the next 3 to 5 years? How might this direction be tailored and implemented locally?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unclear how to translate WIA purpose into local activities, what constitutes success? Policy gives structure to function within, and initiate strategies locally and integrate with state</li> <li>• Youth program couldn't have happened without local connections youth/employers</li> <li>• Needs to be locally driven, skill sets are local; if local entity is not identifying need I don't know how the state can</li> <li>• 100 percent employment and jobs filled; all those who want them; career ladders for those that want them</li> <li>• Never enough money, must leverage capital and funding to create more capacity, broaden capacity</li> <li>• Don't have a clear state objective that is tangible that locals can work towards; weakness is state doesn't have clear/concise statement of objectives; gather input from the local for state to develop operational environment</li> <li>• State and local policymakers agree on what are tangible outcomes; clearer articulation of what it means to be successful</li> <li>• Employers have greater commitment to human capital investment</li> </ul>

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<b>EDUCATION AND TRAINING</b>	
<p>4. The workforce development system is comprised of many complex organizations and systems. <b>What are your suggestions to ensure better coordination/alignment between the one-stop system and education partners?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Look at much broader system, needs to be nimble and prepared to respond, WS as well as training system; systems are far more complex; what does training look like in the future, can we afford long term endeavors when environment requires frequent changes; connecting K-12</li> <li>• What are the hard barriers? Need to see system as a whole, not just a here's money and go do it; common protocol around tools and data between WS and CTCs; capacity variance—boundaries do not allow for crossover, need for more online and alternative options to deliver training;</li> <li>• Reactive v. proactive theme; blueprint- clusters based on economic development data, identifying need and build training accordingly, career paths in industries that are going to grow; need strategy in place for CC to build skills to anticipate needs</li> <li>• SnoHo works, we know when/where classes should be offered</li> <li>• If things are working in the state, and looks at what is working, capture and disseminate best practices</li> <li>• Should look at limits re: if don't have a cohort large enough, can't offer class; ABE, and how do we integrate into system, employer-based education</li> <li>• Consider alternative model, develop a demand driven model, focus on where employer needs are and create a supply accordingly, does not lend itself to stability however, (not supply driven) will supplement WorkSource, must be flexible and nimble</li> <li>• Financial aid piece to worker retraining, not well coordinated, staff changes, don't realize gamut of available resources</li> </ul>
<p>5. The community and technical colleges serve as an important training provider/vendor to the federally funded workforce development system. <b>Do you believe the two year college system is fully utilized by the workforce development system? Why or why not?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-location models are helpful</li> <li>• Most training dollars go to colleges</li> <li>• We do utilize (5809 example), not a separate system, they participate on the councils</li> <li>• Effective partner, but can't do everything everywhere, so you have to grab resources that are going to work for you, funding can be an obstacle because of limited uses</li> <li>• Track where graduates go, WS and SKIES might be helpful to CTCs</li> <li>• Need to be realistic about the CTC system, not the most flexible or motivationally changing institution, to counteract we have to do a better job of separating out basic education, job training; need flexibility at the college level;</li> <li>• CTCs have been flexible</li> <li>• Need for more local level work and collaboration, depend on good personal relationships to keep WS/CTC together</li> <li>• More IBEST, work place models, ABE</li> <li>• WDCs can support CTCs better. WDC contracts with CTC for placement, other relationships to help CTCs succeed</li> </ul>
<p>6. From your perspective, <b>what gaps exist that hinder an effective comprehensive workforce development system?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stackability of degrees, example nursing programs, don't start over each time</li> <li>• Not a lot of cooperation between private sector and CTC system, particularly in maritime</li> <li>• CTCs work closely with private schools</li> <li>• Articulate prior experience (ex: military), assessment of that work and granting credit accordingly</li> <li>• State needs to be about "what" needs to happen and let the local level figure out "how", tracking of outcomes rather than inputs, when deciding what you want from locals we need clear and concise objectives from the state, don't tell us how to do customer flow in a WS, ex: summer youth program—state didn't say how, it was what they wanted)</li> <li>• Transferability and articulation of credits and program among state schools in particular, within and between</li> </ul>

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<p>7. The current economic situation has resulted in extremely limited state resources. <b>How can we efficiently and effectively leverage federal funding to increase training capacity in order to provide training to more Washingtonians?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax incentives, exist but are limited, there needs to be a larger pool of credits and informing of employers</li> <li>• Commissioner approved training, quicken process</li> <li>• Fulfilling best practices that other entities are not and showing to DOL</li> <li>• Been very proactive around the state getting folks connected with Trade Act</li> <li>• Recognition by the legislature</li> <li>• Rapid response additional assistance funding becoming available earlier appreciated</li> </ul>
<p>8. The Workforce Investment Act allows states to reserve a limited pool of funding for activities of statewide significance (these funds are commonly referred to as the Governor’s Discretionary 10% funding). <b>How can the system ensure that the Governor has maximum flexibility in the utilization of these funds in order to respond to statewide need as it arises? How can the state still provide funding for ongoing systems services?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Innovation, what is being done out there as best practices and using 10% to encourage those practices, incentive</li> <li>• Incumbent worker training component is welcomed</li> <li>• 10% allows for some flexibility, alternatives</li> <li>• Policy advising to the state</li> <li>• Process needs to be inclusive enough so that Gov is given optimal choices</li> </ul>

