



Strategic Workforce Development as a Catalyst for Economic Growth

Lessons and Insights From the Field and Implications for the Future of WIA

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Abstract

Not since the Great Depression has such attention focused on America's needs for global competitiveness and for achieving full and meaningful employment across the country. America's competitiveness can be bolstered by a strategic system for developing and deploying the talents of a skilled workforce; and local workforce development entities can be the key agents of this change. Their ability to transition to an integrated system to guide economic transformation makes them vital.

This paper shares a set of ideas that suggest the re-authorized Workforce Investment Act should be re-characterized and christened as the "Strategic Workforce Development Act." Local entities, as part of multi-partner collaboratives, would be given the resources to develop thorough and comprehensive talent development strategic plans to spearhead regional transformation. These plans would incorporate measurable objectives and metrics to gauge progress towards those objectives. Active collaboration with economic development entities, employers, and educational institutions would be crucial for this strategy. Time is of the essence. We can no longer afford the opportunity costs of a siloed workforce development system that provides services in a transactional manner.

Based on significant work in the field, the authors of this paper identify three major contextual issues shaping the re-authorization of the Workforce Investment Act: 1) the imperative across the United States for better systems integration; 2) the realization that social change happens most effectively at the regional level; and 3) the need for new systems of accountability that better integrate the outputs of both economic development and workforce development systems. This paper then suggests critical workforce system characteristics and policy factors that are needed to assure the success of collaborative strategic efforts:

- An ability to collaborate across functional and jurisdictional boundaries
- The structure, and decision-making mechanisms to convene effectively all key entities in the talent development system and to develop meaningful plans
- An ability to engage the employer community
- The commitment to establishing shared goals across local workforce investment boards and economic development organizations
- The ability to leverage multiple funding sources
- A commitment to a more robust system of accountability

Were America's workforce systems to possess these integrative and strategic capabilities, they would be positioned to effectively prepare people not only for the jobs that exist today, but also for emerging and promising new areas of economic activity going forward.

Introduction

Reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act

Transformation of the workforce system —fundamental change in how it functions in tandem with the education system in support of economic growth—is crucial for the system to operate successfully in an increasingly global economy. The system must be “re-imagined” if it is to work smoothly and effectively with economic development organizations, the educational system (grades K-16), and employers to meet the demands of the 21st Century economy. Indeed, as members of the transformed workforce system see themselves—and behave—as integral partners in their region’s economic development and growth, and as their activities become aligned with this vision, the workforce system can play a leadership role in regional economic growth, catalyzing their partners to action in areas of common interest.

The Workforce Investment Act (WIA) was enacted in 1998. A main philosophy of this legislation was oversight and governance of workforce programs by local workforce investment boards (LWIBs) and consolidating in One-Stop Career Centers a range of services that address employment barriers. Now, more than ten years later as Congress reauthorizes WIA, legislators must again grapple with the issue of appropriate workforce development strategies for the nation. The pending reauthorization of WIA provides an ideal opportunity and propitious timing to make recommendations for changes to the law that reflect new, research-based understandings of the roles that LWIBs and workforce investment system partners can play in supporting economic revitalization and growth throughout our country.

In many parts of the nation, especially those hit by upheaval in major regional industries, the workforce system and its regional partners have found ways to:

- Promote industry diversification and entrepreneurship;
- Offer incumbent worker training on critical skills;
- Help workers in failing industries to retrain for jobs in high-growth sectors; and
- Focus career development options for young people on jobs in tomorrow’s emerging industries.

The lessons learned from these initiatives can inform the discussions about the reauthorization of WIA by illustrating how the workforce system can be a key player in supporting economic revitalization and growth.

The authors of this white paper represent a diverse group of researchers and academics who, over many years, have been involved in multiple research and evaluation studies about workforce development, regional economic development, and the challenges of the new economy. The observations presented in this paper reflect lessons learned through extensive and ongoing research that has included dozens of site visits comprised of in-depth interviews with key stakeholders who represent a wide range of organizations and companies that have a common and vested interest in maintaining the health and long-term vitality of their regional economies.

The pages that follow describe some innovative approaches to forging meaningful partnerships, explain why these are essential components for transforming the workforce system, and discuss specific implications for federal policy and practice.

The Contemporary Policy Context

As the United States grapples with the challenges of a) global competitiveness and the importance of economic renewal, b) workforce transformation, and c) the emergence of new and high value added technologies and industries, national attention is focused on three important issues, each of which in its own way, shapes a new way of thinking about workforce development, moving forward. These three issues are: 1) the need for better systems integration across many functional areas, such as workforce development, economic development, public education, and entrepreneurship; 2) the recognition that social change and economic transformation increasingly happen at the local and regional level and are enabled by collaborative regional networks focused on common economic and workforce development opportunities; and 3) an increasing focus on systems of accountability, which capture the diverse range of inter-related outcomes required for genuine transformation. Any reauthorization of WIA should be shaped by these broader national imperatives.

WIA mandates that each state establish LWIBs, and that each board establish at least one comprehensive One-Stop Career Center; i.e., a single location where customers can access a range of employment and social services, including training for those who meet eligibility requirements. Over time, as states and LWIBs took steps to implement WIA, some of the limitations of the Act became apparent, including issues related to service delivery sequence, education and training provider program eligibility, payment options, coordination of funding streams, and performance measures, to name but a few.

The reauthorization of WIA has attracted the attention of numerous nationally recognized policy organizations and service providers, all of which have offered recommendations about how the Act should be changed and improved. Essentially, they argue that by expediting access to training, expanding training options, facilitating the use of funds from multiple sources, and creating a credentialing system, more One-Stop customers will have the opportunity to develop the skills that they need to be competitive for higher-skill, higher-wage jobs.

While these modifications may increase the level of participation in training by eligible One-Stop customers and enhance their qualifications for employment, such changes do not guarantee that customers will receive training aligned with the needs of employers or find work in a training-related occupation. In fact, recent reports have noted the frequency with which displaced workers completed training but did not find jobs afterward, even in occupations touted as high-demand job categories.¹ This observation is not intended to downplay the importance of education and training to career success, but to emphasize the essential need for understanding the rapidly shifting needs of employers and for focusing retraining efforts accordingly.

¹ Michael Luo, "Job Retraining May Fall Short of High Hopes," *New York Times*, (2009 July 6), <<http://tinyurl.com/oj2hvy>>

Unfortunately, most of the existing data on industries and occupations are gleaned from data sources that document historical trends but have limited predictive power, particularly for rapidly evolving sectors. Better information about industry diversification plans, emerging industry trends, and related economic development investments would facilitate the process of focusing retraining efforts towards jobs that will be created as the economy rebounds and grows.²

While assisting individuals to develop the knowledge and skills they need to be successful in the workplace is certainly important, one of the primary challenges involved in WIA reauthorization is creating a workforce system that is strategically positioned to learn about and respond to economic development trends in a manner that more closely links job training with job creation.³

² Robert Pollin, James Heintz, and Heidi Garrett-Peltier, *The Economic Benefits of Investing in Clean Energy*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts, 2009), <http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2009/06/pdf/peri_report_execsumm.pdf>

³ Ibid.

