

WORKSmart

Kentucky



A Strategic Transformation of Kentucky's Workforce System

May 2010



KENTUCKY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD



KENTUCKY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

May 20, 2010

Governor Beshear,

Over the past year, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board has engaged in an aggressive and open planning process to create a strategic action plan that will transform Kentucky's workforce development system. The need for transformation was made clear to the Board when considering the current financial and unemployment crisis coupled with the dynamic nature of business, industry and the world of work in a new and emerging economy.

In order for Kentucky to compete in an economy that looks very different from the past, we must redesign our workforce services to adapt to the changing needs of employers; i.e., a focus of green jobs and energy efficiency, leaner manufacturing, small business, entrepreneurial growth, and a talented/skilled workforce as an increasingly important differentiator in economic development.

This plan looks at the current system with a critical eye and proposes a set of strategies to realign nearly every aspect of our delivery of services in some way to provide our customers with a demand-driven, business-led, solutions-based approach to workforce investment decisions.

Like any investment portfolio, Kentucky should insist on a return on its investment in our workforce. The ultimate return is realized in a Commonwealth where skilled workers retain family-supporting jobs with employers who are competitive in the new economy.

The members of Kentucky Workforce Investment Board are pleased to present you with a plan that not only articulates a vision for moving Kentucky forward in the field of workforce development, but also prescribes specific strategic action steps required to realize that vision.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Hugh Hayden'. The signature is fluid and cursive.

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Executive Summary

In the summer of 2009, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board began a process to develop a strategic plan to transform Kentucky's workforce development system to meet the challenges of a changing global economy and address the most immediate concerns of the current financial crisis. This process included an extraordinary stakeholder engagement process with input from customers, local and state workforce professionals, economic development officials, educators, and business leaders.

What emerged was a consensus belief that the system was overly complex, not user-friendly, program driven rather than demand driven, and lacked the cohesion of an efficient and effective service delivery organization. With a great deal of input, the business and industry-led committees developed a vision statement to serve as the guide for the development of goals.

Vision Statement

Kentucky will transform the workforce development system through innovative practices which enhance sustainable economic and job growth to improve the lives of Kentuckians.

Goals

Align the Commonwealth's workforce development system with Kentucky's education objectives

Align the Commonwealth's workforce development system with economic development strategies

Simplify the workforce development service delivery system

Improve service to achieve a customer-centered delivery system

Themes

Themes of the plan include greater involvement of business, industry and labor in the investment decision-making process to assure Kentucky's workforce possesses the skills required to meet the demands of employers. Value will be created in the system by transforming a workforce development

culture that is based on developing viable human resource solutions for business and industry, as well as the aspirations and career goals of job seekers and employees.

This plan does not seek to direct how specific programs should be managed at the local level, instead it looks at the system as a whole and provides both state and local officials responsible for serving customers with guidance, policy frameworks and tools to achieve success in a dynamic new economy.

Implementation

Hundreds of hours of volunteer time were contributed by business, education, labor, economic development and workforce development organizations to create comprehensive strategic action steps. These tactical implementation measures are the keys to successfully achieving all four goals and ultimately realizing the vision.

In addition to action steps focused on specific goals, a number of tactics were identified which can contribute to achieving more than one goal, and thereby have a transformational impact on the system as a whole. These include developing sector strategies at the state, regional and local level to help guide investment decisions based on those sectors of the economy with the most promise of quality job growth.

Another challenge that impacts the entire system is the lack of customer recognition, which is a direct result of a lack of statewide brand identity. The development and promotion of a brand is seen as much more than rolling out a new logo. Branding the system includes developing a level of consistency among foundational elements of the system including user-friendly, online services, One Stop Career Centers, customer service, and case management. This plan also recognizes the need for local areas to have flexibility and opportunities to adapt the brand locally.

Specific action steps are designed to take advantage of opportunities to improve customer choice and promote innovation, such as a renewed focus on the advantages of registered apprenticeships and a statewide initiative to

promote entrepreneurship training and access to venture capital and micro-financing. Others such as the Workforce and Economic Development academies recognize the importance of quality assurance in the delivery of services and the need for collaboration between education, workforce and economic development professionals at all levels.

Each action step included in the plan provides some level of benefit to customers of the system either directly or indirectly by improving the services and/or delivery of services. The number of action steps included in this plan is significant, a signal from the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board that major changes to manner in which Kentucky invests in its workforce are required to compete with other states and nations in the future.

Implementation Costs

Where possible, costs of implementation have been identified. Some costs are one-time costs, while others will require on-going funding to transform and maintain a project over time. Funding sources for implementation of many projects are identified and include new funding sources as well as reallocation of existing resources to better align investments with the goals of the plan.

Although the Commonwealth, like every other state, is experiencing budget shortfalls requiring cuts to programs, the workforce system is in a unique position to invest millions of federal American Recovery and Reinvestment Act dollars back into the system. By design, these funding streams encourage states to make transformational changes in response to a new paradigm for the national economy, new and emerging industries, and the changing characteristics of the workforce.

Monitoring Progress

Roles and responsibilities for implementation of the plan rest with nearly every board, agency, partner, and employee that is part of the workforce, education and economic development community. While the Governor has directed the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board to monitor the progress of implementation and report on the results, the board understands that in order to fully realize the vision of making significant improvements to the workforce system, the participation, innovation and hard work of many other groups and individuals is required.

Conclusion

Based on significant stakeholder involvement and the examination of best practices from within Kentucky and across the nation, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board has presented a bold strategy to transform the state's current system to one that is demand-driven, business-led, and solutions-based. This new blueprint for Kentucky's workforce investment portfolio goes beyond the traditional boundaries of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and the Wagner-Peyser Act, to bring together the collaboration of education, workforce and economic development at all levels in new and innovative ways. This strategy seeks to leverage state, local and private-sector resources for a comprehensive and robust approach to preparing workers of today and tomorrow for new opportunities and Kentucky employers for the human resource tools they need to compete in a dynamic global economy.

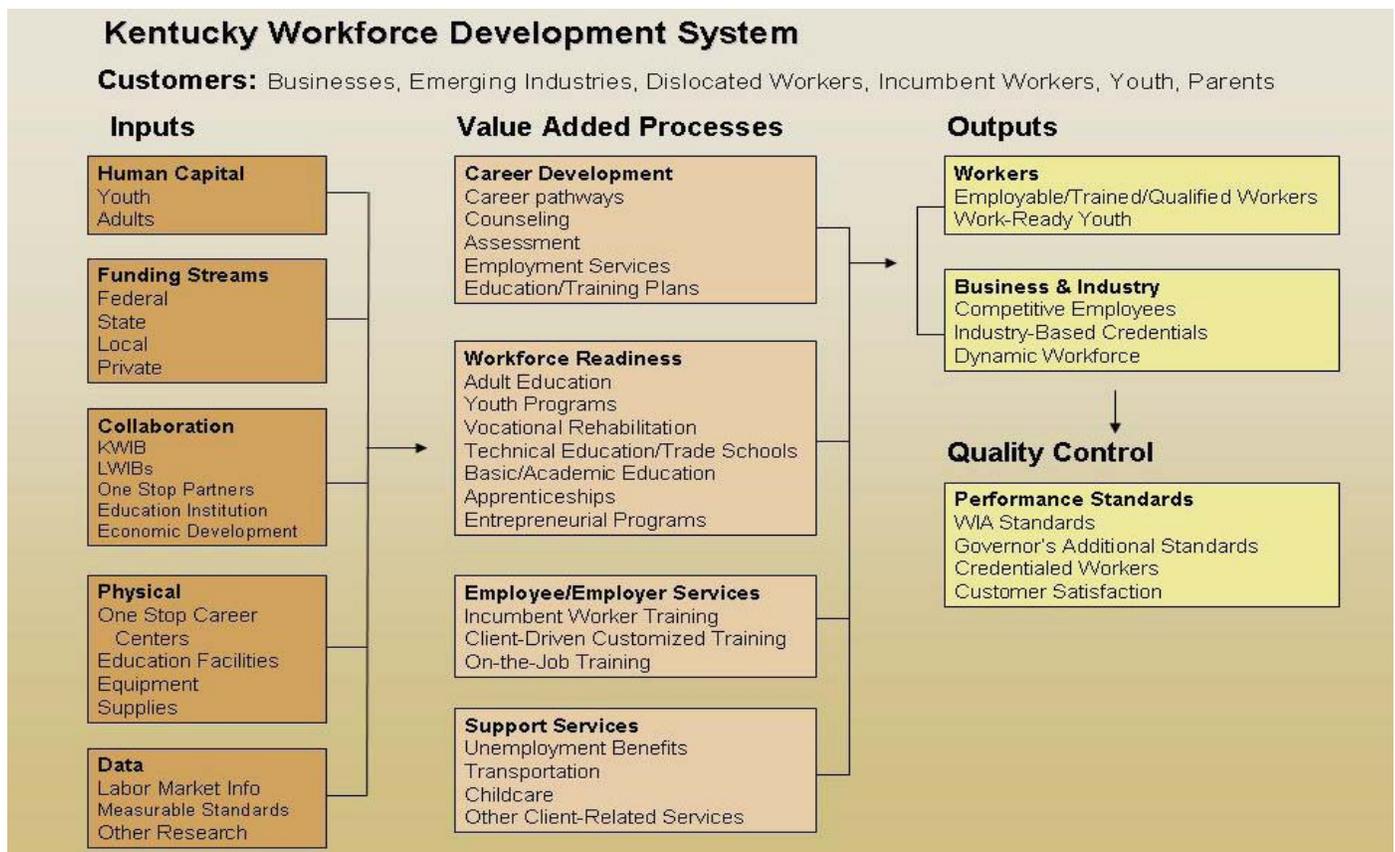
Workforce System Overview



As initially presented to the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, the model of the Commonwealth's workforce system is extremely complex and program-focused.

The sight of this system diagram generated audible groans and even one call to "blow up" the system by business members of the board.

A new way of looking at the system from a private-sector standpoint focuses not on programs and funding streams, rather on inputs, value added processes, outputs, and customers.



Strategic Planning

Planning Process

Stakeholder & Public Participation



Planning Process

At the first meeting of the newly appointed Kentucky Workforce Investment Board on June 11, 2009, members adopted a process for developing a strategic plan that would serve as the blueprint for transforming Kentucky's workforce system to meet the changing needs of business and residents in a new economy.

The board saw the development of this plan as a core responsibility in fulfilling its role as an advisor to the Governor on matters relating to the Commonwealth's workforce system.

Philosophy

Rather than looking at the system at the program level, the board took a "big picture" approach to examining how the system needed to function and how it fit into the greater role of state government as a provider of services to individuals, business and industry. The board also encouraged members from the private sector and others outside state government to actively lead the process, in order to deliver a strategy that would focus on the demand side of service delivery.

The development of a vision and lofty, but achievable goals, was central to the philosophy of designing a demand-driven system based on the needs articulated by employers (the ultimate end user of the system), with input from resident clients, partners and other stakeholders in the system.

Approach

In order to articulate a demand-driven, business-led, solutions-based vision for the state's workforce system, the process followed by the board included a review of existing data and recent input, stakeholder and public involvement and research into best practices.

Three committees were appointed to undertake the development of goals and input into a vision statement. Each committee was instructed to look at the system from the perspective of an assigned stakeholder group. These included employers, employees and partners. The Executive Committee with representation from each of the committees will

synthesize the work of each committee into a vision and provide the forum for addressing issues that were of common interest to all of the stakeholder groups.

A review of notes generated from meetings held by, then-Secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, Helen Mountjoy provided a foundation for each of the committees to make an initial identification of topics of interest. The groups Secretary Mountjoy met with include: Economic Development professionals, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System, workforce partners, local workforce investment board members and staff, and members of the previous iteration of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board.

A draft white paper, also developed by Secretary Mountjoy was reviewed and issues identified for study.

Each committee held a series of meetings, where issues were discussed and developed into proposed goals and objectives. Some made site visits to One Stop centers and held focus group meetings with customers of the system. Others invited individuals with technical expertise to provide input on their work.

The Executive Committee developed a vision statement and four goals based on the work of the committees. These were posted on the board's Web site and public input was sought regarding the document. At the December 10, 2009, board meeting, the draft vision statement and goals were approved by the board and staff were instructed to forward them to the Governor for his approval.

Following approval by the Governor, four committees received new assignments to begin drafting specific action steps required to achieve the goals and fulfill the vision.

Working through a rigorous schedule of meetings, committee members met and dedicated themselves to developing detailed documentation for more than 30 individual initiatives. Each committee identified projects that could have the greatest impact, those that could

be achieved quickly to build a foundation for the more complex initiative that would follow and forwarded those recommendations to the Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee identified action steps that were common to more than one goal and established a process for presenting the draft and gathering input from the full board at the May 20, 2010, meeting.

The full board discussed the action steps individually and the plan document as a whole during a three hour meeting on May 20, 2010. With minor modifications suggested during the meeting by members of the board, a motion to approve the plan received unanimous support.

Stakeholder & Public Participation

In developing this strategic plan, one of the guiding principles the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board established was to embrace a process which included gathering input from as many stakeholders and users of the system as possible.

While the draft Vision Statement, Goals & Objectives, and Implementation Action Steps were posted online for public comment, throughout the process committees sought out and engaged others to enrich the plan with robust and meaningful participation.

Stakeholder Meetings

Prior to the planning process getting underway, former Secretary Helen Mountjoy held a series of stakeholder meetings to gather ideas for ways to make the system more responsive to customer needs and engaging for partner organizations. The results of these meetings were provided to the planning committees which reviewed and used the data to begin their work on specific topics. The five stakeholder groups included:

1. Economic Development Professionals
2. Kentucky Community and Technical College System
3. Local Workforce Investment Boards and Directors
4. Partner Agencies, and
5. Members of the former Kentucky Workforce Investment Board.

Committees

Three committees of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board conducted a series of meetings to develop proposed goals. These committees reviewed data and conducted in-depth original research including:

- Field visit to a One Stop Career Center
- Focus groups with customers, and
- Discussions with technical staff.

Following approval of the vision and goals by the Governor, a fourth committee was added. Each was assigned the task of developing a set of action items required to implement their assigned goal. Each committee engaged the participation of partners,

local workforce directors and key technical staff with expertise in how to implement a variety of ideas.

Local Workforce Investment Boards

Local Workforce Investment Boards were engaged in the process in a number of ways, including:

1. Updates at several local board meetings
2. A meeting with local board chairs hosted by the state board executive committee
3. A special meeting for local board executive directors hosted by the state board executive committee
4. Discussion of specific topics at local board directors' monthly meetings
5. Local board directors encouraged to attend and participate in committee meetings

Partners

Partner agencies and organizations as well as potential new partners were invited to attend and participate in committee meetings, enriching the process and broadening the base for ideas and input.

