



Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development

Metro Denver WIRED Partnership

Implementation Plan

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WIRED

Implementation Plan

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1. Executive Summary

Workforce Shortages

Metro Denver employment growth outpaced the nation in 2005 and for the first five months of 2006, after suffering from a severe recession in 2001 which severely affected the tourism, telecommunications and high tech sectors for several years. As the economy began to recover, however, it became increasingly clear to public officials, business and community leaders that, without intervention, our current K-12, Higher Education and workforce systems could not deliver the skilled workforce needed by companies in our fastest-growing industry sectors. For too long Colorado has relied on an imported workforce – from other states and other countries – to fill some of the highest-paying jobs generated by our economy. Yet, even this strategy may not be a choice in a future expected to bring severe labor shortages, with baby boomers retiring and the numbers of individuals entering the workforce declining. Additionally, more restrictive immigration laws since 9-11 have made it increasingly difficult to hire foreign technical talent. Attracting the best talent from other states and from around the world, when available, will always be a good economic development strategy, but ignoring the power of a highly skilled, home-grown workforce is not in Metro Denver’s best economic interest.

A study recently released by Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (EDC), *Towards a Competitive Colorado*, documents the looming workforce shortage in our region. Metro Denver EDC identified nine industry clusters that are important to the region’s economic base and concluded that the following five industry clusters are ripe for national recruitment efforts to grow and expand: aerospace, bioscience, information technology, financial services and energy. A number of these industries, however, are already experiencing severe labor shortages, with the energy sector having the greatest need. The study also raises concerns that the region’s competitive position might erode as a result of declining high school graduation rates and the low percentage of students who goes to college.

Addressing Needs through WIRED

The WIRED Initiative, designed to support Metro Denver EDC’s growth industry clusters and to build a pipeline of workers for high-demand occupations, has come at a very opportune time for the Metro Denver region, and, as such, has received widespread support from public officials, and from leaders in economic development, workforce and education. The Initiative has targeted four of the five industry clusters – aerospace, bioscience, information technology and energy – as having the greatest growth opportunities, coupled with the largest potential for labor shortages. A common element to occupations in these industries is that they all require higher-level math, and all but one require higher-level science; therefore, the Metro Denver WIRED Initiative will emphasize improving Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) skills of the pipeline of workers at all levels. Emphasizing STEM skills,

however, does not preclude working on improving reading and writing skills of the workforce. In fact, improved literacy skills must be part of any curriculum to prepare individuals for high-skill, high-pay occupations.

The WIRED Initiative recognizes the importance of the arts and humanities, of the region's agricultural and tourism sectors and the importance of having a workforce with a multitude of skills and interests. Metro Denver ranks 14th among U.S. regions in Richard Florida's Creativity Index, and its more than 300 cultural and scientific organizations, fueled by the Scientific and Cultural Facilities District tax first approved by voters in 1989, are a source of economic vitality for the region. According to a 2004 study of the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, Metro Denver is a destination for cultural tourists, attracting almost 3 million from outside of the metro Denver region and over a million from outside of Colorado, with an economic impact of over \$400 million per year. A balanced region must continue to produce and attract artists, farmers, hospitality workers, liberal arts majors, bankers, teachers, lawyers, protective services employees, as well as skilled craftspersons. The most severe shortages, however, currently seem to be in occupations heavy in STEM skills, and, consequently, WIRED will focus on improving them in the current and future workforces. Our competitiveness as a region in this global economy may well depend on the ability of our educational institutions to produce workers with these skills, just as the economic security of families in the 21st Century will depend on the educational attainment of the individuals making up that family.

2. Goals of the Metro Denver Regional WIRED Initiative

The goals of the Metro Denver WIRED Initiative, as agreed by all the partners, are:

Goal 1: For the benefit of Colorado's future, *develop a home-grown skilled workforce* for the fastest-growing industries -- aerospace, bioscience, information technology and energy – so that our regional companies can remain competitive in the global economy.

Goal 2: Be the *best region in country in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education*, supported by full skill-set of competencies and masteries. Metro Denver will be the “go to” region when companies are deciding to relocate or expand because our workforce has the best STEM skills.

Goal 3: Provide an *entrepreneurial climate for business creation and expansion* for companies in targeted industries.

Goal 4: Become the region where the *minimum acceptable educational standard for all becomes a post-secondary certificate or an Associates Degree*.

Goal 5: Create a regional system *that seamlessly integrates workforce, education, and economic development programs* to effectively meet the needs of individuals and business.

The Regional Transformation

The following ideas would help transform our regional system into one in which educational institutions and the workforce system can produce skilled workers for our industry clusters and in which the best jobs go to the home-grown workforce:

- Change the education paradigm to create awareness of the idea that math and science should be for all kids and that academic rigor helps students achieve success.
- Create a lasting partnership with employers, K-12 and Higher Ed to transform system to a 'P-16' or to a 'P-16-work' and to support the region's growth clusters.
- Ensure that the educational system provides all students opportunities to build strong academic skills, learn to use technology and to be innovative.
- Identify students at risk of dropping out and provide opportunities for apprenticeships and/or technical training leading to a good job and career paths.
- Create a climate that encourages workers – whether employed or unemployed -- to upgrade skills and engage in life-long learning strategies.
- Create a strong entrepreneurial culture, enhanced by strong ties to research institutions.
- Develop a regional consortium of Higher Ed institutions that breaks down turf barriers and develops a common vision for supporting the region's economic growth.
- Create a seamless “metro college system” allowing students to move freely from high school to high school, to community colleges, to and from four-year colleges, attending the “best” or “most convenient” campus for training.”
- Create a strong regional workforce development entity that parallels Metro Denver EDC and works regionally with companies in industry clusters.
- Create a network coordinated by the workforce system that includes company recruiters, workforce center career counselors and college placement offices to encourage recent graduates to stay in the region.

- Create several industry-specific one-stops to serve the needs of businesses and job seekers in targeted clusters.
- Create opportunities for “cross-pollination” among industry clusters and between cluster businesses and college campuses.
- Create opportunities to engage business in the transformation process through this initiative and institutionalize business participation in the workforce development, K-12 and Higher education reform efforts.

WIRED Goals Matrix

Goal 1: For the benefit of Colorado's future, develop a home-grown skilled workforce for the fastest-growing industries -- aerospace, bioscience, information technology and energy – so that our regional companies can remain competitive in the global economy.

