



April 10, 2009

To: Scott Koch, President, Oregon Workforce Alliance

From: Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board

Chair Robin Popp, Goodwill Industries
Vice Chair Wendy Schechter, Partnership to End Poverty
Steve Williamsen, UFCW 555
Tom Moore, Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council
Laurel Werhane, Oregon Employment Department
Carol Moorehead, Central Oregon Community College
Ron Parsons, Oregon Department of Human Services
Darrel Wilson, Opportunity Foundation of Central Oregon
Christine Lewis, Housing Works
Parrish Van Wert, Department of Corrections
Ray Hasart, High Desert Education Service District

Re: Re-Structuring of the Region 10 RWIB; Delegation of Responsibilities to OWA

The Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board met on March 25, 2009, to discuss and act on a proposal to restructure into a regional workforce committee and to delegate RWIB responsibilities to the Oregon Workforce Alliance. Through formal COWIB action at that meeting, COWIB members agreed to:

- Disband the RWIB effective July 1, 2009
- Consider July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010 a “transition year”
- Re-form in an alternate structure – the “Central Oregon Workforce Coordinating Council” - as defined within the attached concept paper

The concept paper provides an overview of the reasons for this proposed change in structure, as well as the composition of the new regional coordinating council. As per ORS 660.315, COWIB will also delegate the responsibilities of the Region 10 Workforce Investment Board to the Local Workforce Investment Board which is the Oregon Workforce Alliance, exclusive of the Employer Workforce Training Fund and Workforce Response Team.

A “transition team” will be formed to guide the formation of the Workforce Coordinating Council, to ensure the establishment of a One Stop Partner group, and to ensure the continued operation of the Workforce Response Team. The transition team will be composed primarily of current COWIB members, and will be established prior to June 30, 2009.

The members of the Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board have worked for nearly a year on the re-structure concept, and have consulted with the WorkSource Central Oregon partners, COWIB member organizations, and other regional partners during the restructure concept development period. The members unanimously agree that the restructured council will better address the strategic workforce needs of the region, while engaging a wide range of key workforce development partners.

COWIB Re-Organization
“Central Oregon Workforce Development Coordinating Council”
April 3, 2009

The Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board will disband as a formal board and reform in an alternate, simplified structure. The Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board approved this re-organization concept at their March 25, 2009 meeting. The action included stipulations:

- The re-organized structure will be effective July 1, 2009.
- The re-organized structure will be presented to the Oregon Workforce Alliance on April 17, 2009. The concept may be modified prior to the effective date based on OWA feedback and/or actions.
- The July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010 time period will be considered a “transition year” in which to further evaluate and finalize the structure and composition of the re-organized workforce council.

This paper outlines the COWIB agreement for an alternate structure: a streamlined coalition of workforce, economic and business development interests, with the goal serving as a broadly-supported forum for identifying workforce development priorities, strategies and opportunities in support of the region’s economy.

1. Background:

The Central Oregon Workforce Investment Board has served as the “Regional Workforce Investment Board” (RWIB) for Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson counties since the RWIB structure was established in 1999. COWIB is a 16-member board composed of public and private sector members. The board includes 7 private sector positions (including chair, vice-chair, and chair-elect), 5 WorkSource Central Oregon partner positions, 1 labor position, and 3 ex-officio positions. COWIB meets six times per year, and supports an executive committee, One Stop management team, Business Resource Network, and various strategic committees.

The workforce development issues and focus in Central Oregon have changed over time. Initially, COWIB was focused on the implementing the federal Workforce Investment Act (WIA) through development of One Stop WorkSource Centers. Now that the One Stop system is functioning well, other needs/issues have arisen. A new type of partnership is needed to address these emerging challenges.

The mandated RWIB structure is not the optimal structure to engage the private sector, or to meet the needs of the region’s workforce system. Since inception, COWIB has struggled to fulfill its mandates due to a number of challenges:

- COWIB has a long history of difficulty attracting and retaining private business members; there are currently four openings on board (with no candidates to fill those positions).
- A significant amount of COWIB energy and budgeted resources have been directed toward private sector board member recruitment, with very poor results. Continued private sector board member recruitment is not a good investment of workforce resources.
- The board’s functions are both administrative and strategic. These functions are not complementary – business members tend to see less value in expending their time and resources on the RWIB administrative roles of certifying One-Stops, developing agreements, monitoring performance, and other similar functions.
- COWIB members do not generally see enough value to justify the costs of a formal standing board.
- The Oregon Consortium/Oregon Workforce Alliance (the Local Workforce Investment Board for the 24 rural Oregon counties, including Crook, Deschutes and Jefferson) has removed certain functions from RWIBs, including: OWA serving as the One Stop operator rather than regional entities, central OWA planning document, declining funding for RWIB staff and activities.

COWIB is re-organizing to reduce administrative functions, to eliminate many of the structured board requirements, and to improve focus on strategic functions. A specific goal of this restructuring is to better connect to and coordinate with the business and economic development organizations in the region in an effort to align strategies for the benefit of job seekers, businesses and the overall economy.

