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COLORADO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
633 17th St, 9th Floor, Denver CO 80202

Colorado Workforce Development Council (CWDC) Strategic Planning Summary

October 8th and 9th, 2008

Inverness Hotel
200 Inverness Dr W, Englewood

Attendance

Mark Warne, Steve Wright, Tammy Coxen, Gary Yakimov, Nancy LaPrade, Keith Lambert, Rich Baer, Celina Shands Gradijan, James Neubecker, Ken DeBey, Bob Wilson, Booker Graves, Dani Crane, Paula Gomez-Farrell, Tracy Boyd, Charlie Unseld, Linda Perez, Carmen Velasquez, Judy Emery, Bette Matkowski, Alex Hall, James Hall, Jane Barnes, Peggy Herbertson, Tom Looft, Nancy Smith, Don Mares, Sue Carparelli, Inta Morris, Elise Lowe-Vaughn, Nancy McCallin, Ray Gonzalez, Ben Curtiss Lusher, Jim Lyons, Amy Mitchell, Nancy Todd, Tony Gagliardi, Glenn Little

Welcome

Rich Baer convened the meeting at 1:15pm. He began by discussing the recent changes to the Council.

Booker Graves discussed the recent orientation sessions with the new members and those that were unsure of the role of the Council and its importance. He met with those that couldn't attend the meeting in May; discussing enhancing the engagement of the Council members and serving the workforce community more effectively. Conversations for the second day of the Strategic Planning would direct and frame the mission of moving the workforce system forward.

Gary Yakimov gave a broad overview of the work to be accomplished during the sessions: what are other boards doing across the country? The second day would be about action planning and goals/matrices. By the end of the second day, the CWDC members would have a specific action plan.

What Makes an Effective Workforce Board?

Gary discussed what Corporation for a Skilled Workforce (CSW) has observed around the country that makes an effective workforce board. Economic and workforce development must deal with the intersection of changes for companies, workers, and communities. The workforce system hasn't moved at the same rate as the business world. It's been retrofitted a couple of times, but hasn't undergone any major changes. **How do you build a local workforce that supports businesses to create sustainable jobs?** The system must re-imagine the people involved, the places they live, the firms they work for, and the approaches to working with all three. Strategic planning is the ongoing work of the Council, not just a day-and-a-half session. Effective boards go beyond working only on WIA initiatives, they work on sector-based approaches. The Council should bring workforce data to life and be a convener and inviter. They should manage campaigns on local workforce issues, develop new resources, push the big ideas, and determine how to do things differently.

Group Discussion:

- Having industry and business involved can attract more people and create more leverage;
- It's important to discuss the relationship between the Council and the local boards;
- It's important to have a well-developed overall strategy;
- Council members need to have clear expectations and build the collective will of the community;
- A lot of people don't know what workforce is and what they do;
- The role of the Board has remained consistent.

Branding the Council and its Important Work

Celina Shands Gradijan provided an overview of what her company, Full Capacity Marketing, does with the Workforce Council. What is the purpose of branding? It provides awareness of the mission, comprehension of the mission, the value of the mission, and engagement in the mission. There are basic and not-so basic Brand Strategy Components: from name, tagline, logo, mission, and vision to packaging and positioning initiatives, communication platforms, conversational marketing, and creating brand ambassadors. Colorado has strong alignment of priorities, e.g. demand, supply, and positioning, and is working to develop a statewide marketing plan.

Why brand the Council rather than the local regions? The job of the Council is to promote the workforce system and is an umbrella framing for communications.

Positioning is critical to this discussion and the Council doesn't want to take anything away from any other groups or agencies, but wants to enhance services.

Is a snappy slogan the best way to spend the limited funds that are available? No, a slogan is only a small part of a brand strategy with respect to public sector organizations. It's about positioning the relevancy and urgency of your mission, in order to engage new customers and strategic partners. It's about telling a compelling story.

Businesses aren't aware that workforce is available to them. The system needs to come together to tell their story. Through branding, you get clarity of purpose, you manage expectations, and you gain accountability for what the Council can do.

Branding the Council is important because by law the Council has the power to direct workforce system activities and funding. The local boards have the same expectations of their local officials. The Council needs to be able to look at the big picture.

The goal of any collaborative is to leverage more funding. Politicians should be invited to participate and listen to the stories of success, to gain their buy-in.

Who needs to be engaged to make the priorities relevant? The Council should begin to shape the communication platform: create value propositions, establish the reasons that workforce development is urgent for them (business/industry), what action should be taken, and how will it help improve the situation?

National Workforce Policy Trends and State Best Practices

Promising practices across the country include: targeted industry strategies, promoting regionalism, alignment with education, reinventing adult education, an innovation agenda, green jobs, special target populations, and state branding. For example, in North Carolina the workforce system doesn't give out grant funds unless two or more regions come together on a project. States are cultivating entrepreneurship and growing teachers for STEM education.

Green Jobs Focus

Many focus on green jobs as a high priority. The definition of what green jobs means is different for each state. Everyone's job can be a green job, they may require some additional training on their current duties in order to be greener, but they already know the job. It's about understanding the training assets one already has and modifying this to be more concerned about green standards.

Workforce Priorities, as determined by the survey completed by CWDC members

- Work with the Jobs Cabinet
- Align education, workforce, and private sector resources around human capital investment
- Promoting regional targeted industry strategies
- Increase student, parent, and educator awareness of STEM and gold collar opportunities
- Maximize the participation and effectiveness of other special target populations
- Maximize the participation and effectiveness of an older workforce

Jobs Cabinet Update

Jim Lyons is one of three Co-Chairs of the Jobs Cabinet and they will be looking to the local regions to make workforce development work.

