

SOLANO COUNTY

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT REVIEW



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**SOLANO
COUNTY**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A. Introduction and Purpose

The Solano County Board of Supervisors is committed to support the work of Solano Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) whose purpose is to “attract, grow, and retain business and industry in Solano County that will enhance the economic vitality and quality of life in our communities.” To complement the SEDC mission, the Board seeks to develop a strong, solid and sustainable workforce development system that will provide excellent and skilled workers, as well as aligned and flexible training partners ready to meet business-training needs.

Solano County is emerging from a deep recession with record unemployment, very high levels of housing foreclosures and record numbers of public assistance recipients. There are lessons to be learned during the downturn. The economy was expanding when the housing and job market collapsed. The County residents and workforce development system was ill prepared to weather the difficult times. The Board of Supervisors wants to ensure that residents will be more resilient and self sufficient, and workforce systems more streamlined when the next downturn occurs.

Though the economy is improving after a long, deep recession and the unemployment rate is lowering, families are still struggling economically with underemployment, families working multiple jobs to stay “above water,” and there remains, according to the census, a large number of Solano County families living at the poverty level. In this current environment and with the stakes high for both the residents and businesses, the County Administrator and the Board of Supervisors determined it was timely to review the Solano County Workforce Development structure.

In Solano County there are numerous public and private organizations involved with workforce development, including: four County departments:

- The Workforce Development Board
- The California Department of Rehabilitation
- The Employment Development Department
- Several nonprofits
- Solano Community College
- Five private vocational schools
- U. C. Davis
- Sacramento State extension programs
- Four adult school programs
- Several newly formed youth employment programs.

All the above are directly operating workforce development programs independently in Solano County with minimal coordination and collaboration.

The perception in the business community is that the workforce development system lacks coordination and does not function smoothly and effectively. The goal of this review is to ultimately create an enhanced workforce development system model that is transparent, cohesive and accessible for both residents seeking employment and businesses needing skilled, capable, and, to the extent possible, local employees. For those individuals who want to work--provide support to make job seeking intuitive seamless. For those who want to improve their career--provide a path. For those who feel they can't secure a job-- give them a greater chance.

Solano County facilitated a review of workforce development which includes:

- identifying gaps and duplicative services,
- investigating and identifying services needed,
- assessing current services that need to be strengthen,
- targeting employer supports needed,
- and ascertaining the connection between training programs and employer needs.

In addition, best practices of the workforce development programs nationally and statewide are reviewed for opportunities for Solano County to adopt elements from these programs.

B. Seven Change Factors Affecting Workforce Development

There are several local initiatives and legislative pressures to integrate and streamline federal workforce development programs in California and locally:

Change Factor 1. - Continued poverty and loss of workforce development capacity because of the "great recession" in Solano County

Change Factor 2. - The impact on the workforce with a growing senior population

Change Factor 3. - Changes to the California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids (CalWORKs) legislation reducing participation in the program from 60 to 48 months.

Change Factor 4. - Effort to reduce poverty among youth by expanding youth programs involvement in work activities.

Change Factor 5. - Offender Reentry population and integration into the workforce

Change Factor 6. - The Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act of 2014 (WIOA) new expectations/requirement starting in 2016.

Change Factor 7. - Moving Solano Forward- Solano Economic Development Corporation's (SEDC) joint effort with Solano County to expand and diversify businesses.

C. Review Scope and Methodology

Scope

The scope of this review was to conduct an assessment of the critical issues in Solano County's workforce development System. This review identifies the strengths of the existing system, looks at weaknesses, reviews individual programs and potential duplication of services, and focuses on outcomes and measurable results. The review focuses on the effectiveness of the connection of training for employees and employers, with a focus on opportunities for strengthening programs and coordination. It identifies several gaps and barriers impeding effectiveness. This study recommends consideration of a workforce development concept that can be utilized to effectively coordinate services, streamline processes, address gaps and weaknesses in the current work programs, capture and share data and resources, establish common tools and standards, document outcomes to get people into jobs, enhance job retention, and career growth, and support local employers.

Methodology

1. Interview key workforce development stakeholders, representing local, regional, statewide and national organizations to identify trends, what works well, gaps in the service delivery model, and input on the most streamlined, transparent, and effective workforce development practices.
2. Review of Solano County programs, services and resources.
3. Extensive literature review of best practices in workforce development
4. Solicit input from local employers, business associations, labor and trade organizations, including recommendations to improve the workforce development system in Solano. Based on information gathered through these efforts, a draft workforce development concept structure evolved and was developed. The concept structure is called HIRRE (Help in Recruiting and Retaining Employees) **(see APPENDIX 1 for detailed concept)**. The HIRRE concept is a draft proposal intended to generate discussion and solicit ideas for new and better proposals.

HIRRE - (Help in Recruiting and Retaining Employees) The HIRRE concept is a high level view of how a restructured workforce system could work more effectively and efficiently for both the job seeker and employers. (see Appendix 1 for more information) The use of a SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats) is an exercise to get useful feedback of the draft concept of a high level "idealized" system that serves clients, businesses and providers of services more effectively. HIRRE provides a "bird's eye view" of an "idealized" Solano's workforce development system it allows for a discussion of what is working and not working currently. It is not intended to be a finished product but is an outline and draft concept of the pieces, tools and system connections needed. The stakeholders will need to tailor the details through further deliberations.

Highlights of HIRRE Concept

- Creation of a close alliance between business and training providers and with job seekers.
- The use of a “**Common Assessment**” tool by all programs and job seekers;
- Employer-driven definitions of **Job Ready Soft Skills** that has a curriculum imbedded in all training programs and is embraced as a common definition;
- **Shared resources** (Computer banks, Job Clubs, Job Readiness classes, Resume preparation classes, library facilities)
- **A Solano County Job Bank** that links all open Solano Jobs in one place to aid job seekers.
- **Navigators/Advisors/ Coaches** that support both employers, job seekers and those that wish to improve their future career prospects.
- Quick, navigable way for self-directed job seekers to find jobs without obstacles

D. Review of Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) of the HIRRE Concept

Several focus groups including City Managers were held to review the HIRRE concept. A focus session was held with key leaders of the current workforce development system. In addition sessions were held in Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville with the stakeholders and community partners in the workforce development system. Lastly, focus groups were held with a representative group of employers and chamber of commerce leadership. In these groups, each were asked to identify the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) of the HIRRE concept. Based on an analysis of these SWOT sessions, research of best practices, discussions with key informants from other jurisdictions in California counties, state representatives, and nationally recognized programs, and change factors listed above, key findings and recommendations were developed.

E. Summary and Recommendations

Federal, state and local administrators of key workforce development programs including the Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act (WIOA), Welfare to Work programs, and reentry programs are seeking ways to integrate funding and programmatic mandates. With the resources for these services not increasing but shrinking as the number to serve increases and the desire to see successful outcomes by the public and legislators, the need for program integration, for a more efficient and effective use of funds, and for measuring outcomes and allowing transparency, is requiring the workforce development systems to change. Job seekers are looking for the best opportunities, businesses are seeking a robust pool of job-ready, skilled and motivated employees and limited resources demand that we work towards a streamlined, coordinated, integrated and cost effective system that gets results and increases the number of local residents who are employed and self-sufficient.

The landscape of workforce development is changing dramatically. The recommendations in this report have been developed within the context of an evolving demand for a workforce development that is strong and effective. The basis for these recommendations come from the findings after reviewing the content data collected in the SWOT focus groups, employer focus groups, research and analysis of best practices statewide and nationally. While there are strengths in some areas of the existing system, there is also a need to change from the “silo” mode of separate workforce development organizations to a larger view in which individual organizations add to, collaborate and strengthen the workforce development system in Solano County. Reforming the current system will create stronger businesses that will allow workers and their families to do better financially. Some of the recommendations will require more analysis and planning, however the report also includes recommendations and solutions that can be implemented quickly.

F. Acknowledgement

The Solano County Board of Supervisors are to be applauded for their forward thinking in conducting this environmental scan of its workforce development system and taking an active role is assuring our residents have opportunities to work locally and for businesses to thrive. In addition, special thanks to the Solano Economic Development Corporation (SEDC), which has been instrumental in gathering information, connecting key informants, and helping to organize the community input sessions. Gratitude goes out to all those who provided input in the focus groups, interviews and participated in this review.

G. Recommendations

Dashboard of Recommendations:

	The Areas in Red should be addressed during the first 6 months
	The Areas in Orange should be addressed in the first 18 months
	The issues in Blue have started. Continue engaging in this activity

-  1a. Adopt a Standard Assessment Tool.
-  2a. Solano County Workforce Stakeholders should adopt a practical and useable employer-driven definition of Soft Skills.
-  3a. Form a steering committee of providers and stakeholders to look for opportunities to coordinate, realign services, end duplicative practices, and look for opportunities to braid funding and services.
-  4a. Include Seniors in Workforce Development Planning.
-  5a. Adopt common outcome measures for all workforce programs and develop a dashboard of all workforce development programs with quarterly reporting.
-  6a. Revamp the Online Job Search System.
-  7a. Adopt Navigator/ Advisor Work System.
-  8a. Assemble a team of IT experts, providers and employers to set up a project for an online job posting plan for Solano County.
-  9a. Develop cross system collaboration; bring key players (Workforce Development Board, Health and Social Service, Reentry Services, Veteran Services, Youth Programs, Voc Rehab, Homeless services, adult schools, and senior programs and other key partners) together to establish an integrated/registration for job seekers with the goal of ensuring that they are able to access all services and programs available to assist them in getting a job.
-  10a. Look at best practices for workforce development resources and services, for example, the Seattle Jobs Initiative in helping low income individuals enter the job market and build careers. The Seattle program has shown remarkable success, and technical assistance is available to jurisdictions through the Seattle Jobs Initiative organization.



11a. Actively engage re-entry ex-offenders involved in work activities as soon as possible.



12a. Youth Programs should continue to work in partnership with the larger reforming of the workforce development system.



13a. Bring together a work group of program experts, financial experts, and experts in one stop center design to form a work group with the purpose of designing an employment-centered, client-centric Job Center.



14a. The Solano County Board of Supervisors should make a Call to Action to direct county staff, contractors of workforce development funds and encourage other agencies and community based organizations to do what is necessary to realign, restructure, and repurpose available dollars to focus on helping all county residents to become part of the workforce and to help business thrive and grow in Solano County.

A. **INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE**

Purpose of the Review

Solano County's Board of Supervisors along with the Mayors and leadership of the county's 7 cities have invested, using Office of Economic Adjustment funding, and partnered with the Solano County Economic Development Corporation (SEDC) to develop tools and processes to help diversify and strengthen the economic base locally focusing on existing businesses as well as new business opportunities. Several reports have been created and ongoing efforts to grow employment continue. To assist in attracting businesses to Solano County, local workforce development programs should be coordinated and collaborate to serve current and future business needs and opportunities. Solano is just emerging from a deep recession when unemployment rates, defaults in housing and record numbers of individuals and families receiving public assistance. There are lessons learned during the downturn. The economy was expanding when the housing and job market collapsed. The county residents and workforce development system was ill prepared to weather the difficult times. The Board of Supervisors wants to ensure that residents will be more resilient and self-sufficient, and workforce systems more streamlined and focused on positive results when the next downturn occurs. Though no previous thorough review has been conducted, the business community views the system to be uncoordinated and not functioning smoothly and effectively. Though the economy is improving after a long, deep recession and the unemployment rate is lowering, families are still struggling economically with underemployment, families working multiple jobs to stay "above water," and there remains, according to the census, a large number of Solano County families living at the poverty level. The current workforce development system is comprised of numerous employment programs that is each organized separately but is not a collaborative system. An initial snapshot of Workforce Development in Solano County;

- Finds employers frustrated and concerned about all the different programs and the lack of coordination; and they are challenged by the need to find capable employers.
- The job seekers are challenged to find jobs that match their skill levels. Each individual must traverse a confusing system and needs a high level of patience, perseverance and Internet savvy to succeed.
- Most programs in the Solano Workforce Development System are regulated at the Federal and State level. The regulations are not consistent across programs and sometimes may actually be in conflict. Programs are often limited to serving only one or two target populations. As a result, local organizations operate their own programs in compliance with these regulations, allowing little opportunity for local collaboration.
- The State and Federal legislation is evolving towards a more integrated, aligned and collaborative systems. There is a growing understanding by legislators and administrators that programing in silos can and does result in duplicative services and lack of streamlining and wastes precious resources. Recent legislative actions

are intentionally moving in a direction to reduce mutually exclusive programs and foster collaboration. The merging of these legislative mandates summon local leaders and businesses to demand better collaboration, closer ties to employers and better integration of services.