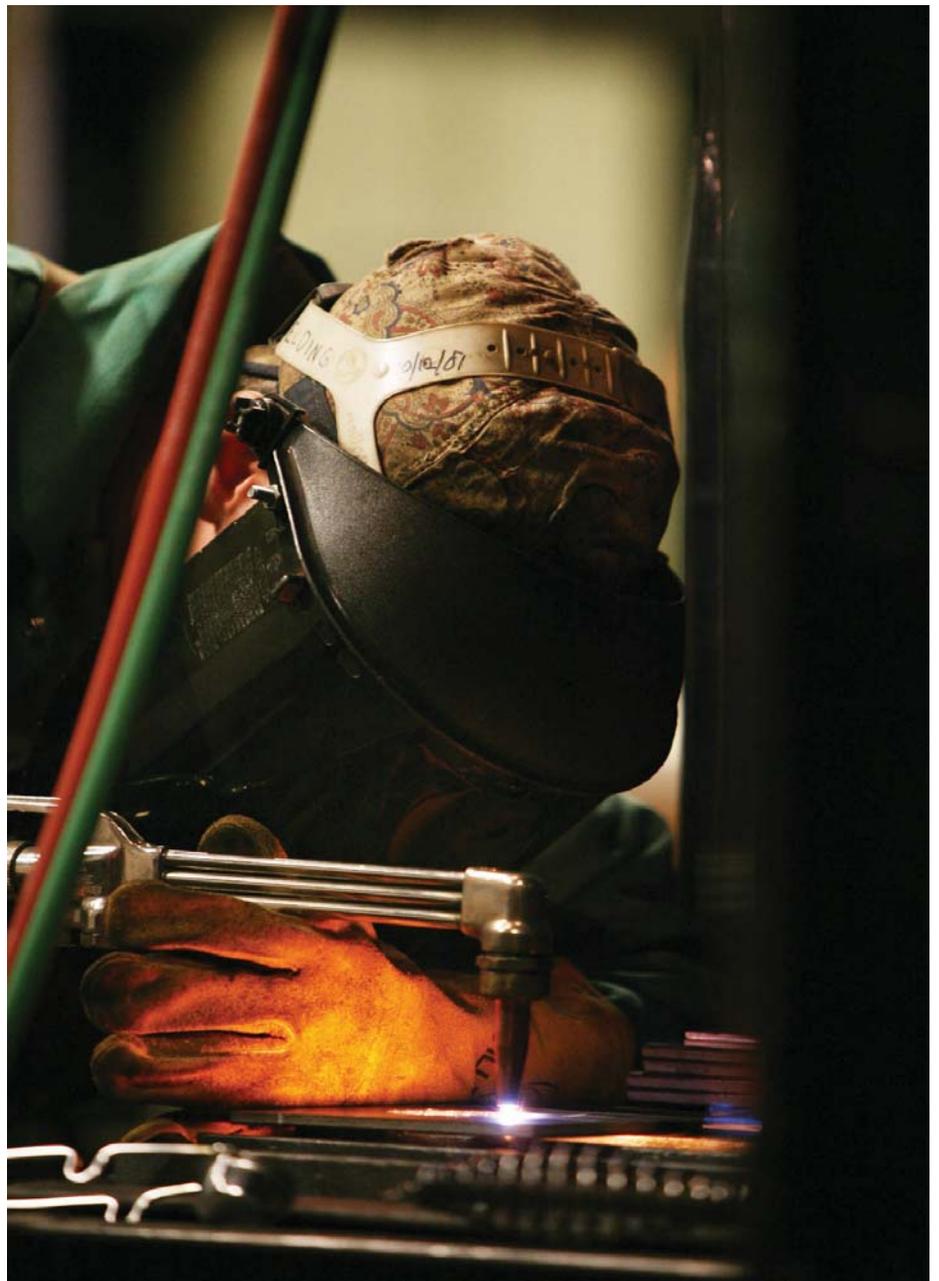
Advisory Council

Members of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board's Advisory Council, which include representatives of the Governor's office, several cabinet secretaries and commissioners, as well as the heads of the community college system, adult education, military affairs, etc. were interviewed individually to achieve a highly focused level of participation. These interviews also resulted in participation by members and assigned staff in the development of the detailed action steps found in the plan.

Vision, Goals & Objectives

Vision Statement

Goals & Objectives



Vision

Vision Statement

A vision statement is a picture of the future, our inspiration, the framework for all our strategic planning. The vision statement answers the question, “Where do we want to go?”

While a vision statement doesn’t tell us how we’re going to get there, it does set the direction for our planning.

Goals & Objectives

Goals

A goal is a statement of desired outcome that is both lofty and achievable. Goals support the vision statement by breaking it down into key elements stated as a series of outcomes necessary to realize the vision. Goals are expressed in general terms and describe a desired outcome without defining the actions necessary to achieve the result.

Kentucky’s Strategic Goals

Based on Stakeholder and public input, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board and Governor Beshear established four goals to support the vision for the workforce system:

Align the Commonwealth’s workforce development system with Kentucky’s education objectives,

Align the Commonwealth’s workforce development system with economic development strategies,

Simplify the workforce development service delivery system, and

Improve service to achieve a customer-centered delivery system.

Kentucky’s Vision Statement:

Kentucky will transform the workforce development system through innovative practices which enhance sustainable economic and job growth

Objectives

An objective is a statement which brings focus to the essential components of a goal. Objectives do not describe specific actions, rather they support the goal by adding specificity to how the achievement of a goal will be determined.

Kentucky’s Strategic Objectives

In order to provide determining factors for the goals of Kentucky’s strategic plan, a series of objectives were developed. Each set of objectives supports a specific goal and provides the framework for the development of action steps as well as a basis for monitoring and evaluating the implementation of this plan by the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board on behalf of the Governor. A process to measure and evaluate implementation of the plan is described in the Implementation section of this document.

The strategic objectives for each goal include:

Align the Commonwealth’s workforce development system with Kentucky’s education objectives

Increase communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development,

Increase the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates,

Promote educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students,

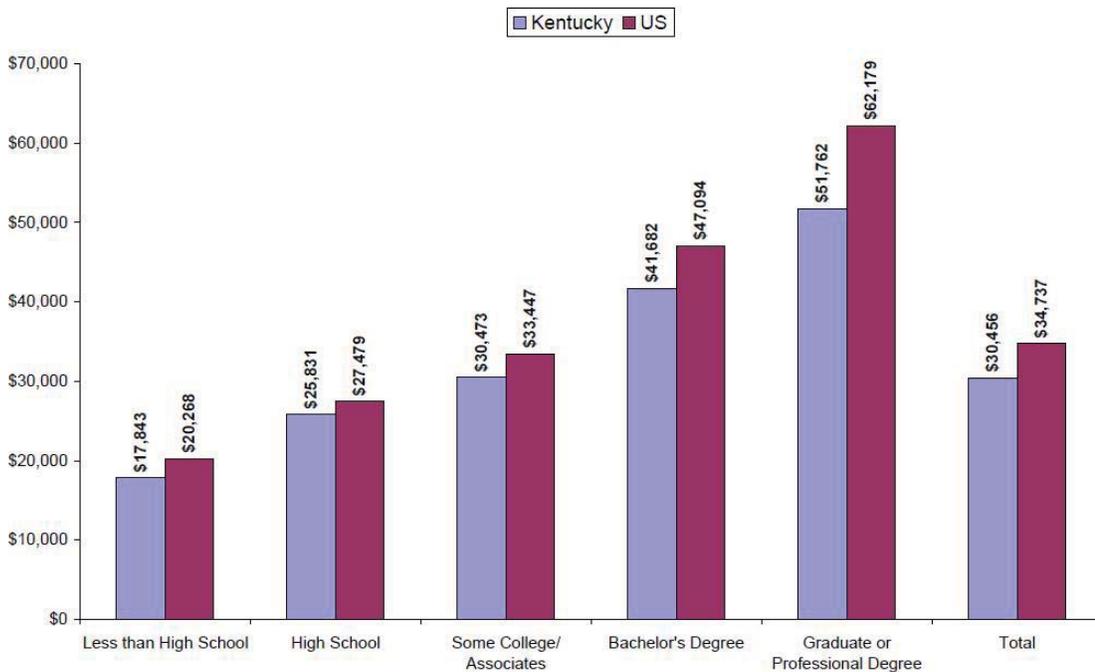
Increase awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries, and

Establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century.

Why this is Important to Kentucky

Data generated by the United State Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals how education impacts the lives of Americans by looking at the average salaries and unemployment rates of workers with a variety of educational and training backgrounds.

Median Earnings of 25 years and over by Level of Education in 2008



Source: U. S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey

This chart demonstrates why education is such an integral component to the financial success of families and individuals.

Align the Commonwealth's workforce development system with economic development strategies

Increase communication and collaboration between workforce boards and economic development agencies,

Develop "rapid response" framework for new jobs based on model for layoffs,

Refine and promote evolving methods of projecting jobs and training needs of the future, and

Increase opportunities for entrepreneurship in a culture of innovation

Why this is Important to Kentucky

Beginning with the economic crisis of 2008 - 2009, a national dialogue about a "new economy" emerged. According to neweconomyindex.org, a service of the Progressive Policy Institute, core beliefs about economic development strategies are shifting to a system which places a higher value on the quality and characteristics of the workforce than traditional strategies and tactics like financial incentives and cheap labor.

In the old economy, people believed that:	In the new economy, people believe that:
Being a cheap place to do business was the key.	Being a place rich in ideas and talent is the key.
Attracting companies was the key.	Attracting educated people is a key.
A high-quality physical environment was a luxury and stood in the way of attracting cost-conscious businesses.	Physical and cultural amenities are key in attracting knowledge workers.
Regions won because they held a fixed competitive advantage in some resource or skill.	Regions prosper if organizations and individuals have the ability to learn and adapt.
Economic development was government-led.	Only bold partnerships among business, government, and nonprofit sector can bring about change.

SOURCE: Progressive Policy Institute

Most analysts agree the majority of jobs lost during the current recession will not return, therefore new jobs in high-demand and emerging industries are key to economic vitality of communities. Identifying the right business sectors to attract and grow and preparing for their needs is a major area of focus for both economic and workforce development organizations.

The O*NET Resource Center, funded by the US Department of Labor and developed by the North Carolina Employment Security Commission, serves as a national on-line resource for job seekers and workforce professionals. According to their research, the following sectors have been identified nationally as high-growth or high-demand in the near future:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace
- Automotive
- Biotechnology
- Construction
- Education
- Energy
- Financial
- Geospatial
- Green
- Healthcare
- Homeland Security
- Hospitality
- Information Tech
- Nanotechnology
- Retail
- Transportation

While the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act was designed to stimulate some sectors, such as energy, construction, and automotive, others see the recession itself as a form of stimulus that is creating

new businesses and employment opportunities.

“This upside-down economy is creating entrepreneurial opportunities aplenty, so long as you can deal with a situation about as stable as a lava flow,” writes Jennifer Wang for Entrepreneur Magazine.

She cites results from Challenger, Gray & Christmas’ job market index that indicates that in the second quarter of 2009, nearly 9 percent of people looking for work became re-employed by starting their own businesses.

She also quotes Kauffman Foundation Analyst Dane Stangler, “Ten, 15 years from now, there will be a slew of companies that we’ll point to and say they started in the recession. You don’t see them yet, but you can be sure they’re out there. In fact, more than half of today’s Fortune 500 companies were founded during a recession or bear market.”

Simplify the workforce development service delivery system

Simplify online services and focus on innovative user-friendly applications,

Transform the identify of the “unemployment office,”

Increase the awareness and use of online job matching and training services,

Increase use of job portal (e3) by employers and job seekers,

Reduce confusion and information overload for those unfamiliar with the system, and

Increase communication among all service delivery points.

Why this is Important to Kentucky

When asked about the difference between in-person and online customer service, Diane Booher, President of Booher Consulting in Dallas/Ft Worth and best selling author of books about communications and customer service, is quoted in an article on About.com, "The primary difference is that you have difficulty in building rapport with customers because there are fewer occasions of real-time interaction. A second difference is that customers seem to be more fickle and hostile because they can chose to remain anonymous. They're in; they're out; they move on without a second thought. First impressions about how user-friendly your site is, for example, get translated to how user-friendly your products and services are in general."

It should be noted that there are more than 12 individual Web sites that make up the Commonwealth's online workforce presence. Some of the sites provide links to others, some have complex navigation menus, and many use jargon, acronyms and terms exclusive to workforce development. Few, if any of the sites appear like they are part of the same system as each has its own identity and design scheme. In addition, each local workforce area also has its own online presence and services. Currently, there is no single point of entry into the online system, nor does Kentucky employ a user-friendly, intuitive navigation feature to easily take users to their desired online destination.

This lack of consistency is one of the driving forces behind the concept of re-branding the system.

"Commercial marketers have been touting the virtues of a powerful identity for years. Disney, Sony and Nordstrom all have strong corporate identities that translate into better performance and bigger profits. In the last decade, many government organizations have built marketing campaigns based on a distinctive identity. The Postal Service, the Census Bureau and the IRS to name a few, have all embarked on strategic branding efforts that hit home with their constituencies and advance their missions.

Whatever their nature, organizations creating a brand face two problems: being under-valued and lacking a consistent, organization-wide message."

– Moshe Engelberg, Ph.D., founder and president of ResearchWorks Inc.

Re-branding the system will only be successful if the system itself reflects the brand. Important changes to Kentucky's system are proposed to meet the changing needs of our customers, as well as how customers access our systems. The use of interactive, Web-based service delivery is but one area that is due for an overhaul.

Technological advances and shifts in demographics have led to an evolution of how the Web is used, as well as the introduction and proliferation of social media. In February 2010, Forbes Magazine identified four new trends in how job seekers are exploring career options and finding work. The four trends mentioned:

- Social networking sites
- Smart phones
- Podcasts
- Blogs

While these tools may be used today by job seekers not currently using the workforce development system, we know that as technology advances, it becomes less expensive and more accessible to the entire population. As employer and job seeker clients adapt to new technologies the workforce system must respond in kind to properly serve our customers.

Improve service to achieve a customer-centered delivery system

Increase awareness within the system that "clients" of the workforce system, include those with jobs to fill as well as those seeking a job,

Decrease wait time for services,

Increase use of workforce system as a resource for employers to identify, screen, match, interview and prepare candidates for work,

Provide customer service training to all service delivery staff,

Increase use of online tools and resources,

Provide up-to-date resources for all clients,

Increase contacts with employers and economic development agencies regarding future workforce needs, and

Develop benchmarks and base-line standards for consistency within the system (physical, program and customer services) while allowing for local and regional adaptation.

Why this is Important to Kentucky

In an interview with F. John Reh on About.com, Dianna Booher, president of Booher Consultants, Inc., an international communications training and consulting firm in Dallas-Ft. Worth, said, “Customer service is dependent on three things: customer-friendly policies set by the organization’s executives, training offered to the staff, and the attitude of the staff about their own organization as generated by the way their company treats them.

If executives don’t actually know/see how their policies get executed on the frontline, they’re often shocked to discover the actual results of how the policies get carried out/enforced. If people aren’t trained on specifics (not just smile and use people’s names), they don’t know how to build customer loyalty even when they want to.

For example, you may tell a frontline staffer to acknowledge customers when they walk in the door. But they have to know HOW to acknowledge them. Is it appropriate to say, ‘Next’ to the next person, thereby making them feel like a number rather than person?”

Kentucky’s goal of improving the quality of customer service means a focus on all three of the areas discussed above, including developing customer-friendly policies and training frontline staff as well as managers.

Implementation

Action Steps

System Transformation
Education Alignment
Economic Development Alignment
System Simplification
Customer Service

Evaluation Methodology



Implementation

Action Steps

An action step or an implementation strategy details the who, what, when, and how of the activities, programs, and initiatives required to meet the objectives of the plan. Action steps can include identification of new or modified policies, development of programs, and any other actions necessary to implement the plan. Action steps answer the question, “How do we get there?”

Kentucky’s Action Steps

Four committees were tasked by the board to create and develop action steps applicable to their assigned goals. Each committee, with input from members of the board, local areas, partners and staff wrote, revised and prioritized these action steps. Because the strategic plan is developed for a system, there was some overlap, common, as well as similar strategies among the committees. Others were specifically focused to a particular goal.

