

Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act

Best Practices Executive Summary

In every major city across the country unemployment and underemployment remains a challenging issue. Yet, even with access to large pools of unemployed workers, many businesses struggle to find employees that meet their needs.

In this executive summary, the key findings are provided for four examples from across the country where workforce efforts have shifted away from a traditional program-centric model to a more holistic approach that engages with the unemployed, the business community and the educational system to ultimately create better alignment between workforce and available jobs.

Additionally, this executive summary provides findings about the Minneapolis St. Paul region's Workforce Investment Boards.

Key Findings

Best Practices Findings

- **Address the long-term skills gap:** Mayor de Blasio's Jobs for New Yorkers Taskforce set out to address inequality in the workforce across NYC's five boroughs. In response to their new goals, the Taskforce report identified a legacy system failure - emphasis on rapid job placement does not address the long-term skills gap.
- **System, not programs:** The Gulf Coast Workforce Board, which serves Houston and the surrounding 12 counties, found that in order to organize for success they needed to redefine themselves, shifting their thinking from being the operators of a \$170M workforce development organization to being the shepherds of a \$6B workforce development system. This shift allowed staff to manage programs under a board-approved structure, freeing the board to focus on leading the larger system.
- **Effective Coordination:** Seattle King County organized their operations in a "hub-and-spoke" model in which WorkSource served as a coordinating body between talent engagement, support and success partners, and employer partners, including community colleges and private sector leaders. This system improved effectiveness and efficiency.

For more information, you can access the full report at www.MSPWin.org.

- **Flexible options matter:** KentuckianaWorks found that WIOA funding was their most flexible funding stream, allowing them to focus on funding their top regional priorities, and not simply on running a WIOA program.

Minneapolis – St. Paul Region Findings

- The GMWC and the six WDBs in the Twin Cities Region differ from those outlined above because they do not proactively promote a workforce that reflects the unique employment needs of the region.
- The GMWC itself cites lack of program alignment and lack of funding as reasons why it is unable to effectively address regional issues. From the GMWC 2016 plan:
 - “A primary weakness of the regional workforce development system is inadequate funding.”
 - “Substantial funding that is made available within the workforce system by competitive grant processes sometimes undermines shared strategies that have been developed at the local and regional levels.”
- The MSP Regional Boards fund programs through a wide variety of funding streams: local, state and federal and governance structures differ for each Board in the MSP Region.
- Local elected officials are key decision makers for the MSP regional board because:
 - They appoint regional members,
 - Staff of the WDB report to those governmental bodies and operate under their authority,
 - In general, the chief elected official in a local area is authorized to appoint the members of the local board for such area, and
 - In addition to WIOA, Counties have authority over MFIP, which for many of these boards is the primary and majority source of revenue.
- Some of the MSP Regional Board’s geographic service areas overlap.
- The Greater Metropolitan Workforce Council aims to coordinate the work of the MSP regional WDBs, however currently the bulk of the work and funding is done at the WDB level.

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