

STATE OF ILLINOIS TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST
Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Strategic Planning Support

PROJECT TITLE: IWIB Strategic Plan

REQUEST: \$30K (Estimate)

PROJECT TIMELINE: 10/1/16 – 06/30/17

TARGET AUDIENCE: IWIB Members in concert with WIOA System and Education Partners (?)

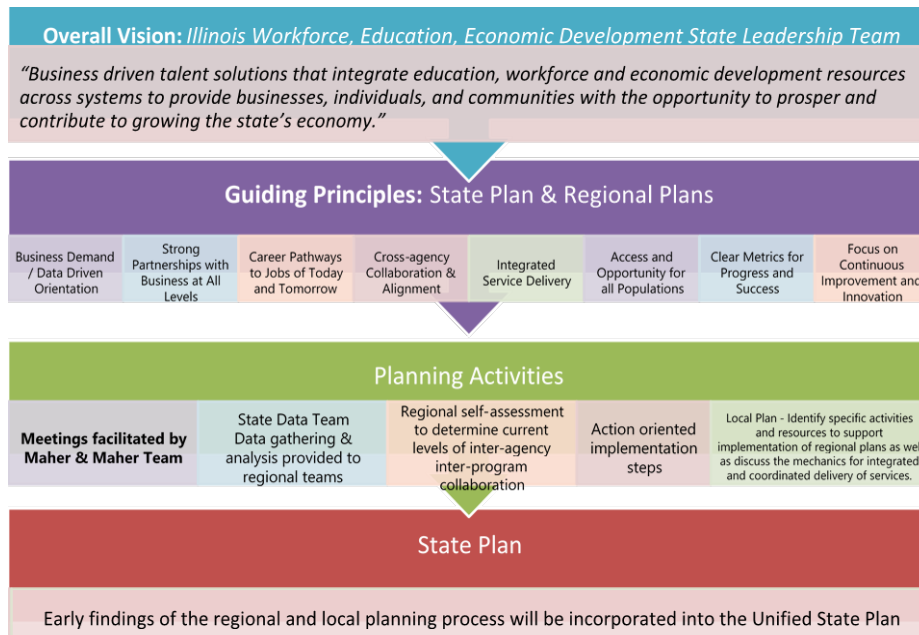
BACKGROUND

The Governor and the IWIB have created a unified vision for aligning workforce, education and economic development through the implementation of WIOA. In August of 2015, a team of IWIB business members, Cabinet level staff along with industry associations, education entities and community organizations established the following vision: *“Business-driven talent solutions that integrate education, workforce, and economic development resources across systems to provide businesses, individuals, and communities with the opportunity to prosper and contribute to growing the state’s economy.”*

To achieve this vision, the Governor and the IWIB built the Unified Plan around the following principles:

- Demand Driven Orientation
- Strong Partnerships with Business at All Levels
- Career Pathways to Today’s and Tomorrow’s Jobs
- Cross-agency Collaboration and Alignment
- Integrated Service Delivery
- Access and Opportunity for all Populations
- Clear Metrics for Progress and Success
- Focus on Continuous Improvement and Innovation

The framework below demonstrates how the vision and principles have guided the regional and unified planning process.



In June 2016, the IWIB participated in a half-day retreat facilitated by Maher & Maher, where IWIB members came together to begin discussing how best to proceed in establishing key priorities for

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creating an effective and efficient workforce system. This retreat was the start of the strategic planning process that will reinforce the above framework. The strategic plan will solidify the IWIB as the keeper of a guiding vision and the driver of the system to ensure the alignment of workforce, education, and economic development leads to a roadmap for board members to put into place a sound operational structure that will ensure the expanded functions under WIOA are carried out.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUEST

While the IWIB has been guiding the implementation of WIOA, they are ready to take a more active role and gain a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities and what is needed to translate these functions into strategic implementation leading to a High Impact Workforce Board. To gain this understanding, the IWIB decided at the June retreat, to undertake a more in-depth planning process that will move the IWIB from a tactical, operational approach to one where the members will think strategically and serve as system leaders.

Specifically, the IWIB is seeking a consultant to build on the suggestions and recommendations of the June retreat and conduct an analysis that recognizes current strengths, identifies and addresses obstacles, and looks at continuous improvement of services leading to actionable steps. Based on a small group activity members of the IWIB were asked to consider and discuss activities the Board could undertake in the three standard areas of the High Impact WDB standards. A sampling of potential activities identified through these small groups for each Standard Area are outlined below.

Strategic Planning and Implementation

- Develop an Illinois strategic plan;
- Ensure policy directives from the board support that strategic vision; and
- Create a dialogue between local boards and state board.

Developing and Managing Resources

- Asset mapping resources at the state level;
- Joint policy development among system partners; and
- Certification standards for Illinois workNet.