Organization

The action steps included in this plan are organized as follows:

- **System Transformation** – These tactics are common to several of the committees, thus are designed to help achieve multiple goals with the same action item. These actions represent some of the best opportunities to impact the system as a whole.
- **Education Alignment** – Tied to the goal of aligning the state’s workforce and education systems, these tactics are focused on improving training education attainment.
- **Economic Development Alignment** – Action steps designed to leverage state and local economic development and workforce resources are the focus.
- **System Simplification** – Opportunities to create a simpler, more useable system are identified.
- **Customer Service** – Steps to assure the system meets the needs of both employer and job seeker/employee customer bases are presented.



Action Steps

1. Make Investment Decisions Based on Sector Strategies
2. Branding & Identity
3. One Stop Certification Policy
4. User-Friendly Online Services
5. National Career Readiness Certificate Adoption & Expansion
6. Eligible Training Provider List Enhancements

Action Step 1

Make Investment Decisions Based on Sector Strategies

Description

For local communities, tax breaks and infrastructure development are no longer the keys to attracting and retaining employers; businesses are now looking closely at the supply of skilled workers and the educational institutions that can provide the industry-relevant skills they need to grow.

Establishing statewide and regional industry sector strategies to achieve the best return on investment with the limited resources available to train and educate the workforce has proven effective in at least 25 other states.

Sector strategies will be developed by state and regional, employer-driven partnerships of industry, education and training, and other stakeholders focusing on the workforce needs of key industries to develop expertise. The partnerships will coordinate information and resources to develop and implement effective, coordinated responses to workforce challenges that are common across employers.

Sector strategies meet the skill, recruitment, and retention needs of employers and the training, employment, and career advancement needs of workers. Sector initiatives include:

Addressing the needs of employers by focusing intensively on the workforce needs of a specific industry sector over a sustained period, often concentrating on a specific occupation or set of critical occupations within that industry, and assuring industry that there will be a pipeline of skilled workers to meet future workforce demands;

Addressing the needs of workers by creating formal career maps and pathways to good jobs, reducing barriers to employment, and sustaining or increasing middle-class jobs;

Bolstering regional economic competitiveness by engaging economic development experts in workforce issues and aligning education, economic, and workforce development planning.

As sector strategies are developed, energy efficiency and “green” issues must be incorporated in anticipation of the culture shift toward a greener economy with impacts in every sector.

Strategic Benefit

Helps align the Commonwealth’s workforce development system with economic development strategies.

Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and economic development agencies, as well as major industries and their employers.

Helps evolve our methods of projecting jobs and training needs of the future.

Nature of Change

Administrative



Cost

Consultant to facilitate and coach the development of sector strategies - \$200,000

Implementation Timing

It is anticipated that roll out of the first sector strategies would occur within one year of contracting with the consultant.

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Commissioner of Workforce Development
Local Workforce Investment Boards

Consequences of No Action

Without sector strategies in place, investment will continue on a case-by-case, employer-by-employer basis. Kentucky will not realize the efficiencies that can be achieved by focusing our investments on specific high-growth, high-demand industries. Achieving these efficiencies could present opportunities to train more workers.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas will benefit by increased contact with business clients and greater focus on industry-specific training needs. Local areas should expect

a higher return on investment due to the highly focused and efficient use of resources achieved via these strategies. Local boards and elected officials can have greater confidence that the services being delivered are those most valued by their clients.

Potential Obstacles

Defining and limiting the sectors
Participation by stakeholders

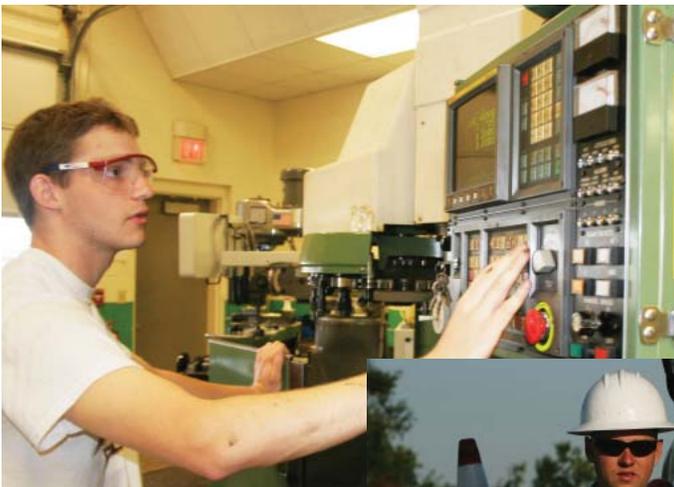
Transparency/Accountability

Benchmarking of current return on investment in each local area should be compared to the return on investment in the years following implementation of the strategies.

Common performance measures should be sufficient for this analysis.

Additional Comments

The energy sector may prove to be the best sector to begin with, as several efforts are currently underway to better understand the workforce needs of this industry.



Action Step 2

Branding/Identity

Description

The current identity of Kentucky’s workforce system consists of an alphabet soup of acronyms for agencies and programs which have little or no meaning to the customers we serve. Our One Stop Career Centers are known primarily as “the unemployment office” because of the location of many of these centers in state-owned buildings built in the middle of the last century or to a lesser extent by a variety of names given by local boards in a well-meaning attempt to rebrand the facilities at the local level. Our online tools and services are a patchwork of sites which lack a cohesive identity and functionality and are accessed through a complex web of links and search parameters.

A comprehensive rebranding initiative to address the architecture of the entire system including One Stops, online services, and other public interfaces is required to achieve a positive return on the Commonwealth’s investment in the system.

The rebranding action item must include establishing the system’s foundational elements or values such as:

- quality of customer service
- user-friendly tools
- consistent case management, and
- standard menu of services.

In developing the architecture of the system, flexibility for local adaptation must also be considered.

While a unifying and easily identifiable name, logo and message are important communication and marketing tools, these must be developed in support of the overall goals of Kentucky’s strategic plan and should enhance the experience for our customers.

Just as a chain restaurant like McDonalds is readily identifiable and promises a consistent experience and expectation of a certain level of quality, so too the identity of the workforce system manifests itself in the facilities and service delivery points where customers interface with services.



KENTUCKIANAWORKS



KENTUCKY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

Our facilities must be updated and upgraded to ensure that our business and job seeker customers feel comfortable conducting business with us and realize the value of the services we provide. The

involvement of the private sector in re-imagining the physical spaces where we conduct business is critical to achieving a successful return on investment in physical improvements.

Strategic Benefit

Transforms the identity of the “unemployment office”;

Increases the awareness and use of online job matching and training services by unifying promotional efforts;

Increases the use of our job portal (e3) by employers and job seekers with increase promotional activity;

Reduces confusion for those unfamiliar with the system by simplifying the message and increasing the efficiency of statewide outreach;

Increases communication among all service delivery points by unifying them under one brand.

Nature of Change

This change will require repositioning of all elements of the system and will have impacts at both the state and local levels.

Cost

Rebranding consultant and identity development – estimated \$200,000

Additional funding will be required to implement the recommendations of the consultant (signage, printed materials, etc.)

Implementation Timing

Rebranding rollout in fall of 2010 with on-going activities continuing for one - three years.

Responsible Parties

Governor’s Office

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board

Local Workforce Investment Boards

Consequences of No Action

Kentucky will continue to fund a patchwork of tools and programs which have limited opportunity to achieve the maximum return on investment due to splintered outreach efforts, a confusion of identities and well-meaning professionals operating in isolated silos.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Job seeker and employer customers will benefit from a user-friendly system that is memorable, easy to identify and of dependable quality. Attracting business clients as new or return customers will benefit those seeking jobs and new opportunities.

Local boards will benefit by becoming part of a larger effort to unify the system, increase awareness and expand the customer base through statewide promotional activities.

Potential Obstacles

Over time, local boards have made significant investments to develop their own unique identities. Flexibility to allow for local adaptation to a state brand is critical to success.

A strong commitment to marketing the rebranded system will be required.

Transparency/Accountability

The involvement of stakeholders at the state and local level will be necessary to achieve the buy-in that will determine success.

Action Step 3

One Stop Certification Policy

Description

In order to assure the highest possible return on investment for a common branding identity across the state, clients must be able to depend on a baseline level of consistency in the services delivered as well as the point of delivery for those services.

Kentucky's One Stop system should take a cue from chain and franchise businesses operations such as McDonalds restaurants. While each individual outlet can reflect the character of the local community, customers can always depend on certain standards in terms of graphic identity, menu of products, convenience of location, customer service, and quality of place.

The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board will establish a policy framework to serve as the baseline standards of a One Stop Center in the Kentucky workforce system. This framework may address: menu of services, presence of partner agencies, quality of place, facilities to serve employer as well as employee clients, graphic identity, trained staff, compliance with data entry and reporting requirements, and others. The policy structure could be based on a private sector quality framework, such as the Malcolm Baldrige model to build and maintain quality.

As local workforce investment boards undertake the certification process there will be an opportunity for centers to be certified at silver, gold and platinum



levels. This framework is intended to motivate One Stop managers and local boards to innovate and constantly strive for improvement.

Financial incentives such as investment of statewide administration funding for improvements and access to statewide reserve funds could be tied to certification levels and plans for improvement to a higher level.

Strategic Benefit

Develops benchmarks and base-line standards for consistency within the system (physical, program and customer service) while allowing for local and regional adaptation;

Increases awareness within the system that “clients” of the workforce system include those with jobs to fill as well as those seeking employment;

Encourages One Stop operators to create facilities which serve as a resource for employers to identify, screen, match, interview and prepare candidates for work;

Requires customer service training to all service delivery staff.



Nature of Change

This change represents a significant departure from the existing culture and will require the commitment of partner agencies and local boards to collaborate in order to achieve the highest return on investment.

Cost

Costs associated with development of the policy framework can be covered by the administrative functions of the cabinet. Estimate for assessment of 31 centers, development of framework, and implementation - \$300,000.

Costs associated with improvements to centers will vary dramatically and should be shared by partner agencies as well as local boards.

Implementation Timing

This is a long-term project, implementation will be on going, but the certification program should be established within six months of adoption of the system rebranding.

Responsible Party

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
Office of Employment and Training
Local Workforce Investment Boards
One Stop Operators
Partner Agencies

Consequences of No Action

One Stop Centers will continue to be seen as “the unemployment office,” and business and industry will not regard the system as having value in the way private sector employment services are regarded. Services will continue to be delivered in facilities that run the gamut of poor to excellent, reinforcing the inconsistency which undermines the investment in programs and services.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas will benefit by having a clear policy framework to guide their improvements as well as those of partner agencies. These new standards will provide local operators with leverage for collaboration and a basis for helping achieve equity in the distribution of responsibility for the success of the One Stop Centers.

Potential Obstacles

Although responsibility for achieving certification

technically rests with the One Stop operator, unless there is a clear mandate from the Governor and the Cabinet for equitable participation by all partner state agencies, local boards will be unduly burdened with achieving results without the ability to influence the means.

Transparency/Accountability

All One Stop Centers will be listed along with their achievement level in all online and printed resources. Certificates or plaques suitable for display in the One Stop will be provided upon certification and advancement to higher levels.

Access to statewide reserve funds and use of administration funding may be used as an incentive for achievement and progress toward improvement.

The Kentucky Workforce Investment Board will review annual status reports as a means of oversight for the program.

Best Practices

The Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Program Excellence is a Journey, Not a Destination

Organizations everywhere are looking for ways to effectively and efficiently meet their missions and achieve their visions. Thousands of organizations use the Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence to guide their enterprises, improve performance, and get sustainable results. This proven improvement and innovation framework offers each organization an integrated approach to key management areas:

- Leadership
- Strategic planning
- Customer focus
- Measurement, analysis, and knowledge management
- Workforce focus
- Process management
- Results

Improving Performance

The Baldrige Criteria can be adapted to fit unique challenges and cultures and help evaluate performance, assess where improvements or innovation are most needed, and get results. Participants in the Baldrige program are part of a national effort to improve America's performance and its competitive standing in the world.

Thousands of organizations of all sizes in every industry use the Baldrige Criteria, including:

Large, Fortune 500 companies, including Boeing Aerospace Support, The Ritz-Carlton Hotel Company, Caterpillar Financial, and Motorola CGISS

Small businesses, such as PRO-TEC Coating Company, which provides coated sheet steel to the U.S. auto industry; privately-held MESA Products, Inc.; and Branch-Smith, a family-owned, full-service printing company

Large hospitals and hospital systems, like Poudre Valley Health System and SSM Health Care and single hospitals like Bronson Methodist Hospital

Large and small schools and colleges, such as Iredell-Statesville Schools, Chugach School District, Richland College, and Pearl River School District, and

Nonprofits and government entities, such as the City of Coral Springs and U.S. Army ARDEC

The Baldrige system criteria help organizations assess their improvement efforts, diagnose their overall performance management system, and identify their strengths and opportunities for improvement.

SOURCE: National Institute of Standards and Technology

New York State One Stop Certification Program

New York established a quality-driven, comprehensive system of workforce development services, and access to services, that benefit all New York citizens. One way this was accomplished is a systemic approach in the development of One Stop operator quality standards and measures of excellence that are flexibly applied on the local level. The State Workforce Investment Board ensures consistency of quality across New York's One Stop system by establishing a state-level certification of local One Stop System and center operators. Achievement of state-level certification allows local Operators to benefit from the "WorkforceNY" statewide One Stop logo and marketing campaign and promotional materials. This "branding" of New York's One Stop system identifies local systems and centers which have attained state certification as

those that have met the highest quality standards for the provision of workforce development services in their community. State certified operators enjoy the benefits of brand recognition and will be able to easily customize marketing products to add their own area/center moniker and logo.

In the New York program, each local workforce investment board must establish a One Stop operator certification process prior to applying for state-level certification. In addition, the local workforce investment board must have a written agreement in place with each One Stop operator in the local system. This written agreement provides a basis for accountability, clarity of roles and responsibilities, and promotes inclusion of partners and integration of services. Consistent with the Workforce Investment Act principles of universal access, customer choice, increased accountability, and strong private sector involvement, the local certification process must also advance quality improvement methods, customer satisfaction measures, and staff development.

State-level certification uses the locally developed quality standards and criteria as its foundation. In addition to a paper review, state-level site visit teams are dispatched to verify required elements, partner involvement, service integration and other quality indicators. If any elements are missing or found to be inadequate, feedback and technical assistance are provided to bring the operator up to the level required for State certification. Once State certification has been achieved, it is valid for two years from the date of award. Local workforce investment boards may apply for recertification on behalf of their operators six months prior to expiration. Listed below are the steps involved in achieving state-level certification.

Step 1: The local workforce investment board develops a written One Stop Operator certification process and submits it to the NYS Department of Labor as staff to the State Workforce Investment Board. The local certification process may be transmitted for review prior to OR at the time of application for State certification of the local One Stop System/Center Operator(s). Technical assistance will be provided as requested.

Step 2: The local workforce investment board submits an application for State certification of locally certified One Stop System/Center

Operator(s) to the state.

Applications will be accepted on a continuous basis and may be submitted for individual One Stop Center Operators as they become locally certified or may be submitted for a One Stop System Operator overseeing more than one One Stop Center. In either case, all One Stop Centers under the responsibility of the One Stop Operator must be locally certified prior to submitting an application for state certification.

The application package must include:

- A copy of local certification process (unless previously submitted)
- A completed state certification application form
- A signed Attestation page asserting that One Stop Operators have met local criteria
- A signed Non-Compliance Policy stating consequences of non-compliance, and
- A copy of local workforce investment board /One Stop Operator Agreement.