2. Principles for Re-Organization:

The over-arching principle of this re-organization is that the regional workforce system is more than the individual workforce partner organizations; the workforce system is the region’s overall approach to identifying workforce gaps/needs, meeting business and industry demand for qualified workers, and assisting individuals seeking employment. This regional approach transcends the individual workforce development partners; the

system includes business development organizations, economic development organizations, non-profits, labor, local and state government, and the private sector.

COWIB members agree that:

- The “workforce development system” in Central Oregon should be broadly defined as a complex collection of organizations, local governments, schools, businesses and individuals that share a common interest in 1) ensuring that people become or remain economically self-sufficient, while 2) promoting the region’s economic growth by providing employers with trained workers.
- While the region has a broad network of education, training, human service, and employment service providers who deliver quality services for the benefit of job seekers and employers, it is important to continually seek opportunities to remove barriers, address challenges and strengthen the workforce development system, with the goal of better meeting evolving workforce needs.
- The opportunity to remove barriers, address challenges and strengthen the system can be best met through establishing a forum that brings together a leadership coalition of workforce development, business development, and economic development interests in an effort to identify the highest priority workforce development opportunities, and to take action.
- Effective action is dependent upon broadly supported priorities. The greater the level of support among workforce development system interests, the greater the likelihood that a priority action will be accomplished.

The proposed re-structured workforce entity will bring together a leadership coalition of workforce development, business development and economic development interests in an effort to improve coordination, and to identify and meet the region’s long term workforce development needs.

The re-structured workforce entity will:

- Eliminate private sector/business majority that is mandated of RWIBs;
- Eliminate the formal board structure, including bylaws and membership requirements;
- Eliminate workforce system/One Stop administrative functions; and
- Better connect with economic, business development partners, with the goal of aligning workforce development efforts with economic and community development efforts.

The workforce system will meet the long term needs of workers, businesses, and job seekers in an effort to improve the region’s economy and overall community quality of life.

3. Re-Configured Workforce Council:

- **Central Oregon Workforce Development Coordinating Council**
- Private sector chair
- Voluntary council membership that represents the three coalition categories
- Assembles 1 or 2 times per year for coordination, action items, and to further council goals and functions

4. Council’s Coalition Components:

The regional workforce system is composed of three components: workforce development, business development and economic development. The Council will be composed of workforce interests from each coalition group.

Workforce Development (supply side): WorkSource Central Oregon partners, labor organizations, education providers, and on-the-ground training initiatives. Includes:

- WorkSource partners (COCC, COIC, DHS, OED, VRS)
- K-12 education
- Higher education
- Partnership to End Poverty
- Labor unions
- others

Business Development (demand side): Organizations serving (and/or led by) individual business and industries. Includes:

- Workforce Response Team (WRT)

- Business Resource Network (BRN)
- High Desert Enterprise Consortium
- Business-School Alliance
- Chambers of Commerce
- EDCO
- Business Development Center (COCC)
- others

Community and Economic Development (strategic regional context): Organizations that are working regionally to improve the economy. Includes:

- State agencies via the ERT
- EDCO
- COIC/Economic Development District
- Oregon Manufacturing Strategy
- others

City and County governments will be invited to participate in the coalition as well.

5. Council Functions:

- Develop regional workforce development strategy (data/metrics, asset inventory, needs/ workforce skill gap analysis, benchmarks); develop shared goals and priorities among coalition component groups.
- Act as focal point for industry's critical workforce needs.
- Develop and/or fund on-the-ground workforce development projects and initiatives; Leverage local, state and federal funding to implement high-priority workforce development projects.
- Shepherd and administer projects and programs.
- Share promising workforce development practices for adoption and replication by businesses and industries.
- OWA coordination functions: ID private OWA members for region; ID private members for One-Stop certification (if necessary).
- Evaluate and/or propose policy – OWA, state and federal levels.

6. Council Goals:

- Identify priority coalition development needs
- Align resources, strategies, and programs to create tailored solutions to the workforce challenges facing business and industry
- Sustain a high quality workforce development system that is responsive to job seeker and business needs, via WorkSource Central Oregon

7. Staff Functions:

- Support Council – agenda preparation, fiscal agent, admin support
- Support System Partners Group –continued meetings of One Stop partners to assure continued communication and system development
- Support WRT and Business Resource Network, and other committees identified by Council.
- Project work as assigned
- Liaison to OWA

8. Functions delegated to OWA:

COWIB will delegate administrative functions to the Oregon Workforce Alliance

- Track and report system performance
- Manage MOU process
- One Stop Operator
- Certification of one-stop
- Local unified plan
- Eligible training provider approval
- Other compliance documents

9. Leadership

A private sector chair will be designated to lead the Council. The chair's role will be to convene the council 1 – 2 times per year, to set the Council agenda, and to ensure tasks are completed between Council meetings. The chair will be invited to participate in the Workforce System Partners group.

The Workforce System Partners group will operate independently of the Council, and will set their own agenda and tasks. The Partners group will be responsible for managing the Council's budget and staff.