WORKFORCE ALLIANCE OF SOUTH CENTRAL KANSAS

STRATEGIC PLAN

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Disclaimer

The study was conducted by the Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University (WSU). The PPMC is an independent research body, and this report was prepared by the research team. It represents the findings, views, opinions and conclusions of the research team alone, and the report does not express the official or unofficial policy of WSU. Information for this report was supplied by the board, staff and stakeholders who participated in focus groups and interviews. The accuracy of findings for the report is dependent upon the information they provided.

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WICHITA STATE
UNIVERSITY
DIVISION OF DIVERSITY AND
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT
Public Policy and
Management Center

WORK FORCE
ALLIANCE
of South Central Kansas

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1. Introduction

The Workforce Alliance (WA) Local Workforce Development Board for Kansas Local Area IV (LWDB) engaged the Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University to assist the research, planning and visioning process to create a comprehensive strategic plan.

The strategic plan resulted from an inclusive planning process, allowing for the creation of a vision for the organization and goals and strategies to accomplish that vision. The LWDB engaged several key partners to address the needs and expectation of all stakeholders.

The purpose of the plan is to create a road map for the LWDB to guide future policy, programming, and financial priorities and decisions. The plan helps guide the LWDB financial decisions, resource allocation (human, capital, infrastructure) and project priorities. At the direction of the leadership representing the stakeholder organizations, the PPMC met with staff and community members to develop the plan.

2. Methodology

The PPMC reviewed historical data and met with staff and Board leadership to review and provide analysis of the 2015-17 strategic plan. In addition, the PPMC conducted independent research of critical topics of future impact to the organization and compiled an influencing factors report.

Strategic planning goals were identified through independent stakeholder interviews, four facilitated focus groups with key stakeholders and one facilitated focus group with LWDB staff.
The strategic plan includes goals, strategies, influencing factors and notes from focus groups and interviews.

GOAL 1

Expand Youth employment opportunities to help develop the workforce of the future

Tactics

a. Provide leadership and coordination to a community collaborative "coalition of the willing"

b. Analyze and map barriers to education attainment and employment for youth, especially "at-risk" youth
   • Utilize partners to create solutions to barriers

c. Focus on "first job" and summer job placement themes

d. Connect work experience to academic/career interest of youth

e. Emphasize importance of "soft skills" through pre-employment workshops
   • Identify volunteer opportunities for youth that will support development of "soft-skills"

f. Engage business community in the region

g. Create marketing/outreach campaigns targeting both youth and employers

h. Collect data on outcomes to identify community impact and share with partners and stakeholders

Goal 2

Strengthen relationships with WIOA partners, community organizations and educational/training institutions to leverage resources and align services through the one-stop workforce centers (American Job Centers)

Tactics

a. Expand use of technology to build partnerships, centralize data/information, and improve efficiencies
  • Determine how technology can increase service to rural communities in the region

b. Identify profiles of job seekers and create a map of the "customer" experience at the Workforce Center to help determine areas of improvement in services and outcomes
  • Convene focus groups or round-table discussions with workforce center partners, job seekers and employer customers

c. Work with one-stop partners, other community organizations, business groups, employers and the media to increase awareness of employment and training services in South Central Kansas.
  • (Note: Kansas Department of Commerce leading an effort with the local workforce boards to "re-brand" the workforce centers and public employments system in Kansas.)

d. Develop metrics, goals and benchmarks to evaluate performance of employment and training "system" and impact on community. (ROI)

e. Review job-seeker workshops, increase focus on job-readiness and "soft-skills"
  • Increased recognition to help job-seekers understand value of "soft-skills"
  • Promote "soft-skills" workshops to employers

Create and implement a more effective and comprehensive communication plan to increase public awareness about employment and training services, and skills needed for current and future careers in South Central Kansas

Tactics

a. Target key industry sectors and identify growing and in-demand skilled jobs in the region.
- Manufacturing
- Healthcare
- Information Technology
- Skilled trades, construction

b. Use labor market information to identify skill gaps and target training

c. Convene employers and researchers to forecast future workforce trends impacting job growth and types of jobs in South Central Kansas

d. Provide a regular forum for education and training providers (K-12 and Post-Secondary) to learn of employment trends and directly engage business and industry leaders in the region

e. Create opportunities to celebrate outcomes and successes of partners, job seekers and employers that benefit from Workforce Center services
- Annual report on workforce issues in South Central Kansas
- Creation of Board awards or public recognition for partners, employers, staff

GOAL 4

Generate revenue to increase community impact of WIOA and Workforce Centers in South Central Kansas

Tactics

a. Increase membership on Community Impact Committee

b. Identify grant opportunities and pursue funding to align with WIOA programs and resources
- Federal, state and local governments
- Philanthropic and community based organizations
- Business and Industry
- Area Banks (Community Reinvestment Act)

c. Create "fee-for-service" plan to utilize in-house subject matter experts that could generate revenue from employers, community based organizations and other workforce boards

d. Continue to hold annual Jobs FORE Youth Golf Tournament

4. Influencing Factors

Many external factors related to social and economic changes can influence strategic planning and decision-making. Understanding these factors supports strategic thinking and leadership for the future. The following section provides background information on key trends that may impact planning decisions.

HISTORY OF WORKPLACE INTEGRATION POLICY

Numerous integration plans allow for federal resources to be funneled toward local employment centers. The preliminary act that began funding centers with federal resources was the Wagner-Peyser Act, developed during the New Deal era following the Great Depression (O'Leary and Eberts, 2008, p.vi). The purpose of the act was to create a more unified employment services system that could meet the unemployment surge at the time. In the early years following the act, employment centers largely directed participants to public sector labor that had been created (O'Leary and Eberts, 2008, p.3). Title 3 of the Social Security Act extended this initial policy, establishing employment partnerships in conjunction with unemployment insurance programs. Changes continued after World War II, as employment centers prioritized veterans returning from war. Programs specifically for youth, elderly, and disabled were also put in place by the 1950s (O'Leary and Eberts, 2008, p.4-5). Allocations for employment services come mostly from state funds, which finance two-thirds of employment program funding. The discretionary funding appropriation for employment services initiatives has remained relatively constant, though real funding has declined 49.1 percent (O'Leary and Eberts, 2008, p.6). Along with state funding, revenue for Wagner-Peyser services is also collected from the Federal Unemployment Tax Act at a "levy of 0.8 percent on the first $7,000 of UI-covered employment" (O'Leary and Eberts, 2008, p.36).

Other key policy related to workforce centers includes the Workforce Information and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and its predecessor the Workforce Investment Act (WIA). One major change within the WIOA is how state systems are governed, with local plans now needing to be aligned with state plan strategy. Criteria is in place to access local boards by state standards every three years. Specific funding levels are now detailed regarding "WIA Youth, Adult, and Dislocated Worker programs" ("Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)," 2014, p.1). State boards now include one member from each legislative chamber rather than two and appointed representatives from different required and permissible areas. A four-year plan on the state level has replaced the previous five-year plan ("Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)," p.2). The latter change is also present on a local level. Accountability systems now include primary indicators for youth as well as general employment indicators. Along with partners of programs listed in the WIA, Second Chance programs and TANF are also now required partners ("Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)," 2014, p.6-9). Other smaller policy changes have occurred regarding the sequence of services and required activities for dislocated workers. Appropriation authorization has changed for national programs as well as JobCorps and YouthBuild initiatives ("Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)," 2014, p.16-19).

In many cases, it can be beneficial if employers and academics can work together to fulfill broader objectives. By integrating practical knowledge with teachings within a field, all parties can potentially see positive outcomes. When students gain knowledge regarding work schedules, production deadlines, and staff reassignments, they gain knowledge that supplements academic knowledge, which can eventually benefit them in the workforce. Current employees can also benefit from learning opportunities, , with communities of practice becoming more commonplace within some areas (Halverson et al, 2016, p.2-3). Today's workplace requires a number of skills that can help integrate knowledge with daily work. These cognitive qualities include "problem formation, flexible modes of solution, using the environment, effort-saving, forms of representation, and cognitive teamwork" (Halverson et al, 2016, p.4). Workforce skills can be universal and apply to numerous fields of study, which makes them especially beneficial to employers (Halverson et al, 2016, p.5).