<p><b>OPERATIONS</b></p>	
<p>9. Year to year and in different Workforce Development Areas, funds provided to the system have fluctuated and will continue to do so. At any given level of funding, <b>how can the ability of the state’s WorkSource centers to deliver a consistent level of assessment, employment planning, and job placement assistance be improved?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed costs, and then funding slides; a huge challenge</li> <li>• ESD has helped in getting mitigation funds out</li> <li>• Look at how do you provide funding to do some of those tasks of planning, we’re reducing while still having to do basic WIA compliance</li> <li>• Better job of strategic planning to make sure we can reduce with loss of funding</li> <li>• Aerospace, costs go down faster than revenue; scalable manufacturing, can’t have too much money in infrastructure (needs to be scaled up and down) and have the ability to leverage partnership</li> <li>• Need to explore service delivery options, outside of bricks and mortar</li> <li>• Use technology better, must work with ESD to make sure that can happen with legacy systems</li> <li>• Don’t confuse activity with results</li> <li>• Can’t rely on antiquated funding formula, opportunity to present threshold of funding to provide to run system</li> </ul>
<p>10. There are a variety of customers who seek assistance in the system. <b>How can service be provided to benefit all interested jobseekers having difficulty competing in the labor force?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workshops, informational events for employers, self-services in labs, investigating what can be done with career networking system</li> <li>• Take more serious our role of coordination, employers that have teamed, provide service connecting unions and employers, funnel people into programs that aren’t paid for by our own funds</li> <li>• Create virtual services, need to come into the 21<sup>st</sup> century</li> <li>• Chat system in Snohomish, deployed access centers at no cost with willing partners, system is everywhere so need to look at the language we use not just four walls of WS or otherwise</li> <li>• Conversation that is ongoing as to what does the public workforce system do in the 21<sup>st</sup> century; are we structured today the way we need to be</li> </ul>

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	<p>to do the work we need to do today</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do we create access, rural areas have poor access, distance learning, internet courses</li> <li>• Need to find statewide stability of consistency of services, expectations, who will be in a WS center</li> <li>• Ask customers what would be the best use of time and energy as they look for jobs or increase skill level or move through job market; do we really have good customer data about this</li> <li>• Global staffing, majority access virtual only to pick up checks</li> </ul>
<p>11. In any given year, hundreds of thousands of customers come into the system seeking assistance. <b>What can be done to improve the accountability of the centers for serving those customers? How can the level of service be measured</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measuring outcomes, know what to measure, let locals figure that out</li> <li>• Performance areas that are most productive, outcomes are hard to do</li> <li>• Management outcomes</li> <li>• We don't want for measures, for whom, conversation for roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• Discomfort with contracting and evaluative role</li> <li>• Accountability should be focused at the local level, started with tax payers, should be to them</li> <li>• Outcome: cause and effect; talking about a result of a substantive interaction; what is expectation for certain level of service</li> <li>• Expansion of roles and responsibilities that weren't there originally</li> <li>• When you talk about outcomes, all politics and outcomes are local, tough to do on a grand scale</li> <li>• How can we measure outcomes for people who don't get intensive services? Must deal with performance measures—how much is due to work of WS? Do a better job of identifying those activities we perform that are most successful</li> <li>• We also need data to measure performance. We don't want to be accountable. Who are we accountable to? Can't we all just agree on outcomes? Karen can hold her staff accountable, but not my staff, Karen plays too many roles.</li> </ul>
<p>12. The current Executive Order has been in place since 1999. Since that time there have been significant changes in Washington state that create different challenges for customers and the system that serves them. <b>Do the roles and responsibilities assigned by the Executive Order promote accountability and customer-focused performance?</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability should be at the local level. Taxpayers paid the bill. Employers should want the accountability locally</li> </ul>

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**Post-discussion Notes**

**What does state mean? Does it matter? (Karen)**

- There are different echelons

Thanks – this demonstrates the importance of communication. I have learned a lot. This has been informative. (Karen)

This has shown again the local aspects of the work we do, and importance of keeping that in mind. Can't do enough local coordination and cooperation, some optimization still needed however (Karen)

Must do more cooperation at the local level; common accountability measures; deploy resources quickly (Charlie)

**What would you prioritize other than local direction (Bryan)**

- Clear articulation of roles and responsibilities
- More money
- Common systems
- Communication with a common language that takes us to a strategic coordinated plan

**Highlighted Themes**

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

- Local leadership, activities, input, and structures are important in positioning the workforce development system to respond to changes. There should be clearer, comprehensively informed state objectives that the local areas are given the flexibility to reach.

**EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

- There is a need to conceptualize local areas and CTCs as part of an integrated, whole system that fosters improved local collaboration, rather than distinct parts with boundaries, enabling a more proactive approach/strategy to anticipate needs and build training accordingly. New models for providing training services, including workplace-based, web-based/virtual, I-BEST, and other emerging promising practices (co-location, stackable degrees, improved transferability and articulation of credits and experience), should be expanded.

**OPERATIONS**

- Explore ways to expand capacity through better strategic planning/coordination and providing services through technology and existing community-based organizations and partnerships. Measure outcomes—not activity, let the state communicate what they want and allow local areas to decide how it is achieved. Accountability should be at the local level.