The Solano County Board of Supervisors has the opportunity to ensure that workforce development processes are aligned with the County's major initiative to diversify, grow and strengthen the business climate. The Board has a key role in facilitating a strong businesses environment, which is to provide access to a strong and well-trained workforce. As part of this initiative, the Board of Supervisors commissioned a review of the workforce development programs in Solano County with the goal of improving coordination and effectiveness. To strengthen the system, the first steps in this process was to identify recent legislative action affecting workforce development programs, conduct an analysis of how programs are currently working, identify gaps in the system, as well as, unnecessary duplications of services, and to pinpoint opportunities for streamlining services.

In addition, the Board expressed the importance of outcomes and measurable results, and a desire to understand what may be the best practices in workforce development for consideration and implementation in Solano County.

Current Legislative and Program Impacts on Workforce Development

- **Change Factor 1 - Workforce Innovations and Opportunities Act of 2014 (WIOA)**

WIOA legislation is a reauthorization the original Workforce Investment Act. (WIA). It will help job seekers and workers access employment, education, and training and support services to succeed in the labor market and match employers with skilled workers they need to compete in the global economy. The new legislation strengthens the original intent of the WIA with purposeful integration language and outcome measures. The role of new Workforce Development Board evolves into a greater coordination role. The highlights include:

- Better Alignment of federal work investments to support local job seekers and employers
- Strengthen the governing bodies that establish state, regional and local workforce investment priorities
- Improves assistance to employers to find workers with necessary skills to meet local needs
- Aligns goals and increases accountability for job seekers and the public
- Fosters regional collaboration to meet the needs of the regional economy
- Target workforce services to better serve job seekers
- Improves services to individuals with disabilities
- Improves support and access to services

- **Change Factor 2 - CalWORKs- (California Work Opportunity and Responsibility to Kids)**

- California's Welfare to Work Program provides a time limited but resource rich program for low-income families receiving cash welfare assistance through the CalWORKs program. While CalWORKs has significant funding and is able to offer a wide array of welfare-to-work services to CalWORKs recipients, the length of time that an individual is able to participate in these employment programs is limited. Further, FY2011 legislation has enacted new rules that shortened the length of time an individual is able to participate in these employment programs from 60 months to 48 months. The federal government requires that states and counties meet work participation targets and failure to do so can result in financial penalties. More significantly, if participants are unable to secure employment within the specified time limit, the financial impact to these individuals and their families is dire due to the reduction in level of cash assistance once the time limit is reached.
- In 2016, Congress is expected to fully reauthorize TANF (Temporary Assistance for Needy Families or, CalWORKs in California) instead of the yearly "continuing funding and regulations resolutions" which have occurred in prior years. Reauthorization will likely result in significant program changes. It appears that there is a strong interest by legislators in developing better collaboration between TANF programs, various industry sectors and with the WIOA programs.

- **Change Factor 3 - Solano Economic Development Corporation (SEDC)- Moving Solano Forward Initiative**

County leaders have invested their time and resources into diversifying the economic base of Solano County and allow residents and businesses to thrive and prosper through an initiative known as Moving Solano Forward. Recognizing the rapidly changing economic and workforce development sectors, the County Administrator and Board of Supervisors took action to ensure that the workforce development system is aligned to meet the needs of businesses moving into the area as well as strengthen the workforce development system for those already doing business in Solano County.

Solano County Board of Supervisors wants to align workforce development processes with Moving Solano Forward's major effort to diversify and strengthen the business climate. The Board acknowledges that a key part of ensuring a strong businesses environment is providing access to a strong and well-trained workforce. With this in mind, the planning for Economic Development and Workforce Development must be closely aligned.

- **Change Factor 4 - Effort to Expand Youth Involvement in Workforce Development**

In 2010, the United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) set a goal to reduce poverty by 50 % in the nine Bay Area counties including Solano County. A collaboration of several local area organizations worked to develop a strategic plan and key focus areas to achieve this goal. One of the key areas of focus of the strategic plan is workforce development for youth 16-24 years. During this evolving effort, youth leaders, adult schools, and organizers are beginning to come to the realization that their planning efforts, as well as the larger workforce development planning effort, should be better aligned. The sheer number of youth programs show there is an interest in youth employment. Collaboration will only make these efforts yield greater results. Here is a list of programs for youth currently operating in Solano County:

- *Kaiser Permanente Summer Youth Employment Program*
- *Genentech Internship Program*
- *Job Squad*
- *Inspire Interactive Career Fair*
- *Vallejo City Unified School Districts Putting Our Youth to Work Program*
- *Big Brothers / Big Sisters of the North Bay*
- *INROADS*
- *Health Career Connection*

Source: Children’s Network

- **Change Factor 5 - The Growing Senior population and Potential Workforce**

The population in Solano County is aging very quickly from 11.5% in 2010 to 13.3% in 2015. The projected aging population over 65 years is 21.2% by 2030. In addition to the larger numbers of seniors in the population, seniors are more able-bodied than previous generations. The normal balance of those retiring and those entering the job market will experience some disruption in future years with more seniors staying longer in the workforce. While it may not appear to be a workforce development issue now, it is a problem that cannot be ignored. In addition, there is a growing body of knowledge that indicate poverty among our senior population is a significant and growing problem. For seniors experiencing financial challenges, being able to supplement income and staying involved in the labor force is a survival need not just a supplement to a comfortable income.

Solano County’s Projected Demographic Rate for Seniors 65 years and Older

2010	11.5%
2015	13.3%
2020	16.7%
2030	21.2%

Source: California Department of Finance Estimates

- **Change Factor 6 - Poverty and Solano County-**

According to the Public Policy Institute of California and the American Community Survey, the poverty rate is estimated to be as high as 12.3% in Solano County, which is higher than neighboring Contra Costa County (10.5%) but a lower poverty level than Sacramento County (18.2%), the State of California (16.4%) and the United States (14.8%). If the Solano County workforce programs want to focus on moving individuals out of poverty, the workforce system must be accessible, predictable, and navigable. According to census data, the pockets of poverty in Vallejo (18.3%), Fairfield (12.7), and Vacaville (9.6%) have remained in place for a significant period of time.

Poverty Estimates in Solano County

Solano Poverty Rate Estimate	12.3% (Overall)
City of Vallejo	18.3%
City of Fairfield	12.7%
City of Vacaville	9.6%

Source: *American Community Survey*

- **Change Factor 7 - Reentry Population**

With the passage of AB109 in 2011 and Proposition 47 in 2014, there has been an influx of ex-offenders returning to their county of origin having completed their time incarcerated but not having received much from the State Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation on the “rehabilitation side.” Realignment shifted this to counties to attempt to redesign services to reduce recidivism. The challenge for counties is integrating these individuals into the mainstream without having them re-offend. Employment becomes a critical and centerpiece strategy in realizing this goal. Solano has opened two “Centers for Positive Change” in Vallejo and Fairfield. The national research shows that addressing criminal thinking (criminogenic) is paramount to entering the workforce. With this evidence, Solano County currently has classes to address criminogenic thinking before employment activities.

The data search reveals that counties are trying various methods to engage this population into the workforce. San Mateo County’s experience with this population was informative. During the first year of implementing the new inmate release program, AB109, San Mateo offered upon release from jail created a voluntary program provided a full array of employment readiness services and the take up rate for all released inmates during the first year was 27%. In the second year, San Mateo offered a different voluntary program for just-released prisoners. Within a week of release these individuals were offered a job at the County’s WorkCenter with minimum wage salary and guarantee for 3 months employment. Immediately the “take up rate” spiked to above 90%. The most positive result was

that 70 of the participants were placed and employed in full time jobs after participating in the program. These results cannot be overlooked. San Mateo did have the advantage of having a sheltered work center and food service training program and a job market that could absorb this program. Though Solano may not be able to duplicate these results, the chance to enter the job market immediately upon release and change past behaviors through employment may be worth exploring.

A report by the Solano Community Corrections Partnership gives a snapshot of the numbers actively supervised of ex-offenders in Solano County in April 2016:

Supervised Ex-Offenders – Solano County

Formal Probation	2753 (2118 male/635 female)
1170 Penal Code	122 (88 male/34 female)
Post Release Community Supervision (PRCS)	340 (362 male/14 female)

Source: Solano County Community Corrections Partnership April 2016

B. OVERVIEW OF SOLANO COUNTY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM

Solano County Demographics

Solano County is located between two Northern California areas; San Francisco Bay Area and Sacramento Region linked by Interstate 80. In addition to the unincorporated area, the County includes seven cities: Benicia, Dixon, Fairfield, Rio Vista, Suisun City, Vacaville and Vallejo. According to California's Employment Development Department (EDD), out of the 431,131 residents, the workforce is comprised of 207,400 residents with an unemployment rate as of 5.6%. Of the 7 cities, here is the breakdown of its workforce as of March 2016:

Area	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployed	Unemployment Rate
Solano County	207,400	195,800	11,600	5.6%
Benicia	14,900	14,400	500	3.5%
Dixon	9,800	9,400	500	4.8%
Fairfield	52,100	49,500	2,600	5.0%
Rio Vista	3,100	2,700	300	11.1%
Suisun City	14,500	13,800	700	4.9%
Vacaville	45,000	43,000	2,000	4.5%
Vallejo	58,500	54,000	4,400	7.6%
Elmira/Green Valley	900	900	0	
California	18,947,20	17,840,200	1,107,000	5.8%
*Data May Not add due to rounding				

Source: California Employment Development Department

Solano County Key Demographic Information

The population of Solano County	431,131
Percentage in Incorporated Cities	95%
Caucasian	60.6%
African American	14.8%
Asian	15.6%
Native American	1.3%
Latino	25.6%
High School Diploma	87.5%
Bachelor’s Degree or Higher-Age 25 year+	24.3%
Medium Household Income	\$67,341
Living in Poverty	12.3%
Veterans	34,593
65 years and older	13.3% <i>(up from 11.5% in 2010)</i>

Source: U.S. Census Bureau- American Community Survey

Solano County Workforce Development Programs

Solano County’s workforce development programs do not function as a workforce development “system” but more of loose network of employment, education and training programs. These programs offer an array of services that help individuals prepare for the workforce through various work preparation and training including vocational training, work experience, adult education, job clubs, resume preparation, and job search activities. Placement with employers is accomplished by placement of the individual by one of the programs or by individuals who are self-directed to seek employment. Included in these services are two “brick and mortar” one stop employment centers located in Fairfield and Vallejo. Those utilizing the Internet to seek local employment can find jobs but it is neither easy nor intuitive to connect with local employment opportunities utilizing this method. The “One Stop Centers” are required to serve the general, job-seeking population but most workforce programs, with limited resources or mandates, target low-income populations.

Solano's Workforce Development is comprised of many programs; the following table provides a snapshot of the budget and target populations for the major workforce development programs in the County:

FY 2015-16

Programs	Budget	Number Served
CalWORK Welfare-to-Work	\$14,332,372	2011
Workforce Development Board (Federal and State)	\$5,181,000	One Stop 4500 Enrolled 300 Career Fair 1600 Businesses 500
Vocational Rehabilitation (State)	\$3,110,278	1684
Veterans – State EDD	\$270,000	Vallejo 668 Fairfield 321
Reentry (Total)	\$6,168,313	Probation 2753 <i>(2118 male/635 female)</i> 1170 PC: 122 (88 male/34 female) PRCS: 340 (362 male/14 female)
Fairfield/Suisun Adult	\$3,580,970	ESL 645 HS Diploma 742 Career Technical Ed 528
Vallejo Adult	\$1,861,296	ESL and ABE 573 HS Diploma 627 Career Tech. Ed 177
Benicia Adult School	\$123,483	ESL and ABE 30 GED 10
Total	*\$34,627,712 budget	*18,131 served

**Other Programs exist but did not report their data in time for report*

C. REVIEW SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

SCOPE

The scope of this review was to conduct an assessment of the critical issues in Solano County's workforce development System. This review identifies the strengths of the existing system, looks at weaknesses, reviews individual programs and potential duplication of services, and focuses on outcomes and measurable results. The review focuses on the effectiveness of the connection of training for employers, with a focus on opportunities for strengthening programs and coordination. It identifies several gaps and barriers impeding effectiveness. This study recommends consideration of a workforce development concept that can be utilized to effectively: coordinate services, streamline processes, address gaps and weaknesses in the current system, capture and share data and resources, establish common tools and standards, document outcomes to get people into jobs, enhance job retention, and career growth, and support local employers.