INDUSTRY TRENDS

Five major industries in the Wichita area are manufacturing, data and IT, health care, transportation and logistics, and oil and gas. Each of these industries makes a major difference to the overall economy of both the City of Wichita and Sedgwick County. Each industry also has employment trends that have shaped job availability. To understand how best to employ individuals in these sectors, it can be important to understand local, state, and national level trends.

The Public Policy and Management Center (PPMC) at Wichita State University conducted a literature review to assess trends in five major industries in the Wichita area: (1) manufacturing; (2) data and information technology: (3) health care; (4) transportation and logistics; (5) oil and gas.

Manufacturing Industry

The manufacturing industry, particularly related to advanced manufacturing and materials for aviation, is essential to the overall Wichita area economy. Major aerospace companies —including Airbus, Textron (created by a merger between Wichita companies Cessna and Beechcraft), and Spirit AeroSystems, a major contractor for Boeing—are prominent employers, making Wichita a central manufacturing hub for aircraft.

The aerospace market has become increasingly global, with the U.S. aerospace industry falling from 72 percent to 52 percent of the global aerospace market from 1985 to 1999 (Tracy, 2004, p.50). Current aerospace industry

workers are on the higher end of age ranges, with the average worker at 54 years old (Tracy, 2004, p.49). Despite some declines, it is estimated that the commercial transport industry will generate approximately $1.8 trillion in the next twenty years. New materials for technology, including "fiber-metal laminates, new aluminum alloys, metal-matrix composites, and new composite processing," are appearing within the market (Tracy, 2004, p.52).

One concern within the sector is the fact that spending for aircraft manufacturing has nearly doubled, while federal funding decreased—though this data largely comes from trends within the late 20th century (Tracy, 2004, 53). The sector has seen some growth in recent years as spending within the U.S. aviation and defense industry rose approximately 2.9 percent between years 2014 and 2015—accounting for approximately 1.6 percent of the total federal budget. This growth can be partially attributed to increasing foreign military sales, which have outpaced the growth of deliveries and created a backlog for manufacturers of defense systems ("The Strength to Lift America," 2016, p.4-5).

The State of Kansas, along with other states such as Texas and Washington, has faced employment losses in the aerospace industry in 2015. The aerospace industry provides approximately 20 percent of Kansas' exports, while the industry accounts for 4.9 percent of annual state GDP ("The Strength to Lift America," 2016, p.9-14)

Data and Information Technology Industry

The data and information technology industry is essential within a wide number of other fields, since almost every modern-day employer requires some level of technological assistance. This sector also includes a number of specific emphasis areas, including software, hardware, web design, coding, and data analysis. The information technology sector is expanding, but growth requires employers hire specially trained individuals in a high demand field.

Technological fields undergo dramatic transitions and trends at paces that are much faster than other industries. Technology is constantly changing and corporations will always be competing to find the next breakthrough. Some recent breakthroughs include virtual reality technologies, artificial intelligence, and 3D printing. Cognitive technologies, such as machine learning and language-processing software, are also experiencing breakthroughs. Each of these areas shows potential for future expansion.

Trends affecting the consumer software industry include pay-per-use and consumption-based models that allow for customers to purchase only what they will actually use and need. Partnerships and new strategies including "shrink to grow" expansion limited to growth of the most productive product lines are also becoming common within the field ("Technology Industry Outlook 2017," 2017).

Technological industries account for a growing portion of the overall economy. STEM industries account for approximately 5.8 percent of the overall United States economy. The information technology (IT) industry can be divided into specific categories, including high-tech service industries and technology manufacturing industries. Service sectors within the data and IT industry employ larger numbers of individuals in computer and mathematical occupations, while the manufacturing sector employ a large proportion of engineers. The high-tech industry is anticipated to continue to grow at a modest increase of 691,000 jobs between 2014 and 2024. Output is expected to grow by $2.4 trillion over this time period.

The service and manufacturing sectors in the data and IT industry have different trends and projections. In the past twenty years, high-tech service industries began to outpace jobs in technological manufacturing—with service industry jobs growing by 3.4 million jobs while manufacturing jobs declined by one million. Despite these employment figures, high-tech manufacturing has remained productive, experiencing a slight decline in output and industry share (Wolf and Tarrell, 2016). These differences in manufacturing could correlate with systematic improvements requiring less direct use of labor.

Young workers typically have the technical skills necessary for employment but older workers face many challenges entering fields that require technological knowledge. To address these needs, training systems include e-learning and class-based learning of technology. Many of these programs are developed through university-community partnerships (Taha et al, 2016, p.276-278).

Job growth in the data industry is connected to the use of big data. Companies are experiencing a shortfall of employees who have analytical skills in the fields of statistics, machine learning, and computer science. To deal with this shortfall, some corporations are hiring employees with adaptable skills outside of these fields. One corporation, for example, has had success including music and physics majors onto their data science teams. Start-ups are shaping the outlook of data-related industries, with companies focusing on customers' needs poised to expand in the coming decades (Dillow, 2013).

Health Care Industry

The health care industry is prominent within the Wichita area and features a wide variety of services. Employers in this industry are dependent on keeping pace with trends to provide optimal health care and optimal treatments for myriad conditions. Jobs are important, as health care industry employees contribute to quality of life issues for community members.

The health care industry currently faces many challenges, including an aging population, a decrease in care availability, ethical dilemmas involving expanding technologies, and increased patient expectations regarding pricing and participation (Spitzer, 2013, p.960). The current generation of aging adults will be the most diverse and educated in the nation's history—but with other characteristics such as having fewer children, higher divorce rates, and less likelihood of living in poverty. Disparities still exist in the elderly population among racial and ethnic lines, with differences including life expectancy and disability rates. Chronic diseases continue to be a major concern for the elderly population (Spitzer, p.961-963). Along with an aging patient population, the number of aging physicians is also increasing with more retirements occurring. An expected shortage of 45,000 primary care physicians and 46,000 surgeons and medical specialists is anticipated in the next decade. Mental health services are expected to have the largest worker shortages, with behavioral health disorders surpassing physical diseases as a cause for disability by 2020 (Spitzer, p.963-964). Chronically ill patients currently account for 95 percent of all health expenditures among older Americans. Due to federal Medicare and Medicaid incentive payments which started in 2009, providers have also largely switched to electronic health records (Spitzer, p.966-967). Many of these factors must be considered in shaping jobs within the mental healthcare industry as well as in finding additional healthcare areas to promote employment.

Some aspects that may reduce new entrants into the health care field include "health care reform, market share, work-life balance, financial security, call schedules, and other risks associated with working in the health care field" (Johnston, 2012, p.2). While physicians primarily practiced independently during the late 1980s and early 1990s, this trend proved to be temporary. Many private practitioners decided to work for larger organizations because of factors such as decreasing insurance reimbursements, further regulations, rising business costs and financial stress. Family factors are also shown to be highly related to an individual's decision regarding where they practice medicine (Johnston, 2012, p.4-5).

A variety of positions are necessary within health care fields. Practitioners and technical occupations make up around 34 percent of overall employment while support positions account for approximately 17 percent of the field. Registered nurses, nursing assistants, home health aides, and licensed practical and vocational nurses are among the largest health care occupations in the industry. While many positions are directly related to health care, administrative support positions and community service positions are also prominent within the field (Fayer and Watson, 2015, p.3). A vast majority, 85 percent of health care positions, require education beyond a high school

diploma. Jobs that require certification but not a full diploma account for approximately one-third of the overall industry (Fayer and Watson, 2015, p.4). Pay also differs greatly between career fields, with home health aides and nursing assistants among the lowest paid and anesthesiologists earning the highest pay (Fayer and Watson, 2015, p.9). The position of medical transcriptionists, who create written reports from voice recordings made by health care professionals, is more prominent in the Midwest than elsewhere. (Fayer and Watson, 2015, p.14).

