

RETREAT 2013

Areas of focus for the final year of the WIB Strategic Plan, 2011 – 2014

Attendees at the 2013 Strategic Planning Retreat engaged in two activities to assist with recommending the focus of the organization’s strategy, based on the strategic plan, into the final year.

1. Industry Sector Analysis

Participants were presented with an overview of labor market data related to the current industry targets and some projections about growth, demand, and wages in these and other potential target areas. The retreat participants were then asked to use the criteria identified at last year’s retreat – **high wage, high growth OR high demand** – to evaluate the current industry sectors that are the targeted industries and to assess whether the current targets will continue to meet the criteria over the next few years (to 2017); whether, based on the data and the criteria, there should be other industries considered; and what they would recommend become the sectors for focus moving into a new strategic plan (2014 and beyond).

Systematic Evaluation of Sectors:

The conversation at each table indicated that all the groups support the current criteria (HW; HG or HD). All of the tables indicated that there should be a system in place to more regularly evaluate the targeted sectors, which should include information from the Industry Alliances and information on how much of a demand there was in each of the county’s regions (East, West, Mid-County). The consensus for the timeframe to evaluate the sectors against the criteria was at least annually unless there was some labor market/data based ‘trigger’ within a given year that would necessitate a closer analysis. One table suggested that the trigger could be 4% (growth/decline) relative to projections for every 5 years. Another group suggested that the annual review should include more than just labor market projections but also a review of educational institutions enrollment rates for the related programs and graduation rates from those programs as well as 6 month post graduation employment within the related industries. Another table suggested using CUEP industry structure as a feeder into the WIBs decision making.

Current Sector Analysis Results:

Current Sectors of Opportunity for focus	Comments from each table
Healthcare	Keep (from all groups) <i>Summary of comments:</i> Sector is growing and will continue to grow)
Infrastructure	May need further consideration: 5 groups indicated keeping it 2 groups indicated eliminating it The others were not sure
Logistics	Keep (almost all the groups indicated keeping it – 9 out of the 12) <i>Summary of comments:</i> Good wages, important to regional economy
Professional and Business Services	Keep but with more focus on specific clusters/occupations within the sector (9 groups out of 12) <i>Summary of comments:</i> One group suggested revamping the focus on service categories including automotive repair,

	mechanics, cosmetology, laundry/dry cleaning, and maintenance and repair workers. One groups comment was that this is the most questionable to keep. It is very broad based and may be difficult to create an industry alliance because it is so broad. If dropped, the group suggested putting some key occupations in the other sectors (such as civil engineer techs into Infrastructure)
Renewable	Needs further consideration. 6 groups said keep it and 3 said to eliminate it...3 discussed combining it with Utilities.
Utilities	Needs further consideration. 6 groups said keep it and 3 said to eliminate it...3 discussed combining it with Renewable.
Recommended new sectors (all tables agreed a sector should not be added without eliminating or combining something): ❖ Construction ❖ Combine utilities and renewable ❖ One group suggested creating a career cluster: Entry level career cluster to include: retail, customer service, salesmanship, hospitality	1
	111 (either delete or combine)
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Conclusions:

Most groups did NOT recommend that any of the emerging sectors presented (tourism, retail, construction) be added at this time either because they did not meet high wage (tourism) or barely met it (retail) or the demand was almost totally replacement jobs and not real growth (construction).

The participants at the retreat were thoughtful in how they evaluated the data presented and in the comments they made to support their decisions on which sectors to continue over the next year. The following current sectors emerged as strong candidates to continue and to grow:

- Healthcare
- Logistics
- Professional and Business Services with some focusing on specific subsectors and occupations within the sector using the same HW/HD or HG criteria.

Infrastructure had less of a consensus. Some of the groups that questioned this sector acknowledged that the sector was important to the region, however, it was noted that the jobs are only there if there is funding to start the building projects.

A consensus emerged around combing the utilities and renewable sectors. Some of the groups called these ‘duplicative’ sectors and others saw them as having substantial areas of overlap.

Regional issues: One group suggested that if an industry was only a ‘localized need’ that it should not be the WIBs focus. Another group suggested more attention needed to be paid to local demand industry/occupations. The rest of the groups did not comment on this issue.