METHODOLOGY

This review and the related processes were designed to identify the current gaps, duplications and opportunities in the current workforce development system. The review includes interviews with key informants, review of programs and studies of other jurisdictions to identify models that work together effectively both for the employer and job seeker. For businesses, incorporate best practices that enhance employer workforce stability and bring qualified, well prepared workforce stability to the workplace and ensure that the employer has the support they need to maintain a well-trained workforce. Here are the steps used in the review process:

1. Interview key workforce development stakeholders; locally, bay area, statewide and nationally to identify trends, what works well, gaps in the service delivery model, and input on the most streamlined, transparent, and effective workforce development practices.
2. Review of the current Solano County operated and contracted programs, resources and outcomes. Reviewed other current programs provided by nonprofits, education and training programs.
3. Extensive literature review of best practices in workforce development.
4. Develop a high level, concept of a workforce development model that could work in Solano County based.
5. Receive feedback from stakeholders using a Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunity, and Threat (SWOT) Analysis about the draft concept model.
6. Based on all the above, provide findings and recommendations to the Board of Supervisors to revamp the workforce development model and processes.

INTERVIEWS

The interviews with key stakeholders set the stage to identify;

- gaps in the services and programs,

- areas where there is collaboration,
- areas of duplication,
- areas of agreement/ disagreements that changing the system is necessary,
- untapped resources,
- underserved populations,
- willingness to share resources,
- willingness to change the way business is conducted
- Outcome measures currently used,
- Overall view and perceptions of the workforce development system,
- Legislative support to change,
- Legislative and Regulatory obstacles to change

Interviews were conducted with key stakeholders in government, including the County Administrator, members of Board of Supervisors, the WIB Director and staff, Department of Rehabilitation, Chief Probation Officer and staff, Solano County’s Mental Health Director, Veterans Services Officer, Solano County Human Resources, Solano County Health and Social Services Executives, Solano County Library Executives, the Solano Economic Development Corporation, Solano Economic Development Task Force on Moving Solano Forward, and the City / County Managers Coordinating Committee

Additional interviews were held with local nonprofits, which currently provide employment serves and organizations that work primarily with lower income job seekers including Goodwill Industries, Children’s Network, Mission Solano and Caminar. Leading national as well as experts in economic and workforce development strategies provided insight, including, an economist and several national consultants on workforce development, Trades Unions, Central Labor Council, California Employment Development Director and his executive staff, Reentry Consultants LCA and staff at the Center for Positive Change, the County Welfare Directors Association staff, Representatives from the educational community including, Solano Community College, Adult Schools (Vacaville and Fairfield/Suisun, Benicia and Vallejo), Solano County Office of Education, Other interviews were held with key informants from Nova Career Center in Silicon Valley, San Mateo County Vocational Rehabilitation Services and the Catering Connection, Presidents of 3 Chamber of Commerce (Vallejo, Vacaville and Fairfield), and Mental Health Housing and Employment Contractor (Caminar) and the new and evolving youth work collaborative, **Youth Employment Solano (YES)**. Lastly, 20 employers and staffing agencies in Solano County were interviewed.

After extensive research, review, interviews with key informants and reviews of programs in other jurisdictions, a high level workforce development concept of a reformed system was developed. This concept tentatively referred to as “**Help In Recruiting and Retaining Employees {HIRRE}**,” is a draft proposal intended to generate discussion of its advantages and disadvantages and to provoke the generation of new and better proposals

HIRRE Help in Recruiting and Retaining Employees (APPENDIX 1)

The HIRRE Concept is a high level view of how a reformed workforce system could work more effectively and efficiently for both the job seeker, workforce development programs and the business community. It is not a finished, detailed product but a draft concept that generates discussion and creates an opportunity for everyone in the workforce system to get a “bird’s eye view” of what exists and does not exist in system.

Some of the Highlights of HIRRE Concept

- Each of Solano’s workforce development programs currently use different assessment tools to determine an applicant’s skill, knowledge, interest and abilities. A valid **Common Assessment tool** is used to gain employer confidence in the skill sets presented by applicants seeking employment in Solano County. There is currently little confidence that the skills presented by applicants is valid.
- In the review of the literature and confirmed by local businesses, employers point out that soft skills are the biggest obstacles to employment success for new employees. An agreed-upon, employer-driven definitions of **Job Ready Soft Skills** that has a curriculum imbedded in all training curriculum would serve Solano County job seekers and employers well.
- **Shared resources** (Computer banks, Job Clubs, Job Readiness classes, Resume preparation classes) will effectively utilize resources more efficiently. Currently each program is expected to provide these services independently.
- A Solano **Job Bank** that has all Solano opportunities posted or linked in one place to aid the job seeker. There is currently no central repository of all employment opportunities in Solano.
- **Career Navigators/Advisors** that support employers, job seekers, career advancement seekers. This would particularly serve to help the “hard-to-place” individuals more effectively.
- Quick, navigable web-based system for **self-directed job seekers** to find jobs without obstacles
- A **close alliance** and access to training between **businesses and training providers**. The connection between businesses and training providers is fragmented.

Focus Groups

A total of 7 focus groups were conducted utilizing a SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats/Barriers) process to solicit input from workforce leadership, community stakeholders and businesses. The focus groups were introduced to the **HIRRE** concept (**APPENDIX 1**) and asked to identify potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of the proposed concept. The HIRRE concept was introduced to the meeting with employers and temporary staffing agencies. These sessions were “listening sessions” to hear business concerns about

the workforce development system and how it currently works. In addition, employers were asked to give feedback on the reformed HIRRE workforce system and to give their input on what “soft skills” are necessary for someone to be successful.

Date	Focus Group	Number of Participants
May 6	Leadership of Workforce Development- Stakeholder Meeting <i>(Includes executives, and top officials of workforce development programs currently in Solano County- SWOT process to get feedback regarding the HIRRE concept)</i>	20
April 18	Stakeholder Community Meeting – Fairfield <i>(Open to community members / stakeholders interested in giving feedback to revamping workforce development using a SWOT process to get feedback regarding the HIRRE concept)</i>	12
April 19	Stakeholder Community Meeting – Vallejo <i>(Open to community members / stakeholders interested in giving feedback to revamping workforce development using a SWOT process to get feedback regarding the HIRRE concept)</i>	15
April 20	Stakeholder Community Meeting – Vacaville <i>(Open to community members / stakeholders interested in giving feedback to revamping workforce development using a SWOT process to get feedback regarding the HIRRE concept)</i>	8
April 19	Meeting with Presidents of Chamber of Commerce (VV, FF, Vallejo) <i>(Feedback session about workforce development, HIRRE concept and needed changes in the WFD system)</i>	3
May 23	Meeting with Employers and Staffing Agencies <i>(Listening session and feedback session about the HIRRE concept and needed changes in workforce development. Included feedback on soft skills, job readiness)</i>	20
May 25	Joint County/ City Managers Meeting <i>(Update on Workforce Development Review and presentation on HIRRE concept)</i>	11

Additionally, pertinent documents, research papers related to workforce development were reviewed including prepared reports, internal budget documents, and a literature search on workforce development projects. These documents can be found in the bibliography.

D. REVIEW OF STRENGTH, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS (SWOT) OF HIRRE (HELP IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES)

Information was gathered from various sources throughout Solano County and other jurisdictions to determine if the HIRRE Concept is viable and can apply to Solano County's Workforce Development Programs and facilitate the creation of a "system." (APPENDIX 1) The HIRRE Concept was developed after interviewing stakeholders who identified gaps, duplications, and opportunities. The draft concept evolved with edits and reedits based on feedback from key stakeholders in Solano county, other jurisdictions, experts in the field of workforce development and literature reviews of successful workforce development programs. The SWOT (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, and Threats) is an exercise to get useful feedback of the draft concept of a high level "idealized "system that serves clients, businesses and providers of services more effectively. With this idealized concept, it brings to light what are the deficits of the current system. It was never meant to be a finished project but an outline that provokes a generation of new and better proposals.

On the following pages is a summary of the most frequently mentioned comments, perceptions and opinions from the SWOT focus groups. (The indicators may appear in more than one category based on feedback from differing audiences.)

**Focus Group SWOT on Help in Recruiting and Retaining Employees (HIRRE)-
Leaders and Stakeholders**

Top Strengths

- Employer Friendly; incorporates employer input; reflects what employers are looking for, will encourage employers to locate in Solano; employers will have a pool of ready candidates
- Coordinate efforts, reduce duplication and create efficiencies; expand opportunities to share resources; breaks down the "silos"; unity among programs is a priority before marketing to employers; training opportunities will increase
- Standardized process; agreed upon definition for "job ready; create Solano "brand" and consistent practices
- One entry point/no wrong door; single entry point easier to manage and easier for job seekers to navigate;
- Central job repository reduces number of contacts with employers by different programs; could allow sharing of job information; data from repository can be used to improve job forecasting;
- Transparency helps job seekers understand what opportunities are available to them; creates a clearer path to success for job seekers; ability to address education of student's/job seekers toward job readiness; comprehensive support for job seeker
- Improved data collection; outcome driven

Top Weaknesses / Barriers

- Lack of funding; expectations not aligned with resources; sustainability plan
- Territory/silos; too many voices; lack of MOUs
- Lack of understanding of needs of local employers; diversity of employers; willingness to participate; scale
- System Barrier/red tape; different regulations/ requirements
- Focused on entry level; need to consider higher level job seekers, career development, ongoing support for employees and length of time in program retraining needs
- Reluctance among providers to share information, funding, credit, etc.; unwillingness to give up autonomy; silos
- "One size fits all" may not work for "job readiness" skills; need to consider variations among population groups (e.g., youth vs. adult) and for different employment sectors (for example, manufacturing vs. retail)- model doesn't address
- Consideration of the ebb and flow of business environment; changing attitudes about hiring; lacking in forecasting for future jobs; no feedback loop on retention
- No strategic plan; lacking a regional perspective and working with other employment programs in the region and availability of jobs locally vs. in other areas;

**Focus Group SWOT on Help in Recruiting and Retaining Employees (HIRRE)
Leaders and Stakeholders (continued)**

Top Strengths

Top Weaknesses / Barriers

- Single entry point -needs to include re-emergence of vocational/technical training; an entry point for youth; access for "training ready" clients;
- Staffing issues; e.g. who maintains website; quality of staff
- Doesn't address barriers for job seekers, such as limited public transportation; lack of affordable child care; number of clients seeking services vs capacity
- Standardized assessment process not clearly defined; for ex., is it for basic skills and/or advanced skills? Has the diversity among job seekers been considered in developing assessment?
- Funding – where does it come from?

