

DISSERTATION

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998: ONE STATE'S APPROACH TO A  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

Submitted by

Vida D. Wilkinson

School of Education

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WE HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE DISSERTATION PREPARED  
UNDER OUR SUPERVISION BY VIDA D. WILKINSON ENTITLED WORKFORCE  
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DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING IN PART  
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Committee on Graduate Work

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Carole J. Makela

---

Dennis Cole

---

Dawn D. Thilmany

---

Adviser Jerry W. Gilley

---

Department Head/Director

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

WORKFORCE INVESTMENT ACT OF 1998: ONE STATE’S APPROACH TO A  
WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP

The purpose of this qualitative case study was twofold. The first purpose was to describe what influence the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) had on three workforce development partners—employment services, economic development, and community college system. The second was to describe the process utilized that created the workforce development partnership.

The state studied was implementing both federal and state workforce legislation with a priority on training and education to meet the needs of business, which was defined by the participants as workforce development. The state was experiencing a lack of workforce with knowledge in technical skills needed for a booming economy mineral extraction industry. Further, there was a natural shortage of workers due to declining K-12 school enrollments and a higher than national average early baby boomer population.

There were two incentive education programs in the fields of nursing (2003) and education (2005) with loan payment forgiveness plans for meeting employment criteria at a qualified state institution. There was also an in-state postsecondary education scholarship endowment program (2005) for traditional students who graduated from a state high school or were residents and met other qualifying criteria.

In Fall 2002, a state level workforce development was formed by administrative staff members from employment services, economic development, and community college system. The two main reasons for creating the partnership were to create a method for regular communication among the three agencies and to support businesses with their workforce training needs.

There are four terms—cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration—associated with partnerships with incentives and barriers linked to each type based on (a) public and private sector policies and programs, (b) job seekers with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood, and (c) businesses achieve exemplary goals.

There are three areas of recommended research. The first is to continue examination of incentives and barriers of the four partnership types. The second is to conduct of survey of businesses' perspective of publicly funded workforce training. The third is to investigate community college funding models that are oriented to compressed class schedules to meet the workforce training needs of businesses.

Vida D. Wilkinson  
School of Education  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, CO 80523  
Summer 2008

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## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Congress has often responded to new problems with new programs rather than incorporate new purposes into old programs; this tendency in turn has generated a proliferation of job training programs with roughly the same goal – the enhancement of employment – for different groups with varying barriers to employment. (Grubb, 1996a, p. 14)

An escalating situation of more and more workforce training and education programs reached its pinnacle in February 1995, when testimony presented by Clarence C. Crawford, Associate Director of Education and Employment Issues for the Health, Education and Human Services Division of Department of Health and Human Services, disclosed that there were 163 federal training programs distributed among 15 federal agencies with a combined budget of over \$20 billion (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). Despite the sheer volume of programs and dollars spent on these programs, there was very little evidence that the desired outcome of helping people find employment was being accomplished. The testimony that Mr. Crawford delivered to the subcommittee on Postsecondary Education, Training and Lifelong Learning and the committee on Economic and Educational Opportunities, House of Representatives, was the beginning of a major overhaul of an admittedly inefficient system laden with multiple program overlap.

Another major criticism of those providing workforce training and education services was the high level of confusion by job seekers and businesses on how and where to access programs. The National Governor's Association had found that less than one in four states administered major economic development and job training programs through

the same state agency (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). Therefore, linkages between economic development activities and employment training programs seldom occurred. Additionally, another matter that was not being addressed was the governance or accountability relationships with other federally funded programs and multiple narrowly focused laws that dominated the determination of what services would be provided to whom (Wills, 1995).

## Background

### *Previous Workforce Legislation*

There are several early accounts of legislation that influenced how the states in the United States managed issues relating to workforce education and employment opportunities. The listing of legislative acts presented in this paper does not represent an exhaustive list of all those that have provided funding for services related to workforce training and education. However, they do represent the most instrumental legislation with respect to the types of training offered, training providers, and clientele.

The Smith-Hughes Act of 1917 represents the beginning of a vocational education funding system for promoting a skilled workforce (Walker & Foster-Bey, 2004). At the inception of this Act, vocational education referred to instructional programs in agriculture, trade and industries, and home economics (Tanner & Tanner, 1995). Accordingly, this Act was advocated by public education, agriculture, and industrial lobbyists who convinced Congress to use federal funds for vocational preparation (Wills, 1995). It also established the Federal Board for Vocational Education, which provided oversight to assure that the funding was for those secondary education purposes that were deemed useful for employment at the time and included agriculture, trade, industrial arts,

and home economics. A result of this structure was that vocational programs and regular high school programs were governed separately even when located in the same building (Gray & Herr, 1998).

The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as Employment Service (ES). Previous to this legislation, there was no consistency among states that had ES offices in their local areas, but through the use of federal monies raised from employer payroll taxes, a unified nationwide system was developed (O'Leary & Straits, 2000). The mission of all of the ES offices was to assist job seekers in finding jobs, employers in finding qualified workers and, in some areas, to provide job training and related services. For purposes of this study, ES will be referred generically as employment services; however, many states have adapted specific agency names and organizational structures that reflect the services they offer.

Legislation in the early 1960s created changes to both of these acts. The Manpower Development and Training Act of 1962 (MDTA) expanded the responsibility of the Wagner-Peyser funded ES to determine the training needs of unemployed youth and adults. Further, they were mandated to coordinate with a state-recognized vocational education agency to ensure that training took place (Wills, 1995). The Vocational Education Act of 1963 expanded the Smith-Hughes funding to include occupations that were in demand and augmented funding to community colleges (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

About a decade later, the Comprehensive Employment and Training Act of 1973 (CETA) consolidated MDTA with the independent vocational programs. This also expanded people who were served to include economically disadvantaged, unemployed, or underemployed. Funding was administered through block grants at both the state and

local levels to support public and private job training and youth programs that included Job Corps and Summer Youth Employment. According to Wills (1995), this Act made no provisions for the specific roles of the federal, state, and local governments and did not distinguish the responsibilities of K-12 and postsecondary education. Dominant decision making was at the local level regarding the type of training offered, the training providers, and the clientele (Grubb, 1996a). Although the consolidation efforts of this Act were well intended, the lack of clear authority made for confusion and CETA lasted less than a decade. However, a feature that did survive was the introduction of a decentralized service delivery model (Walker & Foster-Bey, 2004).

In 1982, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA) replaced CETA and for the first time amended the strict administrative role held by the U.S. Employment Service over the state agencies, which had been granted in the Wagner-Peyser Act. Governors now had oversight authority for the workforce programs delivered in their states (Wills, 1995). Further, the business community was given a voice through the mandated Private Industry Council, whose membership included private employers, to provide policy direction and oversee the administration of JTPA (Walker & Foster-Bey, 2004). Another major change was that previous employment and vocational related acts focused on types of services delivered; JTPA changed this emphasis to program outcomes.

As with previous job training programs, those served by JTPA included the economically disadvantaged and youth. There were also programs for special populations such as older workers, migrants, and Native Americans. Overall, the concentrated effort of JTPA was to primarily focus services for welfare recipients who could receive services through any of the programs. However, this would not be the only job training program

to target welfare recipients due to the Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training (JOBS) legislation that passed in 1988 and required all states to create another funding stream for this group (Grubb, 1996a). Over time a number of other job training programs were funded to provide services for various target groups including: women, minorities, homeless, veterans, disabled, and disabled veterans to name a few. Further, members of these targeted groups could be eligible to receive services from more than one government agency.

#### *Devolution Versus WIA Mandates*

Individuals within some of these target groups had the attention of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress which started its session in January 1995 with an agenda that included strict federal policy reductions in spending, taxes, programs, and influence (Conlan, 1998).

#### *Devolution revolution*

The impetus of this federalism reform is known as devolution or the transfer of power from the federal government to state and local governments. The belief system that drives the shifting of policy authority from the federal to the state level (first order devolution) and then the local level (second order devolution) is that the determination of how services are delivered in a particular area is best made by those who understand the needs of their service area (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). This rationale was partially utilized in two pieces of legislation passed in the latter half of the 1990s and resulted in a climate of mixed devolutionary control with flexible funding structures at the state level and restrictive timelines on employment support at the federal level.

According to Conlan (1998) and Soss, Schram, Vartanian, and O'Brien (2001), the efforts of the 104<sup>th</sup> Congress were zealous and did not result in the sought after



‘devolution revolution’ or the liberation of states from stringent federal rules.

Nevertheless, a degree of devolution was evident in the passage of the landmark welfare reform bill, the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act of 1996 (PRWORA) (O’Shea & King, 2001). The policy structure of this act provided states with new flexibility regarding welfare eligibility, funding, and services; however, there were additional stringent federal mandates governing length of support, job target timelines, and child support enforcement (Conlan).

### *Devolution and WIA*

In 1997 the Committee on Labor and Human Resources conducted a series of meetings to examine vocational education programs, adult education measures, and job training effectiveness (S. Rep. No. 105-109, 1997). Findings from these hearings contributed to the passage of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) on August 7, 1998 (H.R. Res. 1385, 1998). The result was the same mixed devolution control that comprised PRWORA two years earlier (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002; O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). States were given increased authority and responsibility for planning and resource allocation of workforce funding; however, strict federal mandates demanded a “work-first” approach to delivery of services (King, 1999). Currently, both the PWORA and the WIA influence the organizational structure of the workforce development system at the state and local levels (Melendez, 2004).

In particular, the purpose of WIA Title I was to provide for workforce investment activities through statewide and local workforce development systems designed to increase the employment, retention, earnings, and occupational skill attainment of participants (Brustein & Knight, 1999). The intent of this new model was to create an

accessible system that would match the needs of businesses with the skills training provided to job seekers through a “One-Stop” delivery method for the implementation and management of workforce training programs (H.R. 105-659, 1998). As stated in the WIA legislation, the act makes provisions “to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training, literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States, and for other purposes” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b, p.1).

#### *WIA mandates*

WIA mandated a process to implement and to oversee One-Stop Centers in each state (H.R. 1385, 1998). These centers are often described as being the heart of WIA to facilitate the core employment and training services to the specifically targeted job seekers: adults, dislocated workers, and youth. The ideal is a user-friendly career development system that uses skill level assessments to match job seekers to appropriate employment, education, and training opportunities. Businesses, defined by WIA as organizations that need employment-related services such as hiring or training, are responsible for providing One-Stop Centers their job vacancy announcements as well as the current and future skills needed by their workforce.

Governors were mandated to have their WIA system implemented no later than July 1, 2000, including a five-year statewide strategic plan that outlined their workforce development activities submitted to the U.S. Secretary of Labor. The plan was developed with the guidance of a state workforce investment board (SWIB) established under the direction of the governor. In accordance with the WIA, SWIB members shall include the governor, two members of each chamber of the state legislature, and various other representatives as appointed by the governor. The majority of those appointed must be

representatives of business and should include: entrepreneurs, chief executive or operating officers, and those who reflect major workforce sectors from various locations in the state. Other members who may be appointed should be in a policymaking position and represent chief local elected officials, labor organizations, youth programs, experts in delivery methodologies for workforce training and education, economic development, and others as deemed appropriate by the governor.

Currently, the WIA has been established in all 50 states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. insular areas. A Congressional hearing was held to review and examine the strengths and challenges of early WIA implementation efforts in selected states and regions (Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, 2002). Overarching themes in the challenge section of the report included a focus on the ability of the workforce investment system to encourage, increase, or expand partnerships with businesses and workforce training and education providers.

#### *Devolution and partnerships*

Gais, Nathan, Lurie, and Kaplan (2000) suggest that when decision-making is moved to state and local levels, an informational infrastructure needs to be developed that will establish a communication system among all of the parties affected by devolution. Further, there needs to be predictability and stability of governance at the state level. Kelleher and Yackee (2004) conducted an empirical study of devolution's policy impact on PRWORA for counties in North Carolina and found that the localized government agencies often experienced a period of political upheaval along with the dynamics associated with organizational change. Based on this finding, state and local workforce development systems that were implemented under WIA legislation have experienced

their own unique systemic model of change based on various workforce programs that have been introduced over the past century. Additionally, federal mandates that tightly constrain job entry time limits for PRWORA clients and employment services for WIA participants suggest a need for an efficient systems' approach among agencies and businesses that are impacted by these legislative policies. WIA Title I demands an increase in workforce investment activities to involve programs run by various agencies that are mandated to partner and, therefore, need to develop strategies on how to effectively partner.

#### *WIA mandated programs*

WIA made a distinction between two types of partners: mandated and non-mandated. Mandated partners include federal training programs authorized within the following legislation: WIA, Wagner-Peyser Act, Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Welfare-to-Work, Title V of the Older Americans Act, postsecondary education under the Perkins Act, veterans employment services, unemployment compensation laws, and Community Service Block Grants. The mandated programs are required to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the One-Stop Center; however, they are not mandated to be physically located at the center.

Four case studies, Barnow and King (2003), Buck (2002), Ganzglass, Jensen, Ridley, Simon, and Thompson (2001), and O'Shea and King (2001), were reviewed that focused on WIA implementation process and delivery of employment services at both the state and local levels. Two of the reports (Buck; Ganzglass, et al.) reviewed sites that started phases of their WIA implementation process before the deadline date of July 1, 2000. These included sites that had either submitted a plan or not submitted a plan but

had been experiencing challenges with some features of the plan. The other two (Barnow & King; O'Shea & King) were a mix of early implementers and those who began the process as required by law. A key characteristic in all of these case studies was the need for more guidance in partnership formation of workforce development programs.

Buck (2002) studied five cities and found they all encountered a struggle in managing mandated partnerships through MOUs, which outlines their respective roles and contributions. Buck further suggested that lack of collaboration and coordination was a key point where more effective leadership would make a difference. Ganzglass, et al. (2001) assessed WIA implementation methodologies in five states and stated that one of the key steps to having a unified workforce development system was improving *coordination* among multiple programs. They went on to say that one of the top challenges to the implementation process was “the lack of clear expectations for *collaboration* among multiple partners” (p. 6).

O'Shea and King (2001) examined the implementation level of readiness in three states during Fall 1999. They concluded that the WIA did not sufficiently prepare for the collaboration proposed, especially regarding:

- Funding the transition to and ongoing support for a more collaborative model of workforce service delivery;
- Addressing the divergent missions of required partners or their sensitivity to target populations, (e.g., vocational rehabilitation); or
- Reducing categorical planning and reporting requirements. (O'Shea & King, p. 20)

They further stated that these omissions increase the challenges to states in designing a workforce development system, which requires collaboration among multiple business partners, intergovernmental agencies, and labor and education organizations. Barnow and King (2003) studied eight states using a field network approach that relied on the research of seven other researchers. Upon analysis and synthesis of the four reports, two partnership issues addressed in their implications for further research section were: (a) a better understanding is needed on how to incorporate business linkages in the system, and (b) how to approach integrating or coordinating delivery of services provided by partners associated with vocational rehabilitation, adult education and family literacy, and postsecondary education and training. Eberts and Erickcek (2002) found that workforce development partnerships can support both of these issues when businesses are encouraged to partner with public employment systems and develop a workforce for the local economy. This includes partnering with education institutions and training providers located in the community.