Transportation Industry

Transportation options are changing, with options and improvement occurring to improve both the functionality of transit as well as the user experience. Vehicle development will continue to remain a central aspect of transit, with options to further enhance the productivity, relaxation, and entertainment of travelers. Autonomous vehicles are another potential opportunity for growth. Self-driving cars may be far from commonplace at this time, but projections indicate that nearly 60 percent of miles could be traveled in fully autonomous vehicles by 2040. Having self-driving vehicles could greatly assist workers in the trucking industries and could also be an excellent development in expanding the ability of elderly individuals to travel. The impact of these developments may be related to whether future policies allow for driver-less vehicles or whether a passenger is necessary to take control of the car in certain situations. With technological advances currently occurring and on the horizon, new types of workers are needed within the automotive manufacturing centers. Finding new workers with skills and capabilities sometimes relies on rebranding or incentivizing to draw highly-technological workers away from competing sectors. While manufacturing methods could potentially change, it is unlikely long-term employees will need to worry in the near-future. The number of workers and skills of qualified workers may continue to change within manufacturing groups gradually for years to come. The trend of using fewer assembly line workers and the need for high-skilled labor will continue to shape the field. (Rea et al, 2017).

In looking at transport options, it is important to consider the size of transit-related businesses and the ways in which they operate. Many small companies exist for transport operations, including taxi and limousine services as well as car repair options. Small transportation operators are most often independent with salaries ranging from $18,000 to $27,000. Most of these individuals will have a small office space but will generally administrate the majority of their operations within their vehicles. The unpredictability of conditions, demand fluctuations, and lack of opportunity for advancement can be downsides of operating this type of service. Midsize businesses in the industry often operate a fleet of vehicles, with entry-level workers making from $17,000 to $32,000 annually. As well as employing drivers, these businesses may also employ "dispatchers, ticket clerks, customer service agents, managers, supervisors, and technical support staff" ("Passenger Transportation and Transit Industry," 2012, p.1355-1357). Large-scale transport services are a completely different type of industry, including passenger train services and multiple unit bus services. Workers are generally paid hourly with customer service concerns answered by phone. Employees in larger corporations are more likely to be a part of labor unions ("Passenger Transportation and Transit Industry," 2012, p.1357-1359). It is important to note that larger transit companies employ a number of professionals from different fields, including management, customer service, sales, marketing, finance, technology professionals ("Passenger Transportation and Transit Industry," 2012, p.1360-1363).

Transit industries have a number of recruitment challenges in selecting and developing potential applicants, with 63 percent of the industry over the age of 45. The need for young talent incentivized the use of internships and college programs related to the field. One corporation also claimed the need to hire a diverse and engaged workforce—and found that adding additional benefits and increasing the pay of low-level staff were effective retention methods. The transit industry is in need of high-quality and consistent models that can be implemented locally, according to the executive director of the Transportation Learning Center. There may be a need for partnerships in developing a standards-based system of workforce development. Many other notable options were listed by various professionals within the transit industry. One idea involved having a clear and concise recruitment message and prioritizing qualified applicants over the quantity of submitted applications. Another individual

stated that centering interviews on an applicant's motivation as well as "why they believe they are successful" was beneficial. Some technical positions may be more difficult to recruit for due to the need of workers with very specific skill-sets ("Recruiting Transit Industry…, 2015).

Oil and Gas Industry

The oil and gas industry is another key sector for employment within the greater Wichita area. Oil has become increasingly essential over the last century as transportation has largely been driven by production, with many large-scale employers and a wide variety of employees working within the field. Employment trends particularly impact the oil and gas industries due to fluctuations in prices.

Employment needs within the oil and gas industry are based on the specific phase of oil extraction. In the preliminary exploration phase, teams of geologists, geophysicists, and engineers may navigate areas where drilling will occur while procurement specialists negotiate leases. Following these processes, an appraisal phase takes place in which workers drill smaller areas in order to confirm earlier estimates of oil and gas extraction levels. Legal services negotiate terms of contracts when a corporation decides to develop a field. The development stage is the most labor-intensive and involves preparing a drilling site, drilling and casing a well, and performing hydraulic fracturing. Pipeline infrastructure is also constructed during this phase. Jobs in this phase include "drilling rig operators, excavation crews, truck drivers, heavy equipment operators, fracking equipment operators, and semiskilled general laborers." In the production phase, developers see the first revenues of their efforts and sell oil and gas extracted from the field. This final phase can last from several years to decades (Brown, 2015, p.61-64). The oil and gas industry does produce a wide variety of employment opportunities, with one rig adding 28 jobs within the initial month of development and approximately 171 jobs over the rigs total lifespan. However, rig response has also been dampened in comparison to past decades as rigs become more capital intensive—with machinery necessities taking priority over rig response times. Decreased responses could lead to an employment decline of approximately 0.1 to 4 percent across states with high oil and gas production (Brown, 2015, p.73-74).

Women currently have unequal representation in the oil and gas industry. Women geoscientists in the oil and gas industry have had varying experiences while in the field and regarding particular initiatives. It was found that preferential hiring and promotion policies have effectively increased the number of women that have been hired within the field. Less direct initiatives did not seem to have the same effect, as thinking was difficult to change without policy implementation and enforcement of equal opportunity protections. Mentorship programs were very useful for some women entering the oil and gas industry. Outside groups have had additional impact in assisting women representation within the field—although one of the major barriers that still exists is advancing women into leadership positions within the oil and gas industry (Williams et al, 2014, p.469-470).

While oil and gas industries have faced some layoffs in the past, it is possible that this trend will reverse. High pay within the oil and gas industry make it possible with projections indicating that 80,000 to 100,000 job could be added as energy firms require additional assistance. The oil industry can currently manage approximately one hundred to two hundred rigs without additional staffing, though bottlenecks—which require additional employment—may develop. While jobs not located directly on an oil field pay less than those on-site, off-site jobs can sometimes be more stable and workers will not need to worry about harsh weather conditions. Both types of employees will need to be present in any large drilling endeavor. While states may have enough workers to fill future needs, it is important that these jobs are also filled by qualified employees. With a number of workers in the field retiring or being bought out, an upcoming possibility that is being discussed is that a "great crew change" will develop within this particular field (DiChristopher, 2016).

Youth Unemployment

A variety of trends are increasing the employability of young individuals, as they "tend to be eager to work, enjoy higher rates of literacy than previous generations, are technologically savvy, are willing to relocate, have a higher risk tolerance than their older counterparts, and are interested in having new experiences" (Garlick, 2013, p.216). However, while youth employment is rising, youth unemployment is still a serious issue nationwide and has had local impact. Young workers are the future of the workforce—with early training allowing young workers to gain experience years earlier than their peers. Having companies in any community that understand the legal requirements and needs of high school workers can greatly increase the number of youth employed and enhance experiences.

Youth unemployment levels rose on a national scale following the economic recession of 2008. Almost all sectors and age groups experienced higher rates of unemployment during this time, but young individuals experienced a more significant drop in employment—partially due to having less experience and fewer necessary skills. While the economy has since improved, approximately one-third of youth unemployment is long-term (Brada et al, 2014, p.556-557). Certain policies have been shown to decrease youth unemployment in both the short-term and long-term. One successful program used within the European Union offered all individuals under the age of 25 educational opportunities, employment, and an apprenticeship or traineeship within four months of unemployment. Another program helped youth develop skills essential in the labor market, increased on-the-job training, and administered first-time jobs for students (Brada et al, 2014, p.565). While these initiatives may be costly, similar programs can be enacted to fit the specific needs and budget of a local government.