Challenges and Opportunities that Need to Be Addressed: Many of the groups spent time thinking about and commenting on the implications of an industry sector approach. These issues included:

- Ensure that selected sectors have career pathways – either within the sector or transferable skills/paths across related sectors.
- Ensure that career pathways are real (employers identify them) and are transparent to the worker.
- Address training capacity for each of the specified sectors.
- Assess the enrollment in training that is related to each of the sectors.
- Address the fact that much of the training required for each of the sectors is longer term and expensive. How do we keep individuals in the programs that require longer term training/credentials to meet industry requirements?
- Ensure the development and design of Industry Alliances as a strategy to engage employers.

2. Priority Setting

Participants were asked to identify **ONE** key thing **within** each goal that they thought ‘absolutely’ had to get done (or be substantially moving along) in the final year, above all the other strategies. The tally from the 12 groups is below. The strategy with the highest number of tables identifying it as the priority for the last year is highlighted in red.

As can be seen from the results below for goals 2 and 3, there seems to be a strong consensus to use Industry Alliances as one strategy to engage employers within the targeted industries (3.2). Industry Alliances that are formed to work with employers on a regular and consistent basis to identify and respond to their workforce needs will identify skill areas that are required for the occupations in their industry. Thus the priority area identified in goal 2 – aligning curricula (2.2) – could be seen as a result or outcome of the success of the Industry Alliances. Given the alignment of these two strategies as key priority areas, it seems that the message from the retreat attendees is clear – the WIBs priority should be to focus on skills and addressing the skills gap thru teaching/learning systems alignment based on sustained and ongoing employer feedback.

Goal One: Educate political leaders at all levels about the importance of workforce development and its positive local impact.

Key Strategies:	Number of Tables that considered it THE priority for the final year
1.1 Develop a policy agenda to present to policy makers that contains a coherent and simple message that articulates the benefits and the return on investment of workforce development initiatives.	(3)
1.2 Identify, articulate and influence workforce trends and policy through research, benchmarking and evaluation.	(1)
1.3 Identify and advocate for future workforce development issues.	(4 - with one table suggesting it be combined with 1.4)
1.4 Actively engage in the political, media, and community process with regard to policy development.	(0)
1.5 Influence funding decisions by staying connected to the legislature and to government.	(2)
1.6 Leverage related workforce issues and structures (e.g., identify the policy nexus between social services, economic development, and educational issues) to promote joint advocacy	(2)

efforts when appropriate.	
Goal Two: Prepare the workforce for current and future economic needs.	
Key Strategies:	Number of Tables that considered it THE priority for the final year
2.1 Develop sustainable forecasting mechanisms to be proactive in determining current and future skill needs of business and industry.	(1)
2.2 Align K-16 curricula with industry standards and with high demand, high growth occupations that result in sustainable wages.	(6 – with one table suggesting it be combined with 2.4)
2.3 Align training with local economic development forecasts for industry attraction.	(1)
2.4 Implement pathways to develop skills and obtain certifications required for middle skill jobs.	(3)
2.5 Assist business with identifying workforce needs created by retirements.	(0)
2.6 Continue to explore and maximize the use of new technologies to collect data and to provide information in more accessible, virtual, and user friendly ways.	(1)
2.7 Deliver consistently high quality services that result in connecting employers and qualified workers.	(0)

Goal Three: In support of goals one and two, we will align the WIB’s service delivery system to meet industry needs and to enhance the WIB’s image and visibility.

Key Strategies:	Number of Tables that considered it THE priority for the final year
3.1 Evaluate the current industry sector approach to ensure targets are in current and future economic growth sectors.	Completed at this retreat
3.2 Strengthen employer engagement through industry alliances in the targeted industries.	(11)
3.3 Maintain and grow the market share of businesses accessing workforce services through the WIB.	(1)
3.4 Leverage the development of career ladders to move entry level workers to more skilled levels.	(0)
3.5 Define brand equity for the WIB and continue to foster a public image and to increase public awareness.	(0)
3.6 Create a strategic marketing and communication plan that incorporates the use of social networking tools to raise awareness of the usefulness and quality of the existing network of workforce services.	(0)
3.7 Define the WIB’s core products and services and continue to evolve the continuous quality improvement system linked to customer expectations.	(0)