Step 3: Once an application has been reviewed, a site visit will be scheduled to include members of the local Board, the One Stop Operator and other individuals as appropriate. Site visits will be conducted by a team consisting of staff to the state Board and state agency workforce development partners. Generally, site visits will cover the areas listed below; however, more specific information will be given prior to the actual visit:

- Customer flow
- Administrative systems
- Service and resource integration
- Information technology systems
- Business services
- Quantitative and qualitative measures
- Financial systems, and
- Facility.

Step 4: The site visit team will provide written feedback to the local workforce investment board which will result in either Certification or provision of technical assistance.

Step 5: The site visit team will make annual visits to assist the local workforce investment board in identifying improvement opportunities, training and technical assistance needs. These visits will be prearranged with local workforce investment board Chairs. In addition, unannounced, “secret shopper” visits will take place randomly during the term of certification in order to gauge performance from a customer’s point of view. Local workforce investment board Chairs will receive a written feedback report after both the pre-arranged visits and the secret shopper visits. Additional details will be distributed to Local Board Chairs regarding how the secret shopper reviews will be conducted, the components the shoppers will focus on, and the evaluation process that will be used.

Step 6: A local workforce investment board may apply for recertification of its system/center operator(s) six months prior to expiration of state certification. Local workforce investment boards must ensure that all operators seeking recertification have continued to meet or exceed the local level certification criteria.

SOURCE: adapted from Guide to Certifying One Stop Operators, NYS Department of Labor in consultation with New York State Workforce Investment Board

Action Step 4

User-Friendly Online Services

Description

Completely overhaul Kentucky's workforce development online service delivery by improving and expanding web-based tools and services. In order to create an online user-friendly environment for all customers, the new approach will include a single point of entry or front door for both employer and employee customer groups. This portal should be designed around the themes of Kentucky's rebranding strategy and easily guide each user to the appropriate services with intuitive navigation features.

One of the cornerstone web tools employed by the system is "e3", the Commonwealth's employment, education, and economic development application. Research during the planning process has revealed that the name "e3" is not widely known by customers and has not been promoted to employers or job seekers effectively. Investments in this system have been significant over the years. However, due to lack of name recognition or possible negative experiences with the current "e3" system, the rebranding of this online service should be included in the system branding project.

Enhancement of the current "e3" system to provide job seekers and employers with a robust menu of services and more intuitive, user-friendly portal and electronic data entry interface which more closely approximates popular job matching services available on the internet, such as Monster.com and Careerbuilder.com.

For job seekers, the enhancements must include a resume building component and automated matching system based on the user's resume profile to identify and rank available jobs best suited to that user.

For the employer, these improvements must reduce the amount of data which must be entered and should be capable of accepting electronic documents already prepared by the employer outside the system. The system must also be able to provide employers with a list of qualified individuals based on resume profiles stored in the system.



Other improvements recommended to the system's online tools include: Web-based eligibility reviews for unemployment insurance claims, redesign of agency Web sites to conform with a new branding architecture, online improvements for employers applying for Work Opportunity Tax Credit, continuous upgrades to create a virtual One Stop, and update of the Commonwealth's Employ Kentucky Operating System user policy to make user access consistent throughout the system.

In all cases, improvements to any part of the system must employ the same principles of user-friendly, intuitive interfaces, using plain English and providing interactive features. Websites within the system must also be redesigned to build consistency in navigation, language, graphic identity, and basic features, such as site index, contact us, about, etcetera.

Strategic Benefit

Simplifies online services and focuses on innovative user-friendly applications

Increases the awareness and use of online job matching and training services

Increases awareness within the system that "clients" of the workforce system, include those with jobs to fill as well as those seeking a job

Increases use of workforce system as a resource for employers to identify, screen, match, interview and

prepare candidates for work

Increases use of online tools and resources
Provides up-to-date resources for all clients

Increases contacts with employers and economic development agencies regarding future workforce needs

Reduces confusion and information overload for those unfamiliar with the system

Nature of Change

This change will require a project champion within the cabinet and the IT department of the cabinet. Developing consistency may require some offices or agencies to be flexible and re-examine their online tools and services.

Cost

Nearly \$1.3 million will be required for the initial stages of the overhaul. Funding will be leveraged using a variety of sources, including statewide administration and reserve funds. Grants and other funding opportunities will be sought for specific elements of the overhaul. Funding to maintain and keep the system up-to-date will be required in future years.

Implementation Timing

Work will begin immediately and make require one - two years to complete. Maintenance and continuous updates and enhancements will be required to remain competitive.

Responsible Parties

Governor's Office
Secretary of Education and Workforce Development
Commissioner of Workforce Investment
Division of Technology Services

Consequences of No Action

Kentucky will continue to invest in a system (e3) which offers little return for either employers or job seekers. Productivity and efficiency will suffer and Workforce staff will have less time to focus on customers' real needs if they are occupied helping clients complete tasks which could easily be automated.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local workforce staff will have better tools and services to offer employers and job seekers. Time spent completing manual tasks can be freed up to focus on customers and their actual needs.

More automation in the system should result in shorter lines and wait times in One Stop Centers by making many applications available to customers 24-7 online.

Potential Obstacles

Buy-in across the system at many levels will be required. Resources to aggressively promote online tools and services will also be required.

Transparency/Accountability

Benchmarking the use of existing sites and comparing to use following upgrades and promotion should indicate the return on investment being achieved.

Additional Comments

Upgrades to services currently underway should continue, with an understanding that modifications to conform with a rebranding strategy will be required once that identity has been adopted.

Best Practices

The states of Illinois and Louisiana employ user-friendly front doors or portals to triage visitors based on who they are and what they want to accomplish.

The top screenshot shows the State of Illinois Workforce Development website. It features a navigation menu on the left with options like 'I am ... a Parent', 'a Job Seeker', 'a Veteran', 'Disabled', 'Unemployed', 'a Small Business Owner', 'an Employer', and 'Home'. The main content area is titled 'Program Finder' and includes three sections: 'I'm looking for a new job for myself or my child. I....', 'I am unemployed or underemployed. I...', and 'I'm looking to hire new employees or want to locate or expand my business in Illinois. I...'. Each section has a dropdown menu and a 'Go' button. A search bar is located at the bottom left.

The bottom screenshot shows the Louisiana Workforce Commission website. It features a navigation menu with options like 'HOME', 'ABOUT US', 'WORKERS', 'BUSINESSES', 'DOWNLOADS', 'CONTACT', and 'FAQs'. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'WORKERS', 'BUSINESSES', and a central banner. The 'WORKERS' column includes links for 'Find a Job', 'Find Your Record', and 'Track Unemployment'. The 'BUSINESSES' column includes links for 'Incumbent Worker Training', 'Find a Job', and 'Workers' Compensation'. The central banner features a headset icon and the text 'Go From Help Wanted to Help Friend'. Below the banner are sections for 'SPECIAL EVENTS', 'GROWING GREEN', and 'NEWS'.

Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)

From their 2009 Annual Report

The agency launched its new Website at www.PositivelyMinnesota.com in December, unveiling a new site that is better organized and easier to navigate.

“Before we began developing the new site, we conducted usability testing with actual users—job seekers, businesspeople, site selectors and local government officials,” said Laura Winge, the agency’s creative director. “They all told us the old site was too confusing.”

Presenting Department of Employment and Economic Development and its programs in a comprehensive yet understandable package online can be difficult. Department of Employment and Economic Development has more than 50 programs, handling everything from veterans issues to employment data to services for people with disabilities. The Minnesota Trade Office, Unemployment Insurance Program, Minnesota WorkForce Centers and Public Facilities Authority all fall under the umbrella of Department of Employment and Economic Development.

How, then, to keep the Web site simple? The solution was to organize the site based on user needs. The home page features three main tabs—one for job seekers, one for businesses and one for local governments.

Customers can easily navigate to pages of greatest interest to them, and bypass information that is irrelevant.

All of the new site’s sections and pages are organized in the same way, providing a uniformity of user experience. That uniformity also extends to local WorkForce Center Web sites, which had varied greatly in their design, content and organization.

A customer who is starting his own business was so impressed with the new site that he wrote Department of Employment and Economic Development to extend his thanks. “The layout of the Web site is very easy to use,” he said. “I can always find what I need very quickly without hassle, and the contained documents are clear, concise and thorough—a difficult balance to achieve.”

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development website. At the top left is the logo for "POSITIVELY Minnesota" with the text "Department of Employment and Economic Development" below it. To the right of the logo are utility links: "Text Only", "Type Size: A A A", "Email Page", "Print Page", and "RSS". Below these is a search bar with a dropdown menu set to "Entire Site" and a "Go" button. A navigation bar contains tabs for "JOB SEEKERS", "BUSINESS", and "GOVERNMENT", along with links for "Programs & Services", "Data & Publications", "Calendar of Events", "About Us", and "Contact Us". The main content area features a large banner image of the Minnesota State Capitol building with the text: "Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development. Other states talk big but deliver small. We're big on deeds. See Why Minnesota is positively the best place to live, work and do business." Below the banner are three columns of content: "FOR JOB SEEKERS" with links for "Recently Unemployed", "Find a Job", "WorkForce Centers", and "More Options..."; "FOR BUSINESS" with links for "Starting a Business", "Managing a Business", "Locating in Minnesota", and "More Options..."; and "FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT" with links for "Financial Assistance", "Shovel Ready Site Certification", "Business Subsidy Reporting", and "More Options...".

Action Step 5

National Career Readiness Certificate – Adoption & Expansion

Description

Kentucky pioneered the work-ready certificate with the implementation of the Kentucky Employability Certificate. That program became a model for other states.

Based on performance on several Work Keys tests, the Kentucky Employability Certificate was envisioned to provide potential employers with an assessment of applicant's basic skills in math, English and locating information. The program met with limited success and is used extensively by some employers in certain regions of the state and not at all by others.

ACT, Inc., the organization that administers the Work Keys assessments has expanded upon Kentucky's idea and created a nationally recognized credential called the National Career Readiness Certificate. This credential offers portability between states. ACT, Inc. offers certificates at four levels, bronze, silver, gold and platinum. A focus group of those familiar with the Kentucky Employability Certificate and the National Career Readiness Certificate have concluded that the Bronze level certificate offers little value to employers. However the remaining three levels can provide employers with a valuable tool in screening applicants.

These levels also provide certificate holders with a credential that will help them compete in the job market. For those reasons it is recommended that Kentucky adopt the National Career Readiness credential and recognize only those scoring at the silver and above levels with certificates. This will replace the Kentucky Employability Certificate.

Expansion of assessment sites to include all comprehensive One Stop locations is also recommended. It is further recommended that an alliance be formed between the Department of Workforce Development and the Kentucky Chamber of Commerce to promote the value of the certificate to business and industry, and that certificates be signed by the Governor and the President of the Chamber.

Other alliances to promote the value of the certificates should be formed with the Kentucky Retail Federation, Hospital and Health Care Associations, the Hotel and Motel Association, the Restaurant Association, and the Kentucky Association of Manufacturers.

Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development;

Increases the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates;

Provides opportunity to promote educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students;

Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries; and

Helps establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century.



Nature of Change

Administrative, no legislation required

Cost

Start up and year one funding - \$420,000
Paid for with 2009 Incentive Grant

Implementation Timing

Roll out in June 2010

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Office of Employment and Training
One Stop Career Centers
Council on Post secondary Education
Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Kentucky Chamber of Commerce

Consequences of No Action

Kentucky will lose a competitive advantage in providing employers with screening tools for new hires.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Opportunity to provide valuable service to local employers, opportunity to meet with applicants to assess and refer for training, if needed, added value to One Stop Centers.

Potential Obstacles

Cost of assessments in future years

Transparency/Accountability

Weekly sweeps of assessments will be conducted and issuance of certificates measured.

Annual surveys may be conducted to determine use of certificates by employers in conjunction with partner organizations.

Best Practice

In 2005, the Cumberland Workforce Investment Area (CWIA) in partnership with Kentucky Adult Education conducted a pilot program to work with businesses and individuals to raise awareness and use of the WorkKeys assessment and the significance of obtaining a Kentucky Employability Certificate (KEC) for both. During this pilot, the lack of knowledge by both groups became evident. Major inroads were made to educate and make the use of this certificate in the interviewing and hiring process. The project also revealed the need for access to a large population of workers that would help build a foundation and larger pool of individuals with the Kentucky Employability Certificate to demonstrate the quality of our local workforce for economic development purposes.

After research and thought, a decision to target high school seniors as the focus to build the larger pool was made. During the pilot, a limited number were selected and the results were successful.

As a follow-up to that pilot, the Cumberland Youth Council and Cumberland Workforce Investment Board chose to continue the project. It has been in operation for the past five years.

During that period, 13,421 seniors took the test with 7,809 receiving either a gold or silver certificate. Those that do not attain a certificate or wish to obtain a higher certificate are encouraged to contact their local Adult Education Center after graduation.

This service to youth is a core service assessment that can lead to a certificate that will benefit them as they seek employment for years to come. The Cumberland Youth Council and Cumberland Workforce Investment Board consider this a great benefit to both the individual and the business community and one step in creating and showing the quality of workforce in our area.



Action Step 6

Eligible Training Provider List Enhancements

Description

Overhaul the Eligible Trainer Provider List process and eligibility criteria to reinforce priorities around high demand occupations, sustainable wages and career ladder goals.

Strategic Benefit

Ensure the training dollars provided meet the needs of business and industry, provide a livable wage for workers and support the regional and state economy.



Nature of Change

Develop a new statewide eligible training provider policy and redesign the state and local process to support that policy.

Cost

Programming - \$10,000

Implementation Timing

Examine best practices around the process (one month)

Draft the new policy for Kentucky Workforce Investment Board review and approve (one month)

Retool the process (three months)

Train state and local staff (three months)

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Office of Employment and Training Division of
Workforce and Employment Services

Consequences of No Action

Training resources may not be strategically invested based on state and regional business needs or economy demands.

Job seekers may not be trained in high-demand, high-growth occupations limiting their economic potential.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Individuals that receive training will be equipped to meet employers' needs in their regional economy.

Potential Obstacles

Resistance to an expanded state role in the Eligible Trainer Provider List process.

Transparency/Accountability

Ensure that taxpayer resources are being invested in high-demand, high-growth occupational training.

Action Steps

1. Tech – High
2. I-Best: GED in Context
3. Apprenticeship Sales Force
4. High School Outreach
5. GED Express: Lodge & Learn

Action Step 1

Tech-High

Description

Much like many of our One Stop Centers suffer from an outdated identity of “unemployment offices”, Kentucky’s secondary technology centers also suffer from an outdated identity as the place to send the “undesirable” or “not-college-material” students. The fact is that these alternatives to traditional secondary education offer programs which can prepare students for work and/or continuation of their education into post-secondary skills training options such as associate degrees, occupational certificates, and registered apprenticeships.

Also similar to the identity problem with One Stop Centers, simply changing the name is not enough to realign the image of this educational alternative effectively. In order to shift the image, meaningful relationships with Kentucky high schools and Area Technology Centers around career development must be established and nurtured.

Providing Career Counselors in all Area Technology Centers, as well as those technical education facilities operated by local school boards, should be an area of focus for promoting relevant career pathways. This action is viewed as one of the most efficient and effective ways to transform the technical education system.

These services should be predicated on and supported by partnerships of local government, business and industry, industrial development authorities, and local workforce investment boards.

The infrastructure and equipment needs of technical education programs must be addressed on a regular basis. There are examples of businesses threatening to leave the state based on outdated technical education facilities and equipment which limit the competitiveness of the Commonwealth’s workforce.

