

DEMAND DRIVEN APPROACH
WHITE PAPER

05/19/2009

Purpose of Document

As Utah strives to maintain its competitive edge and foster economic prosperity, there is no greater strategic value worth pursuing than a qualified and skilled workforce that meets employer demands. The globally competitive marketplace, national economic pressures, and Utah's unique demographics have defined this as a top priority for businesses, job seekers, educators, and policy-makers alike.

The purpose of this document is to articulate the Department of Workforce Services' (DWS) primary roles, responsibilities, and strategic priorities within the context of demand driven talent and workforce development. This is the first comprehensive assessment of DWS' direction and approach in operating the State's one-stop system since the inception of the Department 12 years ago. This high-level overview is intended to serve as a catalyst for discussion and feedback; feedback that will be used to refine, strengthen, and focus the Department's priorities and direction.

Process

As DWS redesigns and refocuses its workforce and talent development efforts, it will engage in three phases of planning and feedback:

Phase I

Validate and Refine: Present – June 30, 2009

Refine the strategic approach to our effort, articulate the key objectives for the redesign, and plan a 30,000 foot "to be" concept to provide a frame of reference. This phase is also designed to offer businesses, job seekers, employees, and stakeholders an opportunity to provide input on the proposed concept.

Phase II

Plan and Design: July 1, 2009 – January 1, 2010

Develop the specific tactical objectives, business processes, operational changes, budget, and staffing needs to implement the new design concept. Several project groups of employees and managers will be tasked to design and plan these changes.

Phase III

Implementation: January 1, 2010 and forward

Beginning January 1, 2010, DWS will begin a phased implementation of the policy and operational changes resulting from the Phase II planning efforts.

Feedback on this document and DWS' direction will be synthesized and used to refine our approach and strategies during Phase I of the planning process. DWS will seek feedback from both external and internal audiences.

- External Feedback: Stakeholder Communities

DWS will seek feedback from its external stakeholders through in-person meetings and discussion groups, an online survey, and email. The Executive Director and other leaders from the Department will conduct visits throughout the state to obtain direct feedback from members of employer, education, job seeker, and legislative communities, as well as disadvantaged populations and other stakeholders.

- Internal Feedback: DWS Employees

DWS employees will be invited to provide feedback in any of the following ways:

*The Comment Box on the home page of the DWS intranet. Comments related to this document will be flagged for easy reference and will support further feedback and dialogue.

*An online survey. All employees will receive, via email, a brief online survey shortly after the release of this document. The survey will provide a direct, structured opportunity to voice feedback.

*Ask Kristen. As always, employees may communicate directly with the Executive Director about this document or other important issues.

Current Challenges and Context

The current economic downturn, coupled with stimulus monies and just plain good business practices, requires us to give a fresh look at the way we deliver services and the philosophy behind our service delivery strategies. Historically the Department has lacked an organizational principal or philosophy to guide our decisions and efforts. This has exacerbated many of the challenges outlined below.

In the Department's region structure, it's often difficult to get policy changes and updates "to the end of the row" and the rollout of new initiatives and the implementation of changes can be uneven. Adding to that challenge is the disconnect that often occurs between certain statewide initiatives and how those initiatives are "operationalized" in the regions. We also struggle with how much local variation should be permitted in an employment center. Is it important for a customer to have the same array of services available in Moab or Logan or should there be the flexibility to account for certain unique geographic or regional needs? With the uncertainty of the Department of Labor (DOL) funding streams beyond the stimulus monies, do we move aggressively to "store-fronts?" We need to better align some funding streams with the services we offer. We also have a general lack of understanding as to how pathway and process changes in our employment centers impact our cost-allocation system and, therefore, our budget.

Primarily as a result of the economic downturn, our workload has increased dramatically with core customers served up 46% year over and open caseload counts for employment counselors up 37%. But what does this mean—are our centers and employment counselors stretched to the max, as an example, as a result of this increase? Perhaps, although we have struggled to establish appropriate workload standards for many of our jobs outside of eligibility. We do know however, that we need to build better “tool kits” for our employment counselors so they will have quick and convenient access to the information and resources that can assist them in their work.

While Utah continues to be a top performer in most of the outcome measures tracked by our federal partners, our Family Employment Program (FEP) participation rate is on the decline. Positive closures (FEP) are just barely above the 70% statewide goal and trending downward. Not surprisingly, the percentage of new employers engaged and employers retained has also steadily declined over the past year. The broader and more difficult challenge with performance outcomes is to measure what is important to stakeholders and the Department.

Other challenges we face are a result of shrinking federal dollars. We are now prepared to head in a different direction, particularly as it pertains to our interface with Unemployment Insurance (UI) claimants. The historic isolation of our UI customers requires us to give a fresh examination to the way we deliver our services both in and outside of the employment center (EC) environment. Whatever we do, we must be nimble and flexible enough to respond quickly to the dynamics of our economy and the demands of the workforce. We must also create an organizational culture and environment capable of attracting and retaining qualified and competent staff.

DWS Mission

We strengthen Utah’s economy by supporting the economic stability and quality of our workforce.

Value Proposition

DWS is uniquely positioned to:

***Serve as the primary liaison between businesses and government in order to identify and plan for Utah’s talent needs.**

*Provide world-class labor market analysis and information that businesses, education, economic development, policy-makers, and job seekers need to make smart decisions and formulate effective policies and programs.

*Direct training resources to support businesses’ human capital needs.

*Invest in and incent systemic collaboration to support a dynamic and skilled talent pool.

*Train and connect job seekers with employment and career advancement opportunities.

