

REACHING THE HARD TO REACH:

Greater Seattle Sector Skills Academy Capstone Presentation

Aspen Institute and Skill Up Washington
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ACADEMY FELLOWS

- ❖ **Sarah Laslett**, Director, Labor Center SSCC **Labor/ College**
- ❖ **Judith Morel**, DOL Grant Manager, Bellevue College **College**
- ❖ **Corinne Malpocher**, Assistant Director,
SEIU Multi-Employer Training Fund **Labor/Employer**
- ❖ **Trena Cloyd**, Airport Jobs Program Manager, Port Jobs **CBO/ Employer**
- ❖ **Ira SenGupta**, Trustee, Renton Technical College;
Executive Director, Cross Cultural Health
Care Program **College/CBO**
- ❖ **Adriana Gamboa**, Apprenticeship Program Supervisor, **Workforce /CBO**
Construction Industry Training Council
- ❖ **Samantha Kealoha**, Program Coordinator, ANEW **CBO**

CAPSTONE OVERVIEW

Communicating about what the workforce development system does is very challenging, both among practitioners within that system, and to potential users of the system. There is a serious question about whether or not that communication is being done effectively. Our team will review:

- ❖ **Research findings** based on interviews from a variety of workforce system stakeholders concerning the system's ability to communicate with diverse communities.
- ❖ **Recommendations** about how the workforce development system can improve its communication capacity on how the system operates, and what the value of the system is, or could be to our society and economy.

BACKGROUND AND PROJECT TASKS

❖ Identified primary stakeholders:

- Labor
- Colleges & other Educators
- Workforce Boards & Service Providers
- CTC Board
- Employers
- Community-Based Organizations
- System Users

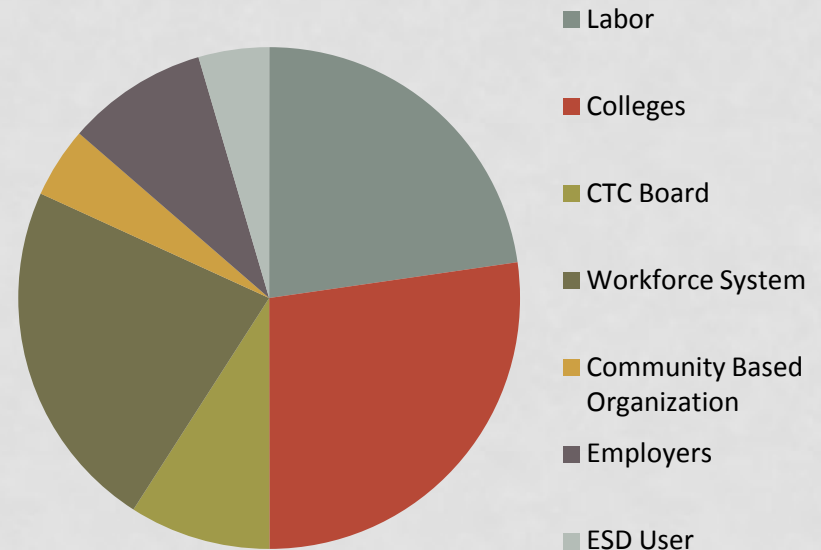
❖ Interviewed representatives from stakeholder groups to identify successes and failures within the workforce system's existing communication strategies

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What does Workforce Development or the Workforce Development System mean to you?
2. What is the value of the Workforce System?
3. Where is the Workforce system succeeding and where is it falling short in communicating what the system IS and the value of that system. (Note: we are not focusing on the effectiveness of the system per se, but on how our stakeholders experience communication within the Workforce System.)
4. Who is not getting the Workforce System message?
5. What is the most important message for your audience?

STAKEHOLDER GROUPS INTERVIEWED

Stakeholders	Total Interviewed
Labor	5
Colleges	6
CTC Board	2
Workforce System	5
Community Based Organization	1
Employers	2
ESD User	1
TOTAL	23



1. WHAT DOES WORKFORCE (DEVELOPMENT) OR THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM MEAN TO YOU?

❖ Key Findings:

- Equal access to training and jobs for dislocated workers, the unemployed, and underemployed
- Advanced training for growth on the career ladder
- Bridging the skills gap so that candidates can be competitive and businesses can build a skilled workforce to stay competitive
- A network of local and statewide partners working in tandem with the business sector
- A component of economic development throughout the state

1. WHAT DOES WORKFORCE (DEVELOPMENT) OR THE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM MEAN TO YOU?

❖ Conclusions:

- The workforce development system is where hope meets opportunity
- The system prepares individuals for immediate job placement.
- Limited funds compel organizations and programs to compete for the same funding streams.
- The system is not reaching all those it is intended for
- A large and complex system leads to calls for simplification

Quote: *'The workforce system is the coordinating hub for training and education in Washington State.'*

2. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM?