By engaging local industry in the development of programs and facilities, technical education in Kentucky will be better positioned to respond to the needs of businesses as they thrive in an increasingly competitive environment. Institution of cutting edge programs, such as those associated

with the green movement will also make our students more competitive in the job market.

Kentucky’s technical education system, regardless of what entity administers the facilities, should be viewed in the same light as a magnet school, where students aspire to attend rather than seeing it as a warehouse of last resort for non-traditional students.

Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, and business and industry;

Increases the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates;

Promotes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students; and



Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries.

Nature of Change

A change in the culture of technical education to one of collaboration and aspiration to lead will help it become a sought after service, rather than an option of last resort. Adding counselors to area technology centers would require legislation already proposed but not passed in General Assembly.

Cost

Estimated annual cost for a full time counselor's salary/fringe = \$63,000
54 Area Technologies Centers
@ \$63,000 = \$3,402,000

Implementation Timing

Because the change requires action by the General Assembly, implementation is likely to occur on a mid-long term schedule. The earliest possible opportunity to pass the required legislation will be January of 2011.

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Career and Technical Education
Local Workforce Investment Boards

Consequences of No Action

Technical education will continue to be viewed in a more negative than positive light, programs have the potential to loose touch with skills in demand locally without strong business and industry involvement.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Technical education has the potential to be viewed like other magnet schools with special focus and become a valuable resource to local employers and true preparatory experience for the world of work or continued education. Students engaged in such a program will become more competitive in the job market and help employers become more competitive in the world market.

Potential Obstacles

Culture shift and attitudinal realignment at all levels within the education system.

Funding for career counselors may be difficult to secure in light of budget shortfalls and cutbacks in nearly every state agency.

Transparency/Accountability

The legislative process will determine accountability measures and structures for this action step.



Action Step 2

I-BEST: GED in Context

Description

Develop integrated contextualized curriculum to meet the basic literacy skills needs and professional-technical certificate requirements to accelerate learning to prepare low-skilled adults for work and to increase their contributions to the state's economy while increasing their capacity for obtaining higher wage positions and career advancement opportunities.

Creating contextualized curriculum to be used in the 120 adult education programs across Kentucky is a way to accelerate this learning process. Currently, Kentucky Adult Education awards approximately 10,000 General Educational Development (GED) diplomas and Kentucky Community and Technical College System (KCTCS) awards 13,000 certificates a year. Each of these credentials can take several years to earn independently. However, a partnership to develop contextualized curriculum will accelerate the learning process enabling the student to enter the workforce much quicker than if each credential were earned separately.

The curriculum should be modeled after the nationally recognized Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model (I-BEST) developed by Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges and aligned with Kentucky's sector strategies. Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model programs are based on professional-technical programs that lead to an approved professional-technical certificate or associate degree program from a community college that result in high wage employment.

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model pairs adult education instructors and professional-technical instructors in the classroom using contextualized curriculum, thus contributing to a learning experience for students that combines both literacy and workforce skills simultaneously. This process allows for the student to gain the necessary education and skills concurrently thus greatly reducing the amount of time the student spends in the classroom.



Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development

Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries

Helps establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century

Enables low-skill adults to simultaneously achieve basic literacy skills plus a college credential while decreasing the amount of time students spend in study

Learning basic skills in the context of technical professions increases basic skills completion rates

Nature of Change

Changes the philosophy that students must complete their GED prior to entering training or educational programs which provide them with occupation-specific skills development. Allows for simultaneous work toward a GED and career credentials.

Cost

Estimated at less than \$1 million

Implementation Timing

Short term, curriculum development
Longer term, incremental integration into postsecondary technical training programs

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Adult Education, Council on Postsecondary Education
Kentucky Community and Technical College System

Consequences of No Action

Kentucky's ability to grow its human capital infrastructure and raise the educational attainment level necessary to compete economically will suffer. Kentucky will continue with business as usual and see programs diminish or disappear as budget cuts limit the resources to achieve gains in education attainment.

Employers see a value in the GED, in some cases as better than a high school diploma. Not implementing this program will constitute a missed opportunity to demonstrate the Commonwealth's commitment to innovate and provide business and industry with the skilled workforce they need to be competitive.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

The program will help local areas develop a more competitive workforce in a shorter period of time.

Participants in the program will find the curriculum for obtaining their GED more relevant to their career choices, increasing chances for successful attainment of both education and occupation credential attainment.

Potential Obstacles

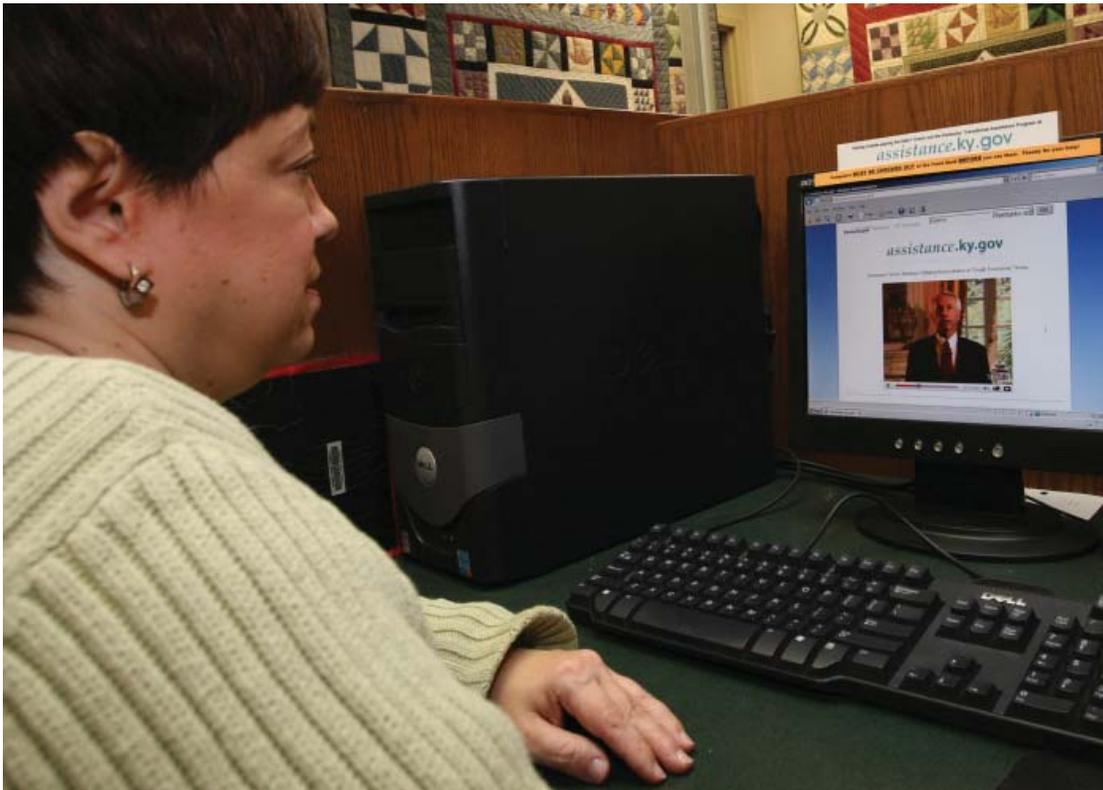
Funding for curriculum development

Transparency/Accountability

The Adult Education and Kentucky Community and Technical College System will be required to report progress to the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet at major milestones as the project is implemented.

Additional Comments

Individuals who attend community college occupational degree programs are eight percent more likely to be employed and earn \$4,400 per year more on average than similar individuals in the labor force who do not enroll in any training programs (Research Report No. 06-2 Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges 2005).



Best Practice

Washington State's I-Best Program

Washington State's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST) began as a pilot program at 10 community and technical colleges and has since been implemented in all 34 colleges in the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC) system.



The program was developed in response to studies performed by the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges that indicated that students were unlikely to complete a long-term basic skills class and then successfully transition to college level vocational programs. The Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model challenges the traditional notion that students must first complete adult basic education (ABE) or English as a second language (ESL) before moving to college level course work. The Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model pairs English as a Second Language or Adult Basic Education instructors with vocational or content area instructors to co-teach college level vocational courses.

State and national research conducted by the

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges revealed that low-skilled adults often begin their educational process in either English as a Second Language or Adult Basic Education courses, and few make the transition to workforce skills training programs that allow them to reap the benefits of higher wage and higher skills jobs. The intention of the ten demonstration projects was to test “traditional notions that students must first complete all levels of basic education before they can begin workforce training.”

Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model has historically been tied to economic development, with Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model courses at individual colleges aligning with high-wage, high-demand jobs within their communities.

A study conducted by the Community College Research Center at Columbia University concluded that Washington's Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model students were “more likely than others to: continue into credit-bearing coursework; earn credits that count toward college credentials; earn occupational certificates; and make point gains on basic skills tests.

The study also used a propensity score matching model to track students for two years. This model revealed that the probability of Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model students earning at least one college credit was 90 percent while the probability for students in the non Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model control group was only 67 percent. Persistence into the second year of college was 78 percent for the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model students, compared to 61 percent for the control group. Chances of earning an occupational certificate proved to be 55 percent for Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Model students compared to a mere 15 percent for the control group.

Action Step 3

Apprenticeship Sales Force



Description

Establish a partnership to market the benefits of registered apprenticeships (union and non-union) to Kentucky business. This “earn while you learn” approach to skills development for a wide variety of crafts and trades in Kentucky has not come near reaching its potential as a tool for building a highly skilled workforce, helping business and industry increase their competitiveness, and providing sustainable wages for Kentuckians willing to work hard to raise their standard of living.

In order to reach its potential with registered apprenticeships, a marketing partnership is recommended to promote the benefits to business and industry. This opportunity must be understood and promoted by the business service representatives of each local board and become an integral part of the solutions-based business services model.

Registered apprenticeships benefit employers by providing them with a pipeline of skilled workers with industry-specific training and hands-on experience. Registered apprenticeship programs are customizable to match employers’ needs, and

highly flexible to always to meet the employers’ changing requirements.

The growing interest in energy efficiency and environmental sustainability (Green) should be monitored by the partnership to assure that Kentucky’s apprenticeship programs are competitive with those in other regions and states.

The partnership should also look at marketing this educational/work alternative to secondary students through the promotion and development of pre-apprenticeship programs.

Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education, labor organizations and business.

Promotes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students

Establish the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century

Nature of Change

Collaborative effort between existing organizations.

Cost

Training of Workforce staff - \$25,000

Implementation Timing

This training should occur in advance of any outreach program rollout for re-energized business services.

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Labor Cabinet
Office of Employment and Training
Local Workforce Investment Boards
One Stop Centers
Kentucky Community and Technical College System
– Apprenticeship Studies
Kentucky Department of Education
Office of Career and Technical Education

Consequences of No Action

As apprenticeships grow in importance and evolve with new technologies, Kentucky could fall behind the rest of the nation, leaving our business and industry sectors less competitive and our workforce lacking the skills necessary to compete in the 21st century.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

As an alternative to traditional post-secondary education, registered apprenticeships will appeal to a segment of the population concerned about earning a wage immediately while developing skills through a combination of hands on and classroom work. Apprenticeships also offer local workforce agencies an opportunity to discuss career pathways and training alternatives with customers.

Local business contacts will increase as the partnership promotes the benefits of the programs, opening the door to promote additional services offered by the state and local workforce system.

Potential Obstacles

Economic conditions could limit the expansion of the program during recovery until additional funding becomes available and demand is realized.

Additional Comments

Kentucky currently has 300 registered apprenticeship programs

Currently funded through the General Fund expansion package

Shortages are anticipated in the following trades – Welders, Lineman, Pipefitters, and Diesel Mechanics.

Action Step 4

High School Outreach

Description

Encourage local workforce investment boards to develop strong working relationships with middle and high schools in their regions. These relationships should be based on the One Stop Centers' capability to deliver assessment and career exploration services, and the direct linkages to the local business community these boards can provide.

Participation in such efforts as career fairs, college recruiting events, innovation and entrepreneurship programs, "reality stores", etc. local workforce investment boards can better position their clients for the realities of the world of work and postsecondary education. As a third-party "expert", the local workforce system will be positioned as an objective resource for career, education and training information for youth.

Based on strengthened relationships, local workforce investment boards should position themselves as expert problem solvers by targeting services to youth identified by the schools as at-risk of dropping out.

Strategic Benefit

- Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and boards of education, technical education, postsecondary education and economic development
- Increases the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates
- Promotes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students

Nature of Change

This action item must be based locally and depends entirely upon the buy-in of local workforce investment boards. However, changing the perception of the One Stop Centers and the workforce system as whole may include such

outreach efforts as part of the branding architecture of a revitalized system.

Cost

Costs will vary depending upon program specifics developed by local boards.

Implementation Timing

This is mid-range action step (two - three years)

Responsible Parties

Local Workforce Investment Boards
Local Boards of Education

Consequences of No Action

Local areas will continue to deal with high school dropouts as customers of the workforce system and dedicate increasingly scarce resources to remedial education rather than using those resources for career training and other services. Funds will be used to catch people up rather than advance the quality of the workforce.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local workforce investment boards benefit by repositioning themselves within their regions as expert problem solvers, rather than just a service delivery organization.

An "intervene now, rather than expend greater resources later" approach should help local areas in the long run to advance the quality of their workforce by dedicating fewer resources to remedial skills development and greater dedication to advanced education and training.

Local schools and their students will benefit from early(ier) intervention to help prevent dropouts and better prepare students for the realities of employment and education.

Potential Obstacles

Local workforce investment areas will likely be challenged to identify resources they can dedicate to these programs.

Transparency/Accountability

Local workforce investment boards should monitor local efforts and report success stories and best practices to the state board

Best Practices

Cumberlands WIA High School Assessments

In 2005, the Cumberlands Workforce Investment Area (CWIA) in partnership with Kentucky Adult Education conducted a pilot program to work with businesses and individuals to raise awareness and use of the WorkKeys assessment and the significance of obtaining a Kentucky Employability Certificate (KEC) for both. During this pilot, the lack of knowledge by both groups became evident. Major inroads were made to educate and make the use of this certificate in the interviewing and hiring process. The project also revealed the need for access to a large population of workers that would help build a foundation and larger pool of individuals with the Kentucky Employability Certificate to demonstrate the quality of our local workforce for economic development purposes.

After research and thought, a decision to target high school seniors as the focus to build the larger pool was made. During the pilot, a limited number were selected, and the results were successful.

As a follow-up to that pilot, the Cumberlands Youth Council and Cumberlands Workforce Investment Board chose to continue the project. It has been in operation for the past five years.

During that period, 13,421 seniors took the test with 7,809 receiving either a gold or silver certificate. Those that do not attain a certificate or wish to obtain a higher certificate are encouraged to contact their local Adult Education Center after graduation.

This service to youth is a core service assessment that can lead to a certificate that will benefit them as they seek employment for years to come. The Cumberlands Youth Council and Cumberlands Workforce Investment Board consider this a great benefit to both the individual and the business community and one step in creating and showing the quality of workforce in our area.

Region 1 West Virginia - Tipping Point Program

The Region 1 Workforce Investment Board has developed a youth initiative that encompasses the stated goals and objectives of the Workforce Investment Board, specifically: "Promote effective economic and workforce development partnerships that develop and sustain productive workers for business and create prosperous communities for our citizens."

The Tipping Point program was developed as a Youth Enrichment Service to introduce youth to the WORKFORCE West Virginia Career Center system and the services available including job preparation, job search activities, investigation of specific careers, required educational levels for specific jobs, labor market information, and demand occupations within the region/state.