#### *Non-mandated partners*

The two non-mandated partners are post secondary education programs, not included under the Perkins Act, and representatives from private businesses. The post-secondary education agencies are most likely community colleges that have taken the lead in providing specialized training for workers in local areas (Grubb, 2001b). Economic development agencies are the typical representatives that establish policies and programs to provide infrastructure and services to enhance the business climate in a community. Eberts and Erickcek (2002) conducted a case study on the role of agency partnerships and one of the significant barriers found was the inability of these two non-

mandated partners to work together. WIA implementation efforts rely on these two partners as they are instrumental in creating a workforce development partnership that allows for the strategic alignment of businesses and job seekers in a labor market area.

### Definition of Partnership Terms

#### *Common Partnership Terms*

Four common terms used to describe a partnership are cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration. A term search on WIA public law PDF file found that forms of these terms were used a total of 190 times (cooperation 42, coordination 92, collaboration 17, integration 39). However, none of these terms were addressed in the Title I-A WIA definition section. A scholarly literature review of the terms cooperation, coordination, and collaboration found they could be placed on a continuum moving from low to high in formality (Reilly, 2001). Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2004) support Reilly's continuum that cooperation is the least formal relationship, coordination introduces more formal communication strategies, and a collaborative partnership produces a new, durable structure. Mattessich et al. and Reilly agree that quite often the term collaboration is easily interchanged with the terms cooperation and coordination.

A report by Ragan (2003) showcased locations in 12 states and their efforts to integrate human service systems. One of the sites featured was El Paso County, Colorado, where they use a continuum to determine the development of relationships among programs based on the type of interactions. This continuum has six categories ordered from complete separation of programs to unity of programs into a new delivery system.

They are:

Communication → Cooperation → Coordination →

Collaboration → Integration → Consolidation

Ragan found this methodology useful in analyzing progression of program delivery systems and subsequently used it for all the site visits.

Based on the studies by Mattessich et al. (2004), Ragan (2003), and Reilly (2001), general meanings for cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration are:

1. Cooperation—informal, unstructured relationships that share information as needed
2. Coordination—formal exchange of information and joint activities to work on a specific project or task with equal partners
3. Collaboration—partners unite and establish a new structure with a common mission to support collective goals and determine an agreed upon authoritative system that includes partners sharing resources
4. Integration—partners restructure missions, services, programs, and resources to provide seamless delivery of services

#### *Agreement of Partnership Term Definitions*

As previously stated, mandated program partnerships were always noted as a challenge in case study reports (Barnow & King, 2003; Buck, 2002; Ganzglass, et al., 2001; O'Shea & King, 2001). The case studies made reference to the terms coordination, collaboration, and integration without providing definitions to these partnership terms. To develop a partnership strategy, agencies need to be in agreement of what the terms mean concerning their role in the partnership. An important step is to first create a partnership



that has the capacity to deliver employment services as mandated by WIA legislation. According to Martinson (1999), a statewide vision of a workforce development system refers to an efficient method for both businesses and job seekers to access a wide range of services that focus on the labor market and required skills, the training and education programs offered, and additional support services.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative case study was twofold. The first purpose was to describe what influence the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) had on three workforce development partners—employment services, economic development, and community college. The second was to describe the process utilized that created the workforce development partnership.

### Research Questions

The grand tour research question to be addressed in this study was:

What process did the agencies describe to create their partnership?

The subsequent questions were:

1. What were the methods used in creating this partnership?
2. What were the agencies' visions of the mission of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998?
3. What workforce training and education variables were included in the partnership?

### Delimitations

For purposes of this study, WIA youth activities will not be explored due to two reasons: (a) the type of restrictions placed on program services for low income youth is

separate from those for adults, and (b) this workforce group was not the workforce development partnership's primary objective.

### Significance of the Study

The case studies that have been conducted are from the perspective of how WIA was implemented and the formation of the One-Stop Centers. One case study did explore the role of partnerships in delivering workforce development services; however, they did not go beyond identifying the agencies' function in the partnership (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002).

This case study will undertake an in-depth research approach and examine a partnership strategy utilized by three workforce agencies that formed a workforce development partnership. There are three aspects that this study will explore. First, the context applied to the four terms most often used to describe partnerships are cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration that can respectively be placed on a continuum from low to high in formality. These terms are often used interchangeably and not well defined as in the case of WIA legislation. Applying the same definition to two different terms or even dissimilar definitions to the same term could potentially lead to confusion and misunderstanding in a partnership relationship. Eberts and Erickcek (2002) found that one of the significant barriers to developing partnerships was too narrowly defining the stakeholders of an agency. They did not offer any guidance on how to provide agencies with a strategy to overcome this barrier.

Therefore, the second aspect of this study will be an in-depth exploration of stakeholder relationships at the agency and partnership levels to identify potential

barriers. The third aspect is the level of strategic planning that took place in their partnership formation.

An in-depth exploration of these three aspects in the partnership formation goes beyond the work of Eberts and Erickcek (2002). Further, in literature searches of partnership formation with respect to workforce development and WIA, no studies were found on workforce agency partnership formation in the context of WIA legislation.

#### Researcher's Perspective

I taught for 15 years in various capacities and locations. For the first seven years I taught mathematics at both the middle and secondary school level in two different states. A third move resulted in a slight change of career path when I became employed at a branch campus of a community college. The first three years that I worked there I taught preparatory classes for students seeking to obtain their General Educational Development (GED), oversaw remedial level open-entry/open-exit courses, tutored various levels of math students, and helped write the annual report for our Adult Basic Education grant.

At the beginning of my fourth year, I became the Interim Director of the Learning Center for one year. I enjoyed the new challenges that came with this position and became more involved with various task forces and boards that were related to workforce training and education in the local community. I started attending these meetings a year prior to the August 1998 passage of WIA; however, the focus was primarily around the concept of determining a single location for intake purposes of individuals in need of employment and training services. It was quite evident that the move to consolidating employment services was on the radar screen of the local agencies that would be impacted by this legislation.

The last three years that I was employed at this branch campus, I taught GED and remedial level college courses, developed and instructed a series of workshops on study skills strategies, established a career center, and continued serving on workforce task forces and boards. I observed a great deal of angst by the agencies most impacted by WIA legislation as they tried to figure out their roles in providing workforce development services in the community. This became a frustrating situation for me, since I was of no help to this group and wanted to be able to contribute much more than my knowledge base allowed me at the time. During this time, I also found myself less challenged by my position at the community college. I decided that it was time to attend graduate school and search for new career opportunities. Interestingly, as I explored dissertation topics I found myself returning to what lead me to Colorado State University – workforce development partnerships. My hope is that my research will offer a flicker of light on the topic of the impact WIA legislation has had on agencies that partner to deliver workforce development services.

### Acronyms

The acronyms used in this study are listed in Appendix A.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The purpose of this review of the literature is to describe the goals of the workforce investment activities that are defined in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the variables that influence a workforce development partnership. The typical workforce development partners are government employment services, economic development agencies, and public education (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). The first section of this chapter is an examination of government documents and reports of WIA policy implementation that pertain to workforce training goals, services, and providers. The second section is a review of the literature on defining workforce development as it relates to the three partner agencies. The third section is an overview of why a partnership strategy is necessary, what it means to partner and an approach to develop a partnership strategy. The final section will provide a summary that describes the relationship between WIA workforce investment activities and the partnership of workforce development agencies.

Sources for this literature review were obtained from the following topics: public policy, economic development, occupational skills training, community college, business management, workforce development, communication, partnerships, agency collaboration, welfare, human resource development, and systems theory. Numerous federal government reports and documents were also used in the first section to describe, through case studies, how legislation is implemented. The rest of the sources were used for workforce development and partnership formation.

## Workforce Investment Act of 1998

### *Background*

In February 1995, there were 163 federal training programs distributed among 15 federal agencies with a combined budget of over \$20 billion (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). This statistic, provided by the Associate Director of Education and Employment Issues for Health, Education and Human Services Division, Clarence C. Crawford, was not the first testimony delivered about multiple employment training programs. In July 1992, there were 125 training programs among 14 federal agencies with a budget of over \$16 billion (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1992) and in March 1994, there were 154 training programs among 14 federal agencies with a budget of over \$25 billion (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1994). The continued proliferation of training programs and funding did peak in 1995 (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995); however, it took three more years before the August 7, 1998 passage of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) (H.R. 1385, 1998).

The enactment of WIA [PL 105-220] represented the first major reform of the nation's job training system in 15 years. At an even larger scale, the intention of WIA was the alignment of over six decades of highly specific federal job training programs that were created to respond to a particular concern at a specific time (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a). WIA was described as both a "major overhaul" of the nation's approach to employment and training and a fundamental departure from preceding programs (Barnow & King, 2003; D'Amico, Kogan, Kreutzer, Wiegand, & Baker, 2001). Therefore, it is not surprising that this legislation is lengthy and complex, which necessitated a structure to deal with its details.

WIA is comprised of five titles intended to delineate the operational aspects of the Act and subsequent amendments that were necessary to achieve the mission “to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment, training , literacy, and vocational rehabilitation programs in the United States, and for other purposes” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b, p. 936). The five titles and a brief description of each follow:

1. Title I, Workforce Investment Systems, is divided into two subtitles or sections. Section A introduces the workforce investment definitions of those pertinent terms used throughout the WIA. Section B is titled *Statewide and Local Workforce Investment Systems*, which “establishes the purpose, goals, and operational framework of the proposed system” (O’Shea & King, 2001, p. 7). This section includes topics related to governance, eligibility, service delivery, resource allocation, and accountability. These two sections are commonly identified as Title I-A and Title I-B and will be referred as such for the remainder of this paper.
2. Title II, Adult Education and Literacy, reauthorizes adult education and literacy legislation to align within the workforce investment system.
3. Title III, Workforce Investment-Related Activities, amends the Wagner-Peyser Act (Employment Service), stipulates linkages with other programs, and creates a Twenty-First Century Workforce Commission.
4. Title IV, Rehabilitation Act Amendments of 1998, reauthorizes rehabilitation programs to align them to state and local workforce areas.
5. Title V, General Provisions, includes establishing authority for state unified plans, receiving incentive grants, and setting transition provisions.

One purpose of this chapter is to examine the delivery of workforce investment activities as defined in WIA. This will be accomplished by reviewing the WIA policy implications that pertain to workforce training goals, services, job seekers, and training providers.

#### *WIA Title I-B*

##### *Purpose statement*

According to Title I-B, the statement of purpose of WIA is to:

Provide workforce investment activities, through statewide and local workforce investment systems, that increase the employment, retention, and earnings of participants, and increase occupational skill attainment by participants, and, as a result, improve the quality of the workforce, reduce welfare dependency, and enhance the productivity and competitiveness of the Nation. (Public Law 105-220, 1998, p. 11)

WIA's purpose clearly indicates that the responsibility for workforce investment activities occur primarily at the state and local levels. This shifting of policy and program responsibility from the federal level to state and local levels is known as devolution.

O'Shea & King (2001) state that both the PRWORA and the WIA legislation brought about pronounced shifts from the federal level to the state level, first-order devolution, and then to the local level, second-order devolution. WIA further devolved responsibility from governments to private providers and individuals (O'Shea & King). The reasoning used to support this further shifting of policy responsibility to the local level is based on the belief that the determination of how services are delivered in a particular area is made by those who best understand the needs of their service area (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002).



### *Five goals*

The U.S. Department of Labor (1998b) identified five goals as the basis of the Title I-B legislation and these provide further support that second-order devolution guides the development of the structure of WIA. The five goals are:

1. Training and employment programs must be designed and managed at the local level where the needs of businesses and job seekers are best understood.
2. Job seekers must be able to conveniently access the employment, education, training, and information services they need at a single location in their neighborhoods.
3. Job seekers should have choices in deciding the training program that best fits their needs and the organizations that will provide that service. They should have control over their own career development.
4. Job seekers have a right to information about how well training providers succeed in preparing people for jobs. Training providers will provide information on their success rates.
5. Businesses will provide information and leadership and play an active role in ensuring that the system prepares people for current and future jobs.

These five goals serve as the guiding framework to develop workforce investment activities that best meet the needs of both job seekers and businesses in local areas.

### *Workforce Investment Boards*

#### *Membership*

WIA mandated that governors establish a state-level workforce investment board (WIB) to help strategize implementation efforts and provide on-going policy oversight

for workforce investment activities. There are five elected officials who must be included as members, including the governor and two representatives from both houses of the legislature with exceptions for states that do not have two houses. The majority of membership (at least 51%) is required to be business representatives and should include: entrepreneurs, chief executive or operating officers, and those who reflect major workforce sectors in various locations in the state. Other members who may be appointed should be in policymaking positions in the organizations they represent. Their backgrounds range from chief local elected officials, labor organizations, youth government programs, experts in delivery methodologies for workforce training and education, economic development, and others as deemed appropriate by the governor. If a state had an established workforce board on December 31, 1997, they were given the option to modify it to comply with WIA standards

### *Responsibilities*

The two primary responsibilities of WIB are the development of the state strategic plan and the establishment of a sole operating center for workforce programs. The initial five-year strategic plan was due to the U.S. Secretary of Labor by July 1, 2000. With respect to workforce investment activities, the plan needed to include the following descriptive information for the state: (a) needs with regard to current and projected employment opportunities, by occupation; (b) job skills necessary to obtain such employment opportunities; (c) skills and economic development needs; and (d) type and availability of workforce investment activities.

The initial plans will expire in 2005 and the first two years of the next five year plan was due on May 31, 2005. Full five-year plans are not being sought due to

anticipated reauthorization of WIA. When that time arrives, there are expected changes in the reauthorization legislation that will impact the strategic plans and timeframes will need to be established for the implementation of these changes.

Another responsibility of a WIB is to determine the local workforce investment areas based on certain criteria. One criterion is that the designated local areas should be served by local educational agencies such as postsecondary educational institutions and/or area vocational schools. Another is that the area should be considered a labor market area as defined by WIA, which is an economically integrated geographic area where individuals can reside and find employment within a reasonable distance or can readily change employment without changing their place of residence. Each local workforce investment area has a board that is appointed by the chief elected official of the general local government. The majority of board members must be business representatives and the rest are to represent agencies that provide workforce investment activities.

#### *Role of businesses*

The intention of Title I-B, goal 5, is to ensure that an active relationship with businesses is incorporated into the workforce investment activities. Dunham, Salzman, and Koller (2004) suggest that one way businesses can be involved is by becoming a partner on the WIB and participating in policy guidance and oversight in the local workforce investment activities. WIA requires a business majority on WIBs to provide a predominant voice to those who are potentially going to hire program participants. Fulfilling the majority requirement can sometimes be challenging due to time constraints

of business leaders. Therefore, those business leaders who desire to serve on the WIB are encouraged to inform WIB members their wish to be nominated.