❖ Key Findings:

- Confusion: “What is the value...now?” or “What should the value be?”
- Workforce system provides support for specific populations including: young adults, homeless individuals, dislocated workers
- 2 primary customers: workers in need of services (training, job placement) and employers

2. WHAT IS THE VALUE OF THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM?

❖ Conclusions

- Need to focus on career pathways, not just placing people in a low wage job
- Labor provides a robust suite of services including apprenticeships and career pathways
- Two groups are being left out of well-paid jobs: skilled workers ages 45-65 and youth
- Value of the workforce systems is about creating opportunities and bridging gaps

Quote: *‘Need to find the sweet spot between workers’ availability and employer needs.’*

3. WHERE IS THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM SUCCEEDING AND WHERE IS IT FALLING SHORT IN COMMUNICATING WHAT THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM IS, AND WHAT ITS VALUE IS?

❖ Key Findings

- Respondents note failure of the workforce system to communicate effectively
- Career pathways other than 4-yr higher education degrees
- Internal communications within stakeholder groups

3. WHERE IS THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM SUCCEEDING AND WHERE IS IT FALLING SHORT IN COMMUNICATING WHAT THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM IS, AND WHAT ITS VALUE IS?

❖ Conclusions

- System fragmentation and duplication
- Is help really available? To who, and how does access work?
- Success stories
- Those with the greatest challenges will be the least likely to succeed

Quote: *'It is important to mine the . . . Workforce website.'*

4. WHO IS NOT GETTING/RECEIVING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM MESSAGE OR COMMUNICATION?

❖ Key Findings:

- Those individuals who need it most ---parents, youth, HS dropouts, low income individuals, as well as employers, are not getting the message
- Labor and unionized facilities do a better job of communicating the benefits of the Workforce System
- Those who are internal to the system, such as colleges and CBOs get the message

4. WHO IS NOT GETTING/RECEIVING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM MESSAGE OR COMMUNICATION?

❖ Conclusions:

- Educators and parents seem to emphasize that the only path to a career is to attend a 4 year college
- Workforce System messaging needs to be more closely aligned with economic development

Quote: 'How well are Workforce programs aligned with the needs of local employers?'

5. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE?

❖ **Key Findings:**

- 'We are open for business!'
- Access
- Outcomes

5. WHAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT MESSAGE FOR YOUR AUDIENCE?

❖ Conclusions:

- Vast resources, potential
- Coordination of communication efforts

Quotes: *'All communications programs must be integrated in a way that they breakdown the communication silos.'*

'I really feel that the WF system is there to help me get a job. That's the message I'm getting.'

'Hope. Possibilities. Options.'

RECOMMENDATIONS: HELPING THE INDIVIDUAL WORKER OR EMPLOYER

- ❖ Strategic and partnered messaging – practitioners message about opportunities both specific to what they can provide, and what else is available in the system.
- ❖ Strategy should include all stakeholder groups but focus on organizations currently less well integrated like BOS, trades apprenticeships, and High Schools – focus on career pathways rather than education in a vacuum.
- ❖ Messaging to employers about how the system serves them, reflecting their needs while emphasizing living wage jobs. Messaging and systems need to be nimble and responsive.
- ❖ More trained navigators at every level. Anyone seeking economic advancement through education and training, or seeking right-skilled employees, should experience consistent and responsive communication.

RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPROVING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

❖ A matrix is needed to identify:

- Relevant funding sources for particular stakeholder groups that builds collaboration rather than competition, especially in light of cut-backs in funding
- Supply and demand for particular jobs reflecting current economic development data
- More system-wide avenues for communication that simplifies messages and targets services

RECOMMENDATIONS: IMPROVING THE WORKFORCE SYSTEM

❖ In order to create this matrix, we recommend:

- A major systems-mapping research project that traces how individuals, organizations, resources, and partnerships flow within the system
- Strategies that will eliminate redundancy and maximize the impact of every dollar spent