Key Strategies	Activities	Responsible Parties	Timeframes / Milestones	Resources Needed	Desired Outcomes/ Metrics
<p>Define Programmatic Needs:</p> <p>Define the programmatic needs of a comprehensive and integrated system to develop Colorado's future workforce, in areas of workforce development, economic development and education/training.</p>	<p>a) Define primary occupations in each industry</p> <p>b) Assess workforce needs of large and small businesses in the four targeted industries, both in the short term (2007-2008) and longer-term (2011-2013)</p> <p>c) Define the home-grown workforce supply for the identified capabilities, including graduates of traditional programs, internal business programs and non-traditional training programs. Identify, if feasible, those with capabilities nearly sufficient to meet requirements of the industries and if industry is hiring local graduates.</p> <p>d) Conduct an in-depth analysis of each targeted cluster to understand supply chains, global market in relation to the region and benchmark the educational and training capabilities and standards of competitor countries and regions.</p> <p>e) Map the existing assets (academic programs) that are potentially applicable to developing Colorado's future workforce, including education, training and retraining programs.</p> <p>f) Identify the gaps between the workforce needs of the four targeted industries and the current workforce streams provided now, and anticipated in the future, from the assets identified.</p>	<p>a) Industry panels</p> <p>b) Industry panels</p> <p>c) Industry Panels, Higher Ed panel, Workforce Panel</p> <p>d) Higher Ed panel and technical assistance from the Resource Team</p> <p>e) All panels</p> <p>f) WIRED staff, in consultation with High Skills Leadership Council</p>	<p>a) 11/30/06</p> <p>b) 12/31/06</p> <p>c) 1/31/07</p> <p>d) 12/31/06</p> <p>e) 1/31/07</p> <p>f) 1/31/07</p>	<p>a) Funding from existing panel resources; input from industry</p> <p>b) Funding from existing panel resources; input from industry; assistance from Resource Team</p> <p>c) Funding from existing panel resources; input from industry</p> <p>d) Funding from existing panel resources; input from industry</p> <p>e) Funding from existing panel resources; input from industry</p> <p>f) Assistance from Resource Team reviewing the results of analysis</p>	<p>a) Report on major occupations in selected industry clusters.</p> <p>b) Survey of workforce need of businesses in clusters</p> <p>c) Survey of Higher Ed programs preparing students for jobs in selected industry clusters. Evaluation of effectiveness of those programs in getting students</p> <p>d) Report on graduates of competitor countries and regions in key occupations</p> <p>e) Analysis of current programs serving industry needs in Colorado institutions of higher education and in industry</p> <p>f) Analysis of LMI and industry-identified workforce needs/ workforce supply and pipeline</p>
<p>Define Workforce Strategies:</p> <p>Define the strategies</p>	<p>a) Define strategies to fill each gap identified in gap analysis. Consolidate parallel strategies for cross-cutting gaps and seek strategies that solve multiple problems, are</p>	<p>a) All Panels</p>	<p>a) Year 2</p>	<p>a) Funding for a forum from Year 2 revenues</p>	<p>a) Forum bringing together industry, education, foundations, workforce and economic development, public officials, to develop strategies; report</p>

<p>to be used to address current and anticipated workforce shortages in the region's targeted industry clusters</p>	<p>regional in scope, offer potential to expand, and are replicable in other regions. Identify both short-term and long-term strategies.</p> <p>b) Define objectives and measures for each strategy.</p> <p>c) Describe activities required to execute strategies.</p> <p>d) Identify policy needs at local, regional state and Federal levels to remove barriers to productive action to meet strategic needs. Define anticipated pathways and periods to accomplish these changes.</p>	<p>b) All Panels</p> <p>c) All Panels</p> <p>d) All panels</p>	<p>b) Year 2</p> <p>c) Year 2</p> <p>d) Year 2</p>	<p>b) Funding from existing panel resources</p> <p>c) Funding from existing panel resources</p> <p>d) Funding from existing panel resources</p>	<p>with results of forum.</p> <p>b) Report outlining objectives and measures.</p> <p>c) Action plans for each industry with proposed strategies to fill gaps</p> <p>d) Policy recommendations report for distribution.</p>
<p>Fund Promising Practices:</p> <p>Identify, fund and evaluate projects to fill workforce identified by executing strategies to prepare Colorado's workforce.</p>	<p>a) Develop criteria to select "JumpStart" projects where needs are already clear and existing projects can be strengthened, expanded or replicated</p> <p>b) Prepare RFP for JumpStart programs.</p> <p>c) Review, select and fund JumpStart programs.</p> <p>d) Develop criteria to select Innovation Pool, to create innovative and projects with transformational approaches to fill the gaps at any level of the workforce system in Colorado.</p> <p>e) Prepare RFP for Innovation Pool programs.</p> <p>f) Review, select and fund Innovation Pool programs</p> <p>g) Monitor and evaluate progress of funded programs</p> <p>h) Evaluate progress of system integration</p>	<p>a) WIRED staff, High Skills Leadership Network</p> <p>b) WIRED staff</p> <p>c) WIRED staff, High Skills Leadership Network</p> <p>d) WIRED staff, High Skills Leadership Network</p> <p>e) WIRED staff</p> <p>f) WIRED staff, High Skills Leadership Network</p> <p>g) WIRED staff, OED, CDLE</p> <p>h) WIRED staff. OED, CDLE</p>	<p>a) 10/31/06</p> <p>b) 10/31/06</p> <p>c) 12/31/06</p> <p>d) Year 2</p> <p>e) Year 2</p> <p>f) Years 2, 3</p> <p>g) Years 2, 3</p> <p>h) Year 3</p>	<p>a) – c) Funding from Year 1 JumpStart/Innovation Pool</p> <p>d) –f) Funding from Years 2, 3 Innovation Pool</p> <p>g)-h) No resources needed</p>	<p>a) Summary of project criteria for JumpStart projects</p> <p>b) RFP for JumpStart programs</p> <p>c) Selection and funding of JumpStart programs</p> <p>d) Summary of project criteria for Innovation Pool Programs</p> <p>e) RFP for Innovation Pool programs</p> <p>f) Selection and funding of Innovation Pool programs</p> <p>g) Quarterly progress reports</p> <p>h) Evaluation of sustainability and system integration</p>
<p>Conduct ongoing economic analysis:</p> <p>Gather baseline data on performance outcomes that will be tracked throughout the initiative</p>	<p>a) Create data team, led by Metro Denver EDC, to manage ongoing economic analysis</p> <p>b) Train data team and partners on use of WITS data tool</p> <p>c) Determine what data will be tracked</p> <p>d) Gather baseline data</p> <p>e) Continue tracking performance data through grant period and beyond</p>	<p>a) Data team, WIRED staff</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>a)-e) Assistance from Resource Team</p>	<p>Data to analyze performance.</p>