Young employees are also found to acquire jobs in industries that have high levels of layoff in times of economic decline, such as construction and hospitality. Young people not in employment, education, or training—referred to as NEET youth—have some of the largest issues finding new jobs. Other individuals have trouble entering a field within the job market or may be underemployed even as quality performers ("Local Strategies for Youth Employment," 2013, p.7-8). In addressing the needs of NEET youth, it is important to invest in early education, increase informal learning, reduce dropouts, and increase motivation. New entrants largely need assistance in finding work that will pave the way for successful careers attractive to youth. Good performers can find better employment through having transversal skills and combined training ("Local Strategies for Youth Employment," 2013, p.9-10). Various cities have also taken specific initiatives that have helped with youth unemployment at the local level. Initiatives focused on building skills for specific employment clusters, incentivizing degrees for high-demand fields, and partnering with community colleges to teach specific skills ("Local Strategies for Youth Employment," 2013, p.22-23).

There are numerous challenges present in coordinating programs for youth services, which include coordination with providers to reduce duplication and gaps, creating a community vision for youth, and commitment from leadership in backing these services. The evidence-based impact can also be measured in order to assist programs in ensuring that they meet the needs of participants. Gaps still occur in generating employer support as well as engaging students by incorporating employment services into school systems. Soft skills and cultural understanding, including exposure to professional environments, can also assist youth seeking employment (Youth Services Report, 2017, p.9-11). Some measures related to youth employment include the successful completion of programs, financial literacy being incorporated into programs, reducing area crime rates, and ensuring that youth attain employment benefits during programs (Youth Services Report, 2017, p.16-17). For

municipalities such as Wichita, it is suggested that groups hold a summit focused on youth talent, participate in youth employment coordination efforts with employment agencies, and establish a set criteria used for measurement. Effective methods involve focusing on diversified youth populations, the training of both youth and employers, creating a mentoring or coaching aspect of programming, and simplifying systems for youth and family involvement (Youth Services Report, 2017, p.37).

Applied Workplace Learning Models
While formal training and development programs are still readily used and available within the workforce, other methods offering training administration are beginning to be offered. In many modern workforces, budget constraints, time demands, and employees working from various locations make traditional training less useful as an option (Noe et al, 2014, p.247). Through the use of technology, e-learning has become a particularly accessible method of teaching employees and is much more cost-effective than traditional training. These learning experiences can also be delivered to employees at any location—so that workers who are telecommuting or out of the office can still participate. Incorporating computer-based simulations into these training sessions was found to increase learners' knowledge when compared to other methods. Social media can also be used to post learning-based links and encourage further employee interest and knowledge regarding various subjects (Noe et al, 2014, p.252-253). Blended methods tend to include some aspect of an online component to supplement in-person learning. While there can be benefits to employees who participate in both online and in-person components, some employees can fail to complete online portions or may find a lack of interest in lectures. Informal learning can be equally beneficial and allows employees to take control of their own learning experiences in the workforce. Experiential learning can also provide a more engaging experience than traditional learning methods and has also been found to be useful in teams and enhances creativity (Noe et al, 2014, p.253-255). A multi-level approach to learning can be particularly useful and it is important to understand that a "one-size-fits-all approach" is less applicable to an organization's specific workforce and needs (Noe et al, 2014, p.265).

Informal learning is still the most common form of gaining knowledge within the workplace, with approximately 70 percent of all learning in the workplace falling within this category. This type of learning occurs when an individual seeks knowledge or skills outside of formal courses in a workplace or educational institution. Unlike planned sessions, informal learning occurs through email, reading on the internet, and unplanned encounters. Informal peer relationships and mentorship roles also allow for discussions regarding work-related ideas that can increase knowledge (Cunningham et al, 2013, p.37-39). Informal mentoring is also generally seen as either positive or very positive while formal mentoring receives lower overall ratings (Cunningham et al, 2013, p.42-43). There are a variety of activities that can greatly help facilitate informal learning—such as encouraging positive behaviors, developing learning networks focused on current topics, and defining parameters encouraging accountability. Having a focused vision for learning goals can also be useful to employees in facilitating learning. Trust, mutual respect, and clear communication are also necessary in workplace dynamics (Cunningham et al, 2013, p.44-47).

Coaching has also been found to be an important means of gaining knowledge within a workplace. Workplace coaching can be described as a "collaborative, reflective, goal-focused relationship" to better a worker that is receiving development (Jones et al, 2016, p.4). Coaching is different from mentoring in that mentorship relationships begin due to an area of expertise where coaching is generally guided by having specific objectives to fulfill. These types of relationships can also develop regardless of the exact positions on an organizational chart—with peer coaching, where workers on the same level learn from one another, developing (Jones et al, 2016, p.5-6). Positive evidence has been found regarding the use of coaching systems—with it being effective regardless of the format and longevity of methods used. If feedback comes from multiple sources rather than one individual, it can be useful to determine how effective the feedback is by through the use of evidence. When external coaches are utilized, it is important to inform these coaches of organizational information so that they have a context regarding daily operations (Jones et al, 2016, p.35).

Apprenticeships

There is currently a large deal of pressure for all students to enroll in college, although many are unprepared or are unaware of other career preparation opportunities available. Apprenticeship programs can educate individuals in numerous fields and have a variety of lengths, with some being one-year programs while others span multiple years. These experiences can also be excellent learning opportunities, as students use critical-thinking skills and grapple with challenges daily. While apprenticeship programs exist in the United States, they are very underused or uncoordinated compared to other countries (Jones, 2011, p.51-52). Most apprenticeships are stated to have a very positive impact on sponsors with most organizations posting high completion rates for participants. These apprenticeships were also stated to not be too costly or burdensome for participating employers. However, improvements still need to be made concerning "rigor, quality, and consistency" (Jones, 2011, p.53). Any successful program must ensure that these programs are attractive to all students—with these systems being seen as a step forward for students rather than an option for only poor-educational performers. A well-organized apprenticeship that is publicized and supported could address shortcomings. Apprenticeships can often fail to address the needs of some students within the higher education system, so specific populations must always be considered. A database on a national level would be one step that could encourage a greater amount of apprenticeships to occur (Jones, 2011, p.55-56).

To have effective apprenticeships, it is important to match work to a specific school curriculum. School and work are two very different systems, with schooling often relying much more on abstract principles while work almost always involves applied learning. During apprenticeships, participants have the ability to learn through both observation and gradual participation (Akkerman, 2012, p.154-156). Students have stated that the difference between schooling and apprenticeship experiences can be described as the difference of being a lab technician versus an operator. Students were generally accepted as participants in the workplace but often performed a limited role related to one specific machine (Akkerman, 2012, p.167). Release days were found to enable discussion and reflection between students and teachers and allowed for discussion regarding the knowledge learned during apprenticeships. In order to increase learning in both contexts, it was encouraged that partnerships between work areas and schools are organized and that learning strategies are outlined within the workplace for an incoming apprentice (Akkerman, 2012, p.168-169).

Occupational identity and belongingness make a large amount of difference concerning the level of enjoyment in the workforce, which is also true among apprentices entering a field. Apprentices benefit from feeling a sense of belonging to a particular workplace, which often occurs through engaging directly in the work of a particular trade or craft. Eventually, these can lead to apprentices developing an identity as a trade worker (Chan, 2016, p.11-13). There are various reasons for an apprentice dropping out of their program, which generally fall under the categories of personal- or work-related factors. Work-related factors can include "poor working conditions, lack of workplace support for learning, and a failure by the employer to provide training." (Chan, 2016, p.14) Other factors can encourage positive apprenticeships—including values being in harmony with the group and having an affinity for the work. Most interns have had prior experiences with their work area due to past employment or family connections to a field (Chan, 2016, p.14-17). It can also help apprentices if their learning experiences match their expectations and what they imagine regarding the field. Workplace support can greatly impact an apprentice in receiving necessary occupational skills (Chan, 2016, p.22).

