

## Spokane Area Workforce Development Council Strategy Team Notes

### Business Clusters Team

**Date of Team Meeting:** January 17, 2006

**Location:** Career Path Services, 905 N Washington, Manito Park Room

**Members:**

Arteaga, Frankie

Cabildo, Ben

**Dias, Craig-Co-Chair**

Garza, Albert

**Hanson, Steve-Co-Chair**

Iranon, George

Kogle, Gail

Lee, Craig

Link, Patrick

Marchioro, Bill

Murcar, Joanne

Zahir, Jeff

**Members Present:**

Dias, Craig

Garza, Albert

Iranon, George

Kogle, Gail

Lee, Craig

Marchioro, Bill

Murcar, Joanne

**Guests:**

Roger Ingbretsen

John Baumhofer

Anne Lockwood

**Specific Purpose of Meeting:** To continue the discussion of implementation of clusters approach to workforce development.

**Action Items Discussed:**

1. The WDC could hold back a portion of funding each year for special needs when a cluster gets hot.
2. The WDC needs to understand business cycles of clusters and develop ways to identify emerging clusters.
3. Identify skills for workforce development. Core competencies and occupational skills sets.

4. How can we help businesses identify needed skills? How do we exchange information with businesses, education, and training institutions?
5. Need to align cluster needs with resources. Identify funding “resources” for clusters/training opportunities. WIA formula funds are targeted to disadvantaged and dislocated worker population.
6. Business needs to be willing to invest in long-term training
7. Identify transferability of skills across clusters.
8. Need to assist incumbent workers within businesses to help them move up career ladders.
9. WIA program providers need to serve targeted populations across many cluster groups. There is a risk in concentrating resources in any one cluster.
10. Committee recommendation to the WDC would be to
  - Maintain business cluster focus
  - Research possibilities for cluster concentration
  - Aggressively seek funds for Skill Panels.
11. Long term workforce development strategies include influencing K-12 (core competencies), changing work culture (to value life long learning), and recognizing characteristics of several workforces new entrants, the aging workforce, dislocated workers, and previously under represented groups.
12. Businesses need to become more visible and vocal regarding workforce issues, and proactive in working with all partners to develop solutions.
13. The WDC needs to establish partnerships with organizations and associations representing business sector interests as well as relying on traditional sources of Labor Market information.
14. Timing of demand with trained workers is a key challenge for forecasting emerging clusters.

### **Open Action Items:**

1. There are two approaches to clusters:
2. Industry clusters and occupational clusters. Perhaps we should consider a hybrid approach
3. The WDC could hold back a portion of funding each year for special needs when a cluster gets hot.
4. Link businesses together that have common themes or common services, such as “customer services”
5. Focus on skills and career ladders
6. Identify skills for workforce development
7. Identify portable skills sets
8. Provide outreach to youth and inform them about opportunities
9. Offer applied technology classes in high schools
10. Educate students about occupational clusters
11. Keep a skills-based approach
12. How can we help small businesses identify needed skills? How do we exchange information with small businesses?
13. Need to align cluster needs with resources. Identify funding “resources” for clusters/training opportunities

14. Business needs to be willing to invest in long-term training
15. Need to identify long-term trends
16. Basic skills have been identified that are needed
17. Need to cluster businesses
18. How could the 501c3 help us?
19. Need to catch clusters earlier to engage them as partners and meet their needs  
(Identify clusters with growth potential)
20. Identify transferability of skills
21. Should recognize that many sectors in Spokane are doing well and have needs for skilled workers
22. Need to assist incumbent workers within businesses to help them move up career ladders
23. Provide background information on clusters identified by Chamber and EDC

**Action Items Completed:** No action items were completed. It was decided that the strategic partners (EDC, Chamber, CCS, etc.) needed to be at a meeting so they can explain the cluster studies that have been done. Craig is going to invite some key business men as well. The purpose of the meeting would be to identify differences and commonalities of the identified clusters to guide the WDC actions, since each partner defines a cluster to fit their purpose.

**Next Meeting Date and Location:** To be determined when Craig has contacted strategic and key partners.