The five regions that have been established within the State were geographically based and these will be modified as is necessary. They held regional meetings in these regions to find out the needs of each part of the state, and what is unique to each area.

- **Key question to participants in regional forums:**

What are your needs and what would you like to see happen that the Jobs Cabinet can assist with over the next five years?

- Coloradoans would like to see the Jobs Cabinet as the convener of workforce innovation work and not several entities overlapping each others' efforts.
- The top industries as determined by those that live within the regions include tourism, healthcare, and education.

- **Next steps for Jobs Cabinet:**

- In September, the Cabinet put together what they learned from the meetings, and created their mission statement.
- They will be working on **asset mapping, determining what resources are available** within the regions and how they can be utilized. The Jobs Cabinet is not trying to reinvent the wheel, but they're taking and compiling existing information in one location.
- They're working to **identify barriers to partnership and collaboration**. The state's procurement and contracting rules are very significant barriers to collaboration and this issue should be a piece of this work.
 - With regard to regional partnerships, in some regions there are great communication tools. They want to make sure they can figure out what an effective partnership looks like and make sure any region has access to partnership tools. Any partnership depends on the needs of employers and these can change over time.
 - This effort should take place at the local level, and the Council and local WIB's can assist the regions in making this happen. The community colleges haven't been getting enough support over the years for the work they do and this should change, as well.
- The Jobs Cabinet needs to be able to **analyze their data and then they will take their results out into the communities** and work with local groups to construct models that work and are effective.

- **What would success look like?**

Partnerships and alignment, with the Jobs Cabinet being the catalyst to promote partnerships in the regions.

- **Is there something the Council can be helpful with in the short term?**

Don Mares, Booker, and Rich continue to be involved with the Jobs Cabinet and they

will continue to be involved in the future. **The Council can help manage expectations of the Jobs Cabinet** when communicating with communities and provide data as necessary.

This is a top two or three priority of the Governor, and the high level of people in this room can make things happen, which hasn't occurred in a long time. This will make Colorado more of a leader than they have been in the past.

The first day ended at 5:00pm.

The strategic planning meeting reconvened at 8:35am on the 9th.

Refugee Policy and Challenges

Booker introduced Paul Stein, the State Refugee Coordinator of Colorado. This is a possible project that the Council may want to be involved with and Booker was looking for the Council's approval to proceed to work on refugee resettlement.

Who is a refugee? It is defined by someone's legal immigration status and if they are individuals who have fled their country of origin because of persecution from race, political affiliation, religion, etc. The United Nations (UN) makes the distinction about what a refugee is. It grants them asylum in the country they enter. Once they've been designated a refugee, they can stay in their new country for the rest of their lives. There are about 14 million refugees in the world; about 8.5 million of those have been in a refugee situation for more than 10 years. Internally displaced individuals are not part of the refugee population. The UN looks at durable solutions: return to home country, second country resettlement (more countries are closing their doors), third country resettlement (UN may plead with other countries to intervene on the behalf of those displaced). There are only 15 countries that accept refugees via the UN program and refugee resettlement is primarily a humanitarian effort.

There are a lot of issues in the program, but most refugees breathe a sigh of relief that they no longer have to live in fear. The groups in Colorado working to assist with refugees are faith- and community-based. There are several factors affecting successful integration, which are employment, political environment, etc. Colorado resettles about 1% of refugees and the goal is to keep refugees out of public assistance programs (TANF). After eight months, funding stops to the refugees, and they may have to rely on TANF at that time. Human Services currently has a 65-68% success rate within Colorado. They pass the baton to the industry and rely on them for ongoing educational opportunities. Human Services asks for an investment from the business community, which will create more loyalty and an investment in a new community. Integration is more than assimilation, it's about creating opportunities for both the employer and the refugee. This issue is about having a whole person that has aspirations, not just a body to do the work.

Because of secondary migration in the US, more refugees are relocating to the rural areas. This is not a Denver-focused project, the focus is also on the rural areas. Human Services can help with interpretation and translation of documents for employers.

Booker sees this as an opportunity that needs to be explored; a comprehensive policy should be developed. He was looking for **authorization to work on a plan for working with refugees. The Council should discover what the gaps are and what is already being provided.** Bob Wilson motioned to approve, Rich seconded with a unanimous vote for approval.

Wrap Up and Next Steps

The Strategic Planning summary will be issued to the members. Another meeting should be scheduled for early January. At that meeting the CWDC members will finalize the plan. The frequency, organization and focus of meetings will be discussed at the January meeting. Are there enough business people in the Council; we need to make sure there are enough business representatives at each meeting. How are meetings going to be made more meaningful?

Thoughts about the Strategic Planning?

Energized; good information; challenge the business participants to stay engaged; who's the customer; don't want to be seen as a state entity stepping on local toes; are businesses willing to put time and money into efforts (buy-in); best method is targeted sector strategies; good to have exchange of ideas; timely; important; effective; this is a moving group with tangible ideas; like to move rapidly, but this has been beneficial; need to see results; moved quickly to agree on three goals; disswayed the concerns I had before this meeting; this is a good first step in getting things moving again; get information to locals and get their buy-in; nice to see alignment; help in organizing work; affirmed by goals that were established; encouraged

Adjourned at 2:25pm.

See "Action Plan Framework" for results of the meeting.