Technological Impact

Technological advances equal the fourth industrial revolution (Berlin, 2017). Increasing technology is driving automation in all sectors of employment, including manufacturing, health care, sales, etc. Developments in the internet, including cloud technology, energy, and advanced manufacturing (Berlin, 2017) are changing the workforce landscape on both domestic and global scales. According to research, automation is expanding; however, much of future automation will exist in tandem with skilled human workers.

- According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 9% of jobs in 21 countries could be automated within the coming decades (Arntz, Gregory, & Zierahn, 2016, p.4).

- 47% of US employment is at risk for automation over the next decade or two (Frey & Osborne, 2013, p.41).

- While there is evidence of increasing automation, the number of jobs that will experience complete automation is small. Research expects that only 5% of jobs are subject to total automation (Manyika, Chui, Miremadi, Bughin, George, Willmott, & Dewhurst, 2017, 32).

- Thirteen manufacturing and service industries in N. America, Asia-Pacific, Europe, and Latin America are using computer-to-computer, not human replacement (Ramaswamy, 2017, p.3)

    - EXAMPLE: 44% of respondents said that automated computer security systems are helping IT professionals (Ramaswamy, 2017, p.3)

    - Used heavily in IT, marketing, finance and accounting, and customer service (Ramaswamy, 2017, p.4)

- Industries that are likely to become automated require repetitive activities (Scott, 2017), such as data entry, tax preparation, insurance underwriters, telemarketers, etc. In contrast, fields that require years of study and practice, such as therapists, social workers, audiologists, etc., will not be automated (Scott, 2017).

Jobs of the Future

STEM industries may account for a large amount of economic growth within the coming years, with nine million jobs expected to be created in these fields between the years of 2012 and 2022 (Vilorio, 2014, p.1). This growth accounts for an amount of approximately 13 percent across all STEM fields, which is 2 percent higher than average job growth across every field. The top three STEM jobs when accounting for percentage job growth within this time frame are the positions of "Information Security Analysts, Operations Research Analysts, and Statisticians" (Vilorio, 2014, p.7). The positions with the largest number of job openings within this time frame include "Software Developers/Applications, Computer Systems Analysts, Computer User Support Specialists, and Software Developers" (Vilorio, 2014, p.6). Within these listed positions, each generally requires a bachelor's degree except for the position of statistician which requires a master's degree and the position of computer user support specialist which requires some college or no degree (Vilorio, 2014, p.6-7). STEM industries can be both rewarding and challenging—although they can also be intellectually stimulating and allow individuals to work with the newest available technology (Vilorio, 2014, p.8). Workers entering STEM industries require technical, thinking, and communication skills. Various levels of education are required, with many high schools offering advanced placement classes in these fields. Associates degrees can also help workers receive positions such as "Chemical Technicians, Computer Support Network Specialists, and Mechanical Drafters." Some roles require at least five years of experience while others require no previous experience, depending on a particular industry and position (Vilorio, 2014, p.10-11).

Automation may also make a major difference in a number of industries that currently shape the overall workforce. Approximately one-thousand companies are testing the use of artificial intelligence as well as machine-learning systems, with most of these new roles supplementing other positions and not replacing old roles. One of the first emerging jobs is that of a trainer to teach AI systems how to perform or understand language and human communication. Some systems have gone so far as to understand common phrases or even sarcasm (Wilson, 2017, p.14). Explainer roles bridge the divide between new technology and business leaders, providing clarity regarding AI systems and available features. Some systems can ensure the overall reliability of machine predictions, which could help assure management of their capability. Finally, sustainers will be necessary to ensure that AI operating systems function correctly over a long period of time. These individuals act as watchmen over the system, maintaining their value to customers as well as ensuring that AI reactions meet social norms. Many of these jobs will be necessary across numerous fields and require various levels of training. Some

roles, such as empathy trainers, may not require a college degree, while other roles such as ethics compliance managers require advanced degrees (Wilson, 2017, p.15-16). The following list of roles can be used to describe positions related to this growing technology:

REPRESENTATIVE ROLES CREATED BY AI

Accenture's global study of more than 1,000 large companies identified the emergence of three new categories of uniquely human jobs.

TRAINERS	Customer-language tone and meaning trainer	Teaches AI systems to look beyond the literal meaning of a communication by, for example, detecting sarcasm.
	Smart-machine interaction modeler	Models machine behavior after employee behavior so that, for example, an AI system can learn from an accountant's actions how to automatically match payments to invoices.
	Worldview trainer	Trains AI systems to develop a global perspective so that various cultural perspectives are considered when determining, for example, whether an algorithm is "fair."
EXPLAINERS	Context designer	Designs smart decisions based on business context, process task, and individual, professional, and cultural factors.
	Transparency analyst	Classifies the different types of opacity (and corresponding effects on the business) of the AI algorithms used and maintains an inventory of that information.
	AI usefulness strategist	Determines whether to deploy AI (versus traditional rules engines and scripts) for specific applications.
SUSTAINERS	Automation ethicist	Evaluates the noneconomic impact of smart machines, both the upside and downside.
	Automation economist	Evaluates the cost of poor machine performance.
	Machine relations manager	"Promotes" algorithms that perform well to greater scale in the business and "demotes" algorithms with poor performance.

Figure 1. Chart from Wilson, H. J., Daugherty, P., & Bianzino, N. (2017). The jobs that artificial intelligence will create. MIT Sloan Management Review, 58(4), 14.

Job search website Monster has outlined what it believes will be the most prominent jobs in future years. One such job is a productivity officer, in which an individual will make recommendations to administration in order to increase organizational efficiency. Self-driving car mechanics could also be necessary, having knowledge of general mechanics in addition to information on this new and emerging technology. Specialists will also be necessary regarding autonomous transportation. Life coaches and mentorship roles may become increasingly necessary as people are increasingly busy and seek to fulfill "physical needs, a social network and spiritual happiness." End-of-life coaches may also develop as people hope to understand their end-of-life goals and make decisions regarding themselves and their families. With the popularity of drones, positions such as drone manager and air traffic control for private industries may also become more common (Slayter).

POPULATION GROWTH

In the next five years, Sedgwick County is estimated to grow by 21,429 between 2014 and 2019, with additional growth of 18,711 between 2019 and 2024. Between the years of 2014 and 2024, population growth from males is expected to outpace the growth of females by 580 individuals. The south-central region is expected to have a relatively consistent population growth of 0.1 percent between 2014 and 2064, with growth greatest in 2019 and slowly declining thereafter (Kansas Population Projections: Regional Growth, 2016).

Modest increases in population growth are expected in the five other counties in the south-central region. Butler County is expecting an increase of 2,583 between 2014 and 2024 of approximately 3.9 percent. Growth is

expected to occur among 20- to 34-year-olds and in the age ranges of 60 and above ("Population Projections, Butler County"). Cowley County is expected to lose population between the years of 2014 and 2014 with 2,570 people expected to leave the county within that time frame. Of these individuals, 1,265 are expected to be male while 1,306 are female. Growth is only expected in age ranges 60 to 89 ("Population Projections, Cowley County"). Sumner County is also expecting a loss of 2,203 residents from 2014 and 2024. Of the residents leaving 1,074 are male while 1,129 are female. All increases for the county are in ages over 65 ("Population Projections, Sumner County"). Harper County expects only a very slight decrease of 307 individuals between 2014 and 2024—although this accounts for approximately 5.2 percent of their overall population. This loss accounts for 136 males and 171 females leaving. During this time frame, increases are expected in the 15- to 19-year-old range while also being present among residents ages 60 to 89 ("Population Projections, Harper County"). Kingman County expects a moderate loss of 726 citizens accounting for approximately 9.4 percent of its overall population. Of these residents, 354 are male while 372 are female. Growth is expected in age categories from 60 to 89 ("Population Projections, Kingman County").