Unleashing the Power of LWIBs

The nationwide network of LWIBs represents a natural institutional mechanism through which the diverse interests that must be involved in any regional efforts to transform economies could be engaged. Although many of these boards have operated in isolation or with a narrow sense of mission, they nonetheless represent an extraordinary web through which regional entities can achieve shared goals through collaborative activities. LWIBs serve every community across the United States, and each local board is supported by a professional staff that is both committed to talent development and knowledgeable about how to use national resources to address local needs. As such, they represent a tremendous set of capabilities that, if properly leveraged, could achieve a great deal during this time of national crisis and transformation. In order to serve this broader mission and leverage this latent resource, the WIA reauthorization must address nine key issues, which—in combination—would unleash the capacity of LWIBs across the country.

1. The need for systems integration
2. Promotion of regionalism
3. The need to establish shared goals and common ground
4. The need for sector strategies
5. The potential convening power of LWIBs
6. The need for collaboration among LWIBs
7. The challenge of overcoming jurisdictional boundaries
8. Opportunities to leverage multiple funding sources
9. The need for more robust performance and accountability measures

The rest of this section discusses each issue in turn.

1. The Need for Systems Integration

A recent paper prepared by the President's Council of Economic Advisers (CEA) noted the importance of talent development, pointing out that in order to fuel economic prosperity a region must have an effective education and training system that can provide a well-trained and highly skilled workforce for high-wage jobs.⁴ This paper concludes that what is needed is a more integrated system that links workforce development, economic recovery, economic growth, and job creation. The CEA calls for the development of a strategy to ensure that our country's education and training systems are strong and effective in "preparing the workers of today for the jobs of tomorrow."⁵

In this call for change, the CEA stresses the need for a comprehensive strategy that engages a broad range of stakeholders in efforts to develop a coherent approach to workforce development that aligns curricula with the needs of employers in targeted sectors. Surprisingly, however,

⁴ Council of Economic Advisors, "Preparing the Workers of Today for the Jobs of Tomorrow," (July 2009).

⁵ Ibid., 22.

CEA's paper makes little mention of LWIBs, One-Stop centers, and other intermediary organizations that could play a key role in convening regional stakeholders and provide information to inform their deliberations.

Previous Efforts to Promote Alignment and Collaboration

Following the implementation of WIA, several state workforce agencies took steps to align the workforce system with local economic development. One state approached this challenge by combining the relevant offices and functions within a single state agency. Another took steps to align the jurisdictional boundaries of LWIBs with state economic development regions. These moves toward alignment were an important first step toward systems integration and signaled a growing awareness among some state government agency leaders of the importance of local and regional collaboration.

States have also sought to promote collaboration through the provision of financial incentives to stimulate local and regional action, although the type and level of participation of LWIBs in these programs has not been very consistent. Michigan, for example, offered incentives as competitive grants that promoted the involvement of community colleges, employers, LWIBs, and other key stakeholders in joint efforts to address the workforce needs of targeted industry sectors.⁶ Indiana created a comprehensive strategic plan and distributed funds across the state to support research about local economic trends and current and projected skills shortages.⁷

At the federal level, the U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration (ETA) launched several different demonstration grant programs that provided funds for almost 100 sector-focused initiatives that sought to engage LWIBs, community colleges, employers, and other stakeholders in joint discussions about the workforce needs of a targeted industrial sector in their area.⁸ Here too, the engagement of LWIBs has varied considerably, with some treating the grant as just another source of training funds and others taking advantage of the opportunity to have meaningful dialogues with regional partners. ETA subsequently launched a larger-scale initiative to stimulate regional collaboration through the Workforce Investment in Regional Economic Development Initiative that is currently underway in 39 regions across the U.S. Early evaluation findings suggest that these regions have used many innovative approaches to involve leaders from education, workforce development, economic development, and businesses of all sizes in their efforts, which have included strategic discussions and implementation activities designed to address regional needs.

Both the regional partners and the authors of this paper have learned many lessons through these and other research efforts. A key lesson is that changing the workforce system from a labor

⁶ Michigan's Regional Skills Alliances initiative, using funds from the Charles S. Mott Foundation and other sources, has made grants to more than 30 sites since it was launched in 2003.

⁷ State of Indiana, *Accelerating Growth: Indiana's Strategic Economic Development Plan*, (2006), <http://www.in.gov/iedc/files/Strategic_Plan.pdf>

⁸ Jeffrey Padden. and Nancy Hewat, *Skills Shortages Demonstration Programs Evaluation Final Report*, (Washington: U.S. Department of Labor, 2003), <<http://www.publicpolicy.com/reports/DOLSkillsShortagesEvalReportVol1-Nov.%202003.PDF>>

Nancy Pindus, et al. "Executive Summary," Sectoral Employment Demonstration Evaluation, (Urban Institute, 2009), <<http://www.urban.org/publications/411103.html>>

exchange service to an integrated talent development system is not easy, but that it is possible with commitment and concerted effort among regional partners, and can yield significant results. The challenge now is to create a policy environment that supports these efforts on a nationwide scale, and to ensure that all LWIB leaders become actively engaged in regional dialogues about current and future workforce needs.

From Transaction to Strategic Talent Development

LWIBs and One-Stops currently provide services using a transactional approach, that is, managers and staff view services as a series of transactions designed to meet the needs of individual customers who may be individual job seekers or companies that post job orders. One of the disadvantages of taking a transactional approach is that attention may be so focused on the relatively small number of individuals and existing companies with job orders that the LWIB and One-Stop may miss the opportunity to get involved in regional initiatives that could have a broader-scale impact.

A recent trend among LWIBs and One-Stops is designating specific staff to serve as business services representatives to improve communications with employers. Although this approach may enhance the lines of communication with employers and raise their awareness of One-Stop services, limitations on the quantity and quality of interactions with individual employers remain.

Rather than clinging to their traditional, transactional role in which the primary goal is to pair job seekers with job openings, some early-innovator LWIBs are becoming more strategic in carrying out the mandates of WIA. They have taken deliberate steps to engage regional partners more effectively, to extend their reach and influence well beyond the limited number of employers who typically interact with area One-Stop centers each year. Such LWIBs are actively engaged with regional partners from the public, private, and philanthropic sectors in important common enterprises that include:

- Assessing current economic opportunities and challenges;
- Identifying regional goals and needs;
- Advancing shared goals through systematic strategic action; and
- Developing knowledge about complementary capabilities and relationships of trust, which enable collaborative activity in uncertain times.