Top Opportunities/Recommendations

- A. Reduce the confusion for job seekers, improve access, improve communication between providers and businesses, enhance collaboration and realign and strengthen the utilization of resources
- B. Clarification of roles of providers, agencies etc.
- C. Identify resources and bring about greater efficiencies within and across programs
- D. Work with school district, specifically high school training academies/ career pathways; model programs outside existing system
- E. Reduce the number of unemployed and/or underemployed in Solano
- F. Sorting out appropriate "soft skills" and "job readiness" curriculum; customize for individual industries and for special population groups, including criminal justice population, and include trade training
- G. Opportunity to improve dialogue with employers; pipeline for new businesses
- H. Message to young people, career pathway options; college; vocational training
- I. Develop common messaging in approaching employers; use media
- J. Serve all "job seekers" (not "clients")
- K. Opportunity to look at continuum of need and how it is measured

Comments from Businesses About the HIRRE Concept and Status of Current Workforce Development

- Mixed experience in working with government entities often lack follow up
- When a dedicated workforce staff moves to another position- program falls off and disappears
- Employers have a broad brush opinion about government entities- if one part fails, they all will probably fail
- Centralized job center is a good concept but skepticism that government can work together and deliver
- For Employers the Centralized Job Center would work well if:
 - Everyone cooperates
 - Online access including mobile devices
 - Right now it is hard for employers to navigate the system
- Excellent opportunity to coordinate the wealth of training programs, coordinated training and job assistance makes it easier for job seekers:
 - Can be used to educate job seekers about the current job market
 - Educate on “what works” for different job sectors
- Expressed concerned and questions “how one ‘employment support person’ can be knowledgeable of all job sectors”
- From experience in relocating to Solano, it would be helpful if a Solano centralized job data site could include key information about Solano’s environment including housing, schools, and other features that are important to people seeking to relocate to Solano
- Questioned about whether a repository is necessary with CalJOBS and Indeed.Com. Suggest that the County explore pulling information from various sources and put them on one site.

Basic and Soft Skills/ Job Ready- Employer Observations about Job Applicants

Some Job Seekers:

- Unable to perform basic skills- Example- reading a tape measure
- Lacking in Math, mechanical reasoning and measurements. There is still a high demand for manufacturing jobs but a lack of qualified applicants
- Too much emphasis on people getting advanced degrees- local market place needs to hire for trade skills- need vocational programs – none exist- need apprentices for certain sectors- don't need college
- Lack of skills/knowledge of accounting, office automation products,
- Lack of appropriate people skills
- Some candidates need refresher / short term training/ brush up on specific math skills
- Lack of right tech skills
- Soft skills definitely lacking; communication (getting along, dress appropriately, many generational and cultural gaps)
- Lack of basic knowledge, i.e. reading skills
- Example: Kaiser intern program (primarily high school juniors and seniors) need interviewing skills, writing resumes. It may be possible that schools are working on this area but it isn't coordinated with employers to assure it is done the way employers seek.
- Rather than “soft skills” – prefer to establish competencies for each sector- (health care, engineering)
- Reliability is one of the major soft skills lacking- (late, calling in sick or don't call at all)

Major Critical Soft Skills Identified by Employers

- Reliability
- Professional Communication
- Integrity
- Interviewing skills
- Retention/ Loyalty (perception –“its better elsewhere in the Bay Area”)
- Competence
- Responsiveness
- Courtesy
- Initiative
- Adaptability to different managers
- Work ethic

E. POTENTIAL CRITICAL FINDINGS IN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The previous section presents an overview of the Workforce Development culture, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to success. The information below addresses many of these critical issues brought to our attention through the research and the information gathering process.

- 1. FINDING - Common Assessment:** There is a need for common “skills assessment” tools that assist employers to select, hire, train, develop, and retain a quality workforce. The assessment should measure foundational skills and soft skills (performance skills). The assessment should measure skills that businesses feel are key elements to success in the workplace. The assessment tool should be available to students, job seekers, and accomplished, job-ready professionals to learn more about their strengths and weaknesses and gain a validated way to demonstrate their abilities to employers. Educators and employers can use it to help to determine the student, applicant, and employee qualifications

State of Solano County’s Assessment System

- Each workforce program in the county has their own methodology for assessment to determine interests, skills, knowledge and job readiness. There is little collaboration or consensus on appropriate tools to use let alone what skills are universally important versus industry/ employment specific.
- There is no inventory of acceptable evidence-based, assessment tools used for Solano’s workforce.
- The One Stop Employment Connection uses CalJobs, the State of California system.
- Employers have little ideas if the skills presented in an interview are valid or based on any evidence-based assessment.
- With no standard assessment tools used, the abilities of referred clients are received with little confidence by employers.
- Other jurisdictions such as Nova in Santa Clara and San Mateo County and Montgomery County, Oh. (Ohio Means Jobs) use a set of standard assessment tools and measurements that is accepted by all stakeholders and most importantly was developed with the businesses community.

1a. RECOMMENDATION - Adopt a Standard Assessment Tool

To reduce duplication and reduce cost, Solano County workforce programs should adopt a standard assessment. The tool should include interests, aptitude and skills assessments. This will give employers the confidence that the skills presented by a job seeker have been reviewed against a current set of criteria increasing the possibility of a successful match.

Convene a local working group of stakeholders with active participation from employers and with the assistance of experts in career assessments to discuss available career assessment tools and review the potential standardized assessment tools that are available and would work for Solano County.

2. **FINDING - Work Ready-SOFT SKILLS:** Work Ready and/or Soft Skills have been mentioned by employers as significant problem with new workers who are entering the workforce. The Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board released an employer survey that looked at the percentage of hiring employers reporting difficulty finding candidates with some variety of performance skills.

Communication Skill	79%
Ability to adapt to changes in duties	76%
Positive work habits and attitudes	68%
Teamwork skills	61%
Ability to accept supervision	58%

Source: Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board

The good news is that if employers are having such a difficult time finding employees with these performance skill problems, the person who hones these skills is at a distinct advantage for securing employment.

The State of Solano County related to Soft Skills/ Performance Skills

The definition of Performance/ Soft Skills in Solano County is anecdotal and has neither been clearly defined nor has there been an agreement within the County. When asked what “soft skills” means to program staff and leaders, they mention examples “coming to work on time” or “getting along with others” but there is never been a formal agreement of what elements make up Performance/Soft Skills. It is encouraging that Solano County work force providers, youth programs and adult schools have identified Soft Skills as an important element to include into their curriculum. The information gathering of “needed soft skills” has been done by individual programs talking to employers so the “consensus” of what employers mean by “soft skills” becomes elusive. In a Solano Employer focus group session, employers noted many of the similar issues as the Washington State Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board employer survey **APPENDIX 4a** The most important feature is the input of local businesses and getting a consensus of which elements are key to success on the job. An example of this collaboration and consensus is the Silicon Valley employers and Nova Career Centers of Silicon Valley. **APPENDIX 4b** The community and employers tackled this issue and identified 5 key elements soft skills that are essential to employment success. Each of the following areas also include a curriculum embedded in each of their training programs that will ensure in-depth discussion and awareness.

Self Awareness- the ability to understand where you are on your career path, where your passions is driving you, and what you need in order to get there.

Networking- the ability to both engage existing contacts and to reach beyond that base to increase the number of professional contacts.

Relationship Management- the ability to ensure that you are well regarded by those around you, by managing your workplace relationships, your reputation and your desired performance results.

Organizational Reading- the ability to analyze behaviors of the organization, the industry and the economy in order to make better-informed career decisions and to be proactive in managing your employment situation

Mentorship- the ability to establish and access a relationship with a more-experienced person or to serve as a mentor to a less-experienced individual.

To standardize soft skills and embed the concepts and language in their day to day practice, Nova has produced a wallet size handout for job seekers and participants in their programs entitled, “5 Truths About Employment Success”. APPENDIX 4c

2a. RECOMMENDATION - Solano County Workforce Stakeholders should adopt a practical and useable employer-driven definition of Soft Skills.

- 1. Convene a facilitated task force of employers to come up with Solano’s definition of core needed soft skills.**
- 2. Have key providers listen to the employers**
- 3. A curriculum should be developed for each of the identified skill areas.**
- 4. The curriculum for each of those specific “soft skills” areas should be imbedded into the training curriculum of all Solano’s employment and training programs and education system**
- 5. These definitions should be part of the culture of the K-12 programs. Youth will be part of the workforce and must understand the expectations as soon as possible**

3. FINDING - Braid Funding to Support Solano’s Workforce Development

System: The review identified duplication of services, gaps in services, non-collaborative processes and programs acting in silo fashion in program development. The reasons for silo thinking in the workforce system is caused by funding and/or regulatory pressures. The results create poor use of precious resources and duplication.

The State of Solano County related to opportunities to braid funding

Solano’s Workforce Development System can be described as; programs acting in a silo fashion, workforce processes confusing to the general public and employers, duplicative and inefficient. An example is the 160 job preparation classes offered annually by the Workforce Investment Board. Most of the job preparation classes are under-enrolled or just cancelled because of so few enrollees. Though programs can demonstrate successes in their specific program areas, the county as a system can do better is streamlining and sharing resources to make the overall workforce programs more efficient.

3a. RECOMMENDATION - Form a steering committee of providers and stakeholders to look for opportunities to coordinate, realign services, end duplicative practices, and look for opportunities to braid funding and services.

Focus on specific practices that can make the system more efficient

- 1. Look for opportunities for organization to support functions by braiding funding and services:
 - a. Examples: shared job clubs, resume preparation, computer banks, job readiness classes, Career Navigators/ Advisors,****
- 2. Develop Outcomes, measure and share**

4. FINDING - Senior Population will need to stay engaged in the Job Market

The State of Solano County related to Senior employment

The overall population of Solano County is aging quickly. Projections by the California Department of Finance:

Year	County Population	Senior Population	% of Population
2010	413,729	47,324	11.4%
2020	454,800	76,312	16.7%
2030	501,456	106,383	21.2%

In addition to an aging population, the issue of senior poverty is becoming more prevalent topic. Here are some telling statistics

A new study from UCLA’s Center for Health Policy Research “finds that the Federal Poverty Level significantly underestimates the number of economically insecure older adults who are unable to make ends meet. Yet, because many public assistance programs are aligned with the Federal Poverty Line, potentially hundreds of thousands of economically insecure older Californians are denied aid.”

The highest rates of hidden poor among older adults are found among renters, Latinos, women, those raising grandchildren, and among the oldest age groups, according to the study.

In Solano County, the latest study found nearly 15 % of elderly singles are officially poor, but nearly 31% are “hidden poor.” It’s 4 % and 14 % among elderly couples.

In this environment, some seniors will need to continue to be engaged in the job market well beyond retirement age to make ends meet or to reengage with the workforce system because of unexpected expenses or circumstances.

- 4a. RECOMMENDATION - Include Seniors in Workforce Development Planning**
- 1. Engage the Senior Coalition as part of work groups and stakeholders and share this report.**
 - 2. Put together a task force with senior advocates to discuss all the issues related to senior employment/ poverty**
 - 3. If there is concurrence, include Senior Coalition representatives in workforce planning.**
 - 4. Develop a work plan to ensure that there is a path for seniors to extend employment into their senior years**
5. **FINDING - Measuring Success:** The workforce development programs do not have a “common measure” for evaluating success. Though each workforce program has different funding, mandates and requirements, there should be common measuring instrument for tabulating the success of programs. When the State of Ohio’s **Ohio Means Jobs** decided to revamp their workforce system, they partnered with the Ohio Education Research Center **APPENDIX 3a & 3b** to develop methods to evaluate their system and find ways to continually improve it. Like Ohio, Solano has an opportunity to seek funding or invest in research of a restructured approach to workforce development to measure program effectiveness and continual improvement. A number of recommendations in this report are related to the work conducted in Ohio to evaluate and continually improve its programs. Though the client populations served may be different between programs, there should be a way to measure effectiveness.

Job Seekers, program funders, businesses and taxpayers want to see if the programs they are supporting are working. The Board of Supervisors has unanimously expressed their desire to find out if programs are getting results. The measuring of program outcomes is overdue. Resources are shrinking and there should be a way to ensure the available funding is spent wisely. The measurement of these programs does not have to be complicated. Measuring job placement, retention, salaries are essential “metrics” for workforce development programs. There can be separate measures for adult and youth programs. The community of stakeholders from the legislators, businesses, education and providers can jointly decide the composition of these measures through a facilitated planning process.

Rationale for Common Measures

The job seekers and decision makers want a transparent way to see how successful programs perform. From those seeking training, they want to make a commitment based on successful results of a program or training. From the decision-maker’s perspective, they can see if programs are effective. Having these measures available and transparent is based on the principle: if you measure your program objectively the chances are that it will work to become more effective. Montgomery County, Ohio has it built into their key motto:

***Measure to Get Better** (Source: Ohio Means Jobs)*

The State of Solano County related to Common Measures

Solano County as a provider nor the other members of job training or placement do not currently have common measurements of outcomes or transparent measures for the public to view of workforce development programs.

5a. RECOMMENDATION – Adopt common outcome measures for all workforce programs and develop a dashboard of all workforce development programs with quarterly reporting.