Brain Drain and Regional Migration

The idea of a brain drain, or migration of educated and talented individuals from one area to another, is a serious issue on a local, regional, and national level. On a state or local level, citizens of rural areas may relocate to larger cities due to opportunities present. States may also receive a brain drain because of migration to metropolitan areas due to specific industry clusters and job opportunities. Migration and the reasons it exists are important issues to consider for any city or county government.

Silicon Valley is used as an example of an area that has benefited greatly from the brain drain due to its focus on technological development. A high-skilled workforce can develop through education and because of agglomeration. While international competition for talent exists, national competition may be even more intense as it is not limited by immigration policy (Marx et al, 2015, p.394). Non-compete policies are shown to have a negative effect on employee migration, with workers often leaving from states where they are enforced to states where they are not in place. Policymakers who put non-compete policies in place unintentionally may be putting regions at a disadvantage (Marx et al, 2015, p.403). This knowledge is especially worrying given that better educated and high skilled workers are more likely to seek employment outside of their state (Marx et al, 2015, p.395).

Rural areas often have a similar issue of losing 18- to 29-year-old residents in what is considered a "hollowing out" effect. However, individuals in the 30 to39 age group were shown to move into rural areas in larger proportions. It is thought that some of this migration from younger individuals is inevitable, as high school graduates seek education or work opportunities in other areas. Instead, it is thought that having a vibrant local community that is attractive for new families could be a better way of increasing the population of rural areas. Small-scale investments or micro-loans could help residents of small communities increase their entrepreneurial spirit of individuals in low-density areas. Other options to protect small farmers and reduce this migration include capping crop insurance premium subsidies at $40,000 or prohibiting meatpackers from owning pigs in vertically integrated systems (Crabtree, 2016).

There has been a large amount of state and local concern regarding the brain drain—with the Kansas Board of Regents tackling the problem in discussions on retaining college graduates within the state. Wichita State University has noticed a negative state retention trend, with graduates leaving the state in greater amounts in every year since 2009. 2009 figures showed that 70 percent of graduates remained within the state; numbers

decreased to 53 percent by 2015. Wichita State University has directly looked into providing more internship opportunities to students to increase state retention. The Innovation Campus hopes to lead the trend, with students receiving practical job experience while on campus and forming connections to prominent industries within the City of Wichita. The Board of Regents is looking to Wichita State as an example of the importance of community business partnerships (White, 2016).

While the State of Kansas has a low unemployment rate of 3.9 percent, there are still a large number of vacant jobs within the state due to a lack of skilled employees within specific industries. A survey from the Department of Labor indicated that Kansas had close to around 45,000 job vacancies in 2016. For every 100 jobs, slightly over three were vacant. This worker shortage becomes more urgent as the baby boomer generation plans to retire. Advanced manufacturing and other technical industries currently have the most job availability for workers, so it can be important to backfill jobs so employers have less incentive to relocate to another location. Possible solutions to the issue at a state-wide level include better technical education as well as the use of targeted tax incentives (Shorman, 2017). Public-private partnerships have also been utilized in a peer city of Omaha, Nebraska, to retain high school students. For example, Nebraska Furniture Mart has teamed up with Westside High School officials to create an Entrepreneurship Academy with the idea of testing business ideas and applying them to a real-world setting. Through interacting with local business leaders, school officials hope that students will see job opportunity within the overall area (Earl, 2017).

Planning for the Future Workforce

Education and training are necessary to ensure a workforce that possesses the skills currently needed as well as the ability to adapt to rapidly changing technology. Education can begin with dual enrollment classes in high school, which provide the opportunity for high school students to receive their diploma while earning college credit. Currently, 47 states have dual enrollment policies, with the State of Kansas offering a policy but generally requiring costs to be paid by the student (Berlin, 2017, 10). States are taking initiatives to provide access to college and technical training. Tennessee began the Tennessee Promise Program, which provides free community college or technical training tuition, and New York offers free tuition for qualified students at two- or four-year public institutions (Berlin, 2017, p.11-12). Training for updated job skills is imperative to keep up with changes in the workplace (Berlin, 2017, p.10). The effects of automation and digitization will depend on the field and occupation (Finneran, 2015, p.62). Defining factors include increased competitiveness and productivity, better working conditions, and quality product development.

The workforce of the future may differ from today as the digital workplace environment for employees accelerates. Teenagers today are currently spending approximately six-and-a-half hours on screens, excluding time spent on homework or assignments. This trend will place a large amount of importance on available technology when these individuals are incorporated into part-time and full-time jobs. Adults are also increasingly living a more digital lifestyle, with the average smart phone user checking their phone approximately every 6.5 minutes or 150 times a day. A new "digital workforce" will have competencies from this interaction that will assist an organization. However, increased technology usage has also has negative associations including an increase in loneliness or a decrease in empathy (Colbert et al, 2016, p.1-3). Many workforce developments have been positive for productivity, with easier interactions across the globe, more blurred work and life interactions, and the ability to leverage technology efficiently. The informal skills developed by future employees can certainly benefit numerous organizations. As workers become more accustomed to technology, digitalized instruction can replace in-person training at a lower cost. Including models that reward employees using methods found in video games may also

increasingly become more common—as digital systems are used to provide individuals with the right level of challenge, track progress towards goals, provide feedback, and reward employees (Colbert et al, 2016, p.5-7). Important characteristics for future employees will focus on "soft" skills, such as dependability, creativity, active listening, and decision-making abilities (Berlin, 2017, p. 10; Frey & Osborne, 2013, p.28-29). Executives have indicated that the top two soft skills necessary in today's workplace are integrity and communication. Courtesy and responsibility also can assist an overall organizational operation. Soft skills can be of importance to employers as well as employees, as they are transferable across career fields and can help in most all employment opportunities (Robles, 2012, p.453-458). Soft skills can sometimes be overlooked in an office setting, as they encompass the character traits that decide how an individual interacts with others, which is directly related to an individual's personality. In a push to boost productivity and generate revenue streams, these skills can often be overlooked as non-essential in comparison to hard skills with direct job applicability. While both skills are necessary for a future workforce, hard skills may be meaningless without the incorporation of soft skills. These skills can help organizational communication on both an internal and external level and will also give employees the ability to cope with difficult or intricate tasks (Robles, 2012, p.458-460).

With the future workforce requiring a wide range of skills, workforce training will become especially important. Employers will push employees towards educational options, which may diversify through new training options and digital platforms. Credentialing systems not available today may also become increasingly common as alternatives develop. As artificial intelligence becomes more prominent, skills that machines cannot replicate could also receive additional focus. Educational areas which are difficult or tough to teach will continue to be invaluable in the job market. As employers seek to produce financial gain, there is also some concern over machines replacing employees in fields that do not require human interaction. The most prized skills of employers will continue to be of utmost importance to educators, as both rely heavily on one another to produce a skilled workforce (Rainie and Anderson, 2017).

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5. Focus Group Notes

Four facilitated focus groups were conducted with community stakeholders and one focus group was conducted with staff. The following sections outlines the key ideas generated in the focus groups.

Youth Employment | November 15, 2017

A) How do we create more partnerships?

1) Resources to the organizations—make it easy for them.
   • Example—WSU Stem mobile lab
   • Share examples and videos
2) Youth success stories
3) Youth "champions"—testimonies—overcoming challenges
4) See the job connections for the youth career paths
5) Connect businesses to the youth organizations and youth
6) Workforce serves as a link between youth organizations and businesses
7) Social media campaign—how do we make these connections
   • GAP area with youth not w/a service organization
   • Employers' needs are so great "Start w/ certificates->pipeline to associates->to bachelors
8) Need models for adult education and at-risk-programs to have special programs to connect
9) "Youth Employment" grand kick-off-get involved
10) Funnel and highlight opportunities
11) Overall youth mission—collaboration to do

B) What is the leadership model needed or overall strategy for Youth Employment?

