

WORKSmart

Kentucky

A Strategic Transformation of  
Kentucky's Workforce System

May 2010



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KENTUCKY WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

# Introduction

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May 20, 2010

Governor Beshear,

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

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

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

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

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

Respectfully,

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## Kentucky Workforce Investment Board

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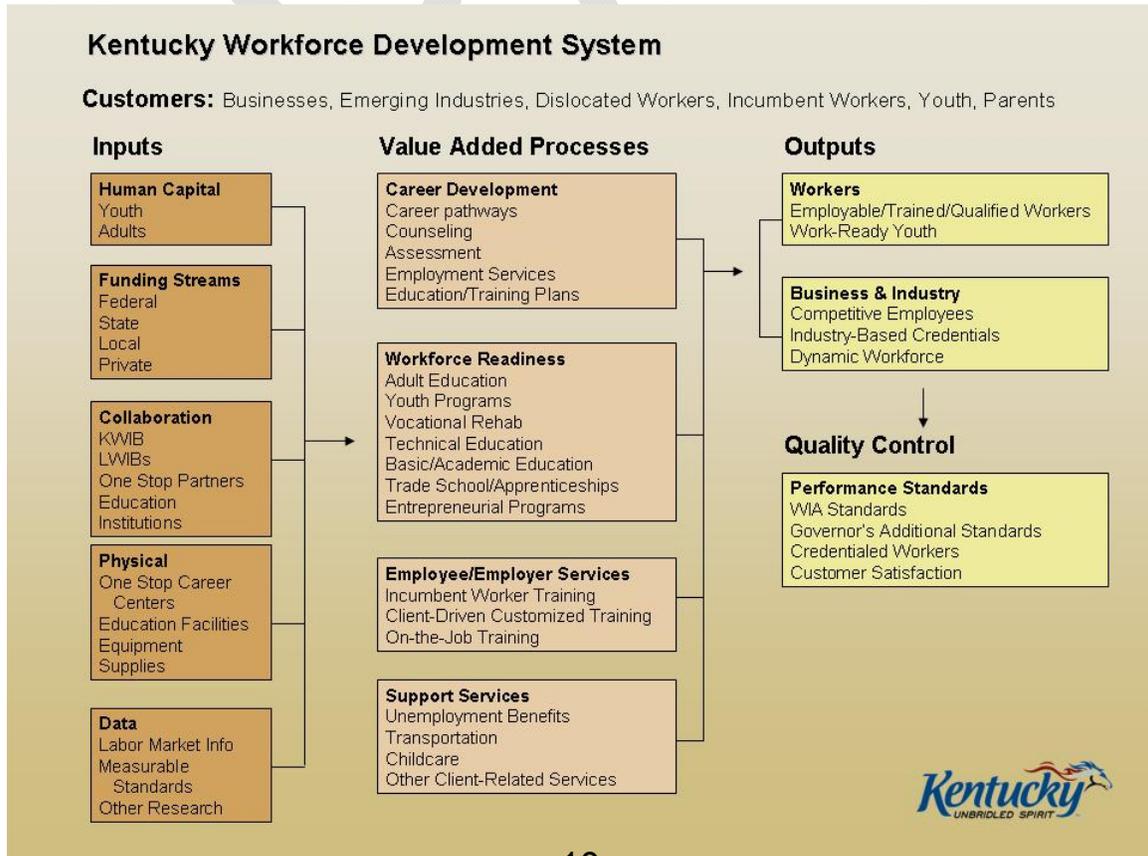
# Workforce System Overview

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



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

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



# Strategic Planning

- Planning Process
- Stakeholder Participation

## **Planning Process**

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

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

### **Philosophy**

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

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

### **Approach**

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

Three committees were appointed to undertake the development of goals and input into a vision statement. Each committee was instructed to look at the system from the perspective of an assigned stakeholder group. These included employers, employees and partners. The Executive Committee with representation from each of the committees would synthesize the work of each committee into a vision and provide the forum for addressing issues that were of common interest to all of the stakeholder groups.

A review of notes generated from meetings held by, then-Secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet, Helen Mountjoy provided a foundation for each of the committees to make an initial identification of topics of interest. The groups Secretary Mountjoy met with include: Economic Development professionals, the Kentucky Career and Technical College System,

workforce partners, local workforce investment board members and staff, and members of the previous iteration of the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board.

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

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

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

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

Working through a rigorous schedule of meetings, committee members met and dedicated themselves to developing detailed documentation for more than 30 individual initiatives. Each committee identified projects that could have the greatest impact, those that could be achieved quickly to build a foundation for the more complex initiative that would follow and forwarded those recommendations to the Executive Committee.

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

**ADDITIONAL NARRATIVE WILL SUMMARIZE THE MAY 20<sup>TH</sup> ACTIONS OF THE BOARD. THIS WILL BE ADDED FOLLOWING THE MEETING**

## **Stakeholder & Public Participation**

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

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

### **Stakeholder Meetings**

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

- Economic Development Professionals
- Kentucky Career and Technical College System
- Local Workforce Investment Boards and Directors
- Partner Agencies
- Members of the former Kentucky Workforce Investment Board.

### **Committees**

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

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

Following the approval of the vision and goals by the Governor, a fourth committee was added and each was assigned the task of developing a set of action items required to implement their assigned goal. Each committee engaged the participation of partners, local workforce directors and key technical staff with expertise in how to implement a variety of ideas.

### **Local Workforce Boards**

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

- Updates at several local board meetings
- A meeting with local board chairs hosted by the state board executive committee

- A special luncheon for local board executive directors hosted by the state board executive committee
- Discussion of specific topics at local board directors' monthly meetings
- Local board directors encouraged to attend and participate in committee meetings

### **Partners**

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

### **Advisory Council**

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

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