

What is a Strategic Board?

◆ The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) highlights three critical hallmarks of excellence:

- ❖ The needs of business and workers drive workforce solutions;
- ❖ One-Stop Centers (or American Job Centers) provide excellent customer service to jobseekers and employers and focus on continuous improvement; and
- ❖ The workforce system supports strong regional economies and plays an active role in community and workforce development.”

◆ The Role of Workforce Boards:

Workforce Boards have sometimes operated primarily in a tactical role, fulfilling the requirements delineated in law. However, Boards have the opportunity to ensure more strategic action by serving as true system leaders that facilitate focused partnerships among previously siloed programs, and ensure industry-defined connections between sector strategies and career pathways that meet needs that are truly data-driven and locally determined. It is important that this role is understood by board members, elected officials, and other stakeholders. Under WIOA, the U.S. Department of Labor indicates:

The vision and purpose of local workforce boards is to serve as strategic leaders and conveners of local workforce development system stakeholders. As strategic leaders, state and local workforce boards, in partnership with governors and chief elected officials:

- ❖ *Facilitate public-private partnerships;*
- ❖ *Support sector strategies and career pathways that advance opportunities for all workers and job seekers, including low-skilled adults, youth, and individuals with disabilities; and*
- ❖ *Foster innovation; develop a vision of a market-responsive workforce system and monitor and evaluate the performance of the system, using board-established measures.”*

Tactical vs. Strategic Boards

Derived from information from Business Administration literature, Public Administration literature, and existing WIOA tools, we seek to identify categories to help drive discussions for Boards around their expanding roles.

Tactical	Strategic	What this Means within a WIOA Context	Promising Practice Examples
Asks How?	Asks Why and What?	Not just interested in how individual programs may serve customers, but focuses on the bigger picture of modernizing the workforce system and ensuring it operates as a comprehensive, integrated and streamlined system for all workers and businesses	New Jersey planned and developed a document which outlines a strategic approach to talent development, entitled "Pathways and Partnerships: New Jersey's Blueprint for Talent Development," including key policy frameworks, as well as a statewide Vision and Mission Statement for Workforce.
Reviews Real Time Analytics	Connects Activities to Vision, Mission, and projected future need	Goes beyond simply looking at workforce and occupational data, but uses data to set future goals, create strategic plans, performance improvements, and ensure system excellence	Colorado has developed a Job Skills Report, which the Colorado Workforce Development Council has been able to use to identify gaps in occupational education related to high demand jobs in key industries, and anticipate workforce need. This information was integrated into their Talent Pipeline Report, presented to the Colorado State Legislature, which lays out key strategies for the workforce system.

Tactical	Strategic	What this Means within a WIOA Context	Promising Practice Examples
Focuses on current conditions	Focuses on emerging economic trends and labor market patterns	Understands and allocates resources to respond to <i>current</i> workforce skill needs while planning for projected <i>future</i> industry needs. Has strong industry sector partnerships in place informing board decisions	Anne Arundel Workforce Development Corporation has developed particularly effective sector partnerships focusing on future trends. One example is their approach to the Cyber Security Industry, with a program entitled: CyberWorks: The Cybersecurity/IT Industry Consortium . The industry is currently facing a future gap of 50,000 workers. CyberWorks provides candidates with real life hands on experience provided by group members, including employers. The program is extremely successful and helping to address the major labor challenges in cybersecurity.
Manages processes	Guides system development by defining goals and supporting transformational partnerships	Moves away from managing day to day processes and more toward capacity building, emphasizing lasting connections between core programs and relationships with industry	Kentucky's Workforce Innovation Board has redefined their membership, and redesigned their committees, with an eye toward the integration of workforce, education, and economic development efforts, while expanding the integration of a business and industry voice in planning their initiatives.

Tactical	Strategic	What this Means within a WIOA Context	Promising Practice Examples
Determines “success” by reviewing outcomes relative to short-term performance measures	Evaluates system performance using board-defined measures and targets that are reflective of local and regionally-defined needs	Emphasizes regional planning and alignment with economic development strategy, creation of career pathways, and development of work-based learning for the long-term success of the workforce.	The Arapahoe Douglas Workforce Development Board’s 2015-2017 Work Plan White Paper lays out a SWOT analysis, with strategies and recommendations for addressing regional challenges, including: sector partnerships; partnering with TANF, Adult Basic Education, and Voc. Rehabilitation; as well as youth training and a “badging” system.

Sources

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