1) What is role of WFA with Youth Employment and how does that fit in the overall mission?
2) WFA Link between business and youth.
3) Identify communication links—business, groups, etc.
4) Repository for needs. Small community host WFA at events (Resources and hub)
5) Networking fair—business and organization connect
6) Strategic connections talk with businesses.
7) Validating point for businesses.
8) Momentum—summer into a year-long program.
9) WFA take the lead
   • How leverage across region and state?
   • Orientation for industries (understand what they are walking into)
10) Exposure, Exploration, Experience for youth—need connection/conduit
11) Networking—youth and chamber
12) Use community resources
13) Bring willing together.
14) Rule—"Of Now" workplace but increase awareness of role of work of "future."

Leveraging Resources and Aligning Services | November 30, 2017

A) What are the current challenges to connecting and leveraging partnerships?

1) Communication—awareness of resources
2) Marketing
   • A lot of individuals/a lot of "partnership meeting"
   • Coordination
3) Data—Duplication of efforts
   • Recreate info bureaucracy
4) Understanding job seekers
5) Fed/State limitation
6) Maximize Outcomes
7) Educational boundaries
   • Limitations—not efficient
   • Board of Regents
8) Education—Accreditation/Workforce Needs
9) Time and distance
   • Not all organizations have capacity to build partnerships
10) Territory/Finding shared goals/Ownership and Pride
11) Transportation for the job seeker
12) Needs of organizations U. System
13) FUNDING!!!

B) How do we make the systems easier to for individuals to navigate? How do we make it easier for individuals to navigate?

1) Eliminate redundancy and paperwork
   - Reduce Data System
2) Not enough funding resources/coordinated to be able to apply effectively—coordination of resources to meet client/business
3) Limited hours at some locations—services only face to face *Connection on re-entry
4) Soft-skill training certification
   - Communication with employers
   - What type
5) 30-Day window overwhelming
6) Break down the process in smaller places
7) Road map for employers meeting needs—disabled/returning offender
8) More online activities
9) Track people who have not returned
10) Teaching "soft advocacy" explain their needs
    - Diverse options
11) Transportation "off hours"
    - Resources for job seeker
12) Not seen as system—people don't know who does what—"Know the Animal"
    - How to access—central service->to align effort coalition

C) How do we improve communication among partners?

1) Clear message about benefit
   - Why to participate
   - Relevance
2) Technology—calendar invites
   - Virtual
   - Slack—Different platforms to use
3) Central location for information
   - Website info
4) Automate processes for users
5) Follow-up information
6) Understanding user needs-job seekers/employers
7) End result- Feedback share out information
8) How do we learn of opportunities for educational partners?

D) How do we measure community impact and improve data collection among the partners?

1) How many finding jobs
2) Programs that meet needs
   - How quickly moving
   - Grads meet needs
   - Meet needs of employers v. bureaucracy
   - Outcomes
   - Same data

3) Tell the story
- Data
- Celebrate
- Personal
- Impact Tours

4) Employer stories
- Data, measure impact
- Platforms

5) Expand-tracking referrals
- Common data needs
- Overall

6) Understand the why for employers "Not a survey"

E) From today's discussion, what are the priorities to build and leverage partnerships in the future?

1) Tell the story and celebrate
2) Use media for message
3) Using technology more
4) Standardization in reporting
5) "One place to go" for information
6) Ensure, relevant
7) Focus on "Proven Success"

Skills Training and Work-based Learning | December 5, 2017

A) What are the current challenges to existing training activities? What training needs to you have?

1) Notice amount of confidence; communication increases
2) Motivation and work ethic is lacking
3) Pool of candidates with skills
4) Perceptions of work environment (type of work—not understanding)
5) Training to be work ready
6) Skills gap with employers and candidates
7) Help understand value of training
8) Competing with outside activities (e.g. sports, family)
9) Relevant, affordable, accessible
10) Need to feel useful (immediate satisfaction)
11) Realistic expectations of employee
12) Candidates ready to interview
- Not meet basic qualifications
- Lack of understanding of technical training opportunities

13) Businesses and providers out of sync
14) Reactive to market and needs change
15) Pace of change
16) Training resources invested and demand changes
17) Matching academic schedule with training needs
18) Family, parents, educators need more awareness of technical education
19) Sure expectations reasonable

B) How do we attract and better prepare candidates in high demand fields?

1) Lack of awareness
   - Occupation list->not clear or always understood
   - Language barrier on how we refer to jobs
2) Industry informed or aware of high school career path; tied to the job sectors
3) Starting earlier—before eighth grade
4) Many do not have work experience—how do we get
5) Employer needs to work with workforce to connect
6) Testing and paperwork is overwhelming to many
   - Need to simplify
7) Rural areas do not have the same career path to connect to industries. Not available beyond USD 255.
8) Message better "engaging work—fun work"—how do we attract students/youth
   - Not about $
9) Missing young adults who may not have taken advantage in high school of training; now "reality" this is important for careers...missed first time around.
10) Message—tangible, relevance, and accessible
11) Need to develop "transferable" skills
12) Attitude critical
13) Affordable to candidates needing training
14) Showing value->missing in middle and high school
15) Marketing needs with schools and employers->Constant, consistent communication; how does that align with desires->Workforce share out to school districts
16) How to inform parents of changes—how things have changed
17) Get off academic calendar (Summer gaps—semester)
   - Academic structure and tradition is a problem for business
   - Change in employers' needs. Training ramped up but need change. Lack of jobs after training due to market change.
   - Employers need to understand resources available
   - Clearing house role for workforce

C) How do we become more agile to respond to employer needs?

1) Deepen Partnerships/Build Trust
2) Identify Basic Soft Skills as basic student—flexibility for learning skills
3) Integrity of program in response to change (Quality) vs. generation needs
4) Core/Gateway classes for multiple careers (OSHA, Blueprint Reading, Software skills).
5) More flexible to meet needs
6) Work experience for credit
7) Incentivize work experiences
8) Change perception of Edu—Blend academic and experience
9) Right decision—makers together
10) Badges into smaller pieces
11) Industry part of conversation for badges (What needed)

A) Thinking as a system, what are the assets or programs we have to build upon to meet the employment trends for tomorrow?

1) Youth Employment Institute
2) K-12 career pathways
3) Future Maker lab
4) High School programs
5) IEP, Individual Education Plan
6) Post-secondary "stackable"
7) Technical education funding
8) WATC–WSU–system in place
9) Communicating to students
10) Diverse Automation programs–all levels
11) Integration with schools–higher education
12) Marketing connections
13) Flexible ways->traditional academics
14) Innovation mindset
15) Industry that we have now
16) Prior learning credit
17) Apprentice Programs

B) From today's discussion, what are the priorities to meet the employment needs of the future?

1) Changing perception of what a "technical" career is–flexible education/employment
2) Higher Education–meet needs of demands of employers. Alignment with institutions not competing
3) Marketing of labor professions–technical not second class–building block–work-life balance
4) Identity high school graduates that are not engaged
5) Connection with business and high school: post-secondary
6) Education mindset–slow to change–much quicker response
7) Just in time training model
8) Common language academia and employers
9) State-local incentive to address workforce needs
10) Marketing to the under-employed
11) Communicate to under privileged in school system
12) Marketing the region
13) Understand next generation
14) More customized programs for employers
15) Applied learning model on steroids
16) Collaboration of higher education
17) Barrier of staffing at schools

Staff Identified Priorities & Barriers | December 18, 2017

A) Youth Employment Priorities

1) Understand soft skills are important
2) Awareness of youth
   - Career Clusters
   - Labor market information
   - Where to find info (options)
   - Understand skills of job requirements
3) See other options besides college
4) Start in middle school
5) Manufacturing day to model apprenticeship interests (Trade Exposure)
6) Better advertising of current employers (honor)
   - Engage kids with peer-to-peer recruitment
   - Employers tell their story
7) Direct Partnerships with school counselors
8) Reputation of job
9) Long lasting fields
10) Education and market to employers
11) External funding for support services
12) Social services and coordination of services
13) Duplication of services
14) Use new technology to get excitement
15) Exploration opportunities
   - Day at work
   - Career fairs
16) Explore more grant opportunities