An instructional and entertaining video containing the career information was transferred to computer-disk format, and 16,000 DVDs, CDs and videos were distributed to students in area high schools. The purpose of the project was to engage youth to think about career choices, and provide information to help them prepare to achieve in their chosen careers. This process will be repeated each year for students entering high school. Each youth can access the WORKFORCE West Virginia Web site through their DVD's or CDs.

The Region 1 Board is aware of the need for youth career awareness and job training. This was brought into focus by the U.S. Department of Labor statistics that report 11 percent of West Virginia teens (aged 16 to 19) are not attending school and are not working. The national average is eight percent.

Action Step 5

GED[®] Express: Lodge and Learn

Description

Create an opportunity for dislocated workers and other unemployed individuals without a high school diploma to complete their GED in a compressed timeframe. Participants in the program will be required to meet certain selection criteria, including Test for Adult Basic Education minimum scores.

The program will compress the classroom work required to prepare students to take the GED exam into a four-week period. State and possibly university facilities (such as state park lodges and university dorms and classrooms) will be used as sites for the program so that classroom and sleeping accommodations can be provided on-site, immersing the students in a controlled environment and minimizing distractions during the program. Such locations also provide an environment that is not associated with prior failed attempts at completion of high school studies.

Rather than one-on-one, on-demand instruction, participants will receive instruction in a structured classroom environment with other students testing at or about the same level. The instruction provided will be in the GED content areas of reading, writing, math, science and social studies.

Participants completing the program will receive free room and board during the program and will be able to spend weekends at home. The program will be scheduled around non-peak demand times at state parks and possibly universities in order to obtain reduced rates for lodging, meals and classroom rentals.

Career exploration opportunities will be incorporated into the program curriculum as a means of breaking up the day, maintaining the interest of students and providing a context for importance of skill attainment.

Local workforce investment boards will also be asked to provide an orientation to the participants about the services offered through the One Stop system, including employment services, occupational training and postsecondary education.

Other opportunities can also be integrated into the program, such as Dress for Success, interviewing skills, resume preparation, etc.

Career-readiness will be a key component of this model. In addition to obtaining a GED, students who complete the program will have the opportunity to test for and receive a National Career Readiness Certificate, based on ACT, Inc.'s WorkKeys assessment, adding to their work-ready credentials.

Strategic Benefit

Increases the number of college- and career-ready GED graduates

Promotes educational attainment, including transition to postsecondary education, technical education, apprenticeships and specialty training

Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries

Establishes the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century



Nature of Change

Removes the barrier of time investment required by individuals to obtain the academic and skills preparation necessary for the jobs of the future

Cost

The estimated cost for personnel, materials and equipment for three pilot projects is \$625,000. Additional costs for room and board must be negotiated with participating state agencies such as Kentucky State Parks or individual colleges or universities.

Implementation Timing

It is anticipated that several pilot projects in strategic locations will begin within one year. If successful, the program can be expanded throughout the state and throughout the year.

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Adult Education, Council on
Postsecondary Education
Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet
Public University Partners
Kentucky Community and Technical College System
Local Workforce Investment Boards

Consequences of No Action

Kentucky's ability to grow its human capital infrastructure and raise the educational attainment level necessary to compete economically will suffer. Kentucky will continue with business as usual and see programs diminish or disappear as budget cuts limit the resources to achieve gains in education attainment.

Employers see a value in the GED, in some cases as better than a high school diploma. Not implementing this program will constitute a missed opportunity to demonstrate the Commonwealth's commitment to innovate and provide business and industry with the skilled workforce they need to be competitive.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local leaders have the opportunity to participate in an innovative and highly visible program designed to increase the competitive characteristics of its workforce.

Individuals who may not have had an interest in obtaining their GED due to the length of time required to achieve it will have an opportunity to see quick results.

Local areas will have an opportunity to market their services to a group of interested customers.

Potential Obstacles

Funding for the program will be an issue. Assuming that the program has enough appeal to secure funding for the pilot projects, the sustainability and expansion of the program will need to be addressed. Other barriers may include childcare, transportation, undiagnosed learning disabilities and proper screening of individuals and their commitment to the program.

Transparency/Accountability

Initial success of the program will be evaluated based on two or three pilot projects in different locations. Criteria will include: number of applicants, number selected, completions, GED and National Career Readiness Certificates awarded.

Additional Comments (optional)

It is anticipated that the pilot projects will generate a significant amount of media attention, increasing visibility of the importance of educational attainment. This increased attention is also anticipated to increase interest in GED attainment for those who may also be unable to participate in the program as well. Kentucky Adult Education should use this attention to increase participation in its more traditional adult education programs throughout the state, as well as incorporate best practices and lessons learned from this program to improve efficiencies and results in those programs.

Best Practices

U.S. Army Prep School

Want to join the Army, but you don't have a high school diploma, or a GED? Previously, this was not possible. However, the Army has now opened the Army Preparatory School (APS) at Fort Jackson, S.C. to help young men and women who fall short of the education requirements needed to join the military.

The four-week course is an Army one-year test program to help young men and women who want to enlist in the Army to obtain their General Educational Development Certificate..

Those accepted for the program enlist in the Army, but instead of attending basic training after their time in the Reception Battalion, they attend the prep school. Upon completion of the program and receiving a GED, they then attend basic training. In addition to intensive classroom training to prepare

for the GED examination, recruits attending the prep school will also undergo daily physical training, be subject to Army discipline, and learn customs and traditions to help prepare them for basic. Those who fail to successfully complete the program are given an entry-level separation, with no prejudices.

To be eligible, applicants must meet the normal enlistment standards (except for education requirements). The program is only open to applicants who score at least a 50 on the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB) and those who aren't eligible to return to high school.

Once fully operational, officials said the prep school could accommodate upwards of 60 new students each week. The school will have the capability of educating 240 recruits at a time in core academic subjects over the course of four weeks. It is expected to yield nearly 3,000 graduates in its first year who upon completion, will continue directly to basic combat training and advanced individual training.

"The Army Preparatory School will help provide the Army with dedicated young men and women who until now were unable to serve their country," Capt. Brian Gaddis the Army Preparatory School company commander, told the Army News Service.

"Because of education requirements, there are high-quality, motivated citizens who can't join," he said. "The Army Preparatory School gives them an opportunity to serve their country."

The Army Training and Doctrine Command is also working with the South Carolina Department of Education to explore the possibilities of the state granting students with an actual high school diploma.

Gen. William S. Wallace, commanding general of Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery, believes that the health and fitness of America's youth is rapidly becoming a national security issue.

"Today only 28 percent of the 17 to 24 year-old population qualifies to wear a military uniform. The other 72 percent fail to meet minimum standards on education, character and health," said Wallace. "We will not lower our training standards so we're faced with helping to raise the health and education standards for our young people who want to serve."

A visit to Fort Knox by Cabinet and Adult Education

representatives in March 2010, included a briefing by Colonel Kevin Shwedo of the U.S. Army Preparatory School at Fort Jackson, SC. Col. Shwedo provided the following results of the school to date:

- Goal of 90 percent graduation rate has been exceeded, actual rate is 99 percent
- Majority of graduates show interest in postsecondary education opportunities
- Created a charter school on post so high school diplomas could be issued
- Currently able to issue a high school diploma from each candidate's original high school

New Opportunity School for Women – Berea, KY

The New Opportunity School for Women was founded in 1987 with the mission of improving the educational, financial and personal circumstances of low-income, middle-aged women in Kentucky and the south central Appalachian region.

Twice a year, the New Opportunity School for Women chooses 14 women to attend its Berea College Campus to spend three weeks in extensive career exploration and leadership development. Placement in an internship on campus or in the community is included. Through testing and counseling, job skills are identified and program participants learn to write a resume and practice job interview skills.

Educational and cultural opportunities are also provided through field trips to museums, music programs, lectures, courses in Appalachian literature, writing and computer basics. Participants examine their personal situations and possibilities for their future through group and individual counseling. Seminars are held to build self-confidence and to help participants return to their communities and families with new self-awareness.

There is no cost for attending the New Opportunity School. Room and meals are provided as well. Grants for travel and childcare are available; however, childcare cannot be provided on campus during the three-week school.

Women living in Kentucky and the south central Appalachian region who have completed high

school, have a GED diploma (or actively working on a GED diploma) and do not have a college degree are eligible to apply. Participants should be between the ages of 30 and 55, of low income and should demonstrate motivation and eagerness to learn. Participants will remain on campus for the entire three-week program.

The school operates two sessions each year. The winter session begins on the first Sunday in February and the summer session begins on the first Sunday in June.

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Action Steps

1. Mind Your Own Business – Entrepreneurship Initiative
2. Work-Ready Communities
3. Rapid Response Redesign
4. Economic Development Academy

Action Step 1

Mind Your Own Business

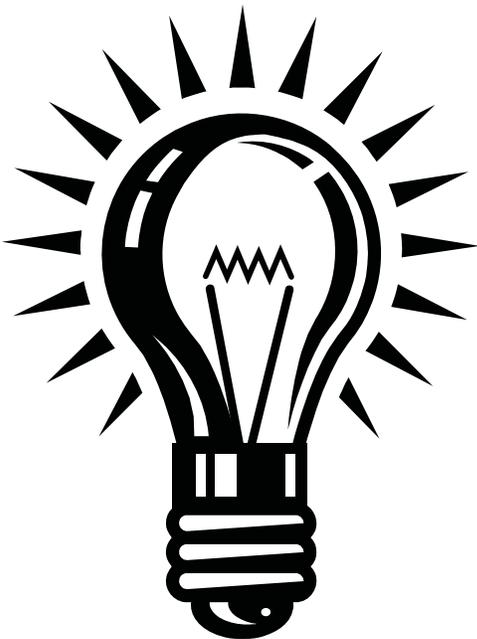
Description

Promote entrepreneurship and innovation as employment and economic development options with training available through every One Stop Center and Area Technology Center throughout the state. Innovative thinking and local adaptation is encouraged by this strategic plan therefore, a standardized statewide curriculum is not recommended.

Local areas are encouraged to work with education, business and finance partners as well as small business development centers and the state's Innovation and Commercialization Centers to develop a comprehensive entrepreneurship training program that is responsive to local needs while meeting certain minimum standards to be established by the Governor.

In addition to providing opportunities for entrepreneurship training, local alliances are encouraged to link successful participants with venture capital, micro-finance, and other financing resources.

Area Technology Centers operated by the Kentucky Office of Career and Technical Education should work with the local workforce investment boards to create secondary-level versions of the entrepreneurship training opportunities.



Strategic Benefit

This action provides increased opportunities for entrepreneurship in a culture of innovation.

Nature of Change

Administrative, no legislation required

Cost

Estimate to develop and staff program - \$175,000

This does not include training costs, as those will be covered by local formula funds.

Implementation Timing

Program rollouts should occur no later than Jan 1, 2011.

Responsible Parties

Governor Beshear
Education & Workforce Development Cabinet
Office of Career and Technical Education
Local Workforce Investment Boards
Small Business Development Centers
Colleges and Universities (two and four year)
Innovation and Commercialization Centers

Consequences of No Action

Entrepreneurship and small business growth is expected to drive economic recovery in the United States. Without the availability of entrepreneurship training and support, Kentucky will lag behind other states and likely miss opportunities to innovate and grow locally-owned businesses, which are less likely to relocate and create unemployment issues in the future.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas have the opportunity to invest in creating businesses and employers with local roots providing more stability to the local economy. This also provides local workforce officials with additional opportunities to partner and collaborate with economic development professionals in the creation of new jobs.

Potential Obstacles

Local areas are unable to count new business start ups as placement in employment in their performance measures.

Transparency/Accountability

Local workforce investment boards and area technology centers will provide quarterly reports to the state describing number of participants enter and completing training, approved business plans, referrals to financiers, and new businesses and jobs created by trained individuals.

Additional Comments

“Intel believes that entrepreneurship is crucial to building local innovation capacity. It brings new technologies to market, and supports economic development through building strong local and regional economies. Both the public and the private sectors have important roles to play in advancing entrepreneurship around the world, including through enabling effective entrepreneurship education.”

– **Craig R. Barrett**, Chairman of the Board, Intel Corporation

“Entrepreneurship education for young people is the most powerful idea in youth development today- every young person on the planet should be exposed to the principles of entrepreneurship, ownership and socially responsible wealth creation.”

– **Steve Mariotti**, The National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship



Action Step 2

Work Ready Communities

Description

“Although the exodus of manufacturing from the United States to offshore locations that became more pronounced during the past 20 years was devastating to many communities, it can be argued that the loss of these lower-skilled production operations made room for the next generation of manufacturing and production that is still occurring today. New industries such as biotechnology and advanced manufacturing require higher-skilled workers and flexible labor forces that many less-developed nations do not offer.” – Area Development Online, March 31, 2010

In order for Kentucky to remain competitive for these new industries, our communities must promote the availability of that skilled workforce. To provide business and industry with the assurance of the availability of this resource, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board proposes the certification of communities as “work-ready.” Communities must apply for this certification and meet certain high standards for education attainment and credentialing in order to receive the status.



Once certified, communities will receive a certificate and template that may be used to create signs for posting at gateway points and business areas within the community. Achievement of Work-Ready status will be announced by the Governor and communicated to the media and appropriate state agencies. They will also have the right to use this status in their own marketing and promotion.

Communities will be monitored on a regular basis to assure they continue to meet the “Work-Ready” standards.

Five or more contiguous counties with Work-Ready status may apply for Work-Ready Region status.

Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards, economic development agencies, technical, secondary and post-secondary educators, and elected officials

Encourages an increase in the number of postsecondary and work-ready high school graduates

Recognizes educational options, including technical education, two-year and four-year college, apprenticeships and specialty training to younger students

Increases awareness of educational and skills requirements for high-demand jobs, as well as those in emerging industries

Reinforces the concept of life-long learning as a norm in the 21st century

Nature of Change

Administrative, no legislation required

Cost

Program Development and outreach in year one - \$200,000

Implementation Timing

Program should be designed and rolled out within one year of plan adoption

Responsible Parties

Governor’s Office
Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet
Cabinet for Economic Development

Consequences of No Action

This is a new project, however in the increasingly competitive world of economic development, such a program provides economic development professionals with additional differentiators when

courting new businesses and industry. Numerous economic development and workforce publications rank a skilled workforce in the top five factors in the site selection process.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas have the opportunity to bring together elected officials, economic development agencies and educators in an effort to focus collaboration on the improved competitiveness of the workforce.

Potential Obstacles

The political will to establish sufficiently high standards so that the certification is meaningful to business

Best Practice

Georgia's Work Ready Program

The following are excerpts from the program's Web site.

As part of Georgia's Work Ready initiative, counties throughout the state have made a commitment to earn Certified Work Ready Community status, a designation showing they have the talented workforce that business demands and the means to drive economic growth and prosperity.

Earning Certified Work Ready Community status ensures citizens have the talent necessary to staff existing jobs and to master the innovative technologies new jobs will require in the future. By taking part in the effort, Georgia counties are transforming their economies and giving themselves a competitive advantage in attracting new businesses and jobs.

To be designated a Certified Work Ready Community, counties must drive current workers and the available workforce to earn Work Ready Certificates, demonstrate a commitment to improving public high school graduation rates and build community commitment for meeting these goals. Each community has created a team of economic development, government and education partners to meet the certification criteria. Counties are given three years to reach the goals necessary to become a Certified Work Ready Community. Those counties willing to complete the process in 18 months are eligible for state-funded grants and serve as models for the initiative, showcasing successes and best practices for others to follow.