Another method suggested by Dunham, Salzman, and Koller (2004) is through business partnerships with chambers of commerce and/or economic development groups. Although WIA does not mandate either of these organizations to serve on the WIB, both usually receive encouragement to join due to their knowledge of business activity in the local area. Typically small businesses partner with chambers of commerce, and chamber leaders who are also WIB members are able to serve as the voice for this constituency. Businesses that partner with economic development agencies provide instrumental information about the job skills needed in the local labor market. Leaders of economic development agencies are then able to present this information to the local WIB.

### *One-Stop Centers*

#### *Mission and programs*

In accordance with Title I-B, goal 2, one of the key aspects of WIA is “meeting the needs of businesses for skilled workers *and* the training, education, and employment needs of individuals” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b, p. 3). Additionally, part of the mission of WIA was to consolidate, coordinate, and improve employment and training programs. To achieve both of these charges, the concept of One-Stop Centers was created to serve as the sole operating center for access to information about workforce investment activities. In their final report of an in-depth, eight-state study of implementation of WIA, Barnow and King (2005) found that it is important to understand that One-Stop Centers are places of service delivery and not comprehensive locations of programs. Table 1 lists

17 mandatory programs from four federal departments that were mandated to consolidate their services through the One-Stop Centers (U.S. General Accounting Office, 2003).

Table 1

*Four Federal Departments with Mandated WIA Programs*

Federal Department	Mandatory Program
Labor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• WIA adult, dislocated worker, and youth activities</li> <li>• Employment Services (ES) through Wagner-Peyser</li> <li>• Trade adjustment assistance programs</li> <li>• Veterans' employment and training programs</li> <li>• Unemployment Insurance (UI)</li> <li>• Job Corps</li> <li>• Welfare-to-Work [Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)]</li> <li>• Title V of the Older Americans Act (senior community service employment program)</li> <li>• North American Free Trade Agreement-Transitional Adjustment Assistance (NAFTA-TAA)—employment and training for migrant and seasonal farm workers</li> <li>• Employment and training for Native Americans</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational rehabilitation</li> <li>• Adult education and literacy</li> <li>• Perkins Act (vocational education)</li> </ul>
Health and Human Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community Services Block Grant (CSBG)</li> </ul>
Housing and Urban Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing and Urban Development (HUD)—administered employment and training</li> </ul>

State level program partners, state workforce development policies, and state funding mechanisms influence how One-Stop Centers organize and structure their partnership (Marco, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). In the final report of their WIA evaluation of implementation in eight states, Barnow and King (2005) found a variety of operators, philosophies, and orientations in both partner participation and activities at One-Stop Centers. However, all mandated partner programs are expected to:

...make their core services available in the One-Stop [Center]; support delivery of their core services throughout the local area's One-Stop system; enter a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the local board delineating the role the partner will play in the One-Stop system; and participate in workforce development planning as a member of the local board. (Marco, Almandsmith, & Hague, p. 4-2)

Most often, WIA, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and Employment Services (ES) physically served as the One-Stop sites because they are legislatively responsible for the development of workforce investment activities at the state and local levels. The mandated MOU is required for all program partners regardless whether located at the One-Stop Center or elsewhere. The MOU specifies the obligatory financial arrangements, legal compliance, and time period of performance by the partner (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002). Depending on the policy developed by the WIB, the role of partners at One-Stop Centers varies due to either their limited target group or suitability to work within certain organizational structures.

#### *Services for businesses*

WIA legislation included three specific provisions regarding services that would be provided to businesses. These are:

1. Assistance in meeting hiring needs by serving as a workforce intermediary between the needs of a business and the skills of job seekers.

2. Provision of customized employment-related services on a fee-for-service basis.
3. Utilization of state-reserve funds for innovative incumbent worker training programs, which may include the establishment and implementation of a loan program for businesses to assist in skills upgrading.

Most One-Stop Centers have services that primarily focus on a labor exchange system to help businesses maximize their hiring needs, such as recruitment assistance, applicant testing, and labor market information. Other services that may be provided are on-site interviewing, business workshops, job fairs, customized training, and labor law information.

#### *Services for job seekers*

According to WIA, there are three categories of job seekers: (a) *adult*—refers to all persons age 18 and over, with priority to those on public assistance and other low income individuals; (b) *dislocated workers*—those who have been terminated or laid-off, were self-employed and now unemployed due to economic conditions, and displaced homemakers; and (c) *youth*—between the ages of 14-21 who are low income and face certain barriers to school completion or employment. The U.S. Department of Labor also administers mandatory partner programs for veterans, Job Corps, seasonal/migrant workers, and Native Americans.

There are three sequential levels of services for job seekers in the adult or dislocated worker categories (O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). The first level is core services that are available to all job seekers on either a self-service or staff-assisted basis. Intensive services involving more in-depth information gathering and training often

include some type of classroom environment (Barnow & King, 2005). Further, priority for training services must be given to low income individuals (D'Amico, et al., 2001). For purposes of this study, youth activities will not be explored. Table 2 provides more detail about these three levels of services, job seeker eligibility, and related activities.

*Navigating through the choice of services*

Perez-Johnson, et al. (2004) stated that “a key goal of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) is to empower customers of the workforce investment system to improve their employment opportunities by giving them meaningful choices about the types of services they receive” (p.1). In this case, customers are the job seekers being served at the One-Stop Center. D'Amico and Salzmman (2004a) administered a program evaluation on the delivery of training services at a total of 13 state and local sites and found that there were various durations of time that job seekers stayed at one service level before advancing to the next level. This situation was partially due to the job seeker's commitment to fulfilling the requirements of both core and intensive services. Perez-Johnson, et al. also found this true and added that necessary guidance was provided by One-Stop Center staff for those job seekers who were clearly in need of training to help them quickly navigate through the first two service levels.



Table 2

*One-Stop Center Services for Job Seekers*

Levels	Job Seeker Eligibility	Activities
<u>Core Services</u> provided at One-Stop Center	Employed or unemployed adults and dislocated workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determination of eligibility</li> <li>▪ Outreach, intake, and orientation of One-Stop</li> <li>▪ Initial assessments</li> <li>▪ Job search and placement assistance</li> <li>▪ Career counseling</li> <li>▪ Assistance for Welfare-to-Work eligibility and financial aid</li> <li>▪ Information on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ labor market statistics</li> <li>○ eligible training providers</li> <li>○ performance measures</li> <li>○ supportive services</li> <li>○ filing Unemployment Insurance</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<u>Intensive Services</u> provided by either One-Stop Centers or by contracted service providers	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Unemployed who are unable to obtain employment through core services</li> <li>2. Employed who need to obtain or retain employment that allows for self-sufficiency</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Comprehensive assessments, using diagnostic instruments to determine employment barriers</li> <li>▪ Individual employment plan (IEP) to identify goals and achievement objectives</li> <li>▪ Individual and group counseling and career planning</li> <li>▪ Case management</li> <li>▪ Short-term prevocational services</li> </ul>
<u>Training</u> provided by qualified institutions as determined by WIA	<p>Unemployed or employed who are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. unable to obtain or retain employment through intensive services</li> <li>2. need training and have the skills and qualifications to successfully participate in select programs directly linked to employment opportunities</li> <li>3. unable to obtain other types of funding assistance, such as federal education grants</li> </ol>	<p>Types of training services may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Occupational skills training</li> <li>▪ On-the-job training</li> <li>▪ Skill upgrading and retraining</li> <li>▪ Entrepreneurial training</li> <li>▪ Job readiness training (soft skills)</li> <li>▪ Adult education and literacy</li> <li>▪ Customized training for a business who commits to hiring individual upon completion</li> </ul>

## *Training Services Mandates*

### *Individual Training Accounts (ITA)*

Job seekers who require skills improvement for labor market success and are eligible to receive training services are offered an Individual Training Account (ITA), which acts as a voucher (O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). D’Amico and Salzman (2004a) point out that a primary goal of WIA legislation is to:

...empower customers to take control of their own career and training choices while providing them with the information and other supports that they need to choose wisely. One way that local job training agencies promote choice is by issuing individual training accounts to adults and dislocated workers who are undertaking training. (pp. I-1-I-2)

This is in agreement with Title I-B, goal 3, that job seekers should be provided choices in deciding the training program that best fits their needs. This goal also proffers that job seekers should have control over their career development. WIA regulates that before training occurs and during the intensive services period, a One-Stop Center staff member provides assistance to the job seeker in preparing an individual employment plan (IEP). The IEP identifies the job seeker’s employment goals and the appropriate combination of services required to achieve those goals. Employment goals must be aligned with the employment opportunities in the local area, and state and local areas may have criteria for duration of training. Also, the funding structure of ITAs is at the discretion of state and local workforce investment boards. Finally, persons are funded for training if it is determined that they have the skills to succeed in a program for jobs that are available in the local area, and that there is not another source of financial assistance available to them (D’Amico & Salzman, 2004a).

### *Eligible training providers and types of services*

Training services that job seekers may procure must be from an eligible training provider (ETP) that meets certain performance criteria as established by the governor. Training providers who automatically qualify are post secondary education institutions and apprenticeship programs, on condition that they submit required information as established by a state or local area (D'Amico & Salzman, 2004a).

There are five main types of education providers, including college/university, community college, technical school, private college, and school district (Marco, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). Other training providers that may seek eligibility are both public and private institutions, including private training companies, employer organizations, community-based organizations (CBOs), and labor organizations. There are three exceptions to being able to contract training versus using ITAs: (a) on-the-job training and customized training; (b) an insufficient number of qualified training providers; and (c) programs provided by CBOs or other private organizations that serve special populations (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998b).

As determined in the Final Rule for WIA (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000c), the types of training services that an ETP may deliver are one or more courses or classes, or a structured regimen, that upon successful completion leads to:

1. a certificate, an associate degree, baccalaureate degree, or
2. the skills or competencies needed for a specific job or jobs, an occupation, occupational group, or generally, for many types of jobs or occupations, as recognized by employers and determined prior to training.

### *Community colleges as primary ETP*

An empirical study of the five educational types of ETPs from 16 local WIA areas and a total of 132 providers found that community colleges were the largest subgroup in this category (Marco, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). Reasons given for prevalence of community colleges were their large variety of programs, flexibility in developing new programs, cost-efficient system, and Pell Grants that help leverage ITA vouchers.

Another reason that was not mentioned is the fact that public community colleges are commonly known as neighborhood institutions and are well suited to offer services to the local community (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). M. J. Cohen brought attention to this fact in a 1972 proximity study of the relationship among the number of community colleges in a state, the state's population density, and its area (as cited in Cohen & Brawer). The findings were the community colleges tended to be located so that 90 to 95 percent of the state's population lived within reasonable commuting distance, about twenty-five miles.

As previously stated, one of the responsibilities of WIBs is to establish local workforce investment areas served by postsecondary educational institutions and/or area local educational schools. Additionally, Title I-B, goal 1, states that training and employment programs must be designed and managed at the local level where the needs of businesses and job seekers are best understood. John A. Logan College President Mees (1997) indicates that "the community college mission is to provide educational programs and services to the region it serves" (p. 1). This mission can be accomplished by having institutional goals consistent with student and community goals that are responsive to needs of the community, offering a diverse curriculum, and opening doors of higher education to all segments of society. Therefore, based on the ideal situation, a local area

with a community college should be able to meet the workforce skill training needs of both job seekers and businesses.

*Work-first philosophy*

Federal mandates for PWORA clients, which placed tight time limits on job entry regardless of education and child care needs, established the “work-first” philosophy that influenced WIA implementation. Initially, there was a misperception by state and local workforce boards that the U.S. Department of Labor’s Employment and Training Administration (ETA) was encouraging this work-first approach for WIA clients and most job seekers were provided only core services (Barnow & King, 2005). This rigorous message was believed to be a carryover from federal mandates for PRWORA clients, which places tight time limits on job entry. This was not the intent so ETA clarified the directive after the first implementation year, which gave states freedom to place greater emphasis on training. D’Amico and Salzman (2004a) also found this shift in attitude between the first and second-round program evaluation site visits they conducted. The first site visits indicated a profound work-first philosophy, while the second visit revealed an emphasis on focusing on client’s needs.

Not everyone agrees that WIA has changed from a work-first and job-seeker driven approach to employment. Shaw and Rab (2003) assert:

Indeed, many elements of WIA reflect and reinforce this orientation toward the needs of the labor market. Perhaps most prominently, despite the fact that WIA promises to deliver education and training to unemployed workers, it employs a work-first philosophy that actively discourages the acquisition of either education or training and encourages states and educational institutions to link access to education with the needs of the local labor market. (p. 178)

Grubb and Lazerson (2004) state that WIA has provided very little job training and cites data reported by Frank, Rahmanou, and Savner (2003) that 41,933 adults completed

training during WIA's first program year from July 2000–June 2001. This was compared to the 163,000 JTPA clients who completed training in program year 1998. Grubb and Lazerson also state that as of 2002, Boston had 242 individuals who had received ITAs in a city with community college occupational education enrollment around 6,000. Further investigation of these conflicting statements would need to be conducted to determine what other data may contribute to the extreme ranges presented with this raw data.

One of the arguments for a work-first approach is the advocated message that labor force attachment leads to positive employment and earnings in the near term for certain groups (Barnow & King, 2005). They do speculate that longer term occupational skills training would outperform a pure work-first approach. Bennici, Mangum, and Sum (2000) suggested a balanced strategy between work-first and training:

...the view that any job is a good job and that the best way to succeed in the labor market is to join it, developing work habits and skills on the job rather than in the classroom. Such an approach does not rule out future training, but it emphasizes work as a critical step in a "learn while earning" framework. (p. 41)

Barnow and King state that management and operation style utilized by a One-Stop Center influences the decision to institute a work-first only approach or a balance of human capital development along with work-first. Further, the type of approach instituted may be either a localized or a state-level decision. Therefore, differing theoretical factors influence the level of service (core, intensive, or training) that a job seeker will receive.

### *Workforce Training and Adult Education*

#### *Occupational skills training*

This section describes some of the types of training activities and possible related program methodologies that are available for job seekers who are eligible to receive training funding as defined by WIA. The first and foremost training activity listed was

occupational skills training. O’Leary, Straits, and Wandner (2004) proffer an operational definition for occupational skills training as that “provided in a group setting is called institutional or classroom training and usually for occupations in general demand” (p. 3). Smith, Wittner, Spence, and Van Kleunen (2002) propose an alternative operational definition as “training that provides job-specific technical skills to prepare an individual for entry or advancement within a targeted occupation” (p. 5). Although one definition focuses on presentation of training and the other on objectives of training, both definitions included that the outcome of training is for targeted or in demand occupations. This is an important inclusion in terms of WIA legislation, which made it clear that the primary goal of funded training is for job opportunities in the local area or to a broader geographic area if the job seeker is willing to relocate (Perez-Johnson & Decker, 2001). This implies that occupational skills training are not a stand alone type of training, but an all-inclusive strategy.

