

Oklahoma Employment Security Commission



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OKLAHOMA EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ISSUANCE #08-2005

Date: April 26, 2005

From: Director, Employment and Training Division

To: Grant Recipients
LWIB Chairs
LWIB Staff

Subject: Guidance for the Development of Local Strategic 2-Year Plans for WIA Title I

Background: The Workforce Investment Act, at §118(a) requires that *each local board shall develop and submit to the Governor a comprehensive 5-year local plan in partnership with the appropriate chief local elected official. The plan shall be consistent with the State plan.* Specific content of these plans are delineated at §118(b). Recent guidance from the Department of Labor allows states to submit plans for two years of the strategic five-year state plan based upon the assumption that WIA will be reauthorized within that timeframe.

Current 5-Year plans are due to expire on June 30, 2005. Considering the uncertainty of WIA reauthorization, changing National priorities, and the Governor's intent that local workforce development systems will align to support economic development at the local level, insufficient time is available before the termination date of current plans to develop truly strategic local plans with long term viability.

Message: Current local plans are extended to no later than March 31, 2006 to allow for the development of viable local plans. Reauthorization will undoubtedly bring about changes, and those changes will create a need for local plan revision. Still, states are without authority to waive development of new plans pending reauthorization and local boards are encouraged to continue with strategic planning. At a minimum, LWIBs must negotiate or accept state-negotiated performance standards so that WIA funds can continue to flow to local boards after June 30, 2005.

The Governor has determined that local boards must become more strategic in the development of local workforce investment systems and that workforce development be aligned to support economic development at the local level. This includes providing closer links and collaborative efforts within local communities.

The Office of Workforce Solutions has implemented several technical assistance initiatives to assist LWIBs.

- In October 2004, an application/needs assessment process was distributed to local WIBs to assist local boards with strategic development. (Attachment I)
- Local Workforce Board Leadership Training was recently provided and also filmed to assist WIBs with local visionary leadership and strategic planning. There are three DVDs and accompanying materials within this training. Local Chairs and board staff have the discretion to present these sessions with the local board members, staff, and other local workforce/economic development partners. These materials are accessible online at www.workforceok.org/board_training and can be duplicated for distribution to Oklahoma local board members, staff and partners only.
 - Disc 1 – Aligning for Action and Achievement.
 - Disc 2 – Seeking alignment with Your Community’s Human Resource Challenges.
 - Disc 3 – Seeking alignment for Your Community’s Economic Development.

The Governor’s Council for Workforce and Economic Development is developing three Labor Market Information products to assist LWIBs with strategic planning:

- **Targeted Industry Analysis:** A report for each region that identifies the major industries by employees or wages paid. Data about employment of each major industry will be detailed. The largest employers by industry sub-cluster at the regional level will be identified.
- **Projected Growth Occupations:** A report will be produced to identify occupational projection data for each WIB area. Fastest growing and occupations with the most anticipated growth will be listed.
- **Local Labor Market Studies:** Local labor market studies will provide data concerning the composition of the workforce in specified local areas in terms of demographic characteristics and skill levels. It will also assess the desirability of various types of jobs and the commuting and transportation patterns of the workforce. These reports will not be specified for a WIB area but will be produced for several local labor markets.

Action Required: Local boards are encouraged to make maximum use of these resources during the development of local plans. Assistance may be requested from the Employment and Training Division or by contacting the Office of Workforce Solutions in the Department of Commerce.

Contacts: Inquiries should be directed to Tony Russo, Employment and Training Division at (405) 962-7594 or tony.russo@oesc.state.ok.us.

Application/ Needs Assessment of local Workforce Investment Boards for Strategic Services

The Oklahoma Department of Commerce, office of Workforce Solutions, is conducting an application process/ needs assessment of local workforce investment boards for the purpose of making available assistance from pre-approved vendors with expertise and multi-state experience in assisting local boards with strategic planning and related activities. This needs assessment will also be used to determine other technical assistance that may be needed using existing in-state resources.

This assistance is not direct grants to local areas, but rather resources that will be made available and paid for or provided by the state. \$240,000 in resources has been budgeted for this purpose. These resources will be leveraged to ensure assistance is provided where it is most needed and will provide the most benefit within each local area and potentially within a larger region.

Ultimately, the purpose is to assist local boards in becoming more strategic in the development of their local workforce development system and for Workforce Development to support economic development at the local level. This includes providing closer links and collaborative efforts within local communities.

Suggested outcomes would include, but not be limited to one or more of the following categories:

- Assist local boards to understand their role in development of a regional workforce system so that they have the knowledge and tools to develop a viable strategic plan.
- Assist local boards in developing collaboration between community partners including identification of common goals, process mapping, resource leveraging and in general, to provide a seamless service delivery system.
- Assist local boards in establishing a vision for what a workforce system might look like within their area.
- Assist the local boards to think strategically regarding the development of the comprehensive workforce system and the alignment of the workforce system with economic development.
- Assist the local boards to develop into a dynamic, collaborative, and positive team with high expectations.
- Develop a process that will actively engage local board members so that they will see the value added and personally rewarding benefits of serving on the board.
- Assist local boards in developing and using an industry cluster approach to workforce and economic development policy and practice.
- Identify a strategic planning process that will produce short and long-term goals with viable action plans that can produce real efficiencies and streamlined service delivery.
- Assist the local boards with resource mapping, community audits, focus groups, community summits, forums and other related activities that will provide the necessary input for educated decisions to be made regarding the aligning of resources and delivery of service.

The state recognizes that each local board and each area is unique, has different needs and has taken different approaches in development of their local system. Thus, the state will accept applications from local boards to access available resources and will work with the local board to match approved vendors as well as other in-state resources to the local needs as determined through this application/ needs assessment process.

Information received from this process will also be used to provide other technical assistance from in state resources that may be available, and will assist the Workforce Solutions Staff team and the Governor's Council for Workforce and Economic Development in better linking with and supporting local boards.

Local boards must apply by submitting information as outlined below:

- Describe the current state of the local board as compared to the suggested outcomes listed above. Include the scope of services that the local board thinks is necessary to move from the current state to the desired state.
- Describe previous efforts of your local board to do strategic planning and include a copy of the most recent strategic plan approved by the board
- Describe any previous efforts by the board in conducting community audits, forums, focus groups, community summits etc. and attach any reports, documentation or other deliverables that resulted from those efforts.
- Include a completed self assessment survey (attached) from each local WIB member.

Completed applications must be returned to the Oklahoma Department of Commerce at the following address:

Oklahoma Department of Commerce
Office of Workforce Solutions
900 N. Stiles Ave
PO Box 26980
Oklahoma City, OK. 73126-0980

Applications will be accepted until February 1, 2005. However, the state will begin working with local boards to assess needs and provide specific services as soon as applications are received.