B) Youth Employment Barriers
   -
1) Limited funding
   - Employers have to pay
   - Message to employers
2) Soft skills—not prepared
   - Need job coaches
3) More contracts/contacts with youth service providers
4) Transportation
5) Extra support systems
   - Lack of family support
   - Education—teen parent
6) Lack of "high school" jobs—either don't exist or adults taking
7) Confusion on career path vs. getting a job
8) Feeling of "entitlement"
9) Perception on trade jobs—Good careers with better time frame
10) Employers not willing to take the risk
11) Schools not promoting all the options

C) Partnerships Priorities

1) Shared Data Base with consistent rules
2) Partnership contracts possible
3) Educate partners
   - Checklists
4) Communication
5) More information with referral
6) Documentation all at once
7) Narrative needed
   - STD Questions
   - Cut down repeat questions
8) Group discussion—tough
9) Conversations to more progress
10) Accountability
11) Neutral Third Party mediator to address with authority
12) Council/Inter-agency
13) Partnerships more meaningful
14) Join Community Health Improvement Plan
15) Lobby leaders re: model improvements

D) Partnership Barriers

1) Territorial on information, data—won't release; lack of cooperation; afraid of losing money
   - "Competition"
2) Duplication of services or "drop" in services
3) Lack of accountability or follow-up
4) Lack of pipelines to agencies, lack documentation and takes time to track down
5) No universal program or intake
   - Paperwork
   - Inconsistency
6) No direct line of communication with employers->coaching support
7) Customers having to duplicate effort and paperwork
8) DCF has information already, but not shared
9) Serve the people—sometimes get lost—agency v. service
10) Lack of community support->translate into actions

E) Workforce Training Priorities

1) More WIOA Approved programs...more flexible, expedited
2) Addition funding
3) Promote apprenticeships
4) Accountability of customers that drop out
5) More future planning for the clients...best interest
6) Support for internet services
7) WIOA—track "returners" exhausted all attempts—ROI
8) Accessing/diagnosing problem
9) Expand partnerships; WIOA region different than actual service areas
10) Communicate with employers on how the process works->myth busting ROI
11) Workshops—Expand or partner to make sure "to get the job."

F) Transformative Issues

1) Soft Skills—accreditation for adults too
   • Expanded and required
   • Best (Basic Employer) skills training
2) Employers get more involved in developing training
   • WF Role: Facilitator
   • Middle School
3) Dedicated Workshop Facilitator
   • Taught trainer
   • "Train the trainer"
4) Retirement in trades (CNA's)
   • More Apprenticeships
   • Promote-Change Perceptions
   • WF Role: Funding for training
5) Board active role in marketing

6. Interview Notes

Three interviews were conducted with stakeholders. The following sections provides notes from those interviews.

Interview #1
Employers note there is a lack of soft skills. We also need to improve the pipeline from high school to certificate programs. There's not a good enough connection between those things. We need to get people trained in areas of the economy that are thriving. They need to know that a four-year degree isn't always the answer. There are good paying jobs waiting for them in trades, etc.

I also hear that transportation is a big issue for people who are looking for employment. They don't have cars. So they rely on public transit, which doesn't cover all parts of the city, it runs on a limited schedule. So, it's a barrier to applying and interviewing for jobs, but also getting to work once they do get a job.

The strengths of the workforce centers is that they're striving to be a one-stop shop. I don't know if they're completely to that level, but I think they're close. I think they could better help people find their strengths, and work with them to get employment based on those strengths.

Interview #2

Employers need people who are reliable and have strong soft skills. I also understand that certain areas have certain needs, such as welders. So those needs need be met through strategically educating our workforce.

Also, I think there should be more partnerships with workforce centers and technical and 2-year schools in order to recruit and train people for our needs.

Speaking with my expertise with offenders, I think the hardest thing is finding the best, safest fit for them. We can train them here in soft skills, enhance their decision making and behavioral tools. We can also make our staff available to employers if issues come up when they're employed. We do mock interviews here, we bring employers in to give them feedback. This is what we do to help them. We also train and provide mentors to help with our offenders once they're out of our facilities.

I think the workforce centers are currently doing the best with what they've got, when it comes to helping offenders. But, funding is always a barrier.

In order to help offenders find jobs, I think there could be more outreach that helps connect the two. When they're released, why can't there be outreach about what their options are? In terms of stigma, I think we can do better to educate employers about what training these offenders have experienced, the skills they've gained, and also the resources that are available to them once they've hired an offender. Well-run employer forums, where they have a chance to hear from other employers who've had success hiring offenders and air their concerns.

There is a legislative issue you should be looking at. One is ban the box. Honestly, it's not settled how effective this change is. Our preference is to not have people get far into an interview process and then be excluded because of their record. But it's also not good if it's a company policy to just throw out any application where there's indication of a criminal history. We need to change those policies. We need to change the mindset of these employers. That's what will help. Not simply "banning the box." There are also really stringent policies in this state where offenders aren't allowed to have certain jobs, such as working at pharmacies or places where alcohol is served. These are too broad and not effective.

Interview #3

Identifying qualified applicants, and/or developing good internal candidates is a challenge of employers getting employees. Candidates have a tough time finding open jobs, and developing the skills to be qualified for jobs. Also, preparation for testing requirements. They might not be ready to apply for jobs. They need training on the application process and all of things required for it. Just basic resume creation.

For clients who are on probation or in trouble with the law, they may have limited education. How do we get them into GED programs? There are certification programs through local businesses that help this population get jobs. But, we need to be able to reach them. There needs to be that connection.

I think workforce centers have an issue with their reach. Many people don't know that these places exist, or what they offer. Also, transportation can be an issue. It can be a barrier to employment. So we need to get people educated on our public transportation system.

The benefits of a workforce center is that it's a one-stop shop for all different kinds of people, from minorities to veterans. They offer a lot. As a manager myself, I think trying to find employees is cyclical. Sometimes we get tons of qualified applicants. Sometimes we get very little.

I think there's an opportunity for workforce centers to meet with employers to talk about our needs, talk about how we can better partner with one another. We should be on a first name basis with people there.

I also think a big thing we should be doing is strategically planning for our future workforce needs and preparing for them. What are the areas where growth is happening? Where is job growth receding? By studying this, we can put people in the right places. We can grow the workforce we need.

Interview #4
I find so many employers who are still trying to put ads in the paper. They just don't pick up on the idea of workforce centers. This is small and large employers (in El Dorado). I don't think we're past the incorrect assumption that these places are the unemployment office. They should be thinking of them as employment offices. So we need people from the workforce centers to be doing a lot of outreach. We need people who are going out to employers and educating them about what these places can offer them. Businesses are bad about keeping up with this stuff. So you have to be proactive about it.

You can also just send out information to a list of stakeholders. We can prepare materials for stakeholders to be able to send out to employers they know. Kind of a prepackaged information pamphlet. Let the stakeholders do some of the leg work.

Here in El Dorado I don't hear many stories of people not being able to find places to apply to. It doesn't mean it's not happening. I just don't hear about it. What I do hear is employers saying that they're getting lots of applications from people who aren't qualified, or who don't have the soft skills of showing up on time, dressing appropriately. So, that means we need to be helping educate and train people in order to prepare for employment. I think the strengths of a workforce development system are that they provide local funding for various causes that wouldn't have been available otherwise. Without them, we wouldn't have access to some federal and state dollars. And, there are employers who use these centers to the max, and their services would be sorely missed without them.

Important things to think about for the future is that we're starting to look at targeted industries. I think it will be important to have conversations about business recruitment in tandem with the workforce development boards. One can't happen without the other. We need to have a workforce to advertise.

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