Develop a taskforce to come up with common measures that all workforce development programs and training programs use.

- 1. Look at other jurisdictions that use as common measurement for success**
 - 2. Work on identifying and seeking consensus what is to be measured**
 - 3. Identify comparison data to each program**
 - 4. Implement**
 - 5. Post on a website that is visible for all to see**
- 6. FINDING - Online Job Seeking:** The world of job seeking is becoming more and more dependent on online tools for assessments, job openings, resumes and applications. The “brick and mortar” employment centers still have a role in the community especially for those with little knowledge or have minimal access to computers but the internet has become a powerful tool for both the employer seeking a qualified pool of employees to interview and the job seeker who is looking for employment but doesn’t have the time to go from business to business looking for employment. In Solano County’s effort to diversify the businesses that operate in the county, the talent pool will come not only from local residents but also from other areas in the region, statewide and nationally. For businesses to capture the best available talent pool for job openings, they must compete and post those openings on the internet. It should be easier to connect job openings that match up with job seekers skills.

State of Solano County’s Online Job Seeking System

All the elements of what is technically needed in a job seeking system resides in the **Solano Connection** website. It has skills assessments, interest profiles, tools to make career decisions and directs individuals to job banks with job openings. The ability to use the system does take skill, knowledge, abilities, familiarity and perseverance to use and maneuver through computer system programs. It is a labyrinth to move from area to area within the system. At times it directs job seekers to talk to a live person to get more information about classes and other resources. The information is not user friendly and the language is difficult to understand. For example, the first question asked on California Department of Education’s developed career profilers “Career Zone-California” is both confounding, abstract and difficult to understand for the average job seeker.

First Question – From a scale of 1 to 7 – Do you possess this skill?

Understanding the implications of new information for both current and future problem-solving and decision-making.

In summary, the online system currently in use is not easy to use for the average job seeker and quickly forces them to look for other means to find employment. An online system is and will be a key tool for job seekers now and in the future.

6a. RECOMMENDATION - Revamp the Online Job Search System Used by the County

To assure that job seekers can have better and more complete access on a robust network to online, real time jobs, the online system needs an evaluation and retooling with continual attention to upgrades and new technologies.

- **Look at other job seeking online systems that have a better user-friendly flow to replace the system currently in use.**
- **Convene a task force to review the current system- Include IT experts**
- **Before adopting a system, have test groups of job seekers from various cohorts, grade levels and skill levels use and evaluate.**
- **Online users should have the ability to evaluate their experience after each use. This would be useful in continually improving the product**
- **Build in a continual improvement model for keeping the system current and programs up to date**
- **Adopt and continue to modify as technology changes.**

7. FINDING - Adopt Navigator/ Advisor Work System: Solano County does a relatively good job of providing pre-employment services for those individuals needing to prepare for the workforce. The services are strong, the staff committed and each program has staff that is willing to go the extra mile for their clients. The programs should be proud of the pre-placement services they deliver. When it comes to the point of job placement, retention and soft skill preparation, the processes become ineffective and inefficient.

The role of Career Navigator and Career Advisor is not a new concept and has been used in various locations and for various targeted populations:

In Washington State, the Career Navigator is a professional who focuses on helping low income individuals develop a path to obtain a living wage and work with the individual throughout their training and start of their career.

In Nova Workforce Development of Silicon Valley, the Career Advisor serves all job seekers pre and post-employment. This position has strong knowledge, skills and abilities in job coaching, community resources and advising regarding the job market. Here are some of the skills, knowledge and abilities needed to perform this work:

- **Pre-employment-** Serve as an advisor and coach to help **any** individual maneuver through the job seeking process. They act as an advisor to self-directed job seekers who may need quick help to secure employment. They will assist in developing and or reviewing resumes, job interview prep and coaching on the training necessary to achieve short and long term goals
- **Post-employment-** Serve as a job coach to address any post hiring issues; handling worker conflicts, supervisory issues and other performance issues. Act as a resource specialist for employees experiencing work life issues impeding top performance on the job.
- **As an employer liaison,** support the employer to secure training for their current employees and address needs of employees that are have life-work challenges.

Source: Nova Career Services Job Specifications

The State of Solano County related to Navigator Services

The placement, ongoing career planning and retention services in Solano County is disjointed:

- For those individuals in preparation or pre-placement vocational programs, it is up to each program to provide the placement services and retention services. The quality and the coordination of these placement services is a target of the ire of businesses in Solano County.
- For those individuals independently seeking employment, they have two options; navigate the online system or go to a one-stop employment center in either Vallejo or Fairfield. The online system has both employers and job seekers confused about how it works and express frustration by not using it.

At the point of placement and connecting with businesses, employers complain of a lack of coordination. An example of this lack of coordination is:

Three different youth programs to develop internships with different requirements have approached one of the biotech businesses. The three programs did not talk to each other before approaching the employer. This leaves the employer with the impression that services are not coordinated. That impression is correct.

In addition, it is not uncommon for programs receiving a new employment related grant, without thought of other initiatives, might ask an employer, “We have a new grant and we want to partner with you.” It is not compelling for the employer to participate in new programs unless it can support their business. There should always be “the business reason” thought through, coordinated with like-programs, planned and presented to employers before asking to partner with businesses.

7.a RECOMMENDATION - Adopt Navigator/ Advisor Work System

- a. Bring together a taskforce of employers, HR staff and program stakeholders to develop the job scope and new classification of the position.**
- b. Get a commitment from key Workforce partners to fund a pilot and;**
- c. Make a commitment to employers for 3 to 5 years that the program will be sustained.**
- d. Use a continuous improvement model to assure improvement**
- e. Set goals and report out visibly to enhance employer credibility and to determine if it is working or not.**

8. FINDING - A local repository of job openings by local businesses: As part of the review, employers were vocal about their inability to find local talent to fill their business needs. Even staffing agencies are struggling to find the talent for filling positions for local employers.

The State of Solano County related to finding qualified employees

Solano businesses use various means of securing employees. CalJOBS, Monster Jobs, Craigslist, Indeed.com and other online job sites have been the go-to means of securing a candidate to hire. Some small businesses still hang a sign outside their business with varying levels of success. In addition, many businesses are depending on “**staffing agencies**” or **temporary** agencies to find qualified employees. The bottom line is; businesses want a qualified pool of candidates to pick the best talent to work at their business. It is an advantage to employers to have local qualified employees fill their openings. It does a lot for the business and the individual’s family to work as close to home as possible. Solano has been known as the bedroom community for the Bay Area and Sacramento. With the efforts to diversify the businesses coming into Solano, it will be imperative to make sure local job-seekers, training providers and the new businesses are all in sync. The listing of an opened position in a local job bank would be a great help. Though employers can post position on any of the online job sites, the posting of their positions in the local job bank will make it more accessible to those who live or want to live and work in Solano County. Individuals who want to relocate to Solano County would now see what positions are opened locally.

An employer focus group made two recommendations to this concept:

1. Don’t create another website for employers to post local jobs. Currently job-posting sites like Indeed.Com searches the internet for job postings and posts them to their site. Employers would prefer that Solano County do the same. Capture all the posted jobs and put them on a local site.
2. In addition, put other information on the site about working in Solano County, Housing prices, schools information, lifestyle information (local attractions, restaurants, and other information that would demonstrate why Solano would be a great place to Live, Learn, Work and Play)

There are reasons for employers and local job seekers to connect for local employment opportunities

- It is easier to get local references since the applicant has local ties
- It opens an accessible network of potential applicants
- Applicants have a known chemistry within the county
- No relocation risk costs
- Less termination pain
- Saves money
- Creates goodwill

8a. RECOMMENDATION - Assemble a team of Information Technology experts, providers and employers to set up a project for an online job-posting plan for Solano County

- 1. Develop a local job posting website that is modeled after job opening sweeping software programs like Indeed.Com which also includes Solano County specific information for job seekers.**
- 2. Add an additional feature that allowed job seekers (especially seeking to relocate to Solano) to get information about Solano County (housing, schools, local attractions)**
- 3. Recruit employers to participate in the pilot.**
- 4. Staff the job posting site with previously recommended Navigators**
 - a. Navigators build the relationship between businesses and local programs**
 - b. Offers employers a support function for their desire to hire the best talent available.**
 - c. Post results with employers to demonstrate the effectiveness of the system.**
 - d. Use a continuous improvement model to increase effectiveness.**

9. FINDING - Cross system collaboration: The “no wrong door” philosophy is key to having a strong workforce development system. This assumes whichever program the job seeker enters, there is access to the entire spectrum of available and eligible resources. This demands cross systems knowledge and collaboration. It demands general knowledge of resources available and ways to access those services by the client. The philosophical intent should be; get the resources to the job seeker, make it as easy as possible so there is minimal obstacles and distractions from the overall intent of employment and career tracking. Not everyone is eligible for all the resources but some services should be standard for all. For example, not everyone is eligible to receive cash assistance but all the partners should figure out a way to deal with Solano’s daunting transportation issues. Providing transportation resources for anyone that needs it to enter the workforce would be an excellent endeavor to tackle jointly.

The State of Solano County related to Cross System Collaboration

There is no plan or system of cross system collaboration. If two programs have a working relationship, the services are delivered in a coordinated fashion. An example: The working relationship of Health and Social Services and the Probation Department is ongoing and strengthening. Other organizations that don't have that a county bond makes partnering more difficult. It was telling during one of the focus group sessions that programs were unaware and surprised that some specific services are being provided in the county. An example of this is the work of the four Solano County adult schools. Their mission should be showcased in Solano County. It is shining light of collaboration between them and their desire to adapt to business needs. The four principals of Fairfield/ Suisun, Vacaville, Benicia and Vallejo adult schools really understand that they are part of a larger workforce system and want to plan together with all the partner agencies. The development of a common application may prove too daunting but a common registration to the Solano Workforce System is achievable. This would track which services job seekers utilized.

9a. RECOMMENDATION - Develop cross system collaboration ; bring key stakeholders (Workforce Development Board, Health and Social Service, Reentry Services, Veteran Services, Youth Programs, Voc Rehab, Homeless services, adult schools, and senior programs and other key partners) together to establish an integrated/ registration for job seekers with the goal of ensuring that they are able to access all services and programs available to assist them in getting a job.

1. Analyze current practice as is
2. Develop a work plan of how it should look and what services should be available to all
3. Set timeframes and funding strategies
4. Implement

10. FINDING - Poverty levels Remain High in Solano County

The State of Solano County related to Poverty

The poverty rate in Solano County continues to be high. Long-term pockets of poverty in the census tracts of Vallejo, Fairfield and Vacaville continue to be daunting challenges. Projects address poverty in a piecemeal fashion but an overall strategy that supports the work of the individual programs to reduce poverty needs significant strategy revisions. The work of poverty suppression programs should include strategies of:

1. Fully engaging partners serving low income individuals to integrate their clients into the workforce development system
2. Integrating soft skills/ performance skills curriculum as noted in recommendation #2 into program curriculum.
3. Knowledge of access to remedial services and high school diploma / credentialing services should be made at every programs / service in the county. When a person is ready to make progress in this area, make sure the information is readily available.

4. Look at innovative programs serving low-income populations like the Seattle Jobs initiative. It has been touted as one of the premier initiatives to help low income individuals to access and complete programs that lead to better career opportunities. The use of career navigators has been essential to its success. The workforce development system need a clearer approach dealing with skills development, expectations of employers regarding soft skills, and a honed training curriculum focusing on success in the workplace.

10a. RECOMMENDATION - Look at best practices, for example, the Seattle Jobs Initiative in helping low income individuals enter the job market and build careers. The Seattle program has shown remarkable success, and technical assistance is available to jurisdictions through the Seattle Jobs Initiative organization.

1. **Make information about remedial programs and diploma programs readily available to anyone ready to tackle this issue. With a path that leads to the possibility of employment success, individuals may see the purpose of taking a remedial courses or getting a diploma.**
2. **All programs working with low-income populations should have knowledge of employer expectations, the larger workforce development system, and have soft skills expectations built into the curriculum.**
3. **Provide follow up after placement to assure residual life/work issues is not affecting the workplace.**
 - a. **Career track planning is moving correctly**
 - b. **Connect to the larger workforce development system of career improvement.**
 - c. **Be available to assist immediately if life / work issues arise.**

11. FINDING - Incorporating Re-entry Services into the Workforce Development Process: With the passage of two major pieces of legislation AB109 and the voter initiative Proposition 47, the practice of jailing low level offenders needed to end dramatically. The two initiatives shifts responsibility from the State to the County. It has been a major undertaking for California counties to effectively treat, rehabilitate and integrate the formerly incarcerated.