These LWIBs have discovered that their participation has:

- Allowed them to become partners in economic development;
- Increased employer awareness of the range of One-Stop services; and
- Enhanced public perception of the role that the workforce system plays in ensuring that an adequately trained workforce exists to meet the needs of area companies.

Field-based research suggests that LWIBs that take this type of active, strategic role in advancing the economies of their regions have increased their credibility with partnering organizations, including employers. By earning a reputation among employers and other regional stakeholder organizations as being a central player in regional workforce and economic development, LWIBs may be able to increase the number of potential job opportunities available to One-Stop

customers. Through active participation in these regional collaboratives, the local workforce systems both gain access to new and expanded employer networks and promote economic growth and job creation.

To emphasize the need for LWIBs to transition to a position of strategic leadership, the re-authorized Workforce Investment Act should be re-characterized and christened as the “Strategic Workforce Development Act.” Local entities, as part of multi-partner collaboratives, would be given the resources to develop thorough and comprehensive talent development strategic plans to spearhead regional transformation. These plans would incorporate measurable objectives and metrics to gauge progress towards those objectives. Active collaboration with economic development entities, employers, and educational institutions would be key to this strategy.

2. Promotion of Regionalism

The concept of regionalism as used by social scientists is, first and foremost, an economic construct. It describes the economic interdependencies and synergies that characterize clusters of industrial or business activity in a particular geographical area. A particular supply chain may be the unit that defines a region; for example, a core industry such as automobile manufacturing, along with the companies that make and repair parts, as well as the caterers and accountants that serve them. A region may be an extended labor market, defined by commuting patterns in a metropolitan area. It may be a group of counties defined by the state as an economic development region, in which leaders have realized economies of scale by learning to work together across city and county lines.

Many argue that the advent of global markets, outsourcing, and the existence of the Internet make the discussion of geographically defined regions irrelevant. Economic and sociological data suggest that this is not the case. Experience has shown that most innovations still come about through face-to-face interactions among highly skilled individuals with diverse knowledge and interests. The importance of “place” is a reflection of the importance of people, their skills, and their ability to collaborate.

Increasingly, economists, urban planners, and social scientists from a variety of disciplines are recognizing the power of social relationships in enabling or inhibiting change. The potential mobilization effects of regionalism are very powerful because the historical connection between various subgroups and economic interests can more easily be harmonized through a process that yields new goals and objectives for the region as well as

Western Alabama/Eastern Mississippi Initiative (WAEM)

WAEM conducted a series of community workshops to support the development of a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship in the 37 county region. The workshops presented information on community resources available to entrepreneurs and solicited feedback from participants. The workshops were followed by a series of regional roundtables that solicited input from local leaders on top priorities for the region. This culminated in a Governor's Summit, during which over 200 regional leaders used electronic voting devices to choose and rank priorities for the region. In addition, the president's of the community colleges in the region meet periodically as a group to help foster regional identity and to coordinate committee work.

strategies for achieving them. People can build relationships and trust and shared knowledge on a regional platform. These social and cultural factors are important whenever a community faces the challenge of social change.

For example, the regions involved in the Initiative have all faced the challenge of developing a regional identity, that is, an awareness of the region as a cohesive economic unit and a willingness to prioritize regional issues and goals. These grantees have devised a variety of strategies to help define and promote their regions' identities, created a common vision of a transformed economy for their regions among key partners, and worked to promote that vision across both geographic and professional boundaries within their regions.

A key aspect of developing a regional identity is creating cultural and attitudinal changes, in addition to the more concrete components represented by shifts in economic strategies and approaches to workforce development. Most of the Initiative's regions reported that they were working to build a culture of collaboration within their communities. Individual regions—such as the Western Alabama/Eastern Mississippi Initiative (WAEM)—also sought to build an entrepreneurial culture, while others promote thinking globally among the region's residents, or aim to increase the perceived value of education and training. Such shared values are critical to developing a regional identity.

3. The Need to Establish Shared Goals and Common Ground

Clearly, a shared vision and goals are critical to the success of any collaborative endeavor. Barriers to achieving this arise from the fact that partners from different professions or service systems often use language differently. Partners may embark upon a project with the presumption that they share goals, but only discover when they start to operationalize their plans that they have been talking about different things. Similarly, different systems have diverse legislative mandates, constraints, and performance measures, all of which can interfere with a group achieving consensus.

LWIBs and other leaders of collaborative projects must ensure that partners allocate the time needed to create a common vision. The process of strategic planning—including planning for the regional work—provides an opportunity for teambuilding and developing new social relationships through which shared goals, co-investment, and a renewed sense of regional purpose and confidence can develop. Furthermore, inclusion of all partners in the early visioning and planning processes helps ensure that all “buy into” and support the work

North Central Indiana's Initiative (NCI)

One of NCI's transformative strategies is to build civic networks that foster collaboration across jurisdictional boundaries. A key activity of the region's Civic Leadership initiative is quarterly regional forums that bring people together around specific ideas or topics to establish trust. NCI has convened forums with elected officials that focused on topics such as clean energy and regional economic development.

Some of the regional initiatives have invested in leadership development in an effort to engage business and civic leaders in their project's activities, and to help develop a shared vision for the region. Respondents in North Central Indiana (NCI) regional initiative said that such projects would address the "need to build new civic habits of collaboration," which they saw as necessary for the collaborative effort of these education and workforce and economic development partners to be successful.

Other regions have used research and analysis of data to identify shared needs and common goals, and through that process to establish common ground. Evidence supports the notion that by using data strategically, convener organizations can move the conversation from a discussion of the individual needs and interests of individual companies and organizations to a broader discussion of industry trends and talent development needs that are apparent when examining the data and the strategic implications for the region as a whole. This approach can make the process of identifying common needs and goals easier and can help build commitment and trust among leaders and their participating organizations.

Forming a functioning collaborative takes skill, patience, and time, in many cases years to fully develop, and that some conveners may underestimate the effort involved in doing so. Effectively managing the process of identifying common needs and formulating shared goals is essential if the participating organizations are to build trust, and find the common ground that is needed to convince participating organizations to commit to and invest in the work.

4. The Need for Sector Strategies

Because many of the workforce needs of businesses vary substantially by industry, a sector-based strategy is vital to LWIBs working to develop strong relationships with key employers. For example, agro-tech firms that are seeking to develop a new seed stock encounter workforce challenges that are quite different from those of precision parts manufacturers seeking to diversify into the aerospace industry or small information technology companies seeking to attract young talent with advanced computer skills. Thorough, insightful intelligence about workforce trends and challenges that specific industries face is vital in order to prepare workers to meet the evolving workforce needs of companies in the targeted industry sector(s). In fact, organizing a sector initiative for each important industry in a regional economy offers LWIBs strategic benefits.