Guiding Philosophy

The statements represent the Department's core beliefs--beliefs that will help to shape and guide all future work. They serve as organizing principles and points of reference for our decision-making:

*We believe jobs are created by businesses, and that the best way to support job seekers is by connecting them with, and preparing them for, the jobs businesses demand now and in the future.

*We believe the marketplace should define the state's talent needs and that government's role is to respond to, support, and broker strategic partnerships.

*We believe meeting the human capital needs of businesses will expand economic and employment opportunities for our job seekers.

*We believe a skilled and qualified talent pool enhances business performance and our state's competitive advantage. Accordingly, successful workforce development is foundational to successful economic development.

*We believe all of Utah's citizens have the potential to contribute to our economy and to prosper, and that those individuals in traditionally marginalized labor pools should be given the opportunity to succeed.

*We believe by leading statewide workforce and talent development efforts, we will more effectively support customers who access our services directly as well as support the broader population.

*We believe in connecting every DWS customer with employment or career advancement opportunities.

*We believe in being proactive, helping customers achieve stability, early education, work experience, and employment successes upstream that will help them avoid more critical and more expensive social service needs downstream, later in their lives.

*We believe the best way to build Utah's talent pool is to build a coordinated system across organizational boundaries; a system that targets priorities, integrates initiatives, aligns resources, shares joint accountability, and jointly measures outcomes.

*We believe as stewards of the public trust, we must connect all of our resources and efforts with clear outcomes, a solid return on investment, and accountability and transparency to businesses, stakeholders, and job seekers alike.

Goals

The following five goals represent key targets the Department will use to define success. Our outcome measures and strategy map will directly result from these stated objectives, as well as our budget priorities and organizational design.

- *Enhance the performance of Utah businesses by targeting and supporting their human capital needs within our defined role.
- *Assist job seekers achieve economic stability, career advancement, and self-sufficiency.
- *Increase Utah's capacity to train and educate a skilled and qualified talent pool.
- *Ensure that DWS employees have the skills, knowledge, and resources required to meet our outcomes and deliverables.
- *Leverage resources and maximize efficiencies.

Strategy

This section includes the high-level strategies DWS will pursue for achievement of each goal. Strategies will be achieved by aggressive implementation, tactical action steps, in-depth analysis, and be tightly integrated with available funding. Strategies will be used to formulate leading indicators and to drive our agenda.

Enhance the performance of Utah businesses by targeting and supporting their human capital needs within our defined role:

- *Establish formal and informal methods to define, capture, and assess the skills, knowledge, abilities, and training required by employers for their employees.
- *Align our training resources with the skills and jobs the marketplace demands.
- *Integrate economic clusters, targeted sectors, and regional workforce needs into a single workforce development approach.
- *Explore options to dedicate special administrative funds and/or general funds to flexible funding for skills training and talent development.
- *Provide businesses and those responsible for developing the workforce with the most relevant and advanced market analysis of Utah's labor pool in order to enhance their business intelligence and to inform their decision-making.
- *Develop tools and methodologies to access the supply-side of the labor pool.

*Enhance the functionality of jobs.utah.gov to improve usability for employers and job seekers.

Assist job seekers achieve economic stability, career advancement, and self-sufficiency:

*Incent and create work sites that link to career pathways.

*Support and expedite the reemployment of customers receiving unemployment insurance by targeting customers and connecting them with employment services and training programs.

*Use job development for targeted populations.

*Develop connections with eligibility services to support and stabilize customers' lives to enable them to participate successfully in training and employment programs.

*Develop a tiered approach to expose all DWS customers to employment opportunities, including those customers traditionally associated with eligibility services.

*Establish an office of research and innovation to continually link policy and budget design with best practices, longitudinal data, and innovations—beginning with options to define customer groups and design service offerings to meet their needs.

*Connect individual training and work experiences with jobs in demand, as defined by employers.

*Remove monetary or programmatic disincentives that discourage customers from pursuing employment or advancing in their careers.

*Provide customers with user-friendly, timely, and relevant job and career information; this includes providing parents and children information to help them envision career possibilities early in life.

Increase Utah's capacity to train and educate a skilled and qualified talent pool:

*Create an efficient incentive structure to facilitate systemic collaboration across organizations in order to support regional and cluster workforce needs.

*Develop an interagency key performance matrix.

*Establish and promote career pathways that are linked to clusters and priority workforce needs.

*Customize our labor market information for our primary user groups, including education, economic development, and applied technology colleges.

*Use state set-aside dollars to invest in programmatic and infrastructure needs.

*Invest in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) academies.

Ensure that DWS employees have the skills, knowledge, and resources required to meet our outcomes and deliverables:

*Expand job specialization.

*Implement on-going assessments and a skills inventory of our employees.

*Benchmark caseloads.

*Reward performance.

*Customize labor market information (LMI) data and career information for our employees.

*Aggressively pursue new technologies that will enhance employee productivity, customer interaction, and knowledge base.

Leverage resources and maximize efficiencies:

*Collaborate with Governor Huntsman's 21st Century Workforce Alliance to develop a demand-driven, talent and workforce development strategy for the state.

*Organize and integrate the DWS, state, regional, and local organizational structures to achieve our outcomes, deliver our core services to defined customer groups, and to integrate business demand with operations.

*Use continual process improvement tools and strategies to reduce costs, cycle times, and to streamline processes.

*Develop a facilities plan that reduces our capital expenses, aligns with Utah's changing demographics, allows for flexibility, and utilizes technology to provide for greater access points.

*Provide seed money to incent resource sharing and industry consortiums.

*Expand interagency data sharing and business intelligence.