Managing the Work of the Board

- Share promising practices and participate in peer learning opportunities with other state boards;
- Provide technical assistance and support to regions and locals based on review of their respective plans; and
- Review data and determine what if any additional metrics the board may want to establish to support accountability and transparency.

To fully implement the development of the Boards Strategic Plan and address each of the three standard areas outlined above, the IWIB would like to implement these recommendations through a 3-phased approach, each considered independently in this Technical Assistance request as outlined below:

- Phase 1 – Training on the Key Elements of High Performing State Workforce Boards (\$10-15,000)
 - Outline the goals and responsibilities of a state workforce board
 - Build a stronger and more engaged board
 - Provide practical examples of how the functions of the board can be implemented through Illinois' workforce system

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- Enhance the current knowledge of board members on sector strategies, especially as they are reflected in the strategic plan and its goals and objectives
- Phase 2 – Develop Short and Long Term Goals and Objectives (\$10-15,000)
 - Clearly articulate the strategic plan that is goal oriented and extends beyond the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) required activities
 - Working with local boards, identify goals outside of WIOA programs that can be leveraged to establish partnerships within communities
 - Implement a continuous improvement process that identifies changes in the system or strategies that are no longer effective and determines necessary updates
- Phase 3 – Asset Mapping of State Board Resources (\$10-15,000)
 - Provide for fully inclusive participation of interested stakeholders to include workforce, economic development, education, business leaders of public and private employers, human services, local and state workforce professionals, and other relevant stakeholders
 - Manage the assets more effectively and efficiently

TARGET AUDIENCE/BENEFICIARY

The Technical Assistance requested would be directed to all of the members of the Illinois State Workforce Innovation Board, as well as the staff to the IWIB. As the provisions of WIOA continue to be implemented in Illinois, there is an opportunity for the state workforce board to renew its commitment to developing statewide strategies and policies that create sustainable changes. A more clear understanding by board members on their roles and responsibilities in meeting the functions required by the Act will strengthen their ability to connect businesses with skilled job seekers.

In addition, the knowledge gained at the state level can be disseminated to all of the local boards to ensure their members develop a coordinated set of strategies and policies consistent with the career pathways and sector strategies relevant to their specific local areas.

Finally, through the efforts of both the state and local boards, the entire workforce system will benefit from the clear message regarding these strategies, especially as they relate to improving access to and quality of the services available to all users of the system, including businesses and job seekers.

JUSTIFICATION

Maher & Maher observed from the June retreat that for the IWIB to grow into a more strategic role, they will need to embrace their role as the driver of workforce development in the state. Furthermore, they suggested that this would require that the IWIB have a better understanding of the need for state and regional collaboration as well as strategies for forming and engaging with business-led (sector) partnerships. It was recommended that the Board would benefit significantly from more exposure to emerging best practices from other areas around the State and country and might be accomplished by:

- Developing a true strategic plan for the Illinois workforce system that serves as the game plan for the interagency partners that could be reinforced in a charter signed by agency partners;
- Conducting discussions regarding what will be specific measurable accomplishments for the first year of the strategic plan;
- A facilitated process through which the priorities, strengths and weakness of regional and local plans are discussed and then an action plan for supporting those plans is developed in conjunction with the Locals and Regions;

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- Exploration of performance metrics that would support the results the Board wants to achieve in the next three to five years; and
- Ongoing investment in sectors and career pathways including:
 - Continued Board and board staff training on sectors strategies and career pathways;
 - Continue efforts around of the development of a “talent supply chain management” data set with state and regional representation that would define and reevaluate sectoral demand and off-set that against supply side data to define any existing skills gap (occupationally) and then define or realign state targeted sector strategies to close any such gaps statewide.
 - A data set such as this would provide an on-going supply chain management tool that would enable the board to better define priorities and measure performance over time.
 - The continuation of the state data team and establishment of regional data teams building off the work already done to collect and disseminate regional data from a single, trusted source to Boards in the region and to gain economies of scale in supporting regional data needs

Approving the technical assistance request would come at the heels of the recently completed retreat and allow the IWIB to begin addressing the recommendations by Maher & Maher and quickly move into the next phase of the strategic planning through an analysis that will inform the IWIB goals and objectives as well as the key strategies and indicators that will promote continuous improvement.

ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

As a result of the technical assistance, the IWIB will be better positioned to develop a vision for Illinois’ workforce system and those policies necessary to meet the vision. They will have a stronger ability to provide leadership to the local boards and state agency partners that will lead to strategic partnerships to achieve the vision, one that will lead to more specific outcomes including:

- Know and understand key terms of WIOA including sector strategies and career pathways, and how they as a board can affect the workforce system through them
- Create a workforce system that brings all partner programs together in the provision of services to businesses and job seekers through better communication and alignment
- Develop a set of measurable outcomes beyond the WIOA performance metrics, that hold the system accountable
- Collect and analyze the necessary data to support policy development
- Identify and share the best practices occurring within Illinois’ local workforce areas and across the country