The realization that an industry's sector experiences and trends have broad implications for the economy can serve as a powerful source of motivation for organizations that have a stake in the continued vibrancy of their communities. The realization that joint efforts can contribute to economic growth by diversifying existing companies and creating businesses can similarly motivate community leaders to participate in collaborative initiatives.

LWIBs that have strategic relationships with employers typically engage groups of employers on a sector basis to:

- Identify shared workforce challenges and opportunities;

- Work with partner organizations to devise strategies for addressing those challenges and opportunities; and
- Take necessary steps to advance those strategies.

Knowledge is an essential ingredient in playing this role effectively. Some LWIBs are now supplementing their basic projections of occupational needs with background research and analysis about the key industries in their regional economies; this requires:

- Becoming highly skilled users of a wide range of workforce, demographic, and economic data and analyzing trends
- Learning from and helping employers understand how external factors (such as technology innovations) are likely to change work processes
- Paying close attention to studies and forecasts of regional economic change

LWIBs can increase their credibility with employers and other important collaborators by becoming a principal source of such relevant and useful data.

To ensure that the needs of employers in key sectors are addressed, and that job seekers receive the training needed to be competitive for current and future job openings, LWIBs and other convener organizations may work in conjunction with economic development entities, as illustrated by Utah ULEAD. A deeper analysis of demographic and industry data can help to:

- Identify the companies involved in the supply chain for those industries;
- Discover areas of potential growth;
- Identify specific workforce challenges and opportunities that may affect multiple employers within the sector; and
- Zero in on possibilities for synergies among firms.

With these data in hand, LWIBs can reach out to companies in a key industry and offer a venue for discussion, insight, decisions, and action to address challenges and capitalize upon opportunities. In addition to demonstrating an interest and understanding of industry needs, this approach can help set the stage for the collection of employer-specific workforce data about recruiting and retaining talent, skill development needs, and observed gaps in the skills and readiness of the emerging workforce. When overlaid on other

Utah Life Science Employment and Development (ULEAD)

The Utah Governor's 2005 Economic Report identified the life sciences cluster as a priority for economic growth. The industry had strong business indicators, offered high-wage jobs, and was growing rapidly, so much so that workforce needs surpassed available supply. Analysis of other data revealed that:

- Significant numbers of underemployed or dislocated workers had suffered due to the decline of other industries in the region, including metal mining, steel mills, and information technology;
- Most new job growth was in low skill, low-wage categories;
- About 20 percent of the population was still in school;
- Large percentages of minority populations were living in poverty, and
- Women's wages fell far behind those of men.

When viewed together, this analysis identified both a need and opportunity to create and develop innovative education and training programs that support the talent requirements for the region's life science companies, which would, in return, raise employees' wages and standards of living.

industry data, such discussions may suggest specific areas for action.

This integrated approach to assessing industry needs is a win-win situation for LWIBs and employers. Employers can gain a better understanding of the evolution of their industry and the interrelationships among companies within the sector and use that knowledge to prepare for the future. The workforce system gains an understanding of the needs of employers that is much deeper than would otherwise be possible—needs that go far beyond simply filling the next vacancy to encompass worker pipeline issues, skill audits, development of new training programs, joint venturing to share worker capacity or compete for larger contracts, and many other common and related workforce issues.

5. The Potential Convening Power of LWIBs

In addition to traditional economic development agencies, educational institutions at all levels (K-16, public and private), workforce development agencies, and employer groups have increasingly become essential contributors to an overall economic development strategy. Civic organizations and political leaders are also key to developing common agendas and coordinated approaches to regional economic revitalization and growth. In some communities, local history and politics dictate that the economic development agency (or sometimes multiple agencies) is not well-positioned to convene traditionally disconnected entities, and the LWIB has stepped into the breach with great success. In many instances, the LWIB is uniquely positioned to convene these diverse groups itself.

In some collaborative projects, including the Southwest Indiana Regional Workforce Board, LWIBs have become critical cogs and even drivers of their regional economic development engines. Embracing the convener role and playing it well, has been an important factor in their success.

While not all LWIBs can or should act as the central convener, they must nevertheless play an active supportive role in order to stay in sync with evolving workforce development needs. These interconnections among partner organizations can maximize the opportunities for aligning and leveraging resources in the pursuit of shared goals.

Southwest Indiana Regional Initiative

This regional initiative is led by an implementation team that was formed by the 15-member Regional Workforce Board (RWB). In December 2007, the RWB adopted a new policy which defined the role of the RWB as being to “ensure that transformative strategies are implemented for the whole Economic Growth Region 11 to significantly increase the number of high skill, high wage jobs as a means of increasing regional wealth.” The regional leadership has consciously fostered this policy change by making the effort to include partners from across the region and has been successful in bringing an array of partners together across traditional boundaries.

6. The Need for Collaboration Among LWIBs

In most states, the workforce system consists of numerous LWIBs, each of which has a defined service area that may be as small as a single county (or subcounty area in an urban center), or as large as a multicounty expanse. Typically, states draw the boundaries of local workforce areas service areas to correspond with county jurisdictional boundaries, which do not necessarily correlate with local and/or regional labor markets.

As LWIBs become more involved as strategic partners in efforts to revitalize and transform regional economies, the challenges of working across these jurisdictional boundaries has emerged as a critical issue. Competing priorities, long-standing personal disputes, competition for funds, and other trust issues have made establishing meaningful partnerships difficult. However, innovative LWIBs, such as those involved in Wisconsin's Regional Workforce Alliance, have managed to address these issues in ways that have been mutually beneficial.

Another example is the Mid-Michigan Innovation Team (MMIT)⁹ in which Prima Civitas, a nonprofit organization associated with Michigan State University, has played the convener role. This region covers 13 counties and five local workforce areas. The MMIT Board meetings provided a forum for considering the role of the LWIBs in the economic revitalization of the region. Previously, LWIB leaders and staff had very limited opportunities to exchange ideas and/or undertake joint activities. Recognizing that existing labor markets cut across LWIB boundaries, the five LWIBs formed a consortium known as Wi-Fi 5.0 to explore opportunities for collaboration on a variety of shared workforce development challenges such as identifying and responding to the workforce needs of “at-risk” companies, coordinating lay-off aversion projects, and developing a common brand identity.

As these examples illustrate, collaborative efforts, by their very nature, present complex challenges that demand a special type of leadership to ensure an initiative includes diverse representation and that policies and practices are designed to facilitate interaction and dialogue among partners.

Regional Workforce Alliance Southeast Wisconsin

The Regional Workforce Alliance (RWA)—a collaboration of three LWIBs—was formed to serve as the talent development arm of a broad-scale regional economic development initiative. Previously, the LWIBs had limited experience working together, but the prospect of collaboration on common interests throughout the region helped to establish greater ties within the region and across the LWIBs. Building a strong working relationship between these LWIBs has at times been challenging, as workforce development concerns within the city of Milwaukee are not necessarily the same as those in neighboring counties. However, this is viewed by regional stakeholders as a prime reason for increased collaboration and partnership, and critical for region-wide workforce system development.

