

# Oklahoma's New Day, New Way!

## Workforce Development System Certification Overview

### Introduction

Today, employers and job seekers are plagued by a skills mismatch. Communities that can create an effective, on-going talent pipeline that ensures there are workers with the right skills to meet the ever-changing needs of businesses can grow and remain competitive. According to the Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED), and Oklahoma Senator Coburn who both conducted studies, nine state agencies and their local entities are working somewhat independently to create this talent pipeline, *with **One Stop Centers as one silo***. But for Oklahoma to have a truly world class workforce/talent development system, the Governor and various agency system directors recognized that all agencies must go beyond being a "collection of hard working, effective individual agencies" and become an "efficient, effective **system** providing seamless and comprehensive services." To create this workforce development system, the directors must look at the system holistically and where their particular agency and its services fit into the larger vision. Then they must commit to jointly producing the tools and processes needed to implement a workforce system.

The Governor and the agency directors who represent the various parts of the system recognized the short and the long term benefits that having such a comprehensive system would bring to Oklahoma. They recognized that a systemic approach would create not only a more effective service delivery approach for Oklahoma citizens and business, but a true competitive advantage for Oklahoma's economic development efforts; thus meeting their strategic vision that "***Oklahoma's workforce development system increases profitability for businesses and increases income for all Oklahomans.***"

Knowing that what gets measured gets done, the GCWED mustered political will and called for "the development of a Workforce Development **System Certification** process with the anticipation of creating a 'new normal' surrounding stellar customer focus. Certification of the system is designed to ensure consistency throughout the system while encouraging local and regional adaptation." This new approach of systemically serving job seeker and business customers is called the New Day, New Way!

### Key Outcome and Reason for Workforce Development System Certification

The key outcome of Workforce Development System Certification is to ensure that "***Oklahoma has a pipeline of appropriately skilled and credentialed workers ready to meet the employment needs of Oklahoma employers.***" The workforce development system will be designed to be the springboard to success for Oklahoma's businesses and job seekers. The benefits to Oklahoma, its citizens and businesses are:

- Consistent, high-quality services to employers and job seekers throughout the state;
- User-friendly, customer-focused services;
- Alignment among education, workforce and economic development;
- Accountability for services and results; and,
- Maximization of all workforce development resources.

### ***Certification of Systems versus Centers***

Although many states are creating certification systems and processes to certify **Centers**, the GCWED has chosen to focus on the certification of workforce development **systems**. A One Stop or Workforce Development Center is the “comprehensive physical location that houses multiple workforce development partners”; whereas the system is the “network of mandatory and optional partners, programs, centers and service providers that collectively address the community’s workforce development needs”. The GCWED was concerned that community perception states there is no difference between workforce development centers or systems, and, that the centers were the responsibility of only one or two of the partner agencies.

As discussed in the Introduction section, individual workforce development agencies working alone or towards disaggregate goals cannot effectively address all of the workforce needs within the community. Creating a globally competitive community requires the close collaboration of all of the workforce development agencies, working together towards common goals, based on a unified plan created to address the skills requirements of employers that are key to community growth and prosperity. Focusing only on one or two agencies that may be co-located within one building or facility, such as a One Stop or Workforce Development Center, will not be comprehensive enough. Therefore, this system certification evaluates how well all partners are working together to create a talent pipeline to assist employers to grow and prosper.

The certification process includes a local system's self assessment and action planning to prepare to be certified, development and implementation of a local unified plan, with a final pre-step of completing a system certification application form. Once the local system applies for certification, a trained, multi-member review team conducts both a desk-top and on-site review of the entire local workforce development system (including all local entities identified as a part of that system), based on a consistent, standardized evaluation tool. Once completed, the review team makes a recommendation for a local system's certification to the Workforce Systems Oversight Committee of the GCWED, who will in turn send the final recommendation to the GCWED. The GCWED will certify each local system.

### ***Process to Develop the System Certification***

The GCWED began by creating a Task Force of representatives from the nine state agencies and their local entities, including the :

- Governor's Council on Workforce and Economic Development (GCWED)
- Local Workforce Investment Boards and Staff (LWIBs)
- Oklahoma Adult Basic and Continuing Education (ABE)
- Oklahoma Department of Career and Technical Education (ODCTE)
- Oklahoma Department of Commerce (ODOC)
- Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS)
- Oklahoma Department of Rehabilitation Services (DRS)
- Oklahoma Employment Security Commission (OESC)
- Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education (Higher Regents)

The Task Force began its work by gathering and using customer feedback on the workforce development system. It then divided into three committees, each focused on one of the following categories: 1) governance; 2) job seeker services, and 3) business services. Over a six-month time period, facilitated by national consultant Richalene (Ricki) M. Kozumplik, the Task Force has developed a workforce development system certification:

- **framework** (how the system certification will be conducted, including a certification process flow chart and overall timeline for completion of the certification process )
- **standards** and draft **measures** (what each regional/local system must meet to become certified)
- local system **self-assessment** tool
- **pilot approach** including:
  - an application to become a pilot area;
  - an evaluation form/process to select pilots;
  - the selection of three pilot areas; and,
  - an orientation/training process for the pilot areas
- **review team** (comprised of one state representative from each of the nine agencies/entities.

In addition, the following workforce development system certification tools are being developed:

- certification application
- certification evaluation form (both desk top and on-site)
- review team training curriculum

Each of the 3 pilot areas has completed a self- assessment that identified common and unique training needs for progression towards system certification. Some of the common training areas are: 1) unified planning; 2) service mapping; 3) resource mapping, and 4) process mapping. The pilot process began October 2012 and is scheduled to be completed by June 30, 2013. At that time, the Task Force will use the information gained within the pilot process to review and finalize the framework, standards and measures and all of the tools, based on the lessons learned during the pilot timeline. The GCWED anticipates certification of all local regions by June 30, 2014.

### ***Further Information Contact***

For further information, or, for copies of tools and materials related to this system certification process, contact:

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