

SWIC Ready to Work Communities Task Force

July 26, 2013

3:00 – 4:00 PM Eastern

Meeting Notes

Participants: Becky Nickoli, Cathy Metcalf, Chip Orben, Dan Clark, Dennis Wimer, Derek Redelman, Kathleen Randolph, Linda Woloshansky, Mark Goldman, Mark Maassel, Mellisa Leaming, Randy Holmes, Richard Rampley, Roger Feldhaus, Ron McKulick

Staff: Nate Klinck, Department of Workforce Development

I. Welcome and Introductions

Mark Goldman began the meeting at 3pm, and welcomed the taskforce members in attendance.

II. Discussion Topics

- **Specific Work Ready Communities Metrics Used in Other States**

- Nate Klinck discussed a document he had prepared that listed the specific metrics that other states utilize when certifying communities as “Work Ready.” He noted that other states had set specific criteria (and metrics) for items such as high school graduation rates, individuals with an ACT National Career Readiness Certification, and the percentage of the workforce that had obtained a two year degree or higher.
- Members of the committee discussed the difference between measuring the graduation rates of high schools and measuring the percentage of the workforce that had obtained a post-secondary degree. There was discussion on whether it would be appropriate to measure the graduations/completion rates of post-secondary schools within local areas to certify the community as “work ready.”
- Members also discussed the use of soft skills in any criteria that would be used in the certification. Members noted that while some other states had identified soft skills are part of the certification criteria, none of them established specific metrics (or a measurement source) for how the current workforce could be measured as having the soft skills needed.
 - Members discussed the ideas of potentially using drug screen result statistics where available to measure this, though some members

expressed concern over privacy and the difficulty obtaining comprehensive and valid statistics for this.

- Members also discussed potentially using high school attendance records as a way to measure soft skills among the workforce pipeline, though some members expressed concerns about the validity of those records.
- Members also discussed the Work Ethic certification program that DWD used to operate. This program was used primarily in high school, and provided students with the opportunity to be measured in a number of categories, including attendance, grades, community involvement, and if successful to be certified by the state as having the work ethic necessary to be successful. Nate Klinck agreed to look into the program further and to provide additional information to the group at future meetings.

- **Work Ready Framework Concept Document**

- Randy Holmes walked the taskforce through the concept document that he developed. The document was designed to essentially identify the educational/training/development infrastructure that a community would need to have in place to be fully “work ready.” Randy explained that he put the document together as a way for him to think about work readiness preparation from a community’s perspective. Members expressed appreciation for the document, and agreed that the next step would be to identify criteria that could be used to measure the success of communities in becoming work ready. As the members discussed the document, two themes or categories of work readiness seemed to emerge:
 - Workforce Pipeline – the quality of programs and institutions that provide the education/training/supports necessary for the workforce to develop the skills and aptitudes to fill the employment needs of the community. Ideas for how the workforce pipeline could be measured would be graduation rates for both secondary and post-secondary programs.
 - Current workforce – the measure of the human capital currently available in a community to meet the workforce demands of employers. Ideas for how the current workforce could be measured would be percentage of workforce that has a high school diploma or equivalent and the percentage that has some form of post-secondary

completion. Members were very specific in that post-secondary data should include nationally-recognized certifications as well as degrees.

- Nate Klinck agreed to draft a framework for certifying communities as ready to work that will be broken in to the two categories above. This framework will be shared with the taskforce in advance of the next meeting and will serve as the primary area of discussion for the taskforce.

- **Geographic Areas for Certifying Communities**

- Members generally agreed that, based upon the models established in other states, that certifying communities makes greater sense at the county-level.

Mr. Goldman closed the call at 4:15pm, thanking everyone for their participation.