⁹ The Michigan Department of Labor and Economic Growth funded the Wi-Fi 5.0 through its “21st Century Jobs Initiative.” It was launched independently of MMIT, but had complementary workforce development goals.

7. The Challenge of Overcoming Jurisdictional Boundaries

Many organizations involved in the workforce and economic development fields encounter challenges that involve crossing jurisdictional boundaries. For instance, competitive attitudes are common among county-level economic development entities, each of which seeks to attract new companies and new jobs to its community, retain existing firms, and grow new companies by supporting entrepreneurship and facilitating access to investment funds for company development and expansion. Competition can derail economic development efforts because of the inherently limited resources of a single county compared to the region as a whole. Competition may also serve as a barrier to collaboration between education and training providers.

Despite the tendency towards competition, some economic development organizations have come to appreciate that the workforce available to their employers includes those residents who travel across county boundaries for work; these organizations are increasingly collaborating with their former competitors. These organizations are also seeing other strategic benefits of regional collaboration, particularly the potential for developing supplier networks and industry cluster growth across county lines.

Education and training providers—especially community colleges—face similar challenges because of their defined service areas.

Individual community colleges face challenges in responding to the growing education and training needs of the community, and experience particular difficulty in being responsive to workforce development needs when the development of new curricula takes considerable time and effort. Some community colleges, such as

those involved in the Momentum Southern Mississippi project and the Community College Consortium in southeast Michigan, have come to terms with this challenge in new and creative ways and in both urban and rural settings. In doing so, their regional initiatives have learned important lessons about what is required to overcome jurisdictional boundaries, and how collaboration can create a win-win situation for individual community colleges and for the region as a whole.

One of the conclusions drawn by the partners involved in these and other initiatives that cross jurisdictional boundaries is that the full support of the leaders of the participating institutions is essential, and that these partners must make clear to their staff that collaboration is a priority.

Momentum Southern Mississippi

This regional partnership seeks to transform the region by ensuring that talent development is business driven. One of the goals is to address the demand for workers with specialized and technical skills. To do so, Momentum is establishing Centers of Excellence, each of which is located on one of the three community colleges in the region. College leaders initially attempted to duplicate capacity at each campus. They later concluded that a more effective and financially feasible approach would be for each Center to develop an area of specialization within advanced manufacturing that would lead to industry-recognized credentials. The colleges plan to coordinate their efforts and with other Centers share resources and existing curricula to address the growing demands of existing companies, draw new employers into the region, and improve the economic standing of workers and their families.

Another has been the mutually beneficial leveraging of additional resources, which has yielded dividends for the colleges and the entire region. The ability to quantify these benefits can be of great help in gaining organizational support for continuation of joint efforts.

8. Opportunities to Leverage Multiple Funding Sources

While agreeing on goals can sometimes be difficult, aligning multiple funding streams toward those common objectives can be even more challenging. Funding relevant to workforce and economic development comes from federal, state, and local governments and from the private sector; public funds flow through workforce and economic development agencies, community colleges and universities, and sometimes directly to businesses. Private funds come mostly from businesses that have a strong stake in improving the skills of their workforce, but also from private and community foundations. Those philanthropic entities have quite different agendas and decision-making processes than businesses.

Community College Consortium Southeast Michigan

Community colleges in this region have a reputation for being extremely territorial when it comes to defining the geographic service areas that historically have set the boundary of each college's market for incumbent worker training. The Community College Consortium has worked hard to change that thinking, recognizing that the market for training in the region is much more dynamic than their service boundaries imply. Initially, Consortium members met periodically to share best practices but practiced a limited amount of real collaboration. Since becoming involved in the regional initiative, Consortium members report that they have made considerable progress in increasing the interaction and collaboration among partner colleges, i.e., sharing faculty, resources, equipment, curriculum, and revenues. This connection has also helped leverage additional resources—including a federal grant to establish five Centers of Expertise to train workers for the advanced manufacturing and alternative energy sectors.

While the alignment of resources can be daunting, this challenge must be confronted directly for two principal reasons. First, funds for workforce development are limited. If various efforts cannot be coordinated and aligned, the result can be a duplication of efforts, excessive and redundant administrative costs, and important gaps that go unfilled. Second, if funding is not well-aligned, the funded programs may work at cross purposes. When that is the case, adding more funding to the conflicting directions yields no progress at all.

Examples of significant progress in combining funds from multiple sources do exist around the country. This section examines the challenges of aligning funding sources and provides examples of effective strategies for leveraging funds from both federal and private sources.

Federal Funds

Most federal funding for workforce development carries a wide range of restrictions and requirements for its use. These limitations generally aim to enhance accountability and to sharpen targeting of services. These are both laudable goals, but when taken together the array of regulations and reporting requirements can represent significant barriers to deploying multiple federal funding streams toward the same objectives or to coordinate their use with other sources.

For example, ETA used federal H-1B dollars to fund the Initiative, and while the agency asked regions to be expansive in their visions and creative in their strategies for achieving them, limitations on the uses of H-1B funds impeded both. Thus, strategies that were intended to strengthen the pipeline of new entrants into key occupations were sometimes thwarted when regions learned that H-1B funds could not be used for individuals under 16 years of age. The contradictory guidance provided by the government led to virtual paralysis in some regions.

The Initiative's original solicitation for grant application (SGA) encouraged, but did not require, applicants to leverage the resources of strategic partners whenever possible. ETA subsequently made clear that the grants were to be considered seed money, and that regions should secure other sources of funding to cover the full range of activities needed to transform their local economies. The agency did not define "leveraged" for the regions, however, until 2008 when ETA auditors applied the standard definition used for all other Department of Labor (DOL) grants, that is, leveraged funds include only those non-grant funds that are used for costs that are allowable by DOL for federal grants.

Many of the grantees defined leveraged funds as any resources that the local initiative or its partners provided to support the implementation of grant activities and the larger goals of their initiatives. This allowed for in-kind donations and private investments of equipment and facilities, which from the point of view of ETA auditors were difficult to accept.

Those with prior experience with such ex post facto reviews are understandably gun-shy about "creative spending" of federal dollars. The simple truth is that federal dollars can rarely be aligned with other resources; much more often only the converse is possible. Other funding streams are welcome to align with federal dollars, but because little flexibility exists in the use of federal funds, using them creatively is difficult.

However, using federal funds to attract money from other federal sources is quite common. Regions have used funds from a number of federal sources to support their activities, including the Department of Education, the Department of Commerce, the National Science Foundation, the National Institute of Science and Technology, and numerous others. Money from these and other private sources can pay for services, equipment, and activities that would not be allowable in a traditional DOL grant, but may be essential for the success of the regional talent development strategy.