*Six training activities distinguished as ITA or contract*

This section will describe six training mechanisms that fall under the occupational skills training umbrella. Figure 1 distinguishes trainings by either the requirement of an ITA or those that are contract trainings. These six are those that are included in WIA as possible training activities, which include on-the-job training (OJT), customized training, skills upgrading, job readiness training, entrepreneurial training, and adult education and literacy.

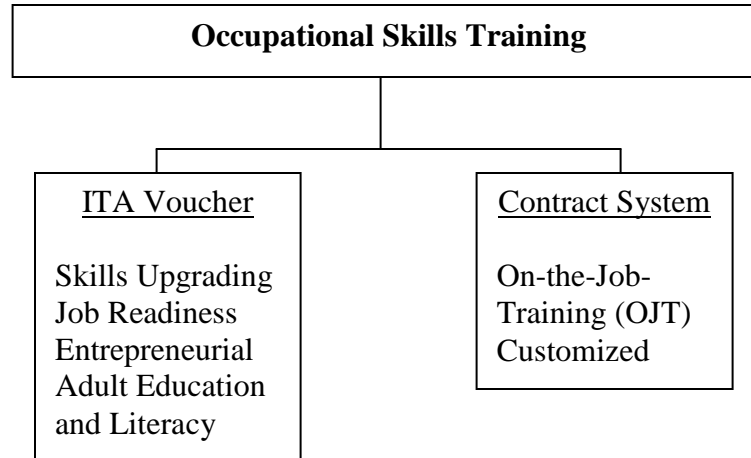


Figure 1

#### *Six Mechanisms for Occupational Skills Training*

##### *On-the-Job training and customized training*

As previously stated, on-the-job training (OJT) and customized training are two training activities that job seekers may contract instead of using the ITA voucher system. Both OJT and customized training are designed to meet special skill needs essential for a specific employment situation. According to WIA, a distinction between these two types of training is that participants of OJT are paid, while those in customized training may or may not be receiving an income during the time of instruction.

An explanation of the role of OJT in the framework of WIA legislation is:

Among the WIA programs of highest appeal is the OJT program. In this scheme, local employers are identified that will take on trainees to learn specific skills over a period of time. OJT candidates are prescreened and approved by the organization. When a match is made, an OJT contract is drawn up with the employer, including how much the organization will be reimbursed for the wages paid to the trainee. The benefit to individuals is that they can learn and earn at the same time, along with the potential for being hired by the employer at the end of the OJT. For employers, they have an added employee, without shouldering the entire cost burden. At the end, employers have trained individuals whom they might be able to hire. (Jacobs, 2003, p. 217)



This definition does include the fact that job seekers are paid during the time of training; however, it also adds a caveat about the employability of the trainee at the conclusion of the training. WIA assumes employability at the end of training and that is the best case scenario; however, reality is that not everyone may be a good fit with an organization, which in turn influences a decision of whether or not to hire the job trainee.

Customized training is designed to suit specific requests of a business either for available job slots upon successful completion of the training or for a group of new hires (O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). This type of training is typically delivered in a traditional classroom setting by either public or private training providers. An empirical study on JTPA customized training programs by Duscha and Graves (1999) found that 45 states provide businesses customized training for their new hires and incumbent workers.

Workforce practitioners in 50 local WIA areas were interviewed and it was found that:

...customized training was virtually assured of leading to job placements for training participants and often provided them with an income stream while they underwent training. It could also be very effective in meeting the needs of the business customer in that it yields a trained workforce geared directly to the employers’ hiring needs and, more generally, can be structured to advance an area’s economic development objectives. (D’Amico & Salzman, 2004b, pp. 124-125)

One of the goals of customized training under JTPA was that training was both business specific and designed with business input. This appears to be the same goal utilized within the WIA guidelines.

Although OJT and customized training appear to have immediate economic benefits for both the job seeker and local businesses, devolution to the local level provides unique management challenges of how to best balance ITA and contract funding (D’Amico & Salzman, 2004a). The intent of WIA training was to be an informed choice

model with job seekers able to make a decision on the type of training from an approved ETP. Contract funding is driven primarily by businesses in need of a trained workforce with specific skills. Resolution of the management of ITA and contract training should reaffirm that the purpose of training is for jobs that are readily available in the local area.

#### *Skills upgrading and job readiness training*

Job seekers who need occupational skills training to either upgrade their skills or develop basic job competencies receive one of two types of training. Remedial training is most often provided for those who have deficiencies in reading, math, and computer-related operations. Soft-skills training, also known as workplace behavior skills or job search skills, provides knowledge and practice in punctuality, cleanliness, and cooperation (O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). Both of these types of training are usually short term and provided in a classroom setting.

#### *Entrepreneurial training*

Intent of entrepreneurial training within the context of available job opportunities in the local area was not addressed in WIA. Warford and Flynn (2000) define future entrepreneurs as community college students who desire to operate or own small to medium-size businesses. According to Don Macke (personal communication, April 5, 2004), co-director of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, the first objective for individuals who are interested in entrepreneurship should be to learn the behaviors that will help them become successful. Brown (2000) states that entrepreneurship education refers to skills utilized to develop new and innovative business ventures.

A 1998 Gallup survey was conducted on the perceived importance of 28 marketable skill characteristics needed by disadvantaged youth who wish to pursue an

entrepreneurial venture (Kourilsky & Kourilsky, n.d.). Those surveyed included business leaders, students, parents, and teachers from a national sampling frame. Based on the findings, three layers of skills and the knowledge base contained within each layer were identified:

1. Foundation skills—basic skills of reading, writing, and math, problem solving, reasoning, decision-making, opportunity recognition, and creative thinking
2. Bridging skills—management of people, time and money; communication skills of listening, presenting, and writing; and technology training
3. Focus skills—the myriad of business and economic skills needed to understand the marketplace

When asked to rank the importance of these skills for job seekers who may work for others, respondents ranked all three skill layers as highly important. The National Alliance of Business (1999) concluded that of the three, foundation skills are more essential than focus. In addition these were skills needed for all workers, not just disadvantaged youth.

Based on the results of this survey and the WIA job seekers who receive training funds, foundation skills are most likely the extent of entrepreneurial training. How and where this type of training would be delivered is left to the discretion of local areas with regard to their current economic development needs.

#### *Adult education and literacy*

According to WIA, adult education and literacy services are for job seekers who are at least 16 years old and meet one of the following conditions: (a) either have not

received a secondary school diploma or a recognized equivalent, (b) have low proficiency levels of basic educational skills, or (c) have limited English proficiency. The goal of adult education and literacy in the context of WIA training activities is to improve foundation skills of job seekers to prepare them for occupational skills training. This can be achieved through postsecondary instruction in Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English as a Second Language (ESL). These programs are typically taught in classroom style and may also include both workplace and family literacy.

#### *Need for training*

Devolution policy implications for occupational skills training allows states to determine how to manage training methodologies that will best contribute to unique economic development needs at both the state and local levels. Trainings that are eligible for funding under WIA are typical basic skills that apply to many people who need to improve competencies in reading, writing, math, or ESL and are articulated in a manner to help prevent and resolve both daily and future workplace problems (Gordon, 2000). Gilley and Maycunich (2000) state that lack of or inadequate training of employees who do not possess necessary knowledge, skills, or understanding of job responsibilities results in poor job performance. Bartik and Hollenbeck (2004) reviewed research on skill development programs and found that the two most important factors concerning content are: (1) training aimed toward occupations that are in demand in the local labor market, and (2) training delivering basic academic skills and soft employability skills, as appropriate (p. 140). Bennici, Mangum, and Sum (2000) studied occupation projections for the decade 1996-2006 and discovered that positions offering family-sustaining wages

were those that required moderate or long term OJT or at least two years of postsecondary education. States should take note of these workforce performance considerations when determining the optimum occupational training methodologies that match job seekers with available job opportunities.

#### *WIA Workforce Training Performance Accountability*

When Clarence C. Crawford testified in February 1995 about multiple employment training programs, he addressed the issue that the agencies handling these programs lacked basic information on how to either manage their programs or measure their performance (U.S. General Accounting Office, 1995). He added that many of the programs were not able to provide information on numbers of people served and/or who obtained jobs. Outcome data are often unreliable and do not offer any valid measure about the results of training versus no training in employment outcomes. When legislation was initiated to respond to the multiple training programs, incorporation of needed performance standards to manage and measure outcomes was also introduced and ultimately included in the WIA legislation.

#### *Performance core indicators*

The purpose of WIA's training performance accountability system is to assess both state and local effectiveness in achieving continuous improvement of the workforce investment activities. There are four core indicators or goals used to measure performance of adults and dislocated workers:

1. Entry into unsubsidized employment,
2. Retention in employment 6 months after placement,

3. Earnings received 6 months after placement, and
4. Attainment of a recognized education or occupational skills credential.

Keeping within the framework of a devolved system, expected levels of performance for each core indicator are negotiated by three layers of government in two stages. The first negotiation process is between the U.S. Secretary of Labor and the state, and the second is between the state and local areas (D'Amico, et al., 2001). This maintains the belief that the best understanding of an area is determined by those in that service area. This also takes into account specific economic, demographic, and other unique characteristics of an area (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998a).

There are two other factors that the performance goals need to take into account: one is the establishment of an appropriate performance level that promotes continuous improvement, and the second is attainment of both high customer satisfaction and optimal returns on investment of federal funds. Continuous improvement is assessed by collecting and evaluating the satisfaction level of both customers—job seekers and businesses—who receive WIA services. In 2001, the U.S. Department of Labor sent all states a training and employment guidance letter referred to as TEGL 6-00 that outlines very specific guidelines for the survey methodology (U.S. Department of Labor, 2001). This includes an expected response rate of 50% or at least 500 completed surveys for both groups of customers and the use of specific state-level American Customer Satisfaction Index (ASCI) formula weights. This index was established in 1994 by the University of Michigan Business School and provides benchmarking data from the customer's perspective, which is used by many organizations including government agencies.

*Performance outcome measures*

To be in compliance with Title I-B, goal 4, ETPs are required to meet acceptable levels of the following performance outcome measures:

1. percentage of all participants who completed training,
2. percentage of all participants who obtained unsubsidized employment,
3. average wages at placement of all participants,
4. percentage of WIA-funded participants who completed training and obtained unsubsidized employment,
5. percentage of WIA-funded completers who were employed six months after the start of employment,
6. average wages received by WIA-funded completers, measured six months after the first day of employment, and
7. if applicable, percentage of WIA-funded completers who obtained a license or certificate, an academic degree or equivalent, or other measures of skills.

(Decker & Perez-Johnson, 2004, p. 182)

Based on this list, reporting of the attainment of the performance core indicators relies heavily on data collection by ETPs. Due to these seemingly burdensome performance requirements, an unintended consequence is that some training providers have opted not to serve WIA job seekers, which creates limitations to customer choice (Welfare Information Network, 2003). An evaluation of ITA/ETP systems found that many community colleges not only expressed dislike of the reporting system, but also decided not to be included as an ETP (D'Amico & Salzman, 2004a). Dr. George Boggs, president of the American Association of Community Colleges, testified to a U.S. Senate

committee his concerns that no funding is available to help collect and process the data required under the WIA performance accountability system (Dervarics, 2001). A further complication is that information required for WIA is usually different from that required for Carl Perkins Act funds for vocational and technical education programs. This is a serious matter for both job seekers and businesses that rely on community colleges to help provide training and may result in a more privatized recruiting and funding scheme than intended.

### *Implementation problems*

A national evaluation report on findings of WIA program implementation found that many states and local areas felt that the negotiation process instituted a top-down approach of establishing performance goals (Social Policy Research Associates, 2004). However, due to the small sample there was a caveat stating that there are limits to generalizing these findings and that later evaluations did indicate an array of negotiation approaches especially between state and local areas.

The national report also discovered that the last core indicator dealing with attainment of a recognized education or occupational skills credential presented problematic definitional issues as to what constitutes a credential (Social Policy Research Associates, 2004). In March 2000, a TEGL 7-99 was sent to all states to assist in implementation of core and customer satisfaction performance measures required by WIA. TEGL 7-99 provided an operational definition of a credential as:

A nationally recognized degree or certificate or state/locally recognized credential. Credentials include, but are not limited to, a high school diploma, GED or other recognized equivalents, post-secondary degrees/certificates, recognized skill standards, and licensure or industry-recognized certificates. States should include all state education agency recognized credentials. In addition, states should work with local Workforce Investment Boards to encourage certificates to



recognize successful completion of the training services listed above that are designed to equip individuals to enter or re-enter employment, retain employment, or advance into better employment. (U.S. Department of Labor, 2000b, p. 15)

The range of interpretations of this definition went from extremely stringent to very broad and/or lenient resulting in a lack of equity among states and their local areas.

Concerns included who to include as an eligible training provider, what level of recognition is necessary for the credential, and how to obtain performance measurement data.

Establishing both performance goals and measures at state and local levels and subsequently reporting outcomes to the U.S. Department of Labor are crucial with regards to receiving federal funding for training programs. If a state fails to meet the negotiated performance level for two consecutive years or if they fail to report their performance in any year there may be up to a five percent reduction in funding. On a more positive side, if a state exceeds expectations they may receive an incentive grant to be used for an innovative workforce investment project, which is agreed upon between the U.S. Department of Labor and the state.

#### *Previous public training performance effectiveness evaluations*

Passage of JTPA legislation in 1982 introduced the requirement of performance standards as a part of the accountability system (Wills, 1995). The standards were determined at the federal level and modifications could be made at the state level with approval from the U.S. Secretary of Labor. JTPA and WIA differ as to their targeted populations, with all adults eligible for WIA services while JTPA adult services were for unemployed and dislocated workers. More current and comprehensive performance evaluations that have been conducted of federally funded training programs are based on

JTPA standards. Prior to the enactment of WIA, there were 20 different workforce purposes in the JTPA system. However, many of the evaluations conducted reviewed the larger scope of three major population target groups—disadvantaged workers, dislocated workers, and youth. Also included are a few evaluations of both CETA and MDTA.

Schaffner and Van Horn (2003) reviewed three major reports that evaluated federal and state training programs for effectiveness of skills training and bridge-to-work efforts. A common theme found was that longer-term training programs, including both OJT and classroom instruction, are more effective for adults. These reports are listed (see Table 3) in chronological order and include title, author(s), and date.

Table 3

*Evaluation Reports on Federal Employment Program's Effectiveness of Skills Training*

Title	Author(s) and date
<i>What's Working (and What's Not): Summary of Research on the Economic Impacts of Employment Programs</i>	U.S. Department of Labor (1995)
<i>Evaluating Government Programs for the Economically Disadvantaged</i>	Friedlander, D., Greenberg, D.H., & Robins, P.K. (1997)
<i>Strategic Plan: Fiscal Years 1999-2004</i>	U.S. Department of Labor (2000a)

Bennici, Mangum, and Sum (2000) reviewed federally funded training evaluations on improvements to annual earnings for unemployed and disadvantaged adults. The general conclusion was that improvement in earnings was mainly attributed to both an increase in labor force attachment or average time worked and not to an actual gain in average hourly earnings. These studies are listed (see Table 4) in chronological order and include title, author(s) and date, and related federal training act.

