

## SWIC Ready to Work Communities Task Force

July 10, 2013

3:00 – 4:00 PM Eastern

### Meeting Notes

**Participants:** Becky Nickoli, Brian Burton, Derek Redelman, Linda Woloshansky, Mark Goldman, Jody Springer (for Mellisa Leaming), Randy Holmes, Richard Rampley, Roger Feldhaus, Rom McKulick, Thomas Miller

**Staff:** Nate Klinck, Department of Workforce Development

#### I. Welcome and Introductions

Mark Goldman began the meeting at 3pm, and welcomed the taskforce members in attendance.

#### II. Discussion Topics

- Mr. Goldman welcomed Thomas Miller to the group and asked him to share any lessons learned from the review of similar programs in other states. Mr. Miller reported that the states that had the most success did the following:
  - Engaged multiple communities and organizations during the developmental phase of the initiative;
  - Tied criteria closely to economic development goals;
  - Made initiative competitive and celebratory; and
  - Established specific metrics that were easy-to-understand.
  
- Mr. Goldman followed up Mr. Miller's discussion with a question to the taskforce – what is the key information that businesses look for when making location/expansion decisions. Members of the taskforce made the following observations of the types of information and data prospective employers review:
  - Educational attainment levels within the workforce;
  - Number of individuals with occupational certifications/credentials in various industries;
  - High school graduation rates;
  - Does training/educational “infrastructure” exist to create career pathways and fill talent pipeline;
  - Where is current workforce employed;
  - What skills exist within existing labor pool;

- The taskforce also discussed the value of soft skills certifications and whether there would be value in including some measurement of soft skills within certification criteria. The taskforce generally agreed that while soft skills were key to an employee's success on the job, there is not a way to accurately measure an individual's soft skills. Some members of the taskforce also shared that it is very difficult to "train" an individual to improve soft skills. For these reasons, the initial inclination of the group is to not consider soft skills assessment/attainment as part of the Ready to Work Communities criteria.
- Members of the taskforce also discussed other organizations throughout Indiana that could be interested in this type of initiative. Three organizations that were mentioned were:
  - ECO 15;
  - The Talent Alliance in Northeast Indiana; and
  - The Ready Initiative in Northwest Indiana.
- The taskforce generally discussed the perceived value by businesses of the National Career Readiness Certification (NCRC). Multiple WIB representatives on the call shared that the NCRC was widely used throughout their regions. Other taskforce members shared that while the NCRC might have some value, it was not a key decision point that most businesses use when making hiring determinations. The taskforce agreed to continue researching NCRC and WorkKeys in order to better understand its potential usage in this type of initiative.
- Before closing the conference call, members suggested including the following topics for discussion at the next meeting of the taskforce:
  - Should Ready to Work Communities certifications be offered at the local (county) or regional (multi-county) level?
  - What specific criteria do other states use for certification in this type of initiative?

Mr. Goldman closed the call at 4:05pm, thanking everyone for their participation.