Private Funds

Working with the philanthropic sector is quite different from working with businesses to align resources. Private and community foundations usually provide funds for clearly defined topic areas that are much narrower than those of governmental entities, yet, their interests are broader than those of private businesses. As with federal funds, linking successfully with these organizations requires a clear understanding of their priority areas and how they make decisions. A number of the Initiative's regions have been successful in building effective connections of this sort.

For example, in an effort to reduce the number of young college graduates leaving the state, collaborators in the Southeast Michigan regional initiative are establishing a coordinated

approach to linking young adults with internships at companies in the area and across the state. The strategy, goals, and general plan for the internship system received funding from the New Economy Initiative (NEI), a southeast Michigan-based entity that several national and regional foundations established to transform the southeast Michigan economy. While the NEI had never specifically announced an intention to fund an internship program, it was persuaded that its goals could be advanced by doing so. NEI provided a grant of \$2 million to support the implementation of the internship system.

Public investment in regional workforce collaboratives has clearly led to instances of aligning private dollars towards common goals. The Northern Oregon region, for instance, pulled together employers in the emerging bio-science industry for the first time; most had not even met one another. This industry did not have a prior connection to the LWIB system and instead each company independently developed its own workforce. Operating now as the Oregon Bioscience Association, these employers saw the advantage of collaborating to meet training needs. The region pulled in local community colleges to develop curricula that addressed the employers' specific skill needs. Through the Association, member firms learned of the opportunities offered through the public workforce system and attracted WIA incumbent worker training funds, which require a dollar-for-dollar match. Other examples of co-funded training can be found across the nation. Using both public and private funds reflects the reality that the training results in both public and private benefits.

What is interesting about the Initiative is that it has enabled regions across all three Generations of grants to create coherent regional strategies whereby diverse agencies and diverse funders could co-invest in shared objectives and outcomes. In Northern Florida, matching funds to their original grant represented \$14 million for the approximately \$4.5 million in grants they awarded to education and training subcontractors with ETA funds. Regions such as the Piedmont Triad, the California Corridor, and West Michigan, also leveraged funding from federal investments demonstration sites established by the National Institute of Science and Technology (NIST), and the Hollings Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP). Additionally, in a variety of communities, STEM-related activities were co-funded by organizations such as the Department of Defense in California or regional foundations such as the Charles S. Mott Foundation in Michigan. When encouraged, regions can be very creative and successful in leveraging multiple sources of federal and local funds for common outcomes.

9. The Need for More Robust Performance and Accountability Measures

This white paper envisions dynamic partnerships that include, if not led by, LWIBs that will be instrumental in regional economic revitalization and transformation. An important function that the partnerships must perform is to monitor the performance of activities and initiatives being undertaken to achieve strategic goals. The objectives of performance monitoring are to:

- Provide valid and reliable information to individuals who are charged with oversight so that they may make adjustments as necessary; and
- Maintain accountability to funders, other stakeholders, and the general public.

The requirements of performance monitoring are meaningful metrics; valid, accurate, current or recent data; and a usable reporting system.

The fact that these partnerships will receive funding investments from numerous agencies or organizations places an even heavier performance monitoring burden on them than if they simply received a single stream of funding, for several reasons:

- Different funders will have different, but overlapping, objectives and expectations.
- Some funders may be interested in training; some in business start-ups; some in low-income alleviation; and some in improving educational opportunities, for example.
- Each funder will hold the partnership accountable for outcomes that meet their specialized objectives.

Thus, partnerships must devote their utmost attention to the process of performance monitoring and oversight, and invest adequate resources to execute this process in a high-quality manner.

Establishing Metrics

Establishing metrics and setting standards is not easy. The process may be highly deliberative. The most important characteristics of outcome metrics are that they are measurable with easily available data and that they are meaningful. Easily measurable metrics that are only tangential to the objectives of the activity may be harmful, however, because they may skew the activity toward what is being measured and away from the program's key objectives. Meaningful objectives that are not measurable may be harmful because the partnership will not know to what extent it is succeeding in meeting its objectives.

ETA currently uses the Common Measures to assess the performance of LWIBs and One-Stops. These measures emphasize the outcomes of job placement transactions, but do not reflect outcomes related to partnership building and other activities that have been discussed in this paper. ETA allowed the regions to develop individualized measures that reflect the goals, objectives, and activities of each local project. The metrics for the North California Partnership (NORTEC) are included as an example. Nonetheless, because the efforts undertaken to address regional needs vary so much, metrics that are relevant to one region are not necessarily applicable to all.

NORTEC Metrics and Expected Outcomes	
<u>Measures</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Business Impact/Entrepreneurship	
Number of Business Startups	150
Number of Business Expansions	75
Number of Businesses Utilizing Incubators	15
Amount of Business ("Risk") Loans	\$5,000,000
Training/Education-Related Activities	
Number Began Education/Training Activities	1,500
Number Completed Education/Training Activities	1,200
Number Attained Degree or Certification	750
Number Placed in Target Industry Employment, or	1,000
Number Placed in Post-Secondary Education or	
Certificate Program	50
Average Wage at Placement	\$12/hour
Capacity Building	
Number of New/Expanded Industry Courses Available	50
Job Creation	
Number of New Jobs Created in Target Industries	450