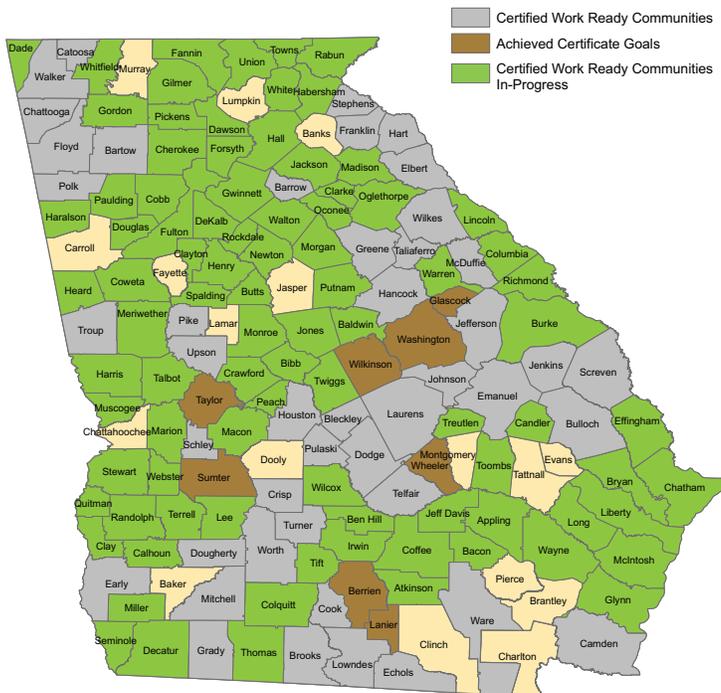
Built on a unique partnership between state government, the state chamber of commerce, local chambers, economic developers, education, private

industry and the state's workforce, Work Ready provides a concrete way to understand what businesses need from their workforce and what Georgians must know to fill those jobs. Through the Work Ready Certificate, job profiling and skills training components, the initiative guarantees workers have both the talent necessary for existing jobs and the skills to master the innovative technologies tomorrow's jobs will require.

Going further, Work Ready is assisting Georgia's communities in designing economic development strategies to attract new business and preserve the health of their existing economic base. The Certified Work Ready Community initiative offers a means of demonstrating that a county's current labor force can fill existing jobs and meet the changing labor needs of tomorrow, and Work Ready Regions encourage multiple counties to work together to build regional talent pools aligned to a common, existing strategic industry.



Certified Work Ready Communities



Action Step 3

Rapid Response Redesign

Description

Evaluate and enhance Kentucky's delivery structure based on best practices across the country focusing on the following elements: the infrastructure; relationships with stakeholders; policies and procedures; gathering intelligence; promoting the services; assessing potential dislocations; and analyzing worker survey data.

The intent is to provide support to Kentucky companies throughout the business lifecycle as opposed to predominantly times of dislocation. These efforts will link with the Cabinet for Economic Development's Department of Business Development.

Strategic Benefit

Maximize the Commonwealth's rapid response resources aligning them with economic development goals around business development and the Kentucky Reinvestment Act resulting in a more proactive systemic approach.

Nature of Change

Administrative – Moving the rapid response system from a fundamental level of performance to an enhanced level of performance at both the state and local levels.

Cost

Training - \$25,000

Implementation Timing

Evaluate State and Local status (three months)
Refine Policies and Procedures (three months)
Develop and Deliver Training (three months)

Responsible Party

Office of Employment and Training Division of Workforce and Employment Services

Consequences of No Action

Maintain reactive rapid response practices.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Broaden the portfolio of services offered to the business community as well as foster a deeper relationship between economic development and workforce development professionals.

Potential Obstacles

Resistance to a broader interpretation of rapid response services

Best Practice

Use Education and Training Administration's Rapid Response action plan tool that includes best practices from across the nation as a launching point.



Action Step 4

Economic Development Academy

Description

Establish a one-day program to be conducted throughout the state at various locations designed to bring together local workforce investment board members, economic development authorities, local elected officials, and members of the General Assembly representing the region.

The purpose is to explore how each can work together in a collaborative manner to achieve community and statewide economic development goals by integrating a workforce system that serves as a tool for recruiting and expansion of business and industry and the quality jobs they bring.

As a spin-off of the Academy, a half-day session focused on innovation leadership is recommended. This can be conducted in conjunction with or as a stand alone supplement to the Economic Development Academy. The Innovation Leadership Forum will expose local elected officials and economic development professionals to the importance of focusing on innovation for economic growth as an alternative to reliance solely on chasing the “big win” of a major manufacturing operation.

The Academy will also create a user-friendly directory of key players in workforce investment and economic development at the state, regional and local levels that can be used as a resource by business and industry as well as economic development, workforce and elected officials.

The directory should be available online in a format that allows users to search by county and region. Hard copies will not be printed, however an option for the user to print the directory should be available. Entries should include the roles and responsibilities of listed agencies and individuals, as well as brief information about programs, resources and funding sources.

Strategic Benefit

Increases communication and collaboration between workforce boards and economic development agencies by bridging differences in “language”, goals and cultures

Focuses a seamless delivery of services provided by Kentucky or the community, not individual agencies

Helps improve and evolve methods of projecting jobs and training needs of the future by building and strengthening relationships between all parties prior to a crisis situation

Increases opportunities for entrepreneurship in a culture of innovation

Nature of Change

This is a program that can be developed and implemented at the administrative level and does not require legislative change.

Cost

Estimated cost per Academy - \$2,000
Includes: Presentation materials, space rental, participant meals, travel for leaders

Estimated directory costs - \$40,000
Includes: research, writing, and information technology services



Implementation Timing

First Academy to be held in Fall 2010

Responsible Parties & Partners

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Commissioner of Workforce Investment
Cabinet for Economic Development
Kentucky Association for Economic Development
Local Workforce Investment Boards

Consequences of No Action

An inconsistent level of coordination between local workforce investment areas and the economic development and elected officials within the region will produce mixed results and does not make the best use of leveraged resources and community collaboration opportunities.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas will benefit by the presence of a third party (the Academy) carrying messages that integrate best practices and bring with that, the attention of Frankfort officials such as Commissioners, Directors and Cabinet Secretaries.

The citizens and businesses in Kentucky benefit from opportunities to better leverage resources and align the workforce system to be responsive to the needs of local businesses and economic development prospects.

Potential Obstacles

Interest of local officials will need to be developed

Scheduling to assure participation of key individuals in each location to assure return on investment

Transparency/Accountability

Publication of notes from the Academy and all presentations on a state Web site, also made available to local agencies for posting, encourage media coverage of the Academy before, during and after the event.

Online survey emailed to all participants within 30 days of the event.

Action Steps

1. Alphabet Soup – Eliminate Acronyms
2. Partner for Success
3. Beyond Measure – Statewide Reserve Investments
4. Case Management Consistency
5. High Performing Local Workforce Investment Boards

Action Step 1

Alphabet Soup

Description

The use of acronyms in many government systems has become a jumbled mess of letters leading to confusion and the creation of exclusive languages; the workforce system is no exception.

When a system's purpose is to serve clients, be they business and industry leaders, or workers who are un-or under-employed, communications must be inclusive and employ terms which can be quickly and clearly understood by all.

All communications intended for public or customer consumption should be free of all but the most common abbreviations and acronyms, such as USA, GED, IRS. In no instance shall system acronyms appear in a communication with a client, electronic or printed, without a definition of the acronym upon first reference.

The following acronyms may be common to those engaged with the workforce system on a daily basis but are not within the basic lexicon of our clients and should be avoided in their abbreviated form: UI, TANF, WIA, WIB, DOL, ETA (unless you mean estimated time of arrival), DW, TABE, AE, ATC, OET, OCTE, OFB, OVR, NEG, etcetera.

Strategic Benefit

Increases understanding by clients

Simplifies online services and focus on innovative user-friendly applications

Reduces confusion and information overload for those unfamiliar with the system

Nature of Change

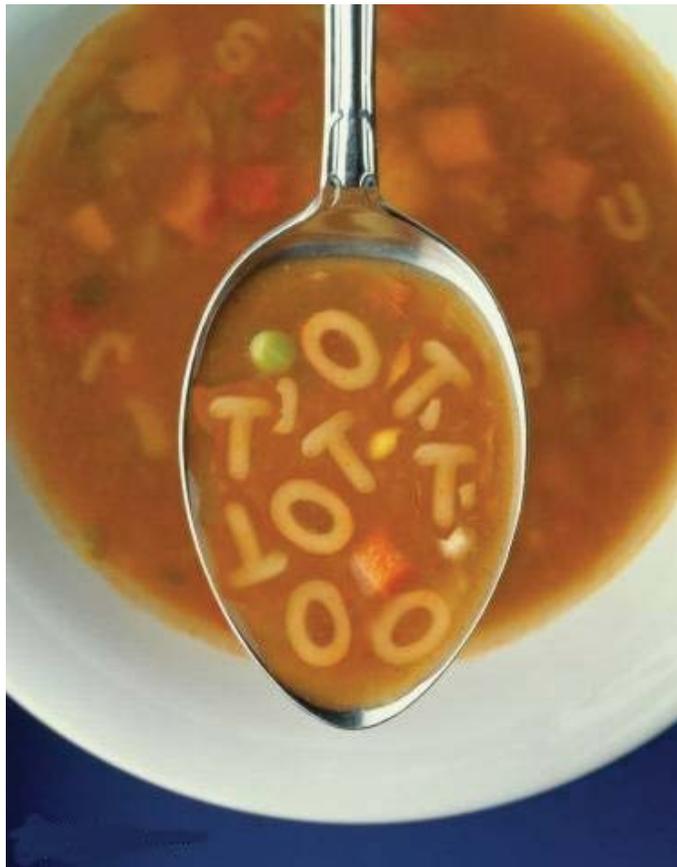
Change will require scrubbing of all existing online resources and monitoring of all new communications tools.

Cost

None

Implementation Timing

This will be an on-going effort but can begin immediately.



Responsible Parties

Everyone who writes or approves any communication material for client or public consumption.

Consequences of No Action

As more programs are added to the system, so too the number of acronyms increases exponentially. Currently, levels of frustration by clients, the public and even those within the system will lead to missed opportunities because of poor communications.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Better understanding should lead to better results in performance as well as participation by volunteer board members who may not have the interest or time to learn a new language.

With a better understanding of programs and funding tools communicated in simple terms, clients will have better opportunities for success.

Potential Obstacles

Old habits are hard to break.

Partner organizations should be encouraged to buy-in to this approach as well.

Transparency/Accountability

State and local review of materials prior to publication or posting

Additional Comments

According to acronymfinder.com, there are more than 8 million acronyms in use throughout the world.

The site lists 34 possible meanings for UI, 14 for WIA, 142 for ATC, and 8 for OET (not one of which is our Office of Employment and Training).

Action Step 2

Partner for Success

Description

Within the Kentucky Department of Workforce Investment there are four offices that have meeting the needs of employers, individual training and job placement as a primary focus. There are also opportunities to partner effectively with agencies outside the Department as well, including adult education, housing, economic development, etc.

This initiative will establish an Achieving Success Together team to identify areas of common services and complementary services. This team will be composed of individuals from all levels of the Department's organization. Once those critical services have been identified, this internal group will look at ways to increase efficiency and effectiveness by simplifying service delivery driven by the employer customer and the individual consumer vantage points. This is expected to impact reporting, monitoring and performance outcomes as well.

Some early opportunities for collaboration are being explored such as the Microsoft Information Technology Academy, career coaches in the Area Technology Centers, and Work Now Kentucky. This could pave the way for state level memorandums of understanding for infrastructure costs for state agencies in One Stops, solutions-based approach to business services, joint policy guidance to the field, integrated case management and cross-training of staff.



Strategic Benefit

Moves the Commonwealth from a confederated set of agencies to a unified system focused on investment in workforce. Streamlines service delivery to employer and individual customers. Leverages resources and shares credit for outcomes. Provides opportunities for individuals at all levels of the system to take ownership in the vision, direction and return on investment made by the department.

Nature of Change

Policy, administrative and operational changes.

Cost

Expenses - \$10,000

Implementation Timing

Identify the team (one month)
Conduct a department summit (three months)
Develop the action plan (one month)
Begin implementing the action plan (six months)

Responsible Parties

Commissioner of Workforce Investment
Agency Heads
Achieving Success Together Team

Consequences of No Action

Continued examples of disjointed policy and service delivery in the Commonwealth for employer and individual customers will limit the opportunity to achieve a better return on investment.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

More efficient and effective service delivery based on employer and individual customer feedback. A greater sense of teaming among One Stop based staff will provide customers with a more unified, goal-oriented seamless system.

Potential Obstacles

Myths around the ability to leverage resources as well as turf issues

Action Step 3

Beyond Measure: Statewide Reserve Investments

Description

Establish conditions for access to statewide reserve funding that encourage implementation of strategic priorities by local workforce investment boards and partner agencies, promise an increased return on investment and promote innovation in the delivery of services to customers of the system.

A policy statement developed by the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board and approved by the Governor will focus on smart investment of these limited resources on financing projects and programs that align with the state's goals. The policy will outline the purpose of the funding, eligibility requirements, application contents and criteria, and will create a competitive process to level the playing field and focus each investment.

Additionally, when statewide administration funds are used to make improvements which benefit local facilities and service delivery, criteria to assure these investments are also in alignment with state strategic goals should also be employed.

Strategic Benefit

Reduce ad-hoc decisions by creating a strategic process for investment of statewide funding

Incentive for local and partner buy-in that is not tied to the common performance measures for program funds

Nature of Change

An administrative policy statement will define the criteria for access to statewide reserve funding.

Cost

None

Implementation Timing

This is a short-term implementation step and should be accomplished in 2010.

Responsible Parties

Governor's Office
Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Education and Workforce Development Cabinet

Consequences of No Action

Investment decisions made on an ad-hoc basis without established criteria tied to strategic goals will limit the ability of Kentucky to implement its strategic vision and achieve the best return on investment for our clients.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Each local area and partner organization will be assured of a level playing field as they compete for funds. Awards from the statewide reserve will be made on the basis of established criteria that support the realization of the vision.

Potential Obstacles

Political will to adhere to the requirements of the policy



Transparency/Accountability

Criteria established will include reporting requirements.

Recommendations for investment decisions will be made by a committee that includes subject matter experts, technical staff and representatives of the private sector.

Action Step 4

Case Management

Description

One of the cornerstone elements that local workforce investment area directors agree should be part of the branding architecture for Kentucky's workforce system is a consistent approach to case management. To achieve this level of service and unify the approach across the system, case managers will be required to attend training and professional development on a continuing basis.

Training should be developed which will elevate case management principles and approaches akin to those used in the private sector by employment search firms. This training is foundational to specific programmatic training for each service discipline.

Case management staff should be trained, and possibly credentialed, through a training provider to be contracted by the Office of Employment and Training. This training should be available for frontline staff of partner organizations as well.

Strategic Benefit

Transforms the identify of the "unemployment office"

Reduces confusion and information overload for those unfamiliar with the system

Increases communication among all service delivery points

Nature of Change

This change to the system will require buy-in at the local and individual levels in order to produce a team of case workers who provide consistent approaches to service across the system.

Cost

Phase One of Training - \$50,000

Responsible Parties

Office of Employment and Training
One Stop Managers

Consequences of No Action

Case management throughout the system will remain inconsistent and not contribute to the implementation of the state's vision. Rebranding efforts will lack the foundational support of consistent service delivery required for success.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Clients will receive case management services delivered with consistency by trained professionals.

Potential Obstacles

Funding and time commitments required for training and continuing education/professional development.

Transparency/Accountability

Case managers will be required to receive training and professional development/continuing education.