Table 4

*Evaluation Reports on Federal Employment Training Program's Improvement in Earnings*

Title	Author(s) and date	Act
<i>A Decade of Manpower Development and Training</i>	Mangum, G.L. & Walsh, J. (1973)	MDTA
<i>CETA Training Programs – Do They Work for Adults?</i>	Bloom, H.S. & McLaughlin, M.A. (1982)	CETA
<i>The National JTPA Study: Title II-A Impacts on Earnings and Employment at 18 Months</i>	Bloom, H.S., Orr, L.L., Cave, G., Bell, S.H., & Doolittle, F. (1992)	JTPA
<i>After AFDC: Welfare-to-Work Choices and Challenges for States</i>	Bloom, D. (1993)	JTPA
<i>Does Training the Disadvantaged Work? Evidence from the National JTPA Study</i>	Orr, L.L., Bloom, H.S., Bell, S.H., Doolittle, F., Lin, W., & Cave, G. (1996)	JTPA

*Economic conditions*

Another factor in the effectiveness of training is the level of economic activity in a business cycle (Barnow & King, 2005). During times of a tight job market, employment opportunities are more readily available and federally funded training programs are used less frequently. In contrast, during periods of high unemployment, training programs are likely to be incorporated into services and will affect performance measures of core indicators.

*Data collection problems*

It is hard to address the applicability of the findings from previous federally funded training program evaluations to WIA standards. The national evaluation study on the implementation of WIA after five years (Social Policy Research Associates, 2004) indicated that many states are still struggling to determine a methodology to correctly measure performance goals. There are four main issues that are interfering with this

process. The first is determining if the point of registration for a job seeker is when they receive intensive services or training. TEGL 7-99 stated that reporting should begin at the time the job seeker received significant staff attention; however, most of the states studied devolved interpretation of this policy to the local level with little guidance. The second concern was the lack of consistency as to when data are tracked for the first three of four previously noted core indicators, which pertain to employment entry, retention, and earnings. The third issue addresses the complexity of the calculation of these three core indicators due to confusing guidance regarding who is excluded in the baseline measure. The last concern was that Unemployment Insurance (UI) wage records used to report performance levels did not result in an accurate picture of the reality of current employment conditions in an area. A second problem of using UI data was that many WIA job seekers who do obtain employment are not covered by this program.

The source of data collection problems that have been presented were from a national evaluation report on WIA implementation that explicitly states there are limitations of generalizing findings due to a small sample (Social Policy Research Associates, 2004). Barnow and Smith (2004) have recommended that DOL take advantage of impending WIA reauthorization legislation and redesign the performance management system using recommendations proposed through empirical scholarly research of the JTPA system. ETA is seeking changes to streamline and strengthen the performance system; however, reauthorization has still not occurred, which makes it difficult to interpret what this means in terms of data collection (Employment and Training Administration, n.d.).

### *Summary of Workforce Investment Activities*

Figure 2 provides an illustrative flow chart of how the One-Stop Center is central to the flow of information from mandated programs, WIBs, and ETPs. Both job seekers who need support services and businesses that need specific skills of employees impact the type of services that the One-Stop Center provides. Finally, the desired output is to have skilled employees for the local labor market.

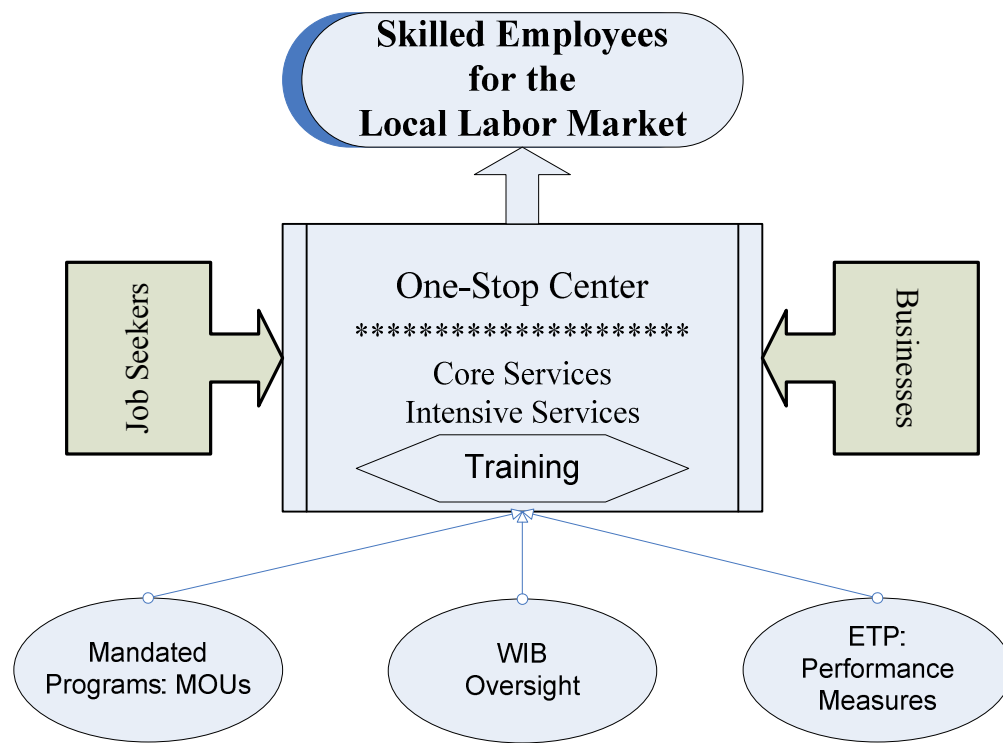


Figure 2

*Linkages of One-Stop Center workforce investment activities*

The One-Stop Center is located in the center of the figure to represent that it is the focal point for WIA activities. The arrow from the oval in the bottom left corner represents the 17 mandated programs that are required to have MOUs with the One-Stop Center. These serve as contracts to explain how the program will deliver services at the One-Stop Center. The arrow from the bottom center oval signifies the WIB oversight authority of the One-Stop Center. ETPs that contract with the One-Stop Center are required to report performance accountability data, which is represented by the arrow from the bottom right corner.

The block arrow on the left side represents job seekers who need employment support services of the One-Stop Center. They are advised about the graduated levels of services available depending upon their skill set and how well it matches employment opportunities in the local area. Core services are intake activities and information on employment opportunities. Intensive services provide more comprehensive assessments and career planning, including development of an individual employment plan. Training is for those job seekers who have not been able to attain employment after the first two levels and job seekers use either an ITA voucher or a contract system. Contracts are typically for OJT and customized training designed for specific needs of businesses. ITA vouchers focus more on upgrading the general skills of job seekers.

The block arrow on the right side indicates the role of businesses as providers of information about the projected employee skills needed. The intended convergence of job seekers and businesses at the One-Stop Center creates the alignment necessary to provide skilled employees to the local labor market.

In theory, this is how WIA intends the One-Stop Center to be the pivotal location for job seekers and businesses through the agreements and relationships of the mandated programs, WIB, and ETPs. To have the potential to achieve the ideal, the five Title I-B goals require a comprehensive workforce development strategy from the agencies that oversee employment services, economic development, and occupational skills training.

### Workforce Development Definition and Partners

#### *Workforce Development Definitions*

The U.S. Department of Labor reports cited have often used the phrases workforce development or workforce development systems interchangeably to describe the process of workforce investment activities needed by the local business community. The reports do not present any basis of meaning of these two commonly found phrases. Jacobs and Hawley (2008) reviewed the literature on numerous workforce development definitions and found that they varied as to the type of perspective being addressed. For example, Grubb (2001b) views workforce development as job training programs necessary for individuals to be employed. Giloth (2000) agrees that workforce development is mainly for employment training and adds that it involves both business and community support. The National Governor's Association (NGA) defines workforce development as the balanced relationship between job seeker skills (supply side) and business employment needs (demand side) of job training (Simon, M., 2002). Although all three of these definitions discuss job training, Grubb's perspective is the job seeker, Giloth's is business and community, and NGA's is job seeker and business.

Based on their review of workforce development definitions, Jacobs and Hawley (2008) extend the following definition: "workforce development is the coordination of

public and private sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the societal context.” This definition introduces the dual relationship of public workforce policies formulated by legislation and business goals to achieve economic success. Both must be considered when developing workforce training programs to enhance employment opportunities. This definition also incorporates that workforce programmatic considerations should be addressed for all three stakeholder groups: job seeker, business, and community. For purposes of this study, the definition formulated by Jacobs and Hawley will be applied to further understanding of how employment services and education agencies respond to the business workforce training needs in a defined employment geographic area.

#### *Workforce Development Partner Agencies*

Eberts and Erickcek (2002) studied the role of local partnerships in the delivery of workforce development services in the United States and found three types of agencies that typically partner: (a) government employment service agencies that administer federal and state programs at the state and local levels, (b) economic development agencies whose general focus is to meet the needs of business creation and sustainability in a local area, and (c) public education agencies that provide workforce training. Grubb (2001b) states that the education agencies are most likely community colleges that have taken the lead in providing specialized training for the workforce in the local areas. The next three sections review literature related to employment services, economic development, and community colleges in the context of workforce development at the state and local level.



### *Employment services agency*

The Wagner-Peyser Act of 1933 established a nationwide system of public employment offices, known as Employment Service (ES). Barnow and King (2005) reported that the workforce development mission of ES agencies is to assist job seekers in finding jobs, businesses in finding qualified workers and, in some areas, to provide job training and related services. This mission is realized by the ES agencies performing the following functions: “maintaining a list of job openings, providing information to job seekers with interest, aptitude, and ability assessments; matching workers to openings through automated and manual procedures; and processing applications to fill positions for employers” (Barnow & King, p. 24). The actual services that an ES agency performs depend on funding resources available to the state. For example, some states no longer provide aptitude testing and automated job matching due to a decrease in real or inflation adjusted resources.

ES agencies are mandated WIA One-Stop Center partners and case studies have found that due to their long history of providing labor exchange services, they are often selected as the primary provider of WIA core services (D’Amico, et al., 2001; Javar & Wandner, 2004; Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003). Therefore, ES providers are often viewed as having the best experience of all of mandated partners regarding implementing, planning, and reporting public workforce development policies.

### *Economic development agency*

To avoid competition among states for business creation, the federal government has maintained a position not to set policy for state economic development agencies. Therefore, economic development agencies are managed at state and local levels, and

develop mission and goals that represent the needs of their key stakeholders in an area. In the local labor market, job seekers want employment opportunities that provide self-fulfillment and skill application, and businesses want job seekers who match their employment requirements (Shaffer, 1989).

Mathur (1999) reviewed literature on definitions of economic development and determined that there is not a consensus among researchers as to the meaning. A plethora of definitions were found, including; “growth in per capita income, change in wealth, change in employment, change in both population and employment, and growth in business” (p. 204). Blair (1995) states that economic development has many elements and that growth in terms of jobs and resources support improvements in quality of life are the most important. The International Economic Development Council (2002) defines economic development as a program, group of policies, or activity that seeks to improve the economic well-being and quality of life for a community, by creating and/or retaining jobs that facilitate growth and provide a stable tax base. A presentation on Building Partnerships: Economic and Workforce Development, delivered by the National Association of Workforce Boards in June 2004, suggests that economic development is a process, not an event. This process is to attract, retain, and expand employment using a number of approaches that are developed based on the needs of the state and local area. Additionally, workforce development is linked to an economic development initiative. Giloth (2004) in a discussion referring to economic development stated that “workforce development is a part of regional labor markets in which business investments and behaviors are critical for the success of all workers” (p. 10). All of these suggestions as to what defines economic development efforts have either implicitly or explicitly implied

that workforce development is a part of the strategy. This is also in agreement with Jacobs and Hawley (2008) that workforce development needs to be included in economic development planning processes to develop sustainable employment opportunities in the local environment.

Economic development agencies find that when they partner with workforce development agencies, they are able to “produce a top-quality workforce that is able to meet the needs of existing businesses or the businesses that might be attracted to the area” (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002, p. 256). These partners are the businesses that are represented by economic development agencies and training providers, which are usually linked to programs offered through employment services. This partnership utilizes both public and private resources and helps to ensure the direct linkage of skills training for jobs in the local area (Blakely & Bradshaw).

The most often utilized skills training mechanism by state and local economic development agencies is customized training. A NGA report based on a survey of states, estimated that all states combined would spend more than \$600 million in 1999 on employer-focused (customized) job training programs (Bartik & Hollenbeck, 2004)

#### *Community college*

Community colleges through their open access admission policies help serve the needs of their local area by responding to diverse curricular needs of the community at large and the business community, in particular (Mees, 1997). In general, community colleges have various curricular purposes that usually include the following categories: academic transfer, vocational-technical education, continuing education, and developmental education (Bailey & Averianova, 1998; Cohen & Brawer, 2003). The

curricular priorities of community colleges differ; however, nearly all of the 1,300 community colleges in the United States offer workforce training and education courses (O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004).

One definition of workforce development from a community college perspective is “an initiative to provide current and future employees with the education, training, competencies, and skills employers needs to maintain high performance in a competitive market environment” (Forde, 2002, p. 34). Another definition from the aspect of vocational education is that “workforce development provides education and training for incumbent workers and those seeking to upgrade their skills or change careers” (Bragg, 2001, p. 6). Together, these definitions agree with Grubb’s (2001b) vocational education curricular viewpoint that community colleges are second chance institutions for job seekers who need to upgrade their skills and overtly provide occupational preparation for middle-skilled jobs. Mid-skilled occupations are those that require either an associate’s degree, vocational certificate, or some college and in 1990, almost three-fourths of the occupations were in this group and were projected to grow (Grubb, 1996b).

From a workforce development perspective, community colleges are the most important providers of the education and training for the sub-baccalaureate occupations in that area (O’Leary, Straits, & Wandner, 2004). Grubb (2001b) considers that because community college funding is enrollment driven, providing for the local workforce is somewhat driven by demands of students to receive education and training for locally available occupations. Community colleges also contribute to workforce development efforts through offering non-credit courses for customized job training programs requested by businesses (Grubb, 2001a; Grubb & Lazerson, 2004).

Community colleges are viewed as partners with economic development agencies to “serve as trainer, technical resource and advisor for community building initiatives which include business development and growth, housing and infrastructure revitalization, creation of jobs and wealth, and ultimately, enhancement of the overall quality of community life” (Forde, 2002, p. 34). However, Grubb, Badway, Bell, Bragg, and Russman (1997) would caution that community college and economic development partnerships result in two different types of relationships, those for specific workforce development activities and those for participatory policy-making activities. Community colleges’ role in workforce development as part of economic development is sometimes viewed as the bridge between legislative workforce policies and business employment needs (Grubb & Laxerson, 2004).

