



Long-Range Strategic Plan

2012 Operational Objectives

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Introduction

This document is the result of a series of retreats conducted with members of the Board of Directors and the staff of Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, Inc. (L/S WIB, Inc.) between July and September 2011. During these meetings, the participants

1. Analyzed the state of the organization—its strengths and weaknesses—as it exists today.
2. Defined the community environment—its opportunities and threats—now and into the future.
3. Defined a set of strategic assumptions to be considered throughout the planning process.
4. Identified the key issues facing the organization.
5. Affirmed the mission and vision statements for the organization.
6. Defined the long-range strategies and supporting strategic actions to be used by the organization to fulfill its mission, achieve its vision and address its key issues.
7. Established the *Critical Measures of Success* that will be used to evaluate the organization's progress as it moves through its strategic plan.
8. Targeted the specific, short-term actions to be taken to implement the long-range strategies and assigned accountability to the appropriate individuals within the organization.

The results are as follows.

Strategic Assessment

Strengths

The strengths of Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, as identified by its leadership team, fall into three categories.

1. Our position in the eyes of our employer customers
2. Our progress over the past two years
3. Our board and staff

More specifically,

Our position in the eyes of our employer customers

- The WIB is well perceived by its employer customers.
- The WIB is seen as having a “good” impact on economic development.
- Our employer customers are well satisfied with the work done by our CareerLinks (except for their success at matching workers to jobs). Our employers know where our CareerLinks are located.
- There is a high to mid level of awareness of our services among our employer customers.
- We now have a presence in and impact on Schuylkill County. (This was not true as recently as two years ago.)

Our progress over the past two years

- Over the past two years, we have developed a workforce development system from the ground up, and it is working. We now understand what we are all about and what we are responsible for.
- We have put our house in order (internally).
- We are now accountable.
- We have created transparency.
- We use partners well to deliver services to our employer customers and job seekers.
- We have developed WIB 101 as a board education process. (However, not all board members have participated in our education activities.)
- We have accomplished a lot in a short time.

Our board and staff

- We have a committed board. Over the past two years, we have not had to cancel a board meeting due to lack of a quorum. (This is a major change from the past.)
- More and more people want to get on the WIB board.
- Our staff is viewed as a key strength by our board.
- We include our staff in our planning activities to maximize their operational input.

Weaknesses

The weaknesses of Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, as identified by its leadership team, fall into three categories.

1. Our ability (thus far) to meet all of our employer customers’ needs

2. Our lack of communication regarding the services we provide and the work we do
3. Our lack of strategic focus

More specifically,

Our ability (thus far) to meet all of our employer customers' needs

- Our job training doesn't match our employers' needs (specifically basic work skills and work ethic development).
- Employers have identified "lack of a suitable screening process" as our number two weakness.
- We have been siloed into areas of work based on funding requirements.

Our lack of communication regarding the services we provide and the work we do

- Because we have not communicated our capabilities well enough, too many of our employer customers don't know us well enough to know our weaknesses.
- Our employer customers have a mid to low level of awareness of the roles the WIB plays in its service area.
- Too many of our employer customers are not aware of the value we provide.
- Our employer customers see the WIB and the CareerLinks as the same organization.
- Awareness of WorkKeys is very low.

Our lack of strategic focus

- We tend to lack focus on key areas and we sometimes fail to get them done throughout our region.

Opportunities

The opportunities facing Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board, as it moves forward, fall into five categories.

1. Service opportunities
2. Communication opportunities
3. Revenue/funding opportunities
4. Governance opportunities
5. Internal systems and resource opportunities

More specifically,

Service opportunities

- Form a business/education committee.
- Partner with the education system to deliver employment education.
- Increase our focus on basic work skills and work ethics in our training.
- Identify a target audience and impact it.
- Define our employer expectations and incorporate them into all our service and communication activities.

Communication opportunities

- Celebrate our successes. Report our progress to our community.
- Communicate our successes to federal and state elected and appointed officials.
- Communicate better with our employers (about our roles).

Revenue/funding opportunities

- Raise money to pursue community needs not supported by traditional funding.
- Raise funds to meet workforce needs not supported by traditional funding.

Governance opportunities

- Improve our board education activities.
- Improve our communications with our board.
- Develop a formal board member orientation.
- Clearly define and communicate board expectations to potential recruits.
- Create talking points for board members to use when talking about the WIB.
- Solidify the board recruitment and nomination process.
- Develop a more engaged and expanded committee structure.
- Expand our committee membership beyond board members.

Internal systems and resource opportunities

- Create resources to think broadly.
- Form partnerships with labor and education to provide employability education.

Threats

The threats currently facing Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board are:

- External perceptions could impact funding during a period of declining resources.
- We could be subjected to lawsuits, real or frivolous.
- A new state administration could redefine WIB service areas.
- We could face continued funding cuts.
- Political influences could attempt to impact how we work and are governed.
- We may not be able to generate the resources needed to implement our plan.

Strategic Assumptions

In addition to the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats as previously defined, we have identified the following assumptions and consider them to be givens that must be recognized as we develop our long-range strategies and move forward through our planning process.