Goal 2: Be the best region in country in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) education, supported by a full skill-set of competencies and masteries. Metro Denver will be the “go to” region when companies are deciding to relocate or expand because our workforce has the best STEM skills

Key Strategies	Activities	Responsible Parties	Timeframes / Milestones	Resources Needed	Desired Outcomes/ Metrics
Work with region's school districts to improve rigor and expectations in K-12 education and to develop an understanding of the demands of the global economy	<p>a) Identify current local K-12 reform efforts in region that support WIRED goals.</p> <p>b) Identify ways to improve rigor and expectations in K-12 education</p> <p>c) Make information available to Industry Panels to disseminate to business leaders in targeted industry clusters who might be interested in becoming involved or supporting the reform efforts</p> <p>d) Provide incentives through WIRED to regional school districts and partnerships to increase high school graduation requirements improve rigor and expectations and to connect high school students to targeted industries</p> <p>e) Bring together K-12 and industry panels in first year to begin understanding respective positions and build working relationships to meet respective needs.</p>	<p>a) K-12 panel, with assistance from CEPA</p> <p>b) K-12 Panel and WIRED staff</p> <p>c) K-12 Panel and WIRED staff</p> <p>d) High Skills Leadership Council and WIRED staff</p> <p>e) K-12 Panel, High Skills Leadership Council, WIRED staff</p>	<p>a) January 31, 2007</p> <p>b) Years 2 & 3</p> <p>c) Years 1, 2, 3</p> <p>d) Years 2 and 3</p> <p>e) January 31, 2007</p>	<p>a) Funding from existing panel resources; input from K-12 community, education advocates, community members</p> <p>b) Same as above</p> <p>c) None</p> <p>d) WIRED funding for K-12 programs and partnerships</p> <p>e) Funding from panels for a ½ day event to discuss findings of research</p>	<p>a) Report showing current reform efforts in K-12 in region</p> <p>b) List of recommendations for improving rigor that will help meet education and industry goals.</p> <p>c) Publicize through panels (and media) a report with current education reform efforts in region and with recommendations to improve academic rigor</p> <p>d) Improved high school graduation requirements for regional high schools</p> <p>e) Improved understanding of needs of industry and needs of K-12 system. Improvements to networks.</p>
Identify existing STEM programs applicable to selected industry clusters in K-12, including summer programs	<p>a) Begin asset-mapping of STEM programs in K-12 that are improving math and science scores and that may be applicable to targeted clusters.</p> <p>b) Begin asset-mapping of STEM programs funded by federal agencies and foundations (e.g., NSF and NASA, DOD, Howard Hughes Institute) that are providing assistance to K-12</p>	<p>a) K-12 Panel with assistance from CEPA</p> <p>b) K-12 Panel with assistance from CEPA</p>	<p>a) January 31, 2007</p> <p>b) January 31, 2007</p>	<p>a) Funding from existing panel resources; input from K-12 community, education advocates, community members</p> <p>b) Same as above</p>	<p>Documentation of quality STEM programs at K-12 level</p> <p>Analysis of quality and efficacy of programs.</p> <p>Recommendations for types of programs to develop that do not currently exist.</p>
Identify existing STEM programs applicable to WIRED selected industry clusters in community colleges	Begin asset-mapping of STEM programs, including bridge programs, that are improving math and science scores; identify funding sources for these programs	Higher Ed Panel, Workforce Panel	January 31, 2007	Funding from existing panel resources; input from K-12 community, education advocates, community members	Documentation of quality programs in higher ed

and four-year colleges and universities					
Identify current efforts to help participants improve STEM skills through workforce centers and through employer-based training	Begin asset-mapping of workforce center and incumbent-worker programs to strengthen STEM skills of participants	Workforce Panel and Industry Panels	January 31, 2007	Funding from existing panel resources; input from K-12 community, education advocates, community members	Documentation of quality programs through workforce centers and industry
Communicate information to teachers, students and parents about career prospects in industry clusters for graduates with STEM skills	Introduce parents, students and teachers to career opportunities for students who study STEM occupations through: Public service campaigns; quarterly e-mail blasts, written materials; K-12 and higher ed leaders on different panels as spokespeople to communicate the efficacy of innovative programs within education community to build credibility and encourage replication.	WIRED staff Communications staff for Metro Denver EDC All Panels	Years 2 and 3	Funding to implement communications plan with message framing and strategic implementation to be funded out of Years 2 and 3 Budget	Development of a communications plan that improves reputation of STEM education and careers that utilize STEM skills. Dissemination of various materials that introduce communities to STEM opportunities. Designation of entity to continue public education beyond WIRED grant period.
Communicate information to partners about multiple pathways for all students	Develop materials and disseminate report on best practices in implementing multiple education pathways to credentials, including competency-based and applied learning approaches for students.	K-12 and Higher Ed Panels	Years 2 and 3	Funding from existing panel resources	Report on best practices in developing multiple educational pathways
Release fund for innovative initiatives to transform the delivery systems to provide the best math and science programs that are connected to the targeted industries	Release RFPs Evaluate resulting proposals Fund innovative programs that connect students and workers to occupations in targeted industry clusters.	WIRED Staff and High Skills Leadership Council	Years 2 and 3	Year 2 and 3 Innovative Pool funds	Innovative programs funded through a quality evaluation process to ensure that grants are creating sustainable delivery systems.
Connect employers in cluster businesses to K-12 reform efforts and educational leaders to engage the business community in helping shape reform efforts	Provide incentives (extra points) through WIRED RFPs for districts to engage employers in reform efforts. Enlist support of intermediary organizations to help facilitate interests of employers and education community.	WIRED Staff and High Skills Leadership Council, Industry panels, Education panels	Years 1, 2, 3	WIRED funding from JumpStart and Innovation Pool	Sustainable partnerships between industry leaders and K-12 community in order to engage the education community in the mission and goals of WIRED grant activities. Agreement to continue working together.
Provide programs to improve STEM skills of workforce system customers	Provide incentives to workforce system to develop programs to strengthen STEM skills of youth, adults, dislocated and incumbent workers	Workforce Panel, K-12 education panel, youth development community, industry leaders	Years 2, 3	WIRED funding from Innovation Pool	Workforce initiatives that provide STEM skills to workforce system customers.
Work to move forward policies that encourage and/or	Support efforts that create a P-16 body for the region and the state.	K-12 panel, Higher Ed panel, High Skills Leadership Council,	Year 1	Policymakers who will champion efforts or community group to convene a commission	Creation of a P-16 governing body that develops and oversees P-16 education system in region