The State of Solano County related to Re-entry Services for Ex-Offenders

Below are the current number of ex-offenders that is the focus in Solano County:

Formal Probation	2753 (2118 male/635 female)
1170 PC	122 (88 male/34 female)
PRCS	340 (362 male/14 female)

The current system of siloed services for Re-entry Ex-offenders is useful up to a point. Solano County looked closely at evidence based practices nationally. Addressing the criminal thinking of ex-offenders before fully engaging in the community seemed to be a positive and right approach. At some point these individuals become part of the general population and must work to successfully integrate into the community. There is value to have ex-offenders work as soon as possible, even if it pays minimum wage. In discussions with San Mateo County officials, they initiated a reentry project that has great promise. The County offered a job for three months a week upon release and the voluntary show rate increased to 93% from a previous model that only included employment preparation services. (27 % show rate). The lesson-learned from this project was; immediate work restarts the resume and also changes the surroundings of the environment that possibly created the incarceration. It provides the beginning of a positive path to full time employment. Another outstanding result was 70 individuals were placed in non-subsidized employment during that year. Though San Mateo has a work facility and has a job market to absorb this program, there are lessons learned by connecting work as soon as possible after incarceration.

11a. RECOMMENDATION - Actively engage re-entry ex-offenders involved in work activities as soon as possible.

1. Continue the expectation that attendance in classes addressing the criminal thinking is mandatory.
2. Expose all participant to all the soft skill elements that employers expect and embed those concepts into any training that is developed at the Center for Positive Change.
3. Have Career Navigator Specialists work with employers and this population while working to:
 - a. Address life/ work issue
 - b. Provide mentoring for career
 - c. Look for opportunities to address future training and career moves
 - d. Follow progress even after probation

12. FINDING - Incorporate Youth Programs Into the Workforce Development

Process: In 2010, when the United Way of the Bay Area (UWBA) set a goal to reduce poverty by 50 percent, a collaboration of partners in Solano County comprised of representatives of the Children’s Network of Solano County worked to develop a plan to focus on youth poverty. According to the American Community Survey conducted in 2013, 29.2% of Solano youth 16 to 19 years old were unemployed while the rate of 20-24 year olds was 21%. As efforts progressed, the enthusiasm of this project grew. Several project were born but it was “too much of a good thing” Employers were enthusiastic but inundated with requests to partner. The comments from employers is “don’t they talk to each other”?

The State of Youth Workforce Programs in Solano County

The news is mostly good. Though the initial startup of programs has been enthusiastic, the realization that coordination among each other is important but also coordination with the larger workforce system is also important. The youth programs led the way by focusing on the strengthening of Soft Skills and developing a Soft Skills Certification program with the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce. It truly was a landmark effort in Solano County to work collaboratively with employers to identify the key soft skills needed by youth to be effective in the workplace. Recently, the youth partners realized that their efforts needs consensus of the whole workforce development system. They have agreed to work together to come up with a common Solano County definition of soft skills.

12a. RECOMMENDATIONS - Youth Programs should continue to work in partnership with the larger reforming of the workforce development system.

1. Executive Director of the Children's Network take a leadership role in integrating youth workforce issues at the Workforce Development Board.
2. Continue to participate in reforming the overall workforce development system
3. Offer leadership on the issues of soft skills definition for Solano County's Workforce Development System.

13. FINDING - Consider Putting All Employment Readiness Programs Under One

Roof: The workforce system is disjointed but have so much in common and so much potential. If the philosophy in Solano County is that anyone and everyone should have the opportunity to work and meet their highest potential, it is appropriate to put most of the employment programs under one roof. Here are some potential programs for co-location:

- Workforce Development Board
- Volunteer Services/ Community Services
- Mental Health Employment Work Center
- Internship Coordination
- One Stop Centers with EDD and Workforce Development Board
- Veterans employment services
- Center for Positive Change (Reentry Services)
- Employment Development Department
- Computer Bank for Job Search
- Central Location for Career Navigators
- Employer Liaison Services
- Employment Services Administration
- CalWorks- Employment programs of welfare to work
- FSET- New employment program targeting SNAP (food stamp) recipients
- Job Club, Job Readiness, Resume prep classes
- Sheltered Workshop for low employment functioning but motivated clients
- Work readiness evaluations
- Work Resources Clearinghouse – Childcare, transportation, etc.

State of Solano County related to all employment services under one roof

The concept of a one-stop service center has been discussed but not fully implemented. The Workforce Investment Board (WIB) operates two “brick and mortar” one-stop centers in Vallejo and Fairfield. To the credit of the WIB, they constructed a concept that most employment programs would provide services under one roof but many of the partners did not participate as planned. It does have key job search functions; job clubs, job preparation workshops, resume writing classes and computer banks. Several providers are located and provide services at the facilities on a part time basis. The location of the facility in Fairfield is not easily accessible by public transportation and needs to be rectified. The one-stop centers do provide services for those most ready for employment, others needing greater assistance to enter the job market are referred to other providers in the community. A full range of services, serving a full spectrum of clients is the vision for a facility in Solano County. There must be tremendous thought into the development of the concept and access. Montgomery County, Ohio constructed such a facility called the Job Center. After some experience operating, they are going through a second transformation of the building to provide better customer experiences. **APPENDIX 5** It would be useful to have the best minds think this through so if a “build to suit” buildings are being constructed it will be done in the most efficient and effective way to serve clients seeking to work in Solano County. There also should be consideration of moving to this model with pilots and rental space to test out the best configurations.

13a. RECOMMENDATION - Bring together a work group of program experts, financial experts, designers, and architects, and experts in one stop center design to form a work group with the purpose of designing an employment-centered, client-centric Job Center.

Purpose: to have a job center wholly dedicated to getting people into the workforce, having key resources located in one area to supporting them in their career and making sure that the career stays on track.

1. Select key task force members
2. Evaluate the Workforce Development programs as is
3. Propose a To-Be model
 - a. Work Plan and timelines to get there
 - b. Develop a financing plan
4. Set Goals
5. Implement
6. Evaluate to see if model meets objectives and use a continuous improvement model to make adjustments.

14. FINDING - Call to Action: The Board of Supervisors play an important role in implementing these recommendations. The recommendations of the review demand much needed changes in attitudes and processes but many will be left behind and those in poverty will remain unless we set up opportunities for those that are “hard-to-serve” and all residents truly have a chance to work. The Board of Supervisors can make a bold statement by declaring that anyone who wants to work, should have that opportunity. Though it could be long process, the Board could demand that all employment programs and contractors work together with our business community to find a way to get individuals into the job market. Ask workforce development stakeholders to seek out best practices, to be innovative and to be creative. Several pilot initiatives can set the tone for this new call to action for our County residents and businesses. With this bold plan, it sends a message to all that Solano means business when the workforce system is doing what it can to put everyone to work. To the business community, this county is a great and creative place to do business. To the working residents, there is a chance to work closer to home. To the persistently unemployed, there is hope that they can contribute and can work.

14a. RECOMMENDATION - The Solano County Board of Supervisors should make a Call to Action to direct county staff, contractors of workforce development funds and encourage other agencies and community based organizations to do what is necessary to realign, restructure, and repurpose available dollars to focus on helping all county residents to become part of the workforce and to help business thrive and grow in Solano County.

F. SUMMARY

This review recommends major changes in the way workforce development programs operate in Solano County. It will be easier to identify the challenging issues than it is to implement the operational changes proposed in the recommendations. System change demands willingness, agreement, trust, patience, perseverance, vigilance, and accountability. In discussions with State staff and advocates at the State level, there was excitement what is being proposed in Solano County. The recommendations are possible and it may take time to implement since staff and resources may have been committed already for this year. In the report it mentions the collaboration with employers but a key component for change is to really listen to what employers need to effectively operate in this county.

VOICE of EMPLOYERS

Employers are supportive of the changes suggested in the revision of the workforce system to make it work more efficiently and effectively. There is skepticism that change will “really happen.” Including businesses with the decisions and operations of the revamped workforce development system will go a long way to building the trust between all the partners involved in workforce development. Also, demonstrating tangible, objective outcomes and progress will also be important. The businesses feedback included some important points:

- Government does a poor job of follow up
- The opinion of government-driven employment programs is not strong
- Use current technologies to development a Job Bank and include Solano specific information on the website (schools, housing costs, recreational activities)
- Can government employees really understand the needs of employers from so many sectors?
- The opportunity to coordinate all employment entities is a good plan
- Many applicants for jobs in Solano County lack not only the “soft skills” but the “basic skills” in applying for entry level jobs.
- The preliminary soft skills identified that are key to success are: Reliability, Professional Communication, Integrity, Interviewing skills, Retention/Loyalty, Competence, Responsiveness, Courtesy, Initiative, Adaptability to different managers, and Work ethic.

Though this report identifies deficiencies the workforce system there is good news:

The Workforce Investment Board (now Workforce Development Board) gets good results for Department of Labor targeted populations. The organization has good credibility with the businesses that they serve. They have branded themselves as a support to business and demonstrate it with their business services such as job fairs and support in hiring and services for dislocated workers.

The Library System has offered their available resources with rooms and its array of computers throughout the county. With their locations in all cities and availability day, night and weekends, this greatly increases the capacity and access of workforce development services.

The community has identified that youth employment services and preparation is critical to move the next generation out of poverty. School districts and youth advocates are realizing that preparing for careers begins in the schools. In addition, there is a growing realization by the schools that they play a very important role in the larger workforce system and need to partner.

Identification of employment by the Community Corrections Partnership is critical for the reentry population to succeed in the community.

Solano County, through the Workforce Development Board just received a \$150,000 grant, Accelerator 3.0, from the State of California to integrate, streamline and do what is being proposed in this study. Discussions with the State Employment Development Department Director praised the direction that Solano is heading and is backing up his words with support and approval of the grant.

The Board of Supervisors have options to implement these recommendations:

The Board can decide not to implement the recommendations. This is not recommended because the Solano's current workforce development system is not effective for both residents and businesses. In addition, with changing workforce legislation, local initiatives, and meeting the Board's goals to diversify and attract businesses, progress will be impeded. The time is right to restructure and streamline workforce development in Solano County.

The Board can choose to implement the recommendations. It will demand ongoing oversight and true collaboration with all the partners. To oversee the implementation process, it is recommended that the Board of Supervisors designate the Workforce Development Board (WDB) as the coordinator of these recommendations. Though the WDB already has the mandate in the WIOA legislation to coordinate the integration of workforce development efforts and the Board of Supervisors has just recently appointed a new Workforce Development Board, this may not be enough to fully reform whole workforce development system. This review recommendations touch the "whole" workforce development system and may need additional partners involved in workforce development board, planning and oversight. In addition, the WDB applied and were approved for a State grant, Accelerator 3.0 whose purpose is to implement many of the recommendations in this study. There is some funding for a coordinator included in the grant. The Board of Supervisors should meet with the Workforce Development Board about the scope and authority of this implementation plan. This organization is the most knowledgeable and suited for this implementation effort.

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors have the coordinator position temporarily assigned to the County Administrator's Office staff. This position then becomes more closely associated with an "overall" county workforce strategy.

In addition, with so many significant changes proposed in the recommendations, the position demands someone who has credibility and trust with all the workforce partners. It is recommended that the selection of this individual include a panel of key workforce partners and employers who will forward their recommendations to the ultimate selection panel which will include Board members, the County Administrator and others.

Acknowledgements

The Board of Supervisors and the County Administrator (CAO) are to be applauded for their foresight in conducting this assessment at this key time as well as their commitment to strong community partnerships. The Board of Supervisor's active participation in the review and a commitment to strengthening the business climate and work opportunities in Solano County is critical in challenging the status quo and strengthening the economy one worker and one business at a time. Special acknowledgement goes to CAO Birgitta Corsello, who provided insight and guidance throughout the process. In addition, thanks to Solano Economic Development Corporation's President, Sandy Person, Sean Quinn and economist, Robert Eyler who co-sponsored many of the community review sessions and provided counsel and connections with our business leaders. They made it a priority to support this review and it paved the way for feedback and guidance from our business leaders.