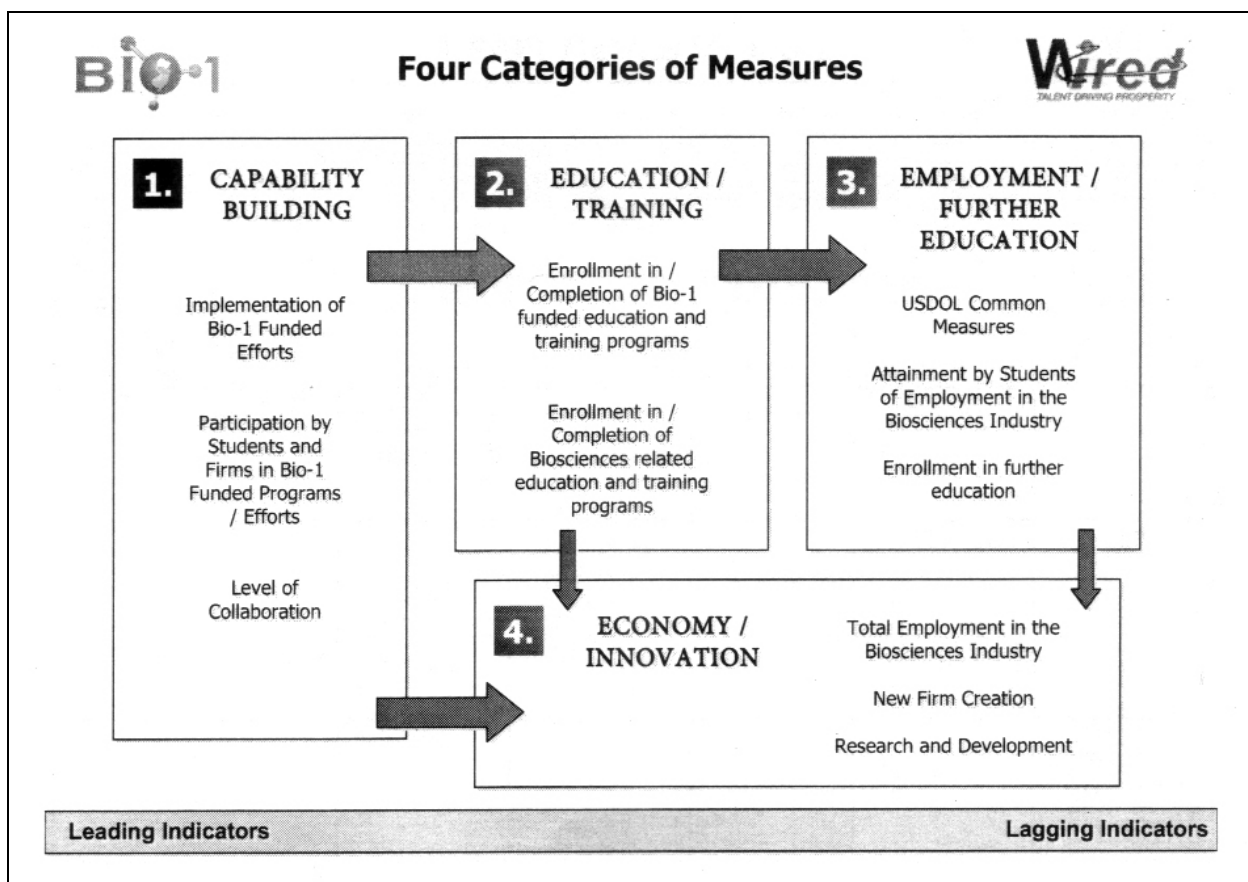
Measurement and Analysis

Developing metrics is the first step in monitoring performance, followed by actual measurement and analyses. The Heldrich Center at Rutgers University has been assisting the Central New Jersey Bioscience Consortium (Bio-1) to conceptualize the performance measurement process and to define detailed, specific measures for assessing the region's success in meeting its goals, beyond the Common Measures. The design criteria for the metrics framework included:

- Developing a set of metrics (including the Common Measures) that meet ETA's reporting requirements;
- Creating a metrics dashboard that can be used by Bio-1 leadership to monitor performance and inform decision making;
- Utilizing existing data sources and minimize the data-collection burden on Bio-1 partners;
- Using a balanced-scorecard approach to measure a comprehensive set of indicators; and
- Measuring leading, as well as lagging indicators.

This performance measurement strategy is a cyclical, cumulative, and an ongoing process.

Bio-1 uses a performance measurement process that includes four categories of measures: capability-building; education and training; employment/further education; and economy/innovation. The model shown below indicates that the capability-building measures tend to be the leading indicators of regional economic transformation, while measures associated with employment/further education tend to be lagging indicators. The model also illustrates how each of these categories of measures are related to one another and how they may lead to innovation and economic transformation.



Some existing partnerships and LWIBs are well down the road of monitoring training, job creation, and business start-ups in their regions. However, developments of relevant measures, identification and coordination of data sources, analysis, and periodic reporting have required a significant investment of time and staff resources.

Implications for Federal Policy and Practice

An overarching implication of this paper's focus on regional collaboration is the suggestion that the renewed WIA be christened as the Strategic Workforce Development Act. Federal policy needs to be far more proactive than simply relabeling, however. ETA should offer incentives and technical assistance to local boards so that they take on leadership roles in collaborations that are active and that engage economic development entities, employers, and educational institutions. These multi-partner collaboratives need to be given the resources to develop thorough and comprehensive talent development strategic plans that incorporate measurable objectives and metrics. The Strategic Workforce Development Act needs to hold the partnerships accountable by assessing their progress toward objectives.

The above discussion of the nine key issues that influence the ability of the workforce system to act as a catalyst for regional economic leads to a number of implications for federal policy and local practice. This section summarizes the policy implications into three groups:

1. Those related to the role of LWIBs as conveners, collaborators, and/or partners in sector-focused regional initiatives
2. Those related to funding of regional transformation efforts
3. Those related to performance measurement

1. The Role of LWIBs as Conveners, Collaborators, and/or Partners in Sector-Focused Regional Initiatives

LWIBs have important roles to play in sector-focused regional initiatives, as conveners, collaborators, and partners. The discussion of these roles illuminates several issues to consider in framing the federal legislation that succeeds the Workforce Investment Act, as well as several implications for practice.

Defining the LWIB Mission

The upcoming federal workforce development legislation provides a rare opportunity to redefine the mission of the LWIBs, sending a clear message that they must play a much broader, strategic role; including acting as a catalyst for economic growth. This role should be cast as a core component of their mission; an expectation rather than a choice.

Maintaining Workforce Development Identity and Better Articulating the Vital Contribution to Regional Economic Growth

LWIBs need to be positioned to make a maximum contribution to economic revitalization and transformation from a workforce development perspective, but should not become economic development entities themselves. LWIBs can make a valuable contribution to economic development by being more effective and strategic in their workforce-focused role than they are

currently. Moreover, LWIBs must maintain ongoing partnerships with the economic development entities in their regions to ensure that efforts to address workforce issues are coordinated, and to maximize the reach of available resources.¹⁰

Setting Explicit Expectations for Engagement

While LWIBs may not necessarily be positioned to play the lead role in regional initiatives, local boards must be actively engaged so that the workforce system is aligned with, and responsive to, the changing needs of employers and shifts in the regional economy. Field research underscores the diversity of activities to which LWIBs can contribute when they are collaborating with economic development entities, employers, and educational providers such as community colleges and universities.

Creating Incentives for Collaboration among LWIBs

Depending upon how a given state's local workforce areas are configured, more than one LWIB might be involved in a regional initiative. Furthermore, LWIBs could be associated with more than one region, depending upon whether the criteria used to define a particular region are based on geography, the configuration of a targeted industry sector, or other considerations. Greater and more meaningful collaboration can be achieved by removing any existing regulatory or structural barriers to collaboration, and/or providing incentives to LWIBs that pursue joint initiatives.

Building LWIB Knowledge and Capacity

The effort involved in launching, participating, supporting, and otherwise being actively involved in regional initiatives can be time-consuming, yet has the potential to provide significant dividends. In order for LWIBs to pursue this activity as part of their mission, LWIBs should be encouraged to rely on diverse, robust databases and metrics for the workforce system. LWIBs may also need instructional guides and technical assistance to understand how various strategic and operational decisions can influence the effectiveness of collaboration efforts. The education and training of workforce professionals could include examining examples of models of effective practice from across the country.