develop a P-16 education system (collaboration and coordination across early childhood education, K-12 education and higher education systems).l		Legislative and political leaders, advocacy and lobbying groups,		or task force.	Creation of sustainable partnerships between K-12 and industry leaders and employers to ensure that recommendations are implemented.
Identify any policy issues that need to be resolved to address goal #2	Develop recommendations on policy issues identified, e.g.: Increasing the proportion of math and science teachers who have degrees in their field Increasing the number of math and science college majors that pursue teaching as a career Increasing K-12 performance in math and science, in early grades so kids do not fall behind. Increase choice options that concentrate on math and science	All panels	Ongoing	Partnerships with advocacy organizations. Political champions	Removal of policy barriers

Goal 3: Provide an entrepreneurial climate for business creation and expansion for companies in targeted industries

Key Strategies	Activities	Responsible Parties	Timeframes/ Milestones	Resources Needed	Desired Outcomes/ Metrics
Assess needs of small businesses in targeted clusters	Conduct surveys, including on-line, and focus groups to assess needs of small businesses	Entrepreneurial/ Small Business Panel, SBDC, Workforce, Chambers, other TA providers	January 31, 2007	Utilize Existing assessments (On-line, Newsletters, SBDC Adv. Council)	Information to develop action plans to address the needs of small businesses.
Develop short-term and long-term strategies to address needs of small businesses in each industry cluster	Write action plans with proposed solutions to address small business needs in each of the industry clusters	Entrepreneurial/ Small Business Panel	By January 31, 2007	None	Action plan
Help accelerate the pace of technology transfer from area universities and labs in cluster businesses	Work with Resource Team to identify best practices in technology transfer and disseminate information through forums, position papers, electronic newsletters and web resources Gather baseline data on state of technology transfer in state's clusters, and benchmark to other state's technology transfer efforts.	Entrepreneurial/ Small Business Panel, WIRED staff and Resource Team, SBDC, Small Business Incubators, University Technology Transfer Offices, Federal Research Labs, Higher Ed Panel Resource Team, Entrepreneurial/Small Business panel,	Year 2 Year 2	Year 2 funds to conduct analysis to establish baseline on state of technology transfer Website to share best practices (utilize existing sites such as SBDCs, Incubators, Workforce existing portal) Year 3 funds to conduct analysis to establish improvements in state of technology transfer	Increased Tech Transfer by 10%
Identify policy issues that need to be resolved to address goal #3	Develop recommendations to address policy issues	Entrepreneurial/ Small Business Panel	Year 2 and 3	None	Executive branch/legislative branch initiatives to remove barriers to cluster industry growth

Goal 4: Become the region where the minimum acceptable educational standard for all becomes a post-secondary certificate or an Associates Degree.

Key Strategies	Activities	Responsible Parties	Timeframes/ Milestones	Resources Needed	Desired Outcomes/ Metrics
<p>Work with Colorado Department of Education (CDE), Colorado Commission on Higher Education (CCHE), school districts and Higher Ed entities to ensure that priority is placed on retaining and graduating a well-prepared workforce</p> <p>Enlist assistance of CDE and CCHE to engage school boards, board of regents of universities and other governing boards in adapting the vision of a region where all students receive a post-secondary certificate or Associates degree</p>	<p>Facilitated discussion with each panel to: Gain consensus on facts, Identify (from each panel perspective) process and policy pathways and barriers for each set of "travelers" on the road to STEM careers, Brainstorm policy and/or process changes or partnerships to eliminate barriers and/or to increase number of pathways Produce initial prioritized set of recommendations, including those for RFP pool Reflect on work of other panels, revising panel's initial recommendation set as necessary Develop plan for next steps</p> <p>Develop materials and presentations to be delivered to school boards about the significance of attaining education beyond high school and to higher ed governing boards about ways that universities can connect with K-12</p> <p>Engage school board members and members of higher ed governing boards on panels</p>	<p>K-12 Higher Ed Input from other panels</p>	<p>January 31, 2007 (Before funds are released from the Innovation Pool)</p>	<p>Funding from existing panel resources Input from policymakers, parents, and "travelers"</p>	<p>Documentation of discussion Prioritized set of recommendations Agreement to continue discussion, work on effecting change, based on recommendations Action plan for continued discussion</p>
<p>Review educator preparation programs to ensure that those responsible for educating our students are themselves familiar with career needs</p>	<p>a) Survey panel for institutional practice b) Facilitated discussion with each panel to: see above</p>	<p>K-12 Higher Ed Input from other panels</p>	<p>This should be accomplished before the first wave of funding from the RFP pool, with discussions to continue</p>	<p>Input from parents, private career counselors (outside of institutional education systems)</p>	<p>a)-c) see above d) Create communication tools for elementary & secondary teachers, guidance counselors and career counselors about STEM careers, necessary skills levels for students and pathways.</p>

			throughout life of project		
Work with Colorado Commission on Higher Ed and other entities to ensure that all students know about financial aid sources	same as above	K-12 Higher Ed Input from other panels	This should be accomplished before the first wave of funding from the RFP pool, with discussions to continue throughout life of project	Need communications plan, which includes message framing and strategic communication modes	a)-c) see above d) Produce communication plan to inform parents/students, guidance counselors, teachers, career counselors, etc. on pathways to higher education and financial resources
Work to expand sources for scholarship and financial aid	same as above	K-12 Higher Ed Input from other panels, corporate scholarships and fellowships Input from Foundations, private, public and corporate	This should be accomplished before the first wave of funding from the RFP pool, with discussions to continue throughout life of project	Need communications plan; Need political input if public dollars involved	a)-c) see above d) Produce Strategic "Policy matters" plan
Make it easier for students to begin at one community college and transfer to complete certificates at another	same as above	Higher Ed Funded programs as appropriate	occurs after initial panel discussions	Need: set of articulation standards input from funded jumpstart programs is essential to see what worked	a)-c) see above d) Produce Strategic
Work with any accredited institution of higher learning in state to ensure that programs meet the needs of industry	same as above	Higher Ed Industry panels Funded programs as appropriate	occurs after initial panel discussions,	Input from: funded jumpstart programs is essential to see what worked key support organizations, individuals, companies or institutions that can modify, alter the direction of workforce training	a)-c) see above d) Produce Strategic

<p>Conduct a media campaign to convince parents, students and policy-makers of the 21st Century reality that it is essential for students, at a minimum, to complete a post-secondary certificate or an Associates Degree.</p>	<p>Hire media consultant Work with panels to identify key audience and message framing (include as topic for discussion in facilitated panel discussions) Work with Higher Ed and K-12 panels to coordinate message with own communications strategies. Produce initial prioritized set of recommendations Develop strategic plan</p>	<p>WIRED staff with input from all panels</p>	<p>Year 3</p>	<p>Funding for a marketing campaign from Year 3 budget and from industry contributions Ledy when will media campaign take place? Year 4?</p>	<p>1a)-c) see above d) Produce Strategic</p>
<p>Identify policy issues that need to be resolved</p>	<p>Develop recommendations to address policy issues, such as barriers that prevent incumbent workers from furthering their education</p>	<p>All panels</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Funding from existing panel resources Input from policymakers, parents, and students</p>	<p>Elimination of barriers leading to more Coloradans furthering their education</p>

Goal 5: Create a regional system that seamlessly integrates workforce, education, and economic development programs to effectively meet the needs of individuals and business.

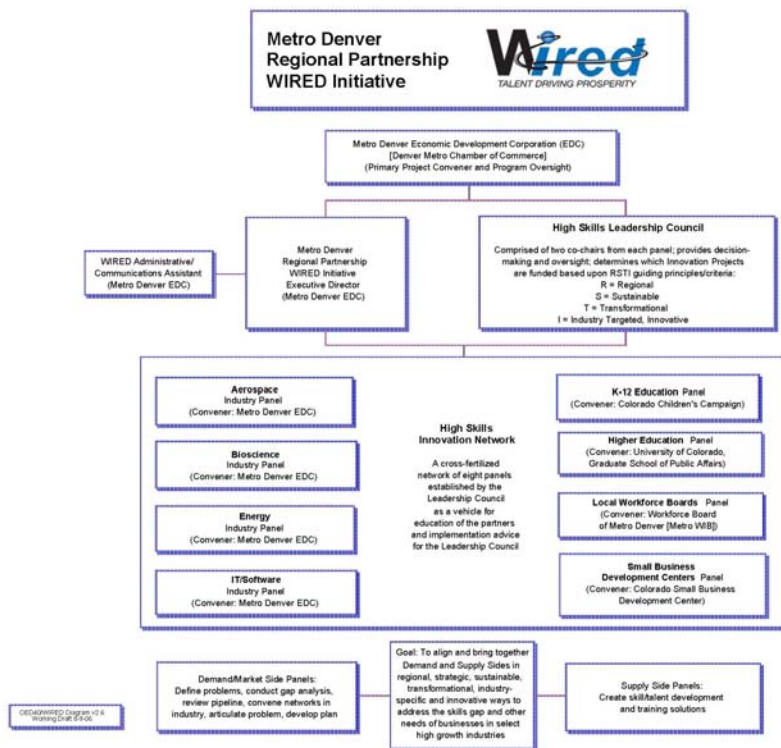
Key Strategies	Activities	Responsible Parties	Timeframes/ Milestones	Resources Needed	Desired Outcomes/ Metrics
Develop and promote partnerships within the educational system – CCHE/CDE, public/private colleges and schools; between the various levels of K-12 and Higher Education; between all levels of education and the workforce system. Work with economic development to ensure that business partners are at the table in all partnerships.	<p>Study best practices and implementation plans of other regions throughout the U. S.</p> <p>Conduct baseline analysis of existing networks (In year 1, survey the relevant organizations involved in WIRED to find out: 1) who they talk to about workforce and economic development issues; 2) how often they talk; 3) how valuable are these conversations, etc. and “map” the “network baseline”. Repeat in year 3 to monitor expected growth in network density, robustness, bridging, bonding, and fill in of “structural holes” in current networks.)</p> <p>Develop a report card on the metrics of how partnerships with education, workforce development and economic development have been integrated.</p> <p>Provide information on regional progress towards goals to Metro Denver EDC governing body and membership</p> <p>Plan an annual summit hosted by Metro Denver EDC and the WIRED partners to communicate and celebrate successful partnerships and to tie work of partnerships to the region’s economic competitiveness</p>	<p>a. WIRED Staff and Resource Team</p> <p>b. Center for Education Policy Analysis (CEPA),</p> <p>c. WIRED staff (with help from Resource Team), K-12 and Higher Ed panels</p> <p>d. WIRED staff and all panels</p>	<p>a. January 2007</p> <p>b. January 2007</p> <p>c. Year 2</p> <p>d. Years 2 and 3</p>	<p>Information and assistance from Resource Team</p> <p>Funds for network software and for baseline analysis (\$15,000?)</p> <p>Information and assistance from Resource Team</p> <p>Financial assistance and sponsorships to hold the summit</p>	<p>Report on best practices</p> <p>Baseline analysis of networks on year one; analysis of changes in year 3</p> <p>Report card on integration</p> <p>WIRED Summit</p>
Develop system through which individuals/businesses can enter through a WIRED partner and can be directed to a program that can meet their needs.	<p>a. Develop a process in which an individual or business customer can enter the system at any point and be directed to the appropriate program.</p>	<p>a. WIRED High Skills Network and Innovation Network as well as panels</p>	<p>a. Year 3</p>	<p>a. Resource Team or consultant assistance needed – asset mapping and career pathways.</p>	<p>a. A process developed to guide a customer through the education, workforce development and econ. development system to the appropriate program needed.</p>
Regionalize the geographies of workforce	<p>Create a regional higher education consortium.</p>	<p>Higher ed panel</p> <p>WIBs in the metro</p>	<p>a. Year 2</p> <p>b. Year 1</p>	<p>a. none</p> <p>b. full time regional director</p>	<p>a. The creation of a Regional Higher Ed. Consortium</p> <p>b. The hiring of the regional WIB</p>

development, economic development and education	Continue the creation of the regional WIB. Create an ongoing structure or organization to promote regional integration of workforce, economic development and education.	area WIRED team.	c. Year 3	and resources for coordination c. funding sources to create an organizational structure for the continuation of a regional structure	director. The regional WIB has already been created. c. The creation of an ongoing organization to carry on WIRED
Educate key stakeholders at the regional level.	Communicate to the community, elected officials, business organizations and others about the WIRED initiative. Communicate information on the state of regional education and workforce to all WIRED partners and local elected officials	WIRED staff and partners, Metro Denver EDC Metro Denver EDC	a. Year 1, 2, and 3 Baseline data on Year 1, reports at end of years 2 and 3	website, and funding for staff capable of handling all communications and PR needs Gathering of baseline data	a. press releases, website, newsletters and media/ related to WIRED Report on the state of education and workforce in region
Manage internal communications process	Encourage all partners to use ASU Collaborative Workspace; enter all information into space that may be of interest to partners Send quarterly newsletters and/or e-mail blasts to all interested parties, in addition to key partners in education, workforce and economic development	WIRED staff	Quarterly, beginning last quarter of 2006	Staff to develop	

3. WIRED Governance

Governance

Provide background and detail on governance, including organizational charts, roles and responsibilities of participating organizations/partners, internal controls and decision-making authority and approach. Documents like agreements between partners and governing organization (e.g., charter, operating principles) can be included in an appendix if such agreements exist.



Charter

The Metro Denver WIRED Initiative is an effort to ensure that the region remains competitive in a global economy through development of local talent, promotion of an entrepreneurial climate, streamlining of delivery systems and creation of sustainable partnerships.

Organization and Composition

WIRED funds will flow from the U.S. Department of Labor to the Colorado Department of Labor and Employment (CDLE) who will provide technical assistance and monitor implementation of the Initiative. CDLE will contract with the Office of Economic Development, City and County of Denver, the fiscal agent for the grant. Because programs under the Initiative will be administered by Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (EDC) the City will subcontract with the EDC

to run all programs. The City will also subcontract with the Metro Denver Regional WIB Partnership to convene the Workforce Panel.

Wired Organizational Structure

A planning team and a core group of interested individuals provided leadership and support to WIRED staff through the writing of the application and through the beginning of the implementation period. However, the groups have now been dissolved and the individuals have been asked to submit formal applications to be on the panels so that the structure of the Initiative can evolve into that which was described in the original application for funds to the U.S. Department of Labor and which is shown above.

To select chairs for the industry panels, the directors of industry trade associations were asked to provide names of individuals who might be interested in leading the panels. These individuals, two co-chairs of each panel, and an alternate, will comprise the High Skills Leadership Team.

The Workforce Panel is made up of all regional directors and Workforce Investment Board chairs within the region. The Workforce Directors have been asked to select co-chairs and an alternate.

The conveners of the K-12, Higher Ed and Entrepreneurship/Small Business panels have been asked to suggest chairs for each panel. WIRED staff and Metro Denver EDC leadership will review suggestions to ensure that individuals serving in all panels and on the High Skills Leadership Council come from all parts of the region and have a diversity of background and expertise.

The High Skills Innovation Network is

Components	Structure & Roles
<p>High Skills Leadership Council</p> <p>Convener: Council's Executive Director</p>	<p>Leadership Council will be 2-way communication vehicle: brings input from Innovation Network, provides information and decisions to Network members</p> <p>Provides structural connect point with other functions of MDEDC and provides business-driven focus for WIRED project</p> <p>Operates as one of MDEDC's committees – accountable to MDEDC Executive Committee</p> <p>Council will be composed of 2 members each from 8 panels – total of 16 members, 12 from private sector</p> <p>Executive Director will be in MDEDC's personnel structure and accountable for implementing Council's decisions</p> <p>Focus on Needs of Industrial Base (key employers in region, product & service offerings)</p> <p>Establish basis for competitive advantage</p> <p>Cluster Analysis to assess regional strengths & weaknesses</p> <p>Keep pulse on Business Climate (tax & regulatory environment)</p> <p>Achieves WIRED Project Goals and serves as decision-making body</p>
<p>High Skills Innovation Network</p> <p>Convener: Council's</p>	<p>Promotes WIRED findings & successes through communications plan</p> <p>Develops cultural competencies</p> <p>Achieves WIRED project goals</p> <p>Serves as focal point for ongoing education of partners</p>

Executive Director	Focal point for celebrating success and collaborating to address deficiencies in delivery
4 Industry Panels Convener: Industry Coordinator hired by Executive Director	Each panel defines the region's industrial base Identifies key employers and champions Identifies products & services Establishes the basis for competitive advantage Identifies regional strengths & weaknesses Analyzes physical infrastructure relative to each industry (transportation, commute time, access to natural resources, communications) Identifies availability of high-speed internet access Evaluates workforce availability & skills Conducts gap analysis Assesses responsiveness of educational opportunities Develops draft sector-based action plan Provides quarterly reports on progress to High Skills Leadership Council
Higher Education Panel Convener: UC-Denver Graduate School of Public Affairs	Connects business with educational program development Determines best strategies for meeting industry needs Determines areas of cooperation and coordination Determines area of specialization – such as “centers of excellence” for specific industries Develops venues for networking to promote technology transfer to stimulate innovation and entrepreneurship Develops new articulation agreements as needed Develops plan to fill gaps
K – 12 Education Panel Convener: Colorado Children's Campaign	Grows programs that improve graduation rates Embeds industry skill demands within STEM curricula Identifies creative methods for “turning kids on” to STEM skills Develops model programs and services for increasing number of college-qualified students who go on to college Identifies and expands the connections between high school and post-secondary institutions – increases opportunities for earning post-secondary credits to encourage transitions Expands career exploration strategies through employer connections for internships and other means Identifies gaps Creates action plan for addressing gaps
WIB Association Convener: WIB Association's Director	Ensures training programs are responsive to regional employer needs Designs response for incumbent worker needs Connects business with opportunities to upgrade math and science skill development Develops coordinated business outreach programs among partnering WIBs in region Develops consistency of service delivery in one-stop centers, individual training accounts, supportive services, and other areas Develops coordinated, multi-WIB plans to address the specific needs of technology sector employers Sponsors Industry Summits and other forums as needed to address technology employer needs
Entrepreneurship/ Small Business Development Panel Convener: Metro Area Small Business Development Corps.	Creates inventory of small businesses in technology sectors Creates assessment of contracting needs of government and large companies Creates venues for networking Develops specific programs with higher education to promote technology transfer to the marketplace Coordinates delivery of training and technical assistance to small business Conducts needs assessment of small businesses Identifies gaps in services to small businesses Creates action recommendations for filling gaps
Local Fiscal Agent & Contract Manager City of Denver's Office of Economic Development/ Division of Workforce Development	OED to ensure legal compliance and provide monitoring of implementation OED to serve as local fiscal agent and ensure proper accounting procedures OED to serve as local point of contact with state on financial and grants management issues

The questions below are for discussion around WIRED Project Governance. This section of the plan should include background and detail on governance, including organization charts, roles and responsibilities of participating organizations/partners, agreements between partners and governing organization, internal controls and information on decision making authority and approach, organizational documents (e.g., charter, operating principles).

4. Operations

This section is a discussion of WIRED Project Operations. Describe plans for how the project will be managed, including any specific operating plans (e.g., communications, reporting, partner assignments, etc.) that have been created or are under development; calendar of key regional events, activities, website links, identification of any tools that the region anticipates using (e.g., Microsoft Project).

Management

Denver's Office of Economic Development is the fiscal agent for the WIRED grant and will contract the administration of programs under the Initiative to the Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (the EDC). Program staff, consisting of an Executive Director, up to four Industry Specialists and an Administrative/Communications Assistant, will be housed at the EDC. The Executive Director of the Initiative reports to the Vice President for Economic Development for the EDC (Holli Baumunk) and to the Executive Vice-President of Metro Denver EDC (Tom Clark), both of whom will play key roles by providing leadership and direction to Initiative staff. Janet Fritz, Director of Marketing and Technology for the EDC, has also been involved in developing the Initiative's Communications Plan and will consult on its implementation.

Operating Principles

The WIRED Initiative is about regional economic development, it's about working together across political boundaries and jurisdictions to develop a home-grown skilled workforce that can benefit from the best jobs that the economy is producing and that can help regional businesses compete in a global economy. It is also about changing the way we do business so that our delivery systems will evolve into sustainable partnerships that can continue to produce a skilled workforce much beyond the three-year WIRED grant period.

Guiding Principles for Programs Funded under WIRED

Regional in scope: Highest consideration will be given to projects that transcend political or artificial boundaries in favor of regional economic development. WIRED funding will favor projects that cross county lines, school district lines, community college and workforce region boundaries and that can show impact to the regional economy.

Sustainable: Preference will be given to activities that show potential for sustainability beyond the three-year period of the WIRED grant.

Transformational: WIRED programs and activities funded through the grant will create regional partnerships and networks that have the potential of transforming delivery systems.

Industry-targeted: Projects funded under the Initiative must meet needs of industry. In the case of programs at the K-12 or community college level, projects

can also provide STEM skills that will allow students to move into careers in the selected industry clusters.

Driven by partnerships: Preference will be given to projects that include many active partners, such as (but not limited to): cluster businesses, workforce regions, school districts, community colleges, universities, economic development offices, etc.

Replicable: Successful projects should be replicable to other parts of the region and/or the state.

Integrated into local economy and the recipient organization. Projects and activities funded under the Metro Denver WIRED should correspond to activities already under place by the applicant organization or to where the organization is headed

Leveraged: WIRED will give preference to projects and activities that are leveraged with other funds, preferably industry and foundation funds.

Innovative: Highest consideration will be given to applications that show understanding of the role of innovation in regional economic development.

Conflict of interest issues

Although we encourage applications by individuals representing organizations that are part of the panels, any member who is also an applicant can neither sit on the “reader” group nor vote on any proposal.

Next Steps under WIRED:

After completion of the Implementation Plan, panels will be formed, staff will be hired and the Plan will guide the work to be done. In very general terms, the following activities will take place:

1. Assessing the needs of business: the assessment of the needs of business will be conducted by the Industry Specialists, guided by the Panel members, through surveys and focus groups.
2. Mapping existing assets: the asset-mapping will be done through mail surveys, phone calls and personal contacts to educational institutions and companies to find the number of programs training individuals for the highest-demand occupations in the targeted industries and the number of individuals currently produced by those programs. The Industry Panel members will assist with the asset-mapping, but an RFP will be released for an individual or a company to guide the work, gather and analyze the results and prepare a report.
- 3 Analyzing gaps: after the needs of business and existing assets are determined, an analysis of the gaps will be performed.

4 Funding JumpStart Programs: during the first year of the grant, and RFP will be released to fund partnerships with programs that are in place or in progress that could meet some of the needs of the targeted industries.

5. Funding System Transformation Initiatives (The Innovation Pool) : during the second and third years, funding will be released through an RFP to address the gaps identified through the analysis of the needs of businesses and the existing assets.

Both the JumpStart and Innovation Pool programs must meet the criteria set forth in the guiding principles in the “Operations” section above.

Communications Plan

Case Statement: The Metro Denver Story is the tale of two regions. The first is a thriving and diversified economy propelled by the growing technology sectors and containing one of the highest average education levels in the nation. The second is a pipeline into the workforce from the school systems that is increasingly “leaking,” resulting in a low percentage of Metro Denver’s students finding their way to the high skill, high wage jobs that are being created in the region. These two different regions are on a collision course, as the failure of the pipeline becomes the failure of businesses in the region, and ultimately the failure of the regional economy. The phenomenon has become known as the “Colorado Paradox” and the recognition has caused increased anxiety among business, government officials, economic developers, educators, and other community leaders.

Background: In early 2006, Metro Denver received a 3-year, \$15 million grant through the U.S. Department of Labor’s WIRED (Workforce Innovation in Regional Economic Development) initiative. Thirteen WIRED grants totaling \$195 million were awarded nationwide as part of President Bush’s competitiveness agenda.

The Metro Denver Economic Development Corporation (Metro Denver EDC) and the Denver Office of Economic Development (fiscal agent) will coordinate the Metro Denver WIRED grant to integrate workforce development, economic development, and education on a regional level to meet the needs of our targeted industry clusters: aerospace, bioscience, energy, and information. A program director and industry cluster liaisons will be hired to assess private sector workforce development needs and to create transformational changes for key workforce education gaps.

Communications Objectives:

Goal 1: Promote and gain support for the Metro Denver WIRED initiative amongst key stakeholders.

Goal 2. Educate and engage the business community (in four key target industries) to participate in the Metro Denver WIRED initiative.

Goal 3: Communicate and engage the education community for participation in the Metro Denver WIRED initiative.

Goal 4: Utilize the local media to educate and promote successful WIRED programs and initiatives to over 3 million citizens in the seven-county Metro Denver region and two-county Northern Colorado area.

Messages:

- The WIRED initiative is a new, innovative approach to solve our workforce challenges, particularly the “Colorado Paradox” of importing highly educated workers into the state rather than growing them from within.
- WIRED brings together education, economic development, and private industry to develop innovative, transformational changes in workforce development.
- The WIRED initiative will work to fill the “pipeline” with highly skilled workers in the aerospace, bioscience, energy, and information technology industries that form the foundation for economic growth in the region.

Target Audiences:

- Metro Denver WIRED Core Group
- Regional Partners in WIRED:
 - Workforce Boards throughout Metro Denver
 - Key Education Contacts:
 - K-12 (superintendents, principals, and guidance counselors)
 - Community Colleges and Universities
 - Niche Education Programs (directors and contacts for existing programs)
- Industry Stakeholders (aerospace, bioscience, energy, and information technology/software)
 - Industry Associations
 - Company/Industry Leaders
- Public Officials

- Economic Development Groups
- Media
 - Local Media
 - National Media

Communications Strategies

Strategy	OBJECTIVE	Audience(s)	TIME LINE/FREQUENCY	STAFF RESPONSIBLE
Develop e-mail distribution lists and full address/contact information for all target audiences.	A comprehensive contact list for communications on WIRED efforts.	All above target audiences.	Immediately, Phase I.	
Develop business cards and full paper system.	Tools for communication to key audiences by WIRED staff.	All above target audiences.	Immediately, Phase I.	
Create fact sheet(s) with info on Metro Denver WIRED program and bios for WIRED staff.	To promote educate stakeholders and promote program.	All above target audiences.	Immediately, Phase I.	
Distribute a news release to local media announcing WIRED staff, program of work, and grant process.	To inform and engage local media in the WIRED program.	Local media, all distribute to key stakeholders.	Immediately, Phase I.	
Access, customize, and utilize ETA's WIRED Collaborative Workspace (CWS) to facilitate communication with core group and regional partners.	Communication vehicle for program updates and meeting information.	Core group, regional WIRED partners.	Immediately, Phase I	
Pending final completion of each industry workplan, develop industry-specific communications strategies for each of the four target industries.	Customized strategies based on the communications needs for each industry and tailored to industry stakeholders.	Companies, industry associations, and stakeholders in the industry clusters.	Phase II	

Develop a WIRED section on Metro Denver EDC's Web site with program details, contacts, and news.	Provide additional reach to www.metrodenver.org users, both regional, state, and national.	Regional ED partners, Metro Denver EDC investors, Metro Denver business community, site selectors, national media.	Immediately, Phase I	
Develop a monthly e-newsletter.	Communicate program news and grant awards.	All above target audiences.	Phase II	
Develop e-alert news system.	Share breaking news.	All above target audiences.	Phase II	
Place quarterly Op-Ed articles by WIRED director, Metro Denver EDC, and key industry reps, etc. in regional media print media in the nine counties.	Educate the public on crucial need to integrate workforce, education, and economic development for economic competitiveness.	Citizens in the seven-county Metro Denver region and the two-county Northern Colorado area.	Phase II	
Pitch regional journalists (print, radio, TV, online) on an ongoing basis regarding news-worthy stories/significant announcements.	Coverage in local media on significant announcements/successes in the WIRED program.	Citizens in the seven-county Metro Denver region and the two-county Northern Colorado area.	Phase II	
After WIRED has been in operation for one year, meet with publisher/editorial board of key regional newspapers to discuss strides/successes in first year.	Third-party endorsement/promotion of WIRED in the opinion section of regional newspapers.	Citizens in the seven-county Metro Denver region and the two-county Northern Colorado area.		
Pitch national journalists (print, radio, TV, online) on an ongoing basis regarding news-worthy stories/significant announcements.	Promote the success of Metro Denver's WIRED initiative in national trade and business publications.	National companies and site selectors.	Phase II	
Create a speakers bureau for WIRED Director and CORE group to promote wired in the education and	Public education.	Companies, industry associations, education groups, civic organizations.	Phase II	

business community.				
WIRED director to provide program updates/reports at Metro Denver EDC Board and Professional Meetings.	Update and engage economic development and business community.	Economic development partners and Metro Denver EDC investors.	ongoing	
Include WIRED updates and success stories in Metro Denver EDC publications like Investor Intelligence and InSite Newsletters. Also provide stories to Denver Metro Chamber publications.	Update and engage economic development and business community.	Economic development partners, Metro Denver EDC investors, national site selectors, and Denver Metro Chamber members.	ongoing	
Evaluate on an ongoing basis, special opportunities and new strategies to promote WIRED to key stakeholders and target audiences.	Educate, inform, promote participation.	All above target audiences.	ongoing	
Definitions: Phase I = July 1, 2006 to September 1, 2006. Phase II = September 1, 2006 to December 31, 2006.				

6. WIRED Technical Assistance/Resources

Anticipated Technical Assistance Requests

Provide a prioritized list of “advanced” technical assistance requests for the ETA Resource Team. In addition to the request for advanced technical assistance from the Resource Team, please include a list of any technical assistance requests already initiated.

This section summarizes the region’s priorities and needs for technical assistance and resources.

WIRED Goal Area	Assistance or Resources Requested
Year One	
Goal #1	1. Assessment of workforce needs of business: Review of survey instruments for finding needs of business.
Goal #1	2. Asset-mapping: help with design of survey instruments to inventory assets – home-grown workforce supply and existing programs.
Goal #1	3. In-depth analysis of each targeted cluster to understand supply chains, global market in relation to the region and benchmarking of the educational and training capabilities and standards of competitor countries and regions.
Goal #1	4. Help with analysis of gaps between workforce needs and supply.
Goal #5	5. Best practices in the Implementation Plans of other WIRED regions, particularly on the integration piece.
Goal #2	6. Best practices around country in boosting math and science scores and in encouraging students to go into STEM careers.

Goal #1	
Goal #3	8. Benchmarking our technology transfer process – are there better ways to do it?
All goals	9. Metrics
Year Two	
Goal #5	7. Development of a report card on the metrics of integration of the E3 partners.
Goal #5	8. Identifying career pathways in industry clusters.