Action Step 5

High Performing Workforce Investment Boards

Description

In order to assure the effectiveness of local workforce investment boards and enhance the strategic nature of these boards, a technical assistance and recognition program will be developed based on an assessment of the following:

- The local workforce investment board is effectively using current information to guide policy and investments.
- The local workforce investment board is investing resources to promote the development of skills and career ladders in the Commonwealth's High Priority Occupations.
- The local workforce investment board has developed partnerships in key targeted industry sub-clusters and is developing innovative approaches to improve their competitiveness.
- The local workforce investment board has a clear strategic direction and has aligned relevant regional resources to that direction.
- The local workforce investment board has both a broad-based and a targeted cluster-linked integrated business services plan.
- The local workforce investment board is ensuring that its One Stops provide excellent and fully accessible services to both employers and job seekers.
- The local workforce investment board has established a youth strategy aligned with the regional and the Commonwealth's high priority occupations.
- The local workforce investment board maintains sound fiscal practices, develops the budget with board member's input and the budget process ensures that Workforce Investment Act investments are aligned with

the strategic direction established by the board.

- The local workforce investment board is in compliance with the negotiated requirements of the quantitative and qualitative measures in the Commonwealth.
- The local workforce investment board is structured, staffed, and funded so that it can carry out its oversight and strategic roles in the local area. The board itself is industry driven and the membership composition is reflective of vital existing and emerging industries.

A consultant will provide an initial high-performance analysis. A technical assistance and recognition program will be developed based on those findings.

Strategic Benefit

Local boards are in direct control of a large percentage of the workforce investment resources, assuring that they are active and engaged in assuring the desired return on that investment will help realize the Commonwealth's vision.



Nature of Change

This is a new initiative to provide direct assistance to local boards and staff.

Cost

Assessment and development of the certification program - \$200,000

Technical assistance would be provided as required and funded by local workforce investment boards on a fee basis.

Implementation Timing

Initial analysis and report by outside consultant in 2010

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Local Workforce Investment Boards
Department of Workforce Investment

Consequences of No Action

Local boards will continue to operate with no clear level of performance expectations from the state. Some will operate efficiently and effectively, while

others will languish and have little direction for making important investment decisions.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas will have a tool to use to measure their effectiveness and provide guidance for strategic direction. Following the best practice model described above will help assure local customers that investment decisions are based on defined strategies and sound data.

Potential Obstacles

Less effective boards may resist or reject findings of constructive criticism and recommendations for improving investment performance.

Transparency/Accountability

This action step is a means of helping local boards establish their accountability for directing the investment decision within their regions.

Additional Comments

This action item is intended as a tool to improve performance.

Action Steps

1. Workforce Academy
2. Outreach Initiative
3. Get Back to Work
4. One Stop Operations Improvements
5. Unemployment Insurance Customer Service Plan

Action Step 1

Workforce Academy

Description

Both state and local workforce officials agree that a high level of customer service should be one of the cornerstones of the brand architecture for Kentucky's workforce system. In order to achieve system-wide consistency in the approach to customer service, a training program will be developed and provided to all service delivery staff.

Great customer service also depends on knowledgeable service delivery staff with the confidence and knowledge required to perform all aspects of their jobs and an understanding of the system itself. In addition to customer service training, opportunities for training in the following areas are also recommended:

- Workforce System Orientation
- Workforce Programs
- Management
- Media Relations
- Case Management
- Career Counseling
- Partner cross-training as appropriate

Development of the training programs should include a mix of live on-site and on-demand Web based training modules.

Local directors have identified case management as foundational element of what should be part of the brand architecture of the Kentucky workforce system.

As part of the workforce academy model, a collaborative case management approach with an emphasis on providing timely and accurate workforce intelligence to our employer and education partners as well as job seekers is seen as critical.

To accomplish this, it is recommended that each One Stop Center have a designated "super user" for the data collection and reporting system. That user should be trained in both technical and customer service areas. The "super user" will also work with business service and other case management staff to assure that all local information is accurate and current.

All other case management staff should be trained and possibly credentialed through a training provider to be contracted by the Office of Employment and Training.

In order to maintain a high level of customer service, development of evaluation methods and customer feedback will be developed and may include customer feedback cards available at the point of service, online feedback surveys, and Email follow up with business clients.

Strategic Benefit

Increase awareness within the system that "clients" of the workforce system, and include those with jobs to fill as well as those seeking a job.

Provide customer service training to all service delivery staff.

Develop benchmarks and base-line standards for consistency within the system (physical, program and customer services) while allowing for local and regional adaptation.

Nature of Change

Buy-in must be created by all partners in the system and a culture that focuses on solving clients' problems, rather than working in silos must be created.

Cost

Academy Development and Expenses - \$200,000

**Case Management Training covered in another step - \$50,000*

Implementation Timing

Roll out of first training modules expected in Fall of 2010.

Responsible Party(ies)

Office of Employment and Training
Local Workforce Investment Boards
One Stop Managers
Partner Agencies

Consequences of No Action

Rather than a solutions center of choice, our One Stop and workforce systems risk falling behind and becoming the last resort for business and individual clients. Without this foundational element, rebranding the system will have little meaning other than a new logo for the same old ad-hoc approach to service delivery.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local areas will have the opportunity to associate with and help build a new paradigm for what the One Stop service delivery system should be.

Consistency across the system will help everyone who makes up and uses the system more comfortable with the vision of a solutions-based rather than silo approach to serving our customers.

Best Practice

Virginia Front-Line Staff Certification

Virginia's One Stop Centers are physical locations across the state where job seekers can visit to receive assistance with core employment services (including job search and placement assistance, access to computers, telephones, fax and copy machines, resume and cover letter development, employment-related workshops) and intensive services (including assessments and career counseling), and training and career education services to those who are eligible.

Continuing Professional Development: In June 2007, the Virginia Workforce Council (VWC) approved a policy that mandates every front-line staff member be certified. The objective of this required certification is to ensure that all front-line service providers have the skills needed to provide effective and consistent customer service throughout the entire Virginia Workforce Network.

The VWC's Workforce Services committee discussed the need for continuing the promotion of professional development, questions regarding the number of staff required to be certified, alternative pathways to certification and recertification requirements.

Businesses with operations across the state will become confident in their expectations of the system and its value to their operations.

Potential Obstacles

Changing a culture that has existed for so long will not be easy, individuals may resist training.

Additional Comments

In the future, the board may wish to consider requiring certification of all front line staff.



Action Step 2

Outreach Initiative

Description

Among the benefits of a unified branding identity is a new opportunity to market a revamped, simpler, user-friendly workforce system. Because of the variety of local identities, marketing the entire system on a statewide basis to all customer groups has been difficult at best.

In addition to a new common name the core values and characteristics of the system, embraced as foundation elements across the system should be emphasized.

“Business should view us in the same light as a private, for-profit headhunter firm,” said one local director.

In order to achieve a status even close to that goal, outreach activities must include emphasis on the regional business service teams and a message that the workforce system is a solutions-based service for employers.

Federal and state regulations may necessitate a distinct division of labor within the One Stop system, however, clients should see the system as seamless and one brand not a series of silos to negotiate.

Strategic Benefit

Increase awareness within the system that “clients” of the workforce system, include those with jobs to fill as well as those seeking a job.

Increase use of workforce system as a resource for employers to identify, screen, match, interview and prepare candidates for work.

Increase contacts with employers and economic development agencies regarding future workforce needs.

Develop benchmarks and base-line standards for consistency within the system (physical, program and customer services) while allowing for local and regional adaptation.

Nature of Change

Some local areas already do an exceptional job

with outreach, including regular meaningful contact with employers. Under a new branding identity, a consistent level of service and approach to outreach should help all local areas become equally proficient.

Cost

Training and program start up - \$25,000

Implementation Timing

All areas are encouraged to continue to build upon current outreach efforts.

Marketing materials associated with the new branding architecture should be rolled out simultaneous with the rollout of the new identity.

Responsible Party(ies)

Kentucky Workforce Investment Board
Local Workforce Investment Boards
Commissioner of Workforce Development
One Stop Partners

Consequences of No Action

Kentucky’s workforce system and One Stop Centers will continue to live with the identity of “the unemployment office,” an image that does not enhance the opportunity to reach business and industry in a competitive way as a solutions-based service provider.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Local workforce investment areas will become part of a greater whole, with a reliable set of foundational service expectations, while retaining the ability to customize for local and regional responsiveness.

Potential Obstacles

Changing the identity of a public institution in the eyes of the business community will require persistence, time, energy, and consistency of message.

Training business liaisons to be problem solvers will be required.

Action Step 3

Get Back to Work

Description

Create a partnership between the Office of Employment and Training and Adult Education to develop an education based redeployment strategy for individuals deemed education deficient.

This project provides those Unemployment Insurance claimants most likely to exhaust their benefits with special services to increase their education level and workforce skills. The Office of Employment and Training uses a profiling model which ranks characteristics of Individuals likely to exhaust their benefits:

- 1) Claimant has previously exhausted benefits
- 2) Tenure at last job
- 3) Years of education
- 4) Hourly wage desired
- 5) Base period earnings
- 6) Job search radius

Those profiled will be sent a letter indicating they have been selected for intensive education and reemployment services and asked to participate in an information/training session at the nearest One Stop.

Adult Education will participate in the One Stop information session to provide the educational resource. Individuals will be encouraged to enroll in Adult Education classes and provided with information on supportive services available to assist them.

WorkKeys, Test of Adult Basic Education and others may be used as a required assessment component. The intent is to use the period of unemployment as an opportunity to increase education levels and expand future opportunities for individuals.

Kentucky Employment Network classes should be offered to all, not just Unemployment Insurance customers.

Strategic Benefit

It is a fact that wages are higher as the education level is raised. Additional education can reduce the cycle of unemployment which in the long run reduces duration of unemployment.

Up-to-date resources would be provided for all clients.

This program develops benchmarks and base-line standards for program consistency within the system while allowing for local and regional adaptation

Nature of Change

This program is a partnership between the two agencies and the One Stop Centers.

Cost

Programming - \$10,000

Implementation Timing

This is a short-term implementation project.

Responsible Parties

Kentucky Adult Education, Council on Postsecondary Education
Office of Employment and Training
One Stop Centers
Local Workforce Investment Boards

Consequences of No Action

Continued cycle of unemployment for undereducated clients with limited opportunities to pursue careers with higher wages and job security

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

This program will allow One Stops to tailor services to those participating in One Stop classes more effectively. Currently class participation can range from masters-level participants to those with little to no education.

Potential Obstacles

Resistance to program by those receiving unemployment benefits.

Action Step 4

One Stop Operations Improvements

Description

Create a tool to collect general information from the customer when entering a One Stop Center for the purpose of providing more efficient service and reducing customer wait times. A pilot project will test the potential of automated kiosks to serve this purpose.

Currently, One Stop Centers manually collect general information from customers and enter the information into an Excel spreadsheet. This spreadsheet is used to retrieve data on the count of customers and the types of services that are being requested in the offices.

A kiosk system would transition this function to a system similar to an automated teller machine where customers can enter information via a touch screen with a menu of options. The kiosks will be available at the entrance to the One Stop. Once customers enter their information, they will be placed in a queue for the staff to view and prepare for the consultation.

The system must produce reports that will allow for better and more efficient and responsive management of the One Stop Centers.

Strategic Benefit

Decreases wait time for services

Nature of Change

Pilot project to test for improved wait times, efficiency of service delivery, reporting

Cost

Pilot project hardware and software for kiosks in three One Stop Centers - \$75,000

Implementation Timing

Deployment of pilot kiosks in Fall of 2010

Responsible Parties

Office of Employment and Training
Local Workforce Investment Boards (in pilot areas)

Consequences of No Action

Continued lengthy wait times for customers. Inability to easily track aggregate number of clients visiting One Stop Centers and for what purposes.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Reduced customer wait times, more efficient operation of One Stop Centers, management tool for analyzing business operations to improve responsiveness.

Potential Obstacles

Ability to develop and maintain system as envisioned and interface with existing data bases.

Literacy skills of some potential users



Kiosks like this one are becoming increasingly popular ways to minimize wait times and augment traditional services

Action Step 5

Unemployment Insurance Customer Service Plan

Description

The dramatic rise in unemployment during the current recession has strained the system in terms of financial solvency as well as the capacity of the system to efficiently and effectively provide service to our customers. Because Unemployment Insurance services are delivered through the One Stop system, the impact of so many customers converging on the centers simultaneously has often affected the staff's ability to provide all of the other services our clients expect.

Improving Unemployment Insurance customer service is expected to have spillover effects to other service areas.

The plan includes both short and longer term improvements:

Short Term Strategies:

- Implement Direct Deposit for disbursement of benefits
- Increase staff supporting the Help Desk
- Analyze Help Desk assistance and develop a FAQ
- Triage the emails to the Help Desk and calls to local offices
- Conduct programmatic training and follow-up Customer Service training

Long-Term Strategies:

- Accounts for claimants - Set up accounts for claimants on line that will allow them to perform self-service functions as well as access account information similar to services offered on line through a bank.
- Expand UI Call Center and online services - Include simple UI data retrieval issues (where is my check, reissue my check, reset my PIN, etc). Develop additional online UI services that could be self service or at least initiated by the customer via the internet such as eligibility reviews. The Interactive Voice Response unit also has a web chat functionality to address claimant issues during filing which would allow for timely assistance.

- Automate the UI appeals and tax processes - Move the process from a primarily manual and time intensive process to an electronic process

Strategic Benefit

Decreases wait time for services

Provides customer service and other training to service delivery staff

Increases use of online tools and resources by automating several functions which currently require in-person contact with clients

Nature of Change

All of the process changes included can be made internally with administrative policy changes.

Cost

Unemployment Insurance stimulus package funding - \$500,000

Implementation Timing

Short-term strategies to be completed in 2010

Responsible Parties

Office of Employment and Training
Commissioner of Workforce Investment

Consequences of No Action

Without changes to our approach and philosophy for delivering quality services, gains in efficiency will not be realized, our clients will continue to feel frustrated, and an already overloaded system will be pushed closer to failure. Other customers of the workforce system will also suffer due to the overwhelming strain put on the system by unemployment.

Benefit to Local Areas/Clients

Clients will benefit by having the opportunity to do more online at their convenience, system capacity will be expanded reducing wait times for information and assistance requests. One Stop Centers can expect a reduction in the number of customers there for the sole purpose of unemployment benefits.

Evaluation Methodology

Although successful implementation of the recommendations of this plan is dependent upon the actions of a wide array of local workforce investment boards, partners, agencies and officials, the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board will monitor the progress of each action step.

Evaluation Framework

With input from the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, the Executive Committee will develop a basic framework for the evaluation of both implementation progress and success or failure of programs following implementation.

Committees

Committees will develop specific criteria under a board-approved evaluation framework for each of the action steps assigned to them., Committees will meet on a regular basis to determine the level of progress made toward implementation or project completion as well as determining the level of return on the investment of each action item.

Board

Each committee will provide staff with an update prior to meetings of the full board. These updates will clearly and concisely convey where progress is being made, where projects are stalled or lagging behind, as well as identifying and issues which should be addressed by the full board. As projects come on-line, tracking the results will be an additional component of each committee's update.

Each board meeting will provide an opportunity for presentation of one or more projects which are completed or nearing completion. These presentations will be led by a board member but may include presenters outside the board who are vital players in the implementation of the project.

Following each board meeting, copies of the committee reports and presentations will be made available to the public via the board's Web site.

Following the final meeting of the board each year, the board chair will submit a report to the Governor documenting the progress made that year and identifying any issues of concern.