Learning New Leadership Skills and Managing Complexity

Leadership of regional initiatives is an inherently collaborative process that requires great sensitivity to the needs and interests of each potential partner, as well as skill in bringing these partners together in the pursuit of greater needs and rewards. A top-down style of leadership is unlikely to achieve success. LWIB staff need training to increase their knowledge and capacity to play the convener role, which means facilitating a shared approach to leadership.

The importance of developing shared databases cannot be underestimated. This strategy enables collaborative work by providing a shared understanding of regional needs and challenges, and moves the discussion from particular employers or agencies to what is in the best interest of the region.

¹⁰ International Economic Development Council, Annual Conference Agenda, 2009.

Leveraging Management Expertise

Convening a large group of diverse stakeholders is a complex and challenging undertaking that requires careful attention to creating a functional organizational structure, decision-making process, and implementation plan. Creating a governance structure is not the sole responsibility of the convener, however. Evaluation findings have shown that these challenges can be addressed by tapping into the organizational knowledge of partner organizations.

2. Funding of Regional Transformation Efforts

Moving forward, all workforce partnerships will need to leverage the funds that they receive with complementary resources in order to meet the multiple agendas that they will be serving. As Congress considers how to address these issues in the upcoming federal legislation, several issues should be considered.

A broader definition of leveraged funds would allow for expenditures by partners and co-investors that benefit the overall talent development system. The new administration is calling for more financial aid for community college students, development of more online curriculum, employer-driven curriculum development, and hands-on education at work sites. It also is calling for the provision of a wider array of personal, vocational, and career support services, which will necessitate partners and resources that will extend beyond the current capabilities of One-Stops. The very able and committed people who run workforce partnerships and One-Stop Centers will, in the future, need to develop more diverse partnerships and business models, as well as new kinds of linkages with regional resources in order to both provide services and to fund services. Thus, the guidelines for what are appropriate direct investments and/or matching funds from other agencies and resources need to be spelled out so that federal workforce education and training dollars can be appropriately applied.

Balancing Effectiveness and Accountability

The restrictions and requirements that accompany federal investments frequently appear to compromise the intended effectiveness of the funded projects. In efforts to reduce waste, fraud, and abuse to zero, funds of both the grantee and the government are diverted from programmatic action to administration and oversight. While a measure of oversight is absolutely necessary, the emphasis has, according to many grantees, swung too far in that direction. Ideally, the restrictions on federal funding should strike a better balance between effectiveness and accountability. In considering the reauthorization of WIA, the Congress should gather testimony from the field to inform its decisions on exactly where that balance may be found.

Joint Federal Grant-Making

The impact of federal grant-making could be improved if multiple federal agencies (for example, ETA, the Economic Development Administration, and the U.S. Department of Education) pooled their resources and issued one combined solicitation. Such a solicitation would be for projects of interest to all agencies, with funding coming from several sources. It would provide for a single application, one set of outcome measures, and one reporting requirement. The

grantee would be permitted to use the funds for any purposes specified in the grant, and any differences among the funding agencies would be transparent.

Such grant-making might be of particular value in supporting entrepreneurship. The creation and success of new and growing enterprises is critical to the future of most regions of the nation. Traditionally, few LWIBs have focused resources on this activity, since other federal agencies do so already. Nonetheless, the conception, development, launch, and success of a new business enterprise relies upon a knowledgeable and skilled workforce. That element encompasses working with a prospective business owner on meeting his or her workforce needs—that is, identifying needed skills and recruiting appropriate workers—but it also can mean education and training for the new business leader. While the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) and the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) network provide financing and counseling, a local One-Stop could play an important role in ensuring that new business owners are able to acquire the skills needed for success. A joint venture of ETA and the SBA could target resources for leaders of small, growing businesses to learn technical or management skills that would improve the odds that their businesses would succeed. At the local level, One-Stops, SBDCs, and community colleges could collaborate to serve as the delivery system.

3. Performance Measurement

Current discussions about the future of WIA are an opportunity for the federal government to learn from the variety of experiences across the country in how to effectively monitor program performance.

Maintaining Common Measures and Creating Customized Measures

The Common Measures are important metrics that emphasize outcomes for individual job seekers, and generally assess whether the workforce investment system is functioning effectively in terms of meeting that goal. In addition, however, metrics are needed that capture the dynamics of a functioning talent development system, in particular one that emphasizes collaboration in pursuit of sector-focused economic revitalization and growth. Both types of measures are necessary because they set clear expectations about the role the workforce investment system can and should play in establishing a talent development system that can provide a well-trained and highly skilled workforce for high-wage jobs.

Exerting Leadership

LWIBs should be called upon to play a leadership role in expanding the measures and identifying new metrics to assess the effectiveness of regional collaboratives.

Maintaining Accountability

Regional initiatives should negotiate relevant metrics with state agency leaders, with the agreements included in each state's strategic workforce development plan.

Investing in Performance Information Systems

Identifying the metrics and data sources and managing the ongoing process of data collection, analysis, reporting, and sharing among regional partners is likely to require some additional investment. Time and resources are needed for these activities in order to assure effective collaborative processes.

Conclusion

Extensive field research conducted by the authors of this paper has revealed that local workforce investment boards have an important role to play in bringing regional workforce, education, economic development leaders, and employers together to address the needs of regionally significant industry sectors. LWIBs are beginning to recognize that this role requires a new way of thinking about their role as key actors in regional talent development systems.

Early innovators in workforce development have responded to this challenge by launching regional initiatives in which public, private, and philanthropic organizations have banded together, identified priorities, aligned resources, and taken specific actions to create a talent development system.

The upcoming re-authorization of the Workforce Investment Act offers an opportunity to reinvent the role of LWIBs as strategic partners in regional initiatives. There is a need for stronger incentives for active collaboration among LWIBs working across jurisdictional boundaries; as well as a need for the boards to move from overseeing job placement services to serving as a partner in a talent development system that seeks to address the needs of current and emerging industry sectors that could play an important role in the health and future of regional economies. In addition to proving targeted incentives for greater and more meaningful collaboration, there is a third need to incorporate measurable objectives and metrics to gauge the progress towards those objectives.

This paper has offered specific ideas and examples of how the Act could address these three needs. Given the critical, strategic role of LWIBs and regional partners in supporting and growing regional economies, there is strategic value to re-characterize and christen the next iteration as the “Strategic Workforce Development Act.”

The country can no longer afford the opportunity costs of a siloed workforce development system that provides services in a transactional manner. In addition to addressing the immediate and short-term needs of our nation’s economy, a re-imagined and revitalized workforce system is a necessary component in for making America competitive in the 21st Century global economy.