GLOSSARY

AB109- Assembly Bill 109 that authorized the counties to provide local services for prisoners released from State prison.

BOS- Solano County Board of Supervisors

Braiding- Putting programs together using multiple funding sources

Brick and mortar- Actual buildings where services are provided.

CalJOBS- Online employment posting service by the State of California

CalWORKs- California Work Opportunity and Responsibility for Kids- California's cash assistance for families and welfare to work program.

CAO- Solano County Administrator's Office

CCP- Community Corrections Partnership- local oversight committee of reentry services that was part of Assembly Bill 109

Common Measures- Using specific measures across programs to compare progress and outcomes.

FSET- Food Stamp Employment and Training- employment programs for those receiving federal food assistance.

H.I.R.R.E.- Help in Recruiting and Retaining Employees- High level workforce development concept.- Also known as the Strawman

IT Professional- Information Technology professional

Ohio Means Jobs- The State of Ohio's effort to integrate all work programs under one umbrella organization.

Proposition 47- California Voter Initiative- criminal offenders who commit certain nonserious and nonviolent drug and property crimes would be sentenced to reduced penalties (such as shorter terms in jail).

PRCS- Post Release Community Supervision- status of individuals on probation as part of legislation of released prisoners in Assembly Bills 109 and Proposition 47.

SEDC- Solano Economic Development Corporation

Soft Skills- Also known as performance skills- Those non technical skills that employers would like employees to possess before entering a job.

SWOT- Consulting technique to receive feedback on a concept. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

UWBA- United Way of the Bay Area

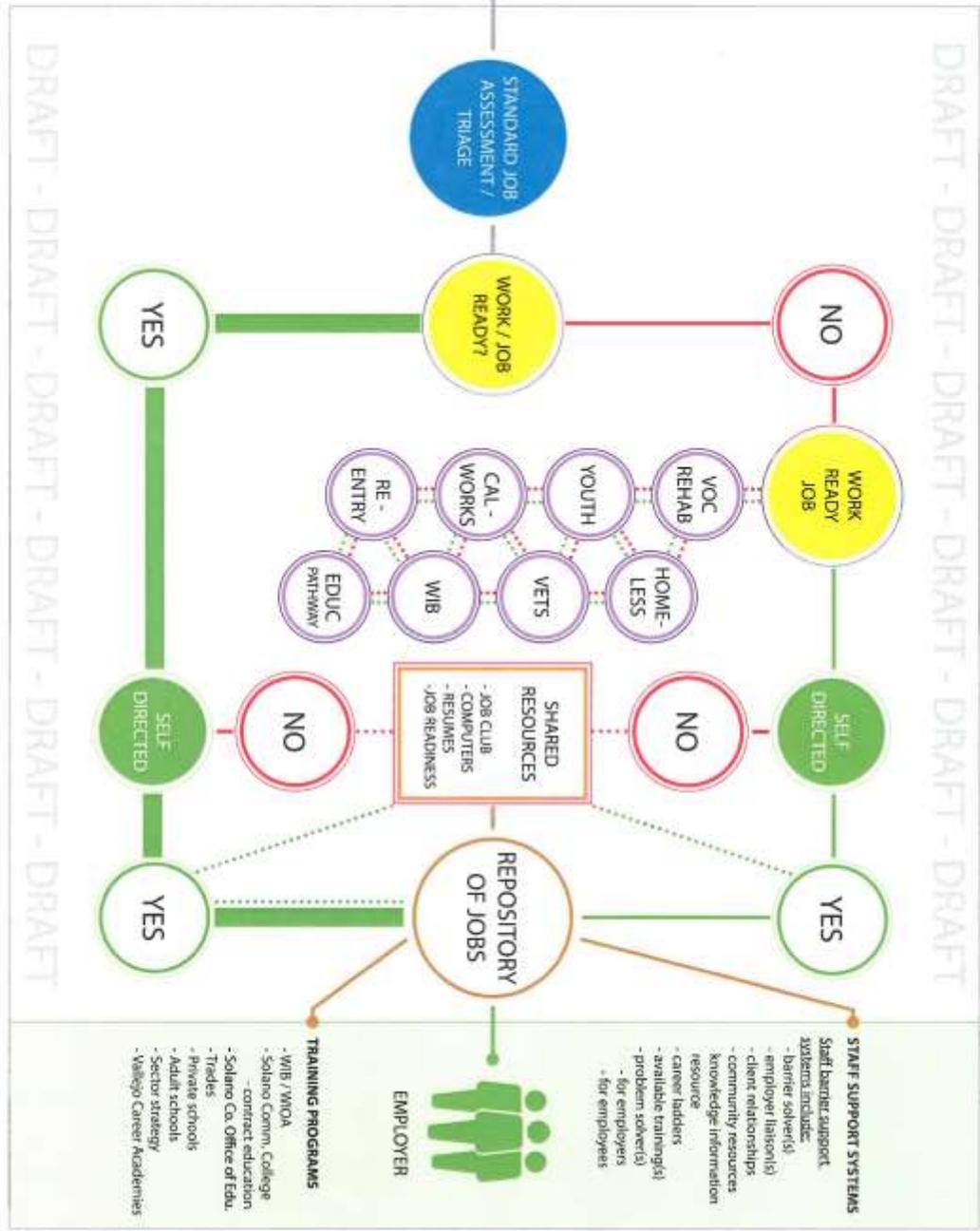
WDB- Workforce Development Board- Legislated through the WIOA legislation to replace the Workforce Investment Board

WIOA- Workforce Innovations and Opportunity Act of 2014- Legislation that replaces the Workforce Investment

HELP IN RECRUITING AND RETAINING EMPLOYEES

concept

by Patrick Duterte
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April 2016

Thank You for your participation and input related to a scan of Workforce Development in Solano County

The Solano County Administrators Office (Solano CAO) in partnership with Solano Economic Development Corporation (Solano EDC) is conducting an analysis to seek input from employers, employment program stakeholders and staff.

Meeting Focus and Context: This meeting will provide an environmental scan of workforce development in Solano County. It will identify gaps, duplication, and opportunities to strengthen workforce development so **local residents** can gain local employment and grow their careers. **Employers** can hire, retain and thrive in Solano County. Your input is requested regarding the future of workforce development in Solano County. The review of the system requires its leaders to take a "birds eye view" of the overall system to strengthen it. Upon reviewing the environment and acknowledging that things can improve; then the opportunity to change can happen

Here is the latest Scan:

- Employers are confused by the proliferation of different employment programs approaching them to place their clients into jobs.
- There is sense from employers that employment programs are not coordinated. Many employers use temporary hiring agencies to fill vacancies.
- Employers are not getting help support for employees having work/life issues (child care, attendance)
- There is duplication of services in various employment programs.
- There is no agreed-upon standard of what is "job ready" or what is the definition of "soft skills"
- The connection between education, training and current workforce preparedness is acknowledged but is not fully integrated into curriculum.
- Is there a quicker way to connect job seekers with available jobs?

Your input is being sought regarding a reformed "employment system" in Solano County:

- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and barriers in key focus areas identified.
- The creation of a sound, system of employment, training and career growth based on the economy of Solano County.
- Investment in our local workforce to grow and to thrive in Solano County.

Keep in mind these Focus Areas:

1. Agreement on the definition of "job ready" and "soft skills" ready.
2. Effective and seamless system of connecting job ready with employers
3. Close connection between training programs and meeting employer's need for specific job skills
4. Employers should have access to help that will keep their employees on the job
5. Some specific employment services can be shared (Job Clubs, Resume Writing, access to computers)
6. A system of delivering employment services should be governed by providers of employment programs and employers.



Help In Recruiting & Retaining Employees

Workforce Stakeholder Concept Input Session

William J. Carroll Government Center

1119 E. Monte Vista Ave

Vacaville, CA 95688

Agenda

Welcome- 8:15 am

**Sandy Person, President
Solano EDC**

**John Vasquez
Board of Supervisors**

Introductions- 8:25am-8:30 am

Patrick Duterte 8:30- 8:50 am

- **Background**
- **Environmental Scan in Solano Workforce Development**
- **Introduction to *Help In Recruiting & Retaining Employees* Concept**

SWOT Analysis (Strength, Weakness, Opportunity, Threat) 8:50am – 9:00 am

Explanation of Process and Ground Rules

9:00- 9:15 Strength

9:15- 9:30 Weakness

9:30- 9:45 Opportunities

9:45- 10:00 Barriers

Next Steps:

Feedback to all of you- Results of SWOT

Report with Recommendations to Board of Supervisors- May/June

Adjourn

APPENDIX 2a. - RECOMMENDATIONS

Dashboard of Recommendations:

	The Areas in Red should be addressed during the first 6 months
	The Areas in Orange should be addressed in the first 18 months
	The issues in Blue has started. Continue engaging in this activity

-  1a. **Adopt a Standard Assessment Tool**
-  2a. **Solano County Workforce Stakeholders should adopt a practical and useable employer-driven definition of Soft Skills.**
-  3a. **Form a steering committee of providers and stakeholders to look for opportunities to consolidate, realign services, end duplicative practices, and look for opportunities to braid funding and services.**
-  4a. **Include Seniors in Workforce Development Planning**
-  5a. **Adopt common outcome measures for all workforce programs and develop a dashboard of all workforce development programs with quarterly reporting.**
-  6a. **Revamp the Online Job Search System**
-  7a. **Adopt Navigator/ Advisor Work System**
-  8a. **Assemble a team of IT experts, providers and employers to set up a project for an online job posting plan for Solano County.**
-  9a. **Develop cross system collaboration ; bring key players (Workforce Development Board, Health and Social Service, Reentry Services, Veteran Services, Youth Programs, Voc Rehab, Homeless services, adult schools, and senior programs and other key partners) together to establish an integrated/ registration for job seekers with the goal of ensuring that they are able to access all services and programs available to assist them in getting a job.**
-  10a. **Look at best practices, for example, the Seattle Jobs Initiative in helping low income individuals enter the job market and build careers. The Seattle program has shown remarkable success, and technical assistance is available to jurisdictions through the Seattle Jobs Initiative organization.**
-  11a. **Actively engage re-entry ex-offenders involved in work activities as soon as possible.**
-  12a. **Youth Programs should continue to work in partnership with the larger reforming of the workforce development system.**
-  13a. **Bring together a work group of program experts, financial experts, designers, and architects, and experts in one stop center design to form a work group with the purpose of designing an employment-centered, client-centric Job Center.**

work group with the purpose of designing and build-to-suit an employment-centered, client-centric Job Center.