### Agency Partnership Strategy

#### *Reasons for a Strategy*

##### *Devolution*

The passage of WIA in 1998 came relatively soon after the landmark welfare reform legislation PRWORA in 1996. The underlying political structure for both of these Acts is the process of devolution, which shifts policy and program responsibilities from the federal to state and local governments. In the case of PRWORA, there were some states that chose to decentralize their authority directly to the county level.

Three empirical research studies on PRWORA implementation reviewed social service agency directors’ leadership roles that would be required to achieve their implementation objectives (Cho, Kelleher, Wright, & Yackee, 2005; Francis, 1999; Kelleher & Yackee, 2004). Francis found that state-level administrators were critical

decision makers for policy implementation. This was not unexpected; however, a surprising finding was the lack of attention to the administrative actions of these key decision makers, which would have provided understanding for policymakers. Further, as more social policies are devolved an examination of the institutional decisions of policy making processes of state administrators will provide better understanding of the impact of devolution on social service agencies (Francis). This would also establish an implementation framework at the state level that could be utilized at the local level.

Kelleher and Yackee (2004) found that some local government agencies often experienced a period of political upheaval along with the dynamics associated with organizational change; however, they did not elaborate as to what that meant. Further investigation was conducted as to why some agencies experienced initial turmoil and others were able to smoothly achieve their implementation objectives (Cho, et al., 2005). One aspect they examined was the leadership characteristics possessed by the directors of the social service agencies, which included expertise, experience, and entrepreneurship. Findings for the three variables were significant and positive indicating that the level of professional training, expertise, and influence that directors have on administering policy makes a difference in the outcome of implementation achievement.

The findings from Cho, et al. (2005) provide valuable information for reviewing how WIA policy implementation affects workforce development decisions by each of the workforce partner agencies. Gais, et al. (2000) suggest that an informational infrastructure needs to be developed that will establish a communication methodology among all of the parties affected by devolution. Heeding this advice, the workforce partner agencies that are essential to implementation of the five goals outlined in Title I-B

would benefit by developing a partnership strategy of policy administration that includes effective communication procedures to comprehensively achieve their objectives.

#### *Workforce development system*

As previously mentioned, the government reports used in the analysis of WIA statutes at the beginning of this chapter often used the phrases workforce development and workforce development systems interchangeably. The workforce development definition developed by Jacobs and Hawley (2008) is being adopted for this research study because the context is applicable to the WIA definition of workforce investment activities, which includes the phrase workforce investment systems. Adding the word systems to either workforce development or workforce investment introduces an operational meaning that requires further analysis.

The late B. Aubrey Fisher, Ph.D. was a highly regarded scholar on communication theory and group processes especially in the topic of decision making. His first book entitled *Small Group Decision Making* (Fisher, 1974) introduced the concept of systems as it applies to groups. He maintained at that time and in his second edition in 1980 that there are three elements—structure, function, and evolution – that influence the dynamics of an open system. Dr. Aubrey died in 1986 and Donald G. Ellis continued to refine the work of his colleague with book editions in 1990 and 1994. Although there are other well known scholars in organizational systems theory (Scott, 1981; von Bertalanffy, 1968; Wheatley, 1999) and systems thinking (Senge, 1990) the most recent work by Ellis and Fisher (1994) on *group as a system* has more applicability to understanding an operational definition of workforce development system.

Ellis and Fisher (1994) define a system as the concept of “a set of component parts that have relationships and are interdependent” (p. 6). A key principle of a system is wholeness or that a change in one of the interdependent parts will result in a change in another part of the system. Another principle closely related to wholeness is that the interaction of the parts results with the whole being different than the sum of the parts. Ellis and Fisher explain this collective relationship of the parts of a system as “an identity separate from the identities of its individual components” (p. 7). For the system components to act interdependently, the three previously mentioned elements have an operational process in the group system. The elements and their operations are:

1. *Structure* refers to the spatial relationships of the parts of a system. This element helps to determine the degree of formality the arrangement of system needs to best utilize the role specialization of each component.
2. *Function* refers to actions of the members of the components. This element establishes the intended purpose of the system by defining rules and regulations required for each component.
3. *Evolution* refers to the history of the system. This element tracks the progressive or regressive changes that have occurred in the system over time.

(Ellis & Fisher)

These elements along with the definition and principles of a system would be the individual components of the WIA workforce development system. The three workforce development agencies—employment services, economic development, and community colleges—would need to make a collective arrangement for each of their role specializations so that the intended workforce development goals for a local area are met.



The system is also a different entity than each of the individual workforce development agencies. Therefore, employment services, economic development agencies, and community colleges would need to establish an interdependent relationship that results in an evolving partnership with activities that can be tracked over time.

### *Strategic plan*

The federal government reports and documents of WIA implementation efforts, which were reviewed for this chapter, rarely if at all mentioned how states and local areas used the five year strategic plan as an implementation tool. A review of WIA from the perspective of the Organisation of Economic Co-operation and Development (2003) stated the following regarding the intended use of the strategic plans:

The planning process led by the governor and state board in collaboration with local elected officials and local boards sought to secure the partners' endorsement of the vision, along with performance goals and the critical strategies needed to attain them. The plan was expected to provide a roadmap with quantifiable milestones. This five-year strategic plan was intended as a management tool that all stakeholders could use to guide the evolution of the workforce investment system and to assess progress toward the agreed upon goals. (p. 5)

Since the federal reports and documents did not report the intention of WIA stakeholders on the use of a strategic plan, a contact with one of the primary authors, Christopher T. King, Ph.D., was made concerning this statement. His reply was:

...for the most part these have been "compliance" rather than "management" tools. That's pretty much the history of most federally mandated planning and coordination requirements unfortunately, so this is nothing new. Some of the states actually engage in real strategic planning but it's done outside the WIA process. (C.T. King, personal communication, May 2, 2005)

In this situation, compliance is fulfilling a requirement of federal legislation, whereas management is referring to rules and regulations formulated within an agency. This has interesting implications for the workforce development agency partners. Either the WIA

strategic plan does not provide the right type of guidelines to have strategic planning utility or the pervasive attitude by the state agency responsible for submitting the WIA strategic plan prevents viewing it as a business management tool or both.

### *Stakeholders*

Carroll (2000) defines stakeholders as individuals or groups who “*may be affected by the actions, decisions, policies, or practices of a firm and also may affect the organization’s actions, decisions, policies, or practices*” (p. 171). Stakeholders can be classified as being either internal or external and may include customers, competitors, or partners (Carroll, 2000; Gilley, Boughton, & Maycunich, 1999). For the workforce development agencies, some characteristics of an external stakeholder might be an agency that engages in tasks that can be usefully incorporated into another agency’s activities; agencies whose budget, turf, or employees might be affected by the actions of another agency; or citizens who receive taxpayer benefits or services provided by the agency (Bardach, 1998).

For the workforce development agencies the stakeholders at large are job seekers, businesses, and community. However, each of these assumes a different role depending on the perspective of the workforce agency. For example, employment services may believe that their only customers are job seekers and rely on businesses to contact them with job vacancies. Economic development agencies may focus solely on creating or expanding new businesses with the belief that job seekers will be available. Eberts and Erickcek (2002) found that one of the significant barriers to developing partnerships was a narrow focus of who stakeholders of an agency are, in particular between job training providers and economic developers. They found that:

Job-training providers tend to focus on the needs of their clients, while often ignoring the needs of employers. Economic development professionals, on the other hand, are focused solely on addressing the needs of the area's existing and potential employers and often neglect the needs of local employees or the needs of less-advantaged population groups. (Eberts & Erickcek, p. 35)

Agencies that use this divisional approach to managing their stakeholders are not embracing a key aspect of workforce development to meet the needs of business for skilled workers and the employment needs of job seekers. Five questions that organizations may use to find out stakeholders' needs are:

1. Who are the organization's stakeholders?
2. What are the stakeholders' stakes?
3. What opportunities and challenges do the stakeholders present to the organization?
4. What responsibilities (economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic) does the organization have toward its stakeholders?
5. What strategies or actions should the organization take to best deal with stakeholder challenges and opportunities? (Carroll, 2000, p. 173)

Based on answers to these assessment questions, the key relationships among the agencies' relevant stakeholders can be diagrammed to reflect their issues, which in this case are related to workforce development (Medeiros de Araujo & Bramwell, 1999).

### *Summary*

Four reasons were identified to explain why the three workforce development agencies should establish a partnership strategy to help with the achievement of the workforce investment outcomes through the use of the five Title I-B goals. The first one is the legislative process of devolution of policy responsibilities to the state and local

level, which has implementation implications. A partnership could help establish an implementation framework that would include effective communication procedures to comprehensively achieve the Title I-B goals. The second one is establishing a systems approach that creates an interdependent relationship among the three workforce partners to meet the workforce development goals for a local area. The third is utilizing either the mandated strategic plan or a separate strategic plan as a business management tool to facilitate achieving the Title I-B goals.

The fourth one is to understand who represents the internal and the external stakeholders for each of the workforce agencies, and collectively, to help avoid barriers resulting from each agency having too narrow a focus as to which stakeholder deserves priority. The aggregate of these four reasons has the potential to benefit from a partnership strategy that could manage the relationship among the three workforce development partners: employment services, economic development, and community college.

#### *Partnership Development Strategy*

##### *Recommendations from WIA implementation reports*

A common theme found throughout four early case study reports on WIA implementation at either the state or local level was determining a methodological approach for either program or agency partnership formation (Barnow & King, 2003; Buck, 2002; Ganzglass, et al., 2001; O'Shea & King, 2001). For purposes of this study, agency partnership formation will be researched with regard to the type of strategic management process that will provide the agencies with the tools they need to develop a partner relationship.

### *Definition and elements of a partnership*

The Fall 2002 issue of *New Directions for Community Colleges* was dedicated entirely to various aspects of community college partnerships with business and community including strategies, case studies, and characteristics. One definition of partnering was a formal collaboration that “is a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve common goals” (Buettner, Morrison, & Wasicek, 2002, p. 5). In addition, four elements can enhance the development and maintenance of a sound partnership:

1. Shared mission and goals can be developed by identifying overlapping interests and activities that the partners have in common and by devising a partner mission that will also meet the priorities of their stakeholders.
2. Evaluation of the perceived effect a partner’s reputation and credibility will have on a partnership’s ability to have an efficient collaboration, in particular with shared resource allocation.
3. Participation and involvement in relevant activities can enhance economic opportunities through the various relationships of the partners to know about and understand the problems or need for services.
4. Combination of resources may strengthen the ability of the partnership to gain access to a funding opportunity. (Buettner, Morrison, & Wasicek)

In conclusion, systems’ building is one of the most important skill sets to elevate partnerships to higher levels of performance and customer satisfaction (Buettner, Morrison, & Wasicek). Spangler (2002) adds that regardless of the reason why a partnership is formed, whether due to a unique one time opportunity or a significant and

ongoing need, all have some common elements and offer economic benefits to the partners.

### *Efficiency of partnerships*

From a WIA perspective, two efficiency conditions were identified for managing the employment and economic development strategies by partnerships. These are:

1. The importance of active business involvement is a key component in a partnership's ability to efficiently manage federal and state employment policies. Businesses, through their membership on WIBs and involvement in other organizations, identify occupations and industries experiencing labor shortages and skill deficiencies and recommend appropriate training programs and other employment services to address these needs.
2. The existing political environment of the local area plays a critical role. The ability of partnerships in resolving conflicts among governmental units, community organizations and political parties determines, in large part, its success. (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002, p. 36)

Businesses are used to making and acting on decisions faster than the bureaucratic process of the community college system, which can provide some frustrating situations for both of these partners (Sundberg, 2002).

### *Partnership terms*

Four common terms used to describe a partnership are cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration. A term search on WIA public law PDF file found that forms of these terms were used a total of 190 times (cooperation 42, coordination 92, collaboration 17, integration 39). However, none of these terms were addressed in the

Title I-A WIA definition section. A scholarly literature review of the terms cooperation, coordination, and collaboration found they could be placed on a continuum moving from low to high in formality (Reilly, 2001). Mattessich, Murray-Close, and Monsey (2004) support Reilly's continuum that cooperation is the least formal relationship, coordination introduces more formal communication strategies, and a collaborative partnership produces a new, durable structure. Mattessich et al. and Reilly agree that quite often the term collaboration is easily interchanged with the terms cooperation and coordination.

A report by Ragan (2003) showcased locations in 12 states of efforts to integrate human service systems. One of the sites featured was El Paso County, Colorado where they use a continuum to determine the development of the relationships among programs based on the type of interactions. This continuum has six categories that are ordered from complete separation of programs to unity of programs into a new delivery system. They are:

Communication → Cooperation → Coordination →  
Collaboration → Integration → Consolidation

Ragan found this methodology useful in analyzing progression of program delivery systems and subsequently used it for all the site visits.

Based on the studies by Mattessich et al. (2004), Ragan (2003), and Reilly (2001), general meanings for cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration are:

1. Cooperation—informal, unstructured relationships that share information as needed
2. Coordination—formal exchange of information and joint activities to work on a specific project or task with equal partners

3. Collaboration—partners unite and establish a new structure with a common mission to support collective goals and determine an agreed upon authoritative system that includes partners sharing resources
4. Integration—partners restructure missions, services, programs, and resources to provide seamless delivery of services

Although there are different terms associated with partnerships, literature supports collaboration as a credible partnership approach for the workforce development agencies.

*Collaborative partnership literature*

In 1989 Barbara Gray introduced a new era of collaboration strategies with her book, *Collaboration: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems*. She defined collaboration as a dynamic process of joint decision making. She proposed five features of collaboration that included (a) stakeholders are interdependent, (b) solutions emerge by dealing constructively with differences, (c) joint ownership of decisions is involved, (d) stakeholders assume collective responsibility for future direction of the domain, and (e) collaboration is an emergent process (Gray, 1989, p. 11). Reilly (2001) found that collaboration studies done in the early- to mid-1990s support the importance of these five features based on an extensive analysis of successful and failed collaborative partnerships. The studies had complex problems, diverse stakeholders, and various social, political, and cultural attributes that found the process of collaboration:

...unites previously separated groups or organizations into a new structure to achieve a mutual purpose. Such relationships require comprehensive planning, a shared vision and frequent and well-defined communication. Authority is determined by the collaborative structure and risk is more substantial because each member of the collaboration contributes its own resources and reputation. (Reilly, p. 55)



The five features proposed by Gray (1989) and the findings by Reilly (2001) provide support for the four reasons—devolution, workforce development system, strategic plan, and stakeholders—a workforce agency partnership strategy is needed. This is especially the case for the three systems’ elements of structure, function, and evolution that are needed for the system components or agencies to act interdependently. The stakeholders referred to by Gray are the workforce agencies, which act differently than the internal and external stakeholders of the agencies, previously addressed.

