



STATE OF WASHINGTON
Office of the Governor

October 27, 2014

Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board
P.O. Box 43105
Olympia, WA 98504-3105

Dear Members of the Board:

On July 22, 2014, President Obama signed into law the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). This is the first reauthorization of the Workforce Investment Act since 1998, and I applaud our state's congressional delegation for their support, particularly Senator Murray for her incredible work in getting this important legislation passed. This kind of leadership from Washington State should come as no surprise, as our workforce development system has been held up time and again as one of the best in the nation.

WIOA represents a new day for our public workforce development system. We have been given the opportunity to rededicate ourselves to the task of connecting workers with the skills they need to be successful in obtaining a job and building a career, and employers with the skilled workers they need to stay competitive here in Washington.

Doing this won't be easy, but I believe we are up to the task. Every one of the organizations and constituencies that you represent plays a critical role in the workforce development system, and WIOA is an opportunity for all of us at the state and local levels to reexamine our programs. It requires us to develop a greater system where we work seamlessly together for workers and businesses, where data drives our decision making and where partnerships help us close our state's skills gaps.

There is much to do to implement WIOA. I believe that the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board is best positioned to make that happen. Your tripartite structure brings together business, labor, and state and local government in a partnership that has time and again produced the agreements that will be paramount throughout this process.

Therefore, I designate the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board to be the state of Washington's Workforce Development Board as required by WIOA. This designation is the first step in our state's implementation of WIOA, and I expect that the Board will make recommendations to implement WIOA and meet all statutory deadlines as defined in the Act as well as:

- Establish a clear focus across three fundamental goals for the workforce development system:
 - Help more people find and keep jobs that lead to economic self-sufficiency, with a focus on disadvantaged populations.
 - Close skill gaps for employers, with a focus on in-demand industry sectors and occupations.



- Work together as a single, seamless team to make this happen.
- Explore fully the benefits of a combined plan versus a unified plan, including an analysis of any current barriers to accomplishing a combined plan.
- Conduct an examination of integrating the Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) program into the workforce system, including recommendations for serving the most at-risk TANF clients. Health and human services stakeholders must be a key constituency in forming this set of recommendations. I am directing the Department of Social and Health Services to participate fully in this analysis.
- Provide a data-driven evaluation and recommendation for planning regions in consultation with chief local elected officials, local workforce development boards and stakeholders, including our partners in the workforce systems in Idaho and Oregon.
- Provide recommendations for elevating the strategic role of both state and local workforce boards to focus on the goals above and for changing service delivery as needed to improve outcomes.

In order to meet the ambitious timeline set out in WIOA, I need to see an initial work plan from you no later than December 19, 2014. It should cover how you intend to engage stakeholders and how you will meet both the spirit and the deadlines of the Act.

There are many goals expected of us in this Act, but at the heart of it, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act presents a tremendous opportunity to ensure that every resident of our great state has the chance to earn a living wage and pursue a career, and that every employer has the skilled worker it needs to grow and prosper in our state. That is the goal we must pursue on behalf of the public we serve. If you have any questions, please contact Alexandre Chateaubriand in my Policy Office at xandre.chateaubriand@gov.wa.gov.

Thank you for dedicating yourselves to this critical task for our state.

Very truly yours,



Jay Inslee
Governor

cc: Members of the Washington State Congressional Delegation
Chair and Ranking members, House Labor and Workforce Development Committee
Chair and Ranking members, Senate Commerce and Labor Committee
Chair and Ranking members, House Higher Education Committee
Chair and Ranking members, Senate Higher Education Committee
Chair and Ranking members, House Education Committee
Chair and Ranking members, Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee
Chair and Ranking members, House Community Development, Housing and Tribal Affairs Committee
Chair and Ranking members, Senate Human Services and Corrections Committee
Eleni Papadakis, Executive Director, Workforce Training & Education Coordinating Board