- The *Brookings Report* identified workforce development as our region’s number one issue.
- The need for workforce development is increasingly recognized as an essential component of economic development.
- Youth programs are not hitting the targets set by Congress.
- Baby boomers will be retiring in increasing numbers, reducing the available workforce.
- Luzerne County is moving to a home rule charter on January 1, 2012.
- Two of three Schuylkill commissioners are not running for reelection.
- Our traditional funding has use restrictions tied to it.
- Our region has a net worker export of approximately 12,000 people.
- Our region will continue to diversify.

Key Issues

Based on the identification and analysis of the current strengths and weaknesses and potential opportunities and threats as detailed previously, we have concluded that the following key issues must be addressed in Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board’s long-range plan.

- How can we impact the basic work skills and work ethics of our job seekers?
- How can we better promote the workforce development needs of our area to state and federal officials?
- Do we want to brand the WIB and, if yes, as what and how?
- How can we better communicate our work and success to our communities?
- Do we want to clarify the role of the WIB and CareerLinks and, if yes, how?
- How can we further develop our board, governance structure, and succession planning?
- How will we fund our strategic priorities?
- How can we bring the education system into our plan and activities?

Mission Statement

To ensure a demand-driven, world-class workforce system aligned with economic development and education.

Vision Statement

The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will increase the prosperity of Luzerne and Schuylkill Counties through a world-class competitive workforce.

Long-Range Strategies

Based on the strategic assessment as detailed previously, Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board has identified four overriding strategies, with supporting strategic actions, it will implement in its efforts to fulfill its mission and achieve its vision.

The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will work with community partners to prepare a workforce with the work ethic and core work skills to meet the needs of current and future job opportunities.

Strategic Actions

- Define the core work skills needed by the employers of our area.
- Define the core work skills needed by employers for the jobs of the future.
- Work with school districts to have the YES Program implemented in every school district.
- Develop a package of outcome measures for the YES Program.
- Explore a “Junior YES” Program (focused on work ethics and soft employment skills).
- Create a YES Program for adults (perhaps connected with WorkKeys).
- Create a technology training infrastructure that differentiates our service areas.
- Adjust/modify the way our CareerLinks operate to support our focus on Strategy 1.
- Identify and pursue opportunities to incorporate “Workplace Essentials” into all training by our partners.
- Lobby for changes in the Workforce Investment Act that supports our strategic direction.
- Explore an education summit on workforce.

The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will build a brand in its service area that supports its mission and its ability to raise awareness to achieve its strategies.

Strategic Actions

- Identify and contract with an agency to develop and implement a branding campaign.
- Determine how our branding efforts impact our affiliate organizations.

The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will build the governance infrastructure needed to ensure its mission for generations to come.

Strategic Actions

- Form a governance committee.
- Conduct a study of other WIBs and how they address organizational governance.
- Develop a list of best practices and worst mistakes for WIB governance.
- Redesign our governance structure based on best practices that supports our strategic direction.
- Develop and implement a board matrix to guide our board recruiting activities.
- Identify and develop reciprocal arrangements for our board and/or committee members.
- Identify workforce professionals in our area who can serve on our board and/or committees.
- Develop and implement a pre-appointment board education process.
- Redesign our board orientation process.
- Develop and implement a continuing education program for our directors.

The Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will identify and develop the resources needed to achieve its strategies.

Strategic Actions

- Secure grants and/or raise funds to support the YES Program in every district in our areas.
- Raise the funds needed to support a branding initiative.
- Build a development capability to generate resources to support our strategic plan.
- Define the internal training needs of our staff and provide them with the skills they need to support our strategic plan.

Critical Measures of Success

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of and progress toward its long-range strategic plan, Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will measure and track the following *Critical Measures of Success*. The results will be reviewed by the leadership team on a regular basis.

Strategy 1

- Employer index on workforce readiness
- Number of job seekers completing WorkKeys
- Number of employers recognizing WorkKeys
- Number of YES Program graduates
- YES Program employment success rate (based on a CareerLink-based system)
- Number of school districts participating in YES Program

Strategy 2

- Employer index on brand awareness

Strategy 3

- Percentage board vacancy
- Percentage board attendance at board and committee meetings

Strategy 4

- Dollar amount raised to support strategic activities

2012 Operational Objectives

During the first year (October 1, 2011–December 31, 2012) of this long-range strategic plan, Luzerne/Schuylkill Workforce Investment Board will implement the following operational objectives.

- Define the core work skills needed by the employers of our area. *Trina*
- Explore an education summit on workforce. *Marla/Lucyann*
- Work with school districts to have the YES Program implemented in every school district. *Marla*
Develop a package of outcome measures for the YES Program.
- Adjust/modify the way our CareerLinks operate to support our focus on Strategy 1. *Larry*
- Identify and contract with an agency to develop and implement a branding campaign. *Larry*
- Form a governance committee. *Lucyann/Martha*
- Conduct a study of other WIBs and how they address organizational governance. *Julie*
Develop a list of best practices and worst mistakes for WIB governance.
Redesign our governance structure based on best practices that supports our strategic direction.
- Develop and implement a pre-appointment board education process. *Julie/Patti*
- Raise the funds needed to support a branding initiative. *Patti/Ed/WIB Staff*
- Secure grants and/or raise funds to support the YES Program in every district in our areas.
Patti/Ed/WIB Staff