Recent literature through case study research of community colleges collaborating with various community sector agencies found:

Collaborations refer to some form of strategic joint relationship between two or more organizational entities. These relationships can be distinguished on the basis of the purposes of the relationship and the products or services that are produced and how formalized they are, and whether a separate entity manages the relationship. (Orr, 2001, p. 41)

Orr found a balanced relationship among the managing efforts of the collaboration and the intensity and scope of the goals. Also, interdependent relationships thrived when agencies were aware of their positive and negative organizational attributes.

Gray (1989) provides a constructive management phased procedure to help guide agencies through the collaboration process (see Table 5). Under each phase is a list of steps that provides a management tool to the collaboration process. Based on the work by Gray, and the recent case study research by Reilly (2001) and Orr (2001), focusing partnership efforts on a model of collaboration has the potential of achieving expected outcomes for a partnership’s goals and mission.

Table 5

*The Collaborative Process*

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Phase 1: Problem setting

- common definition of problem
- commitment to collaborate
- identification of stakeholders
- legitimacy of stakeholders
- convener characteristics
- identification of resources

Phase 2: Direction setting

- establishing ground rules
- agenda setting
- organizing subgroups
- joint information search
- exploring options
- reaching agreement and closing the deal

Phase 3: Implementation

- dealing with constituencies
- building external support
- structuring
- monitoring the agreement and ensuring compliance

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Source: Gray (1989, p. 57)

Summary

The first section of this chapter was an examination of the WIA statutes that pertained to workforce training. Federal reports and documents of state and local level implementation case studies were used to provide context to policy implications. This section was divided into eight sub-categories based on WIA mandates that have implications for workforce training. These eight sub-categories are: background, WIA Title I-B, workforce investment boards, One-Stop Centers, training services regulations, workforce training and adult education, WIA workforce training performance

accountability, and an illustrative summary of the WIA workforce investment activities process.

The second section discussed workforce development and had two sub-categories. The first was the development of a workforce development definition and the second explained the three primary agencies at the state and local levels that are involved with workforce development issues.

The third section developed the rationale for the need for agency partnership strategy and had two sub-categories. The first one discussed four reasons that necessitated a strategy and the second set up the foundation for developing an agency partnership.

This emerging case study is examining delivery of workforce development services to meet the employment needs of both job seekers and businesses. The delivery of services is affected by the mandated implementation of WIA workforce investment activities and the role capacity of the three workforce agencies at the state level.

Figure 3 is an illustrative representation of this emergent study. This model depicts the impact stages of the previous stated four reasons for implementing a workforce development partnership strategy. The bottom two bins indicate that the WIA mandated programs and policy and the three state-level agencies are both inputs in the formation of a workforce development partnership. Next, the responsibility of the partnership is to establish jointly supported implementation strategies. These strategies are dynamic in nature as indicated by the dotted line around the triangle and can be influenced by local-level activities.

The local-level response box is the point in the model that results in formative action. Both job seekers and businesses are requesting services, including occupational training from the One-Stop Center. The degree of efficiency in responding to needed services is a result of interactions between the partnership and the One-Stop Center. The ultimate goal for the workforce development partnership is the achievement of skilled employees for the local-labor market.

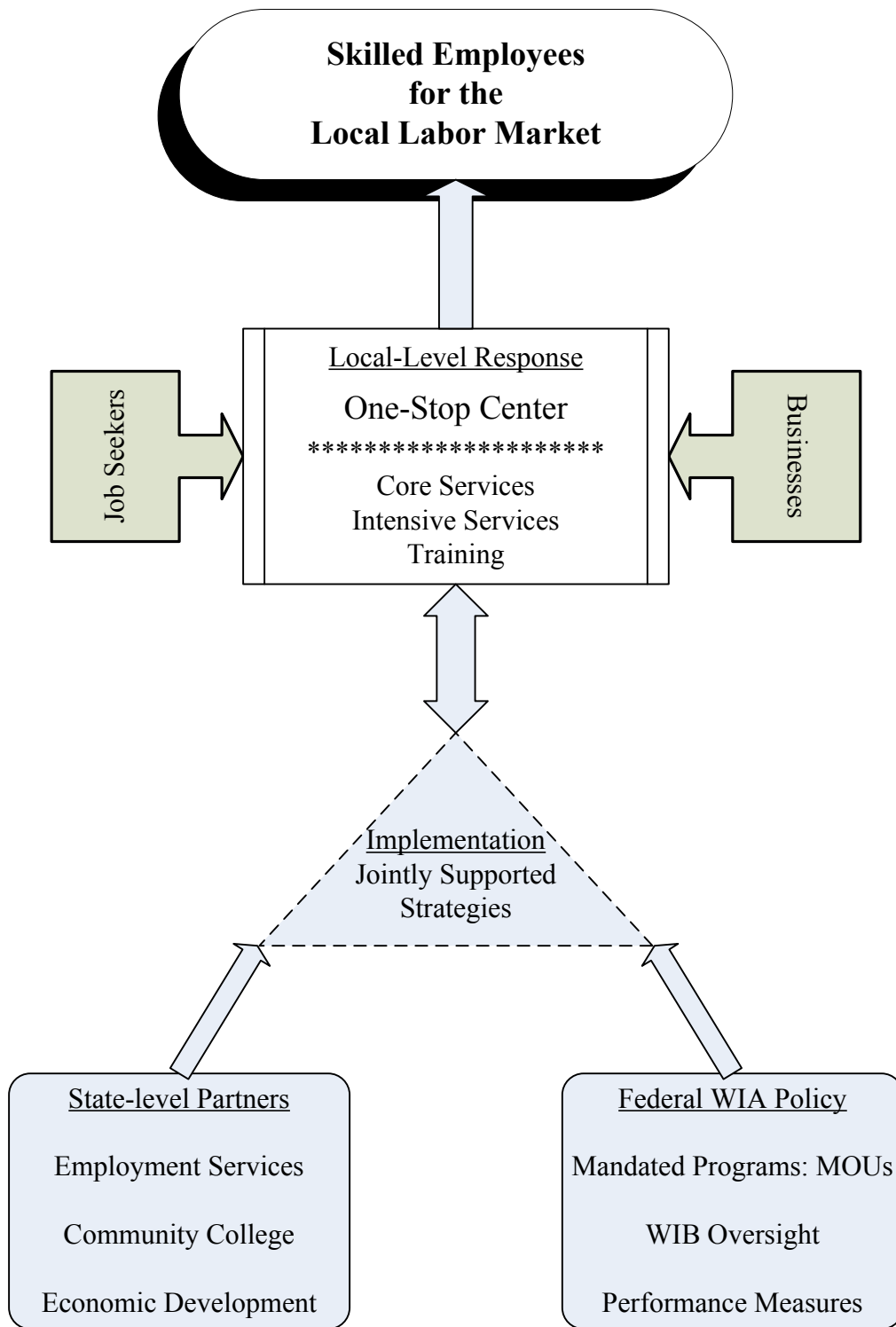


Figure 3

*Workforce Development Partnership System Model*

## CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

### Introduction

This chapter presents the research methodology selected for this qualitative study. In the first section, the research design and rationale are explained. The second section addresses the conceptual framework to describe the interrelationships of the key factors that were studied. Site location and setting are described in section three. The participation selection process is delineated in section four. Data collection procedures are described in section five and the data analysis methods immediately after in section six. The final section presents the trustworthiness standards used.

### Research Design and Rationale

The purpose of this qualitative case study was twofold. The first purpose was to describe what influences the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) had on three workforce development partners—employment services, economic development, and community college. The second was to describe the process utilized that created the workforce development partnership.

### *Research Approach*

A qualitative case study approach was used to fulfill the purposes of this study. Creswell (1998) defines a case study as:

...an exploration of a 'bounded system' or a case (or multiple cases) over time through detailed, in-depth data collection involving multiple sources of information rich in context. This *bounded system* is bounded by time and place and it is the *case* being studied – a program, an event, an activity, or individuals. (p. 61)

In this definition, Creswell acknowledges case study as a research approach. Yin (2003) agrees that case studies should be considered a research method and this strategy can be used in developing the design, data collection, and analysis aspects of a study. The case for this study is an event about the formation of a workforce development partnership.

#### *Rationale for the Research Topic*

The review of federal reports and documents on WIA implementation efforts presented an array of challenges for many of the state and local areas that were studied. WIA consolidated 163 federal workforce programs in 17 agencies to 17 programs in 4 agencies. These 17 programs had various mandates in the WIA legislation that was 313 pages long and comprised of five titles, which includes a plethora of statutes with an overwhelming number of mandates associated with many of the statutes. The Title I, Subtitle B section is over 120 pages and establishes the purpose, goals, and framework for the statewide and local workforce investment systems (O'Shea & King, 2001). This is where the dynamics of WIA implementation exist and establish the heart of the process at One-Stop Centers. This also became a point of confusion according to documentation provided by many of the case study research reports.

Two of the major thematic challenges presented throughout the reports were devolution and performance accountability. Devolution of implementation responsibility from the federal level to the state and local levels presented uncertainty about the level of services One-Stop Centers provided to job seekers. This was especially found in the work-first approach in contrast to occupational skills training. The second was that frustrated training providers approached compliance of the mandated performance accountability measures by either using pervasive methods or did not elect to become a

training provider. Both of these challenges meant that organizational changes for the workforce development agencies would need to occur.

WIA legislation not only brought about many changes to the management of public workforce programs, but also to the manner by which the three workforce agencies deliver services to their stakeholders. Employment services agencies are a mandated program at One-Stop Centers and must adhere to the stipulated regulations on how to provide services for job seekers. Economic development agencies are not regulated by the federal government and their primary stakeholders are businesses in the private sector. The federal government did mandate that the Workforce Investment Board that oversees the One-Stop Center have at least 51% of its membership from the business community. Community colleges are most often regarded as the likely choice to provide workforce training in a local area. However, mandated performance accountability standards do not readily coincide with the data, grant, and job placement protocol reporting systems of community colleges. Situations encountered by these agencies have brought the unique challenges to develop a workforce development partnership strategy that delivers services to both job seekers and businesses under the mandates of WIA.

#### *Need for a Case Study*

The qualitative case studies that were conducted for the federal reports were studying the state and local levels from the perspective of WIA implementation and in particular, the One-Stop Centers. This study will be from the perspective of the workforce agencies that deliver employment related services in a state. One study was found that identified and explained the role of these workforce agencies and discussed the need to partner, but did not identify a strategy (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002).



Three workforce agencies in a state, referred to as *Employment Responsive Model State* or ERMS, have formed a workforce training partnership since the implementation of WIA. Further exploration through an in-depth analysis of these agencies and their role in the partnership will help answer the research questions.

### *Research Questions*

The grand tour research question to be addressed in this study is:

What process did the agencies describe to create their partnership?

The subsequent questions are:

1. What were the methodologies used in creating this partnership?
2. What were the agencies' visions of the mission of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998?
3. What workforce training and education variables were included in the partnership?

### Conceptual Framework

Miles and Huberman (1994) offer advice on how to build a conceptual framework and their number one suggestion relates to the design.

Conceptual frameworks are best done graphically, rather than in text. Having to get the entire framework on a single page obliges you to specify the bins that hold the discrete phenomena, to map likely relationships, to divide variables that are conceptually or functionally distinct, and to work with all of the information at once. (p. 22)

They also suggest a descriptive framework with bins or sections with variables listed based on theory or experience of the roles and behaviors being studied and how they connect with the outcome for an exploratory study.

For the three workforce agencies to work together and help the One-Stop Center meet the WIA Title I-B expectations, they need to devise a partnership strategy. There are three reasons to identify the strategy used to determine how to partner and why to partner. The first two reasons are two group system elements that guide establishing the purpose of the partnership. They are (a) structure or the roles of the members, and (b) function or the relationship process among the members (Ellis & Fisher, 1994). The third reason is to explore what partnership terms the agencies use when describing the workforce development partnership. The four terms most often used to describe partnerships are cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration that can respectively be placed on a continuum from low to high in formality.

From an organizational perspective, mapping of input, design, and output of a system provides a methodological tool to help identify disconnects in the system (Rummler & Brache, 1995). Also used was an adaptation of Figure 2.1, Conceptual Framework for a Study of the Dissemination of Educational Innovations (The Network, Inc. 1979) in Miles and Huberman (1994, p. 18). Based on these two approaches, the following conceptual map (see Figure 4) has been developed to help define the input, design, and output variables of the workforce agencies and their partnership.

At the top of the figure are the input variables: labor market and economy. The design variables are mission and goals, strategic plan, and stakeholders of the three workforce agencies and the partnership. The double arrows represent the various relationships that may exist. The output variables are the public and private sector policies and programs, job seekers, and businesses based on the workforce development definition for this study (Jacobs & Hawley, 2008). Conceptual mapping is an iterative

process and as the research study progresses, so will the refinement of the conceptual map.

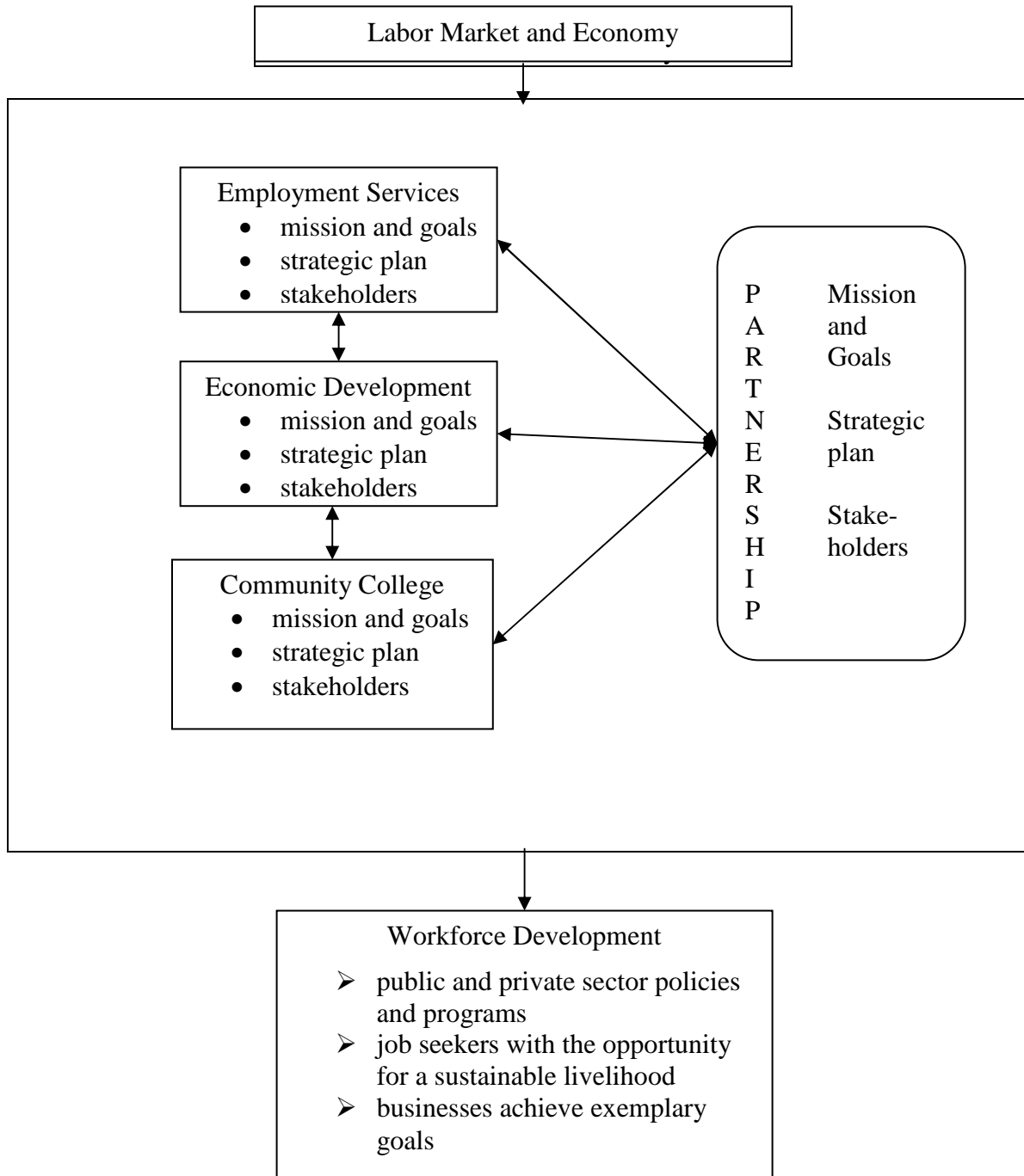


Figure 4

*Conceptual Framework of Variables in a Workforce Development System*

## Location

There are 22 contiguous states west of the Mississippi and the state studied is 1 of 14 in that region whose community college system serves a range between four to nine percent of the population 18 or older (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003). This is in contrast to the other eight states that have less than 4% community college population of 18 or older.