- 14a. The Solano County Board of Supervisors should make a Call to Action to direct county staff, contractors of workforce development funds to do what is necessary to realign, restructure, and repurpose available dollars to focus on helping all county residents to become part of the workforce and to help business thrive and grow in Solano County. Those entities not under the control of the Board, encourage them to join Solano County's workforce development restructuring efforts.**

How to Use the Workforce Success Measures Dashboard

Ohio Governor's Office of Workforce Transformation

Click tabs to choose state, region, county, or provider-level reports

About | State Reports | JobsOhio Region Reports | County Reports | Provider Reports | FAQ | Info | Contact Us

County Reports | COLUMBIANA County | WIA Program Reports | Adult Report

Click here to open printable PDF | Click Notes for methods details | Click Info tab for information about programs and definitions

Use pull-down menu to select report year

Workforce Investment Act (WIA) Adult Program Summary for COLUMBIANA County 2011-2012

Second Quarter Employment
69 TOTAL

Metric	2011-2012	2010-2011	Trend
Program Completion	125	122	↑
Employed Second Quarter	69	69	↔
Percent Employed Second Quarter	55%	52%	↑
Percent of Region	52%	48%	↑
Difference to Region	+3%	+4%	↓
State Percentage	50%	48%	↑
Difference to State	+5%	+3%	↑

Fourth Quarter Employment
69 TOTAL

Metric	2011-2012	2010-2011	Trend
Program Completion	125	122	↑
Employed Fourth Quarter	69	69	↔
Percent Employed Fourth Quarter	55%	52%	↑
Percent of Region	50%	48%	↑
Difference to Region	+5%	+4%	↑
State Percentage	50%	48%	↑
Difference to State	+5%	+3%	↑

Earnings Second Quarter (Annualized)
\$20,600 MEDIAN

Metric	2011-2012	2010-2011	Trend
Second Quarter Employment	69	69	↔
Median Earnings Second Quarter	\$20,600	\$20,900	↓
Region Median Earnings Second Quarter	\$20,900	\$21,000	↓
Difference to Region	-\$300	-\$100	↓
State Median Earnings Second Quarter	\$20,200	\$20,500	↓
Difference to State	-\$400	-\$300	↓

Earnings Fourth Quarter (Annualized)
\$20,700 MEDIAN

Metric	2011-2012	2010-2011	Trend
Fourth Quarter Employment	69	69	↔
Median Earnings Fourth Quarter	\$20,700	\$21,000	↓
Region Median Earnings Fourth Quarter	\$21,000	\$21,500	↓
Difference to Region	-\$3,000	-\$500	↓
State Median Earnings Fourth Quarter	\$21,200	\$21,500	↓
Difference to State	-\$500	-\$300	↓

Skills Attained

Metric	2011-2012	2010-2011	Trend
Program Completion	125	122	↑
Second Quarter Skills Attained %	NR	NR	NR
Fourth Quarter Skills Attained %	NR	NR	NR
WIA-ERP Skills Attained %	NR	NR	NR
WIA-ERP Skills Attained % with 90%+	NR	NR	NR
Other Direct Instruction Skills Attained %	NR	NR	NR

Postsecondary Enrollment

Metric	2011-2012	2010-2011	Trend
Second Quarter Employment	69	69	↔
Enrollment	25%	22%	↑
Region Enrollment	21%	21%	↔
Difference to Region	+4%	+1%	↑
State Enrollment	21%	21%	↔
Difference to State	+4%	+1%	↑

Report year: 2011-2012, Previous year: 2010-2011

Fewer than 10 individuals not reported (NR)

Attachment B: Common Measures At-A-Glance

ADULT MEASURES

Entered Employment

Of those who are not employed at the date of participation:

$\frac{\# \text{ of participants who are employed in the first quarter (qtr) after exit}}{\# \text{ of participants who exit during the qtr}}$

Retention

Of those who are employed in the first qtr after exit:

$\frac{\# \text{ of participants who are employed in both the second and third qtrs after exit}}{\# \text{ of participants who exit during the qtr}}$

Earnings Increase

Of those who are employed in the first qtr after exit:

$\frac{\text{Earnings in the first qtr after exit minus earnings in the qtr prior to the date of participation}}{\text{Earnings in the qtr prior to the date of participation}}$

- and -

- and -

Of those who are employed in the first qtr after exit:

$\frac{\text{Earnings in the third qtr after exit minus earnings in the first qtr after exit}}{\text{Earnings in the first qtr after exit}}$

Efficiency

$\frac{\text{Program appropriation level}}{\# \text{ of program participants}}$

YOUTH MEASURES

Placement in Employment or Education

Of those who are not in post-secondary education, employment, or the military at the date of participation:

$\frac{\# \text{ of participants who are in employment or the military or enrolled in post-secondary education and/or advanced training/occupational skills training in the first qtr after exit}}{\# \text{ of participants who exit during the qtr}}$

Attainment of a Degree or Certificate

Of those enrolled in education (at the date of participation or at any point during the program):

$\frac{\# \text{ of participants who attain a diploma, GED, or certificate by the end of the third qtr after exit}}{\# \text{ of participants who exit during the quarter}}$

Literacy and Numeracy Gains

Of those who are basic skills deficient:

$\frac{\# \text{ of participants who increase one or more educational functioning levels}}{\# \text{ of participants who have completed a year in the program (i.e., one year from the date of program participation) plus the \# of participants who exit before completing a year in the program}}$

Efficiency

$\frac{\text{Program appropriation level}}{\# \text{ of program participants}}$

What Employers Mean by Soft Skills or Performance Skills Seattle Jobs Initiative		Yes? or No? Why No
Reliability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Attendance: regular and on time -Delivers: turns in work on time -Communication: regarding expectations, deadlines and Setbacks Dependable: Does what says will do 	
Responsiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Good Communication: listens actively -Sets Realistic Goals and objectives -Accurately Assesses own and other's capabilities and needs -Follow through -Efficiently acquires and applies new information, knowledge and skills necessary to the job 	
Courtesy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gets along with others Performs well with team Behaves respectfully towards others Manages stress Positively resolves conflict Acknowledges others in positive and appropriate manner Displays appropriate etiquette and manners in a variety of settings 	
Competence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Possesses adequate technical skills and knowledge necessary to perform job requirements Possesses ability to quickly acquire new skills and knowledge appropriate to change needs of the the job. 	

APPENDIX 4b

What Employers Mean by Soft Skills or Performance Skills
Nova Workforce Development

Yes? or No?
 Why No

<p>Self-Awareness</p>	<p>The ability to understand where you are in your career path, where your passion is driving you and what you need in order to get there</p>
<p>Networking</p>	<p>The ability to both engage existing contacts and to reach beyond that base to increase the number of professional contacts</p>
<p>Relationship Management</p>	<p>The ability to ensure that you are well regarded by those around you by managing your workplace relationships, your reputation and your desired performance results</p>
<p>Organizational Reading</p>	<p>The ability to analyze behaviors of the organization, the industry and the economy in order to make better informed career decisions and to be proactive in managing your employment situation.</p>
<p>Mentorship</p>	<p>The ability to establish and access a relationship with a more-experienced person or to serve as mentor to a less-experienced individual.</p>

3. RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

The ability to ensure that you are well regarded by those around you by managing your workplace relationships, your reputation, and your desired performance results.



"Build relationships with your colleagues, customers, and your supervisors to demonstrate a willingness to learn, to help, and to meet expectations."

4. ORGANIZATIONAL READING

The ability to analyze behaviors of the organization, the industry, and the economy in order to make better-informed career decisions and to be proactive in managing your employment situation.



"Do not become too focused on the day-to-day grind. Invest time in your company's performance to avoid becoming blindsided by changes."

5. MENTORSHIP

The ability to establish and accept a relationship with a more-experienced person or to serve as mentor to a less-experienced individual.



"Find a mentor, conduct a research project, and then share your findings with your employer and the mentor. You will receive feedback and the mentor will receive credit for their time and effort."

1. SELF-AWARENESS

The ability to understand where you are on your career path, where your passion is driving you, and what you need in order to get there.



"I know myself and I know what I'm capable of. I know if I want to embrace a space. I know what I need to do to become consistent in that space ... You have to be able to put on the right hat and see what things are at play."

2. NETWORKING

The ability to both engage existing contacts and to reach beyond that base to increase the number of professional contacts.



"Networking is establishing value and relationships that are bidirectional. You can't always be asking, 'How can I be getting that?' ... You have to be giving, too. You have to be open."

The 5 Truths of Career Success

Insightful, relevant on a changing economy

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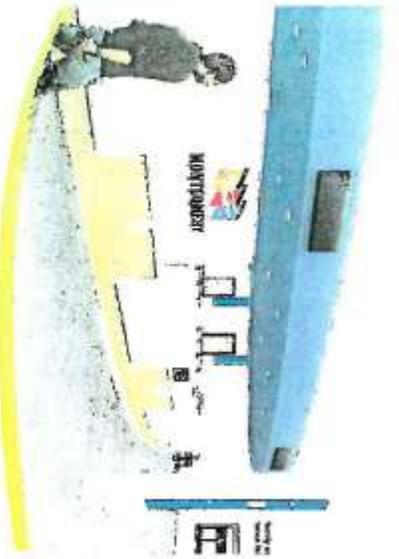




YOUR FULL-SERVICE CONNECTION TO
**Job Search Assistance
Employer Services**

Create take advantage of NOVA services

NOVA is an Equal Opportunity Employer. Any person who is employed by or under contract to NOVA is an employee.



We are Transforming The Job Center to Better Serve our Customers!

We've taken a long, hard look at our processes, and Montgomery County Job and Family Services (JFS) is making some changes to ensure that we work as a team to better serve you.

When seeking our help, you may need cash, food or medical assistance from our Family Assistance Division (formerly Social Services and Income Support), or you may need employment through our Workforce Development team or services from our Child Support Enforcement Agency. You may, in fact, need all three divisions. That is why we are putting them all under one roof and streamlining our processes.

Comments, Questions?

We have a dedicated email address you can use if you have questions or comments about our Job Center 2.0 project. It is JC20questions@jfs.ohio.gov. You can also get the latest information about our construction project by going to the Latest Updates area of our Job Center 2.0 page.

Our Job and Family Services team truly appreciates your patience and cooperation as we reshape The Job Center to make your experience better!



The Job Center
1111 S. Edwin Moses Boulevard
Dayton, OH 45422



Improving Your Job Center

APPENDIX 5a





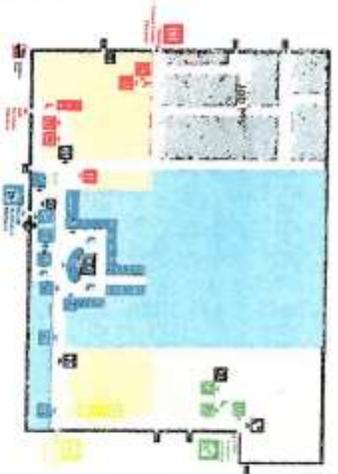
A Year of Growing Pains

Our construction project, known as Job Center 2.0, is projected to conclude in the fall of 2016 when Child Support Enforcement moves into The Job Center. Before that, some departments will need to temporarily move so operations can continue during construction.

Virtually every area of JFS within The Job Center will undergo some type of change. Several moves have already taken place, as our Hospital Unit, Adult Protective Services and Investigation and Recovery have temporarily moved to the Rehbold Building. Other departments will be moving to different locations within The Job Center to accommodate the three-phase project. Temporary signage will direct you when departmental moves occur.

Closer Access, Better Traffic Flow

New parking off the northwest corner of our building will help accommodate you. There will also be an RTA stop behind the St. Vincent DePaul Thrift Store, replacing the current bus stop and helping to create a safer traffic flow.



Destination Points

Rather than coming in one main entrance on the north side of the building, you will be routed to four main JFS entrances so you can park closer to the service you are seeking.

OhioMeansJobs-Montgomery County will have its own storefront on the northeast corner of the building, and the current main entrance will continue to serve most Family Assistance customers. Specialized services for seniors and disabled persons on Medicaid will have a ramp access and plenty of close parking. The Job Mall will continue to have its own entrances for our community partners, and Child Support will have a dedicated entrance on the west side of the building.

Scan You Imagine?

Currently, you must first wait in line to get a pass to gain access to one of two scanning areas where you usually encounter another line. Our new design will feature scanning stations up front with no need for a pass to access them.

Thousands of pieces of paper are scanned in every day at The Job Center. We are refining our processes to help ensure that the material you scan is linked to your case as quickly as possible.

A Better Customer Experience

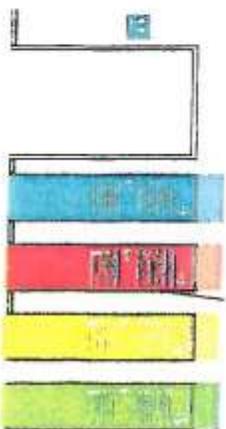
After our project is complete, you will find a Concierge Desk in the front of The Job Center, where a worker will direct you to where you need to be. If your business is with Family Assistance, you will be directed to either an area for new cases or an area for existing cases. Our goal is to eliminate unnecessary waiting and make your experience faster and more effective.

Face to Face Meetings Made Easy

When face-to-face meetings are necessary, we will utilize a series of meeting rooms where caseworkers will meet you. You will be notified to meet your worker in a specific room with the help of a system that will let you know your worker is ready for you.

Colorful Surroundings

New permanent signage will make it easier for you to find the services you seek here at The Job Center. Each service area will also have an associated color that will help identify where you need to go. Exterior signage will direct you to your destination point and help you find closer parking. We are also planning to have an electronic sign in the future to highlight events.



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