



On August 11, 2009, Governor Gregoire directed Karen Lee, Commissioner of the Employment Security Department and Charlie Earl, Executive Director of the State Board for Community and Technical Colleges, in collaboration with Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director of the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board, to conduct a review of the Workforce Development System. The scope, process for gathering input, and questions to be addressed are described below.

Scope: The purpose of this project is to clarify roles and responsibilities of critical parts of the Workforce Development System. For purposes of this review, those “critical parts” have been defined as the Employment Security Department, Workforce Board, Workforce Development Councils, and the Community and Technical College system. This study will build on prior efforts for improvement and provide recommendations that will enhance services. Efforts will be focused particularly on the system’s ability to *respond to changing economic conditions, rapidly and effectively deploy discretionary and other funds, and establish operational standards and consistency.*

The intent of this work is not to recreate the wheel or dismantle healthy and functioning structures. It will not examine the membership structure or independence of the current State Workforce Board or the number of workforce development areas or membership structure of Local Councils, or the Community College system. Rather, it will focus on effectively and consistently connecting people who are at a competitive disadvantage in the labor market with training, services, and jobs.

Information Gathering: Information will be gathered through conversations with three tiers of participants, an on-line instrument, and research and analysis. Research and analysis will provide a foundation for examining the structure, roles, and responsibilities within the workforce system.

Stakeholder Input will be gathered by engaging statewide associations, local practitioners, and representatives in Olympia. An on-line instrument will also be made widely available to ensure all who wish to comment may do so.

Questions to be Answered: The review will address three aspects of the workforce development system, as defined above. Those are: Strategic Direction, Education and Training, and Operations.

Strategic Direction:

State and local partners are responsible for strategically positioning the workforce development system to respond to a changing environment. How should the system be organized to improve its ability to identify future needs?

Substantial research and policy recommendations have been developed to guide the system. 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?

The expertise of state and local workforce development system partners is essential in determining future strategies. What do stakeholders want to accomplish over the next 3 to 5 years? How might this direction be tailored and implemented locally?

Education and Training:

The workforce development system is comprised of many complex organizations and systems. What are your suggestions to ensure better coordination/alignment between the one-stop system and education partners?

The community and technical colleges serve as an important training provider/vendor to the federally funded workforce development system. Do you believe the two year college system is fully utilized by the workforce development system? Why or why not?

From your perspective, what gaps exist that hinder an effective comprehensive workforce development system?

The current economic situation has resulted in extremely limited state resources. How can we efficiently and effectively leverage federal funding to increase training capacity in order to provide training to more Washingtonians?

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). 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?

Operations:

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, 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?

There are a variety of customers who seek assistance in the system. How can service be provided to benefit all interested jobseekers having difficulty competing in the labor force?

In any given year, hundreds of thousands of customers come into the system seeking assistance. What can be done to improve the accountability of the centers for serving those customers? How can the level of service be measured?

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. Do the roles and responsibilities assigned by the Executive Order promote accountability and customer-focused performance??

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