## Participant Selection

Purposeful criteria sampling was utilized in selecting participants who had a connection to and/or knowledge of the workforce agency partnership goals. Creswell (1998) and Patton (2002) agree that this type of approach is useful for quality assurance purposes. Merriam (1998) adds that to discover, understand, and gain insight, purposive selection criteria should be identified to choose a sample from which the most can be learned.

There were thirteen individuals who were asked to participate in this study and twelve agreed to take part. Three of the participants were identified as contacts on the partnership website and six others were referred by the initial contacts. These nine participants were all employees at one of the three workforce agencies and had administrative influence on decisions made related to state-level workforce development activities since the implementation of WIA. The other three participants, referred by some of the workforce agency participants, backgrounds and knowledge of either WIA policy or state-level workforce development initiatives. All individuals were contacted using one of three types of recruitment scripts: telephone, e-mail, or letter (see Appendix B).

## Data Collection Procedures

Four sources of data collection were used for this research study. One was tape recorded in-depth interviews with the twelve participants. Another was documents collected from the agencies, state library, and the Internet. Field notes taken during the time of the interviews were another type of data collection. The fourth type was observations of agency meetings.

The Human Research Committee (HRC) of Colorado State University (CSU) approved the proposal for this study on August 23, 2005 (Identification Number 05-207H). Prior to this approval date, the HRC of CSU required a letter of cooperation from each participating agency (see Appendix C). Each of the letters is on official letterhead from the cooperating agencies and is signed by a person in decision making authority with that agency.

### *Interviews*

The interviews were in-depth semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions. According to Merriam (1998), this type of structure allows for specific information to be asked of each participant about their perspective of the topic being studied and allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic. The twelve participants were asked to explore and describe the workforce agencies and the partnership through the use of open-ended questions and probes (see Appendix D).

The face-to-face interviews were scheduled at a time and location convenient for both the participant and the researcher. The participants were given a consent form

requesting the participant's written approval to participate in the study prior to conducting the interview (see Appendix E).

The participants were interviewed between the dates of September 9, 2005 and October 14, 2005. Each interview was tape recorded and was no longer than one and half hours in length. For confidentiality purposes, the participants were identified by a number associated with the agency they represented and a letter associated with the consecutive order of interviews from a particular agency.

Each participant was e-mailed their transcript and given three weeks to provide any feedback or clarifications that they felt were necessary. Eight of the participants were also e-mailed follow-up questions for clarification purposes and six replied. None provided any additional feedback.

### *Documents*

Documents are useful to stimulating thinking by providing new insights in the course of inquiry for interview and observation purposes (Patton, 2002). The documents for this study were collected between June 16, 2005 and November 15, 2005 and were used as both pre-and post-interview resources. Those collected from the partnership and partnership agencies included strategic plans, annual reports, brochures, newsletters, and meeting agendas and minutes. These provided information on the structure, communication methods, and accomplishments and challenges of each of the agencies and the partnership. Documents were also collected from other workforce related agencies and included legislative bills and initiatives.

### *Field Notes*

Patton (2002) repeatedly states that the use of a tape recorder does not eliminate the need for taking notes and that they serve the following purposes:

1. Notes taken during an interview can help the interviewer formulate new questions as the interview moves along, particularly where it may be appropriate to check something said earlier.
2. Looking over field notes before transcripts are done helps make sure the inquiry is unfolding in the hoped for direction and can stimulate early insights that may be relevant to pursue in subsequent interviews while still in the field – the emergent nature of qualitative inquiry.
3. Taking notes about what is said will facilitate later analysis, including locating important quotations from the transcript itself.
4. Notes are a backup in the event the recorder has malfunctioned or, as I've had happen, a tape is erased inadvertently during transcription. (p. 383)

The use of field notes enhanced the interview inquiry process by noting key phrases, major points, and key terms that were used by the participants. In some instances, these remarks helped guide transcript follow-up questions. Field notes were also used for observations to document both descriptive and reflective notes.

### *Observations*

According to Creswell (1998), an observation protocol is useful to record both descriptive and reflective notes. The design for the observation protocol for this study was adapted from Creswell (2002, p. 214). Observations were conducted at an ERMS

WIB state meeting and three ERMS Labor Force Development Association meetings during September and October, 2005 (see Appendix F).

## Data Analysis

### *Constant Comparative Analysis*

The four sets of data collected were analyzed using a constant-comparative method suggested by Merriam (1998), which

...begins with a particular incident from an interview, field notes, or document and compares it with another incident in the same set of data or in another set. These comparisons lead to tentative categories that are then compared to each other and to other instances. (p.159)

Categories were determined by using five guidelines established by Merriam. They should

1. *reflect the purpose of the research*. In effect, categories are the *answers* to your research questions(s).
2. be *exhaustive*, that is, you should be able to place all data that you decided were important or relevant in a category or subcategory.
3. be *mutually exclusive*. A particular unit of data should fit into only one category.
4. be *sensitizing*. The naming of the category should be as sensitive as possible to what is in the data.
5. be *conceptually congruent*. This means that the same level of abstraction should characterize all categories at the same level. (pp. 183-184)

### *Procedures*

The interview transcripts for each participant were analyzed by an initial reading and then a re-reading that included writing memo notes in the margin. The transcripts



were then downloaded into QSR NVivo qualitative software package and were coded. Coding reports were then saved and produced upon completion of the coding process for each of the transcripts.

The analysis process used open, axial, and selective coding processes as illustrated by Strauss and Corbin (1998). The process of open coding starts with many different incidents first being identified. Then using constant-comparative analysis the incidents were collapsed until new information no longer introduces new concepts. Axial coding begins the process of relating the open coding incidents with one another. Selective coding refines the process by determining core categories, which include those incidents relevant to a category.

Analysis of documents, field notes, and observations were integrated into the coding process by examining their cross-relationships to incidents or by identifying new incidents. The conceptual framework (see Figure 4) was utilized as a tool to organize the data for writing the findings presented in Chapter 4.

### Trustworthiness

Trustworthiness refers to techniques that address the question of “*How do I know I got it right*”? Four rigorous strategies were utilized to determine trustworthiness for this study based on those proffered by Merriam (2002), which include:

1. Triangulation – using multiple sources of data collection methods—interviews, documents, field notes, and observations – to confirm emerging findings. This well researched strategy incorporates different sources, methods, and theories (Creswell, 1998; Gillham, 2000; Lincoln & Guba; Merriam, 1998; Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Creswell suggests

that this process is typically used to corroborate evidence from different sources “to shed light on a theme or perspective” (p. 202).

2. Peer review – discussions with methodologists regarding the process of study, the congruency of emerging findings with the raw data and tentative interpretations.
3. Rich, thick description – providing enough description to contextualize the case such that selected readers will be able to determine the extent to which their situation matches the research context, and hence, whether findings can be transferred. Creswell agrees by stating that transferability is achieved through rich, thick description of the participants or setting under study.
4. Audit trail – a detailed account of the methods, procedures, and decision points in carrying out the study. Confirmability is achieved by establishing an audit trail of both process and product on how the findings, interpretations, and conclusions were supported by the data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

## CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

This chapter contains nine sections. The first section provides background information of a workforce development partnership among employment, education, and economic development agencies. Section two is a brief contextual description of the state and agencies studied, and section three describes the demographic characteristics of the participants. Section four reviews the economic and employment challenges facing the state, and section five discusses the state's workforce demographics and education legislation.

The analysis of federal workforce training and employment legislation, including the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and Wagner-Peyser, is provided in section six. Section seven explains the state's implementation of matching workforce supply and demand to provide the skills needed by businesses. Section eight describes the formation of a state level workforce development partnership by first presenting backgrounds of three state agencies involved in the partnership, second the partnership formation process, and third an analysis of partnership terms as defined by the participants. The final section, nine, is the summary of the findings.

### Background of a Workforce Development Partnership

The Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) represented the first major reform of the nation's job training system in 15 years. WIA is comprised of five titles. The purpose of Title I-B, *Statewide and Local Workforce Investment System*, is to provide for workforce investment activities through statewide and local workforce development

systems designed to increase employment, retention, earnings, and occupational skill attainment (Brustein & Knight, 1999). This is further stressed in goal 1 of Title I-B that states training and employment programs must be designed and managed at the local level where the needs of businesses and job seekers are best understood.

The intent of the WIA was to create an accessible employment system that would match the needs of businesses with skills training provided to job seekers through a “One-Stop Center” delivery method (H.R. 105-659, 1998). WIA stipulates that job seekers must utilize training providers that meet certain performance criteria and are deemed eligible training providers (ETPs). Those that automatically qualify as ETPs are postsecondary education institutions and apprenticeship programs. An empirical study of WIA services found that community colleges were the largest group of ETPs (Marco, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003).

WIA was written to emphasize the importance of business participation by mandating that at least 51% members of a Governor’s appointed Workforce Investment Board represent major non-government workforce sectors in a state. The primary purpose of having a business majority was the shift of priorities in the employment system from one based solely on providing a supply of workers to one driven by businesses’ workforce demands. The typical link to the business community is through economic development agencies, which are managed at either the state or local level due to the federal government’s position not to set a national guidance system for business creation.

Eberts and Erickcek (2002) studied the role of local partnerships in the delivery of workforce development services in the United States and found three types of agencies typically partner: (a) government employment service agencies that administer federal

and state programs at the state and local levels, (b) economic development agencies whose general focus is to meet the needs of business creation and sustainability in a local area, and (c) public education agencies that provide workforce training. A congressional hearing on early implementation efforts of WIA revealed that a challenge for some states and regions was the ability to encourage or increase partnerships with businesses and workforce training and education providers (Implementation of the Workforce Investment Act, 2002). However, economic development agencies found that when partnering with workforce development agencies, they were able to “produce a top-quality workforce that is able to meet the needs of existing businesses or the businesses that might be attracted to the area” (Blakely & Bradshaw, 2002, p. 256). Therefore, a workforce development partnership is a beneficial strategy for state and local workforce systems to enhance one of the key aspects of WIA, which is “meeting the needs of businesses for skilled workers *and* the training, education, and employment needs of individuals” (U.S. Department of Labor, 1998, p.3).

To better understand the dynamics of a workforce development partnership, this study explored the partnership formation process utilized by three state-level agencies: employment services, economic development, and community colleges. The data for this one state case study were collected through interviews, documents, observations, and field notes.

### Contextual Description of State and Agencies

The state studied was 1 of 14 contiguous states west of the Mississippi whose community college system serves a range from four to nine percent of the population 18 or older (American Association of Community Colleges, 2003). The pseudonym used for

this state was *Employment Responsive Model State* (ERMS). The pseudonyms for the three state-level agencies were: (a) employment services agency referred to as ERMS Job Search Agency; (b) economic development as ERMS Occupation Agency; and (c) community college system as ERMS Sub-Baccalaureate Agency. The workforce development partnership was referred to as ERMS Labor Force Development Association.

The Job Search Agency (JSA) was established in 2002 and originated from restructuring the former department of employment to streamline customer service. The Occupation Agency (OA) was created in 1998 to consolidate authority responsibilities for a number of programs and divisions related to economic development. The Sub-Baccalaureate Agency (SBA) had been originally established by the state legislature in 1951 and served strictly as an advisory council to the two-year colleges. Throughout the years authoritative responsibilities were added and in 1985 the state legislature gave the agency operational duties, especially for fiscal allocations and instructional programs of the community colleges. The Labor Force Development Association (LFDA) had been formed shortly after the JSA was established.

#### Participants' Demographics

There were 12 people who participated in this study, 11 state employees and 1 state appointed board council member who represented business. Three of the state employees were agency contacts from JSA, OA, and SBA who were first identified from the LFDA website. These three participants each referred two other employees at their agencies. These additional six state employees met the participant criterion of having

administrative influence on decisions related to state-level workforce development activities since the implementation of WIA.

The remaining three met the participant criterion of having background and knowledge of either WIA policy or state-level workforce development initiatives. Two were state employees—one was from a social services agency referred by an SBA participant and the other was from the Governor’s office referred by a JSA participant. The third was from the private sector and a member of the workforce investment board that is required by WIA, which is also associated with JSA and was referred by a participant from that agency. These three were referred due to their active involvement and leadership exploring the state’s employment challenges regarding training, education, childcare, and wages.

The participants from the JSA included an administrator, a division director, and an analyst each who had been with this agency for three years or more. Each had work history with either a state or regional government agency, and one had professionally managed workforce related programs. Further, the three were active members in the LFDA and contributed either background information and/or ideology on how they viewed JSA as a contributing partner. The division director and analyst had oversight responsibilities for the division that manages WIA and other federally-funded employment programs. The administrator provides internal support to this division. The researcher asked each of these participants if there were others in this or another division who had additional operational knowledge about WIA and LFDA. No others were identified.

Participants from the OA included a liaison, a division manager, and a supervisor. Two of the participants had been with the agency over six years and the other for less than one year. Their work histories included corporations, higher education, and federal government, which were geographically diverse. The liaison was an active member in the LFDA and primarily provided information about the founding of the partnership. The division manager was responsible for assisting new or existing small business owners with financial support and leadership training. An OA objective of this training is to enhance the employment opportunities that currently exist in the state for both recruitment and retention. The supervisor was an executive officer for OA and an active member of the workforce investