

## **Oregon's Workforce System**

The state workforce development organizations and community partners have moved to a simple, unified approach in delivering "market driven" services to job seekers and employers through the implementation of the federal Workforce Investment Act. By bringing industry together into a partnership with service providers, state agencies and educational institutions, Oregon offers a diverse array of workforce services that can be accessed throughout the State. At the same time, a collaborative approach to the delivery of technical assistance, training and capacity building to support state workforce development partners also is occurring among state agencies.

### **In the beginning**

Following a major recession in 1989, the Oregon legislature published *Oregon Shines*, a report that put forth a new vision with a stated goal to “build an advanced economy that provides well paying jobs to the maximum amount of citizens.” In 1990 the Oregon Progress Board (OPB), chaired by the governor and made up of community leaders and 16 committees representing business, labor, education and government, developed a long list of quality-of-life indicators which are still used today. These benchmarks continue to provide the foundation for measuring and managing the state’s economic, social and educational endeavors.

### **The recent past**

In 1994, the state created the Department of Community Colleges and Workforce Development (CCWD), which administers grants to businesses through the U.S. Department of Labor and the U.S. Department of Education. The technology boon in the mid-1990s caused a mild shift in thought, resulting in the 1997 adoption of *Oregon Shines II*. With recession imminent, state agencies re-evaluated the condition of the state and realized the need for a more connected system – a partnership in which job seekers, local businesses, educators, government and social service agencies would provide a network of services.

### **Oregon’s Strategic Goals**

Oregon Shines continues to be a statewide vision for all of Oregon and all Oregonians (not just state government). Its three goals are:

- Quality jobs for all Oregonians
- Engaged, caring and safe communities
- Healthy, sustainable surroundings

### **WorkSource Oregon**

Today, Oregon’s workforce development system is in full operation, connecting citizens with agencies, businesses, education, training, jobs, child care and a wide range of related services.

*WorkSource Oregon* is a statewide workforce development system—a network of public and private partners that stimulate job growth by connecting businesses and workers with the resources they need to succeed.

*WorkSource Oregon:*

- Ensures businesses have a ready supply of trained workers whose skills and talents are aligned with the expectations and needs of business and industry;
- Connects businesses with the resources they need to grow their workforce and their business; and,
- Provides resources to help Oregon's unemployed and underemployed connect with the employers that are right for them, find the jobs they're looking for and get trained for jobs they want.

We also:

- Align concurrent initiatives in the education, workforce and economic development arenas.
- Provide leadership in shaping the education programs and workforce services that benefit individuals, businesses and communities in Oregon.
- Ensure a continuum of comprehensive learning opportunities that enable youth and adults to effectively contribute to our global society.
- Broaden sustainable public access to skills, knowledge and career opportunities.
- Foster innovation in instruction, service delivery and information collection and dissemination.
- Meet public stewardship and accountability expectations to federal, state, and local partners.

**Governor's Vision for Education and Workforce**

Three years ago, the Governor's guidance for a coordinated vision was to directly link to, and be part of, the Governor's program for economic revival and opportunity as captured in "The Oregon Equation:  $O = C + E2$ " (Oregon = Children + Economy + Environment). Governor Kulongoski explained, "The Oregon Equation means that Oregon's future equals a sum of its children, its economy and its environment."

As we pursue economic opportunity, focus on our children, and maintain our livability, Oregon will thrive. The Oregon Equation is about building an economy that can produce family wage jobs, especially high wage jobs, by investing in Oregonians and creating a world-class, capable workforce. The recession was a harsh reminder that having a job – and a growing income – is a critical part of living here and maintaining the quality of life that we aspire to as a state. Connections between education, workforce, and economic development must be collaborative, strong, and very real.

The Governor's Vision for Oregon's Workforce states that "we must invest in education and workforce training so Oregon becomes a magnet for companies that want to hire skilled workers, and workers have good jobs that fully utilize their skills and talents. Oregon needs competitive companies, productive people and innovative ideas to grow and keep stable, high-paying jobs in our state."

Oregon's workforce system serves Oregon workers, helping people update their career skills, launching them toward higher wages, and referring them to jobs or educational career paths based on new technologies or innovations. Having a highly skilled

workforce means Oregon businesses have a competitive edge and Oregon workers have stable jobs.

### **WIA Title IB Adult and Youth Programs**

The WIA Title IB programs provide skill assessment, skill training, and knowledge development necessary to be successful in the job market. Services provided to adults (18 years of age and older) include core, intensive and training services through local area WorkSource Oregon Centers and local providers, technical assistance, capacity building, identification of resources, leadership in policy making and the coordination of discussions and continuous improvement efforts.

The youth programs provide assistance in achieving academic and employment success to eligible youth, ages 14-21 who are economically disadvantaged with barriers to employment. The goals of the program are to establish local youth councils that connect many youth programs into a youth system and provide:

- On-going mentoring opportunities for youth with adults committed to providing such opportunities.
- Opportunities for training to eligible youth.
- Continued support services which enhance the success of youth.
- Incentives for recognition and achievement of youth.
- Opportunities in activities related to leadership development, decision making, and citizenship in their local communities.

WIA Title IB Adult and Youth Programs:

- Coordinate activities at state and local levels with other workforce programs.
- Deliver services through local providers.
- Measure and evaluate performance under Title I-B of the WIA (monitoring entry into employment, job retention, attainment of credentials).
- Provide objective assessments of adults and youth to identify academic levels, skill levels, and service needs of each participant.
- Develop individual service strategies for each participant by preparing him/ her for postsecondary education opportunities or unsubsidized employment opportunities and providing linkages between academic and occupational learning and effective connections to the job market.

### **Results and Successes**

CCWD and partners are delivering results:

- 5,500 Community college students successfully transferred to the Oregon University System (OUS) in 2004-2005
- Over 88% of adults served in the adult workforce programs entered employment
- Approximately 50% of students in adult basic skills programs who have the goal to transition to post secondary education do so within a year

- Oregon programs exceeded federal and state negotiated performance measures for skill gain, receipt of secondary credentials (AHSD/GED), placement in post-secondary education or training, employment placement, and employment retention
- 93% of students in community college professional technical programs (Carl Perkins) achieved a GPA of 2.0 or higher
- Expanded Options, an early college program at Oregon community colleges, was developed with the Oregon Department of Education to facilitate implementation of SB 300 (2005)
- The Oregon Student Assistance Commission and OUS collaboration resulted in a Shared Responsibility Model, a financial aid formula where the students, parents, and State of Oregon share in the cost of a college education
- The Dislocated Worker Unit responded to more than 390 layoffs at worksites in Oregon between 2005 and February 2007 – coordinating services with 15 local program providers across the state to ensure that all laid off workers in Oregon receive information and access to Dislocated Worker program services, unemployment insurance and other One-Stop system program services.
- 804 high-skilled, high wage, union represented workers were laid off from Freightliner in Portland. CCWD worked with the employer and employees resulting in a hiring event for targeting only those employers who offered comparable wages (more than \$12/hour + benefits or \$17/hour without benefits). Many of those laid off were recruited by areas businesses, specifically because they have skills that are in high demand
- Over 23,000 current workers trained in needed skills for critical knowledge-based industries through the Employer Workforce Training Fund over the past three years
- Improved availability and access to GED test sites – increased number of sites and increased number of testing times available; rural GED site expansions (Grant, Union, Baker and Wallowa counties)
- Working with the Oregon National Guard, WorkSource Oregon partners provided transition services to over 47,000 veterans – and over 23,000 were placed in jobs
- Pathways to Advancement provided a fast track to higher learning and higher earning through professional and technical certificates, degrees, and skills in high demand occupations
- 4,000 people with disabilities were helped with job searches through the Disability Navigator Initiative
- CCWD organized workforce resources and services for workers and families affected by the Salmon disaster – the DWU coordinated and conducted local meetings to identify the state and local services available to meet the emergency needs of the fishermen, worked with the Port Outreach Specialist (POS) to identify state and local services in their respective areas, trained the POS to provide services

to the fishermen using the Peer Outreach Handbook, and provided technical assistance when/where necessary

- Coordination of Summer Conservation Corps (SCC) with at least one crew in each of Oregon's 36 counties, actively seeking projects and funding partners for crews (OYCC)
- Leveraged Community Stewardship Corps (CSC) by partnering with 25 alternative high schools and offering planning grants for prospective new programs, exploring grants and project opportunities (OYCC) – a 29% increase in the amount of scholarships awarded through the CSC program
- For the 2005-2006 school year, \$199,335.00 in scholarships were awarded (OYCC), contributing to a 30% increase in the number of diplomas awarded by the alternative schools that receive OYCC funding
- Annual training for 100+ teachers and crew leaders in team building, project development, safety, leadership skills, integration of classroom and field learning and experiential teaching techniques (OYCC)
- Over 3,000 employment/community resource referrals made to the Navigators and over 5,000 resource referrals made by the Navigators to employment/community resources
- Five colleges formed an Oregon Pathways Alliance, which planned and convened a statewide Pathways Academy in June 2005(including teams from each college and a state agency team) – the Oregon Pathways Alliance expanded to 11 member colleges, which planned and convened a statewide Pathways Academy in April 2007, and included teams from each college and a state team
- Career Pathways roadmaps have been developed for more than 35 occupations and dozens more roadmaps are in development
- The EWTF required a 1:1 fund-match but achieved a more than 2:1 (private/federal) match resulting in more than 23,000 workers trained, 19,500 jobs retained, and more than 2,300 jobs created by participating companies
- A partnership with Oregon AFL-CIO created a Joint Apprenticeship Training Committee for developing a pilot industrial apprenticeship with union-employers. CCWD is now working with BOLI on an apprenticeship preparation pilot with high schools

### **Performance**

CCWD has a long history of working with and supporting local efforts to meet and exceed state, federal or local performance measures. Performance measures are an integral part of CCWD's work, and are incorporated into the services provided through community colleges, the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Title IB and Title II programs, and Carl Perkins Vocational and Technical Education programs.

Federal performance measures include the US Office of Management and Budget common measures that now impact WIA Title IB, WIA Title II, and Carl D. Perkins programs.

CCWD is meeting targets or making progress toward targets in over half of 25 key performance measures. Following the economic recession and subsequent performance declines, the Department is now seeing gains in rates of employment for older youth and adults and wages for dislocated workers.

Licensing/certification rates and employer satisfaction with business and industry training services have remained high for several years, and high school participation in college credit courses continues to grow. Rates for completion of professional technical degrees/certificates dropped in response to the loss of sections and courses at colleges, stemming from resource shortages, but have remained above the target.

CCWD is seeing slight declines in the rate of at-risk youth returning to school or earning a diploma/equivalent, the rate of associate degree completion, and the progress of transfer students. These declines are likely due to the loss of resources and services available to serve these individuals in recent years. Reduced enrollments at community colleges and changes in enrollment patterns are also likely factors.

### **State Evaluation**

Oregon continues to evaluate the impacts of the workforce system. Initiatives include a renewed interest in further developing Oregon's long-standing system wide performance measurement system and data warehousing, continued emphasis on WIA performance analysis and improvement, increased efforts to implement the WIA common measures, and An initiative by the Oregon Workforce Investment Board to track the implementation of its new strategic plan.

The state has undertaken or plans to undertake the following efforts in the area of program evaluation:

- Data from our system wide performance measures continues to be available for the employment related indicators, basic skills attainment, and TANF caseload management. Our experience in using this information for the narrative portion of the Annual Report has been positive and continues for the current report. This system wide performance data is available at [www.prism.state.or.us](http://www.prism.state.or.us) . The site includes analysis of the data. Current discussions include changing some of the definitions of the indicators to more closely reflect Federal measures.

- Oregon is increasing the emphasis on developing the “next generation” data system. Efforts include connecting with a planned data warehouse for Oregon's K-20 education system, a desire for more flexible reporting on system wide data, and warehousing data for the reporting of common measures for federal compliance.

- The Oregon Workforce Investment Board (OWIB) completed a formal evaluation of the capacity-building impacts of the state level portion of the Employer Workforce Training Fund, Oregon's incumbent worker training program. The suggestions from the evaluation's final report are now being incorporated into the program, including a focus on consortia-building projects and follow-on funding to sustain the capacity-building projects. Plans now include setting aside a portion of the funding for continued evaluation of program impacts.
- The Oregon Workforce Investment Board completed a strategic planning process to set direction for the entire workforce system. The inclusive process resulted in *Winning In the Global Market*, a plan to transform Oregon's workforce education and training system. The plan for the process includes a continued emphasis on metrics, accountability and program impacts and results. To track system performance against the plan, the Board has formed a Performance and System Improvement Committee that will report metrics to the full board and will suggest system improvements.
- State staff review local area and statewide performance quarterly. Local areas are contacted about various aspects of their operations and their effect on performance. In-depth analysis of local performance includes the continued use of Performance Matters, a performance management on-line service, which has greatly improved efforts to analyze WIA IB performance.
- Annual quality assurance reviews address multiple aspects of program compliance and program improvement.
- Oregon's Labor Market Information system continues to be responsive to state and local Workforce Investment Board needs, and supplies information and analysis to assist with evaluation initiatives. Recent studies have included job and industry growth analysis, industry cluster analysis, studies of the occupational needs and growth of various industries and industry groupings, and local/regional profiles, all of which assist in the evaluation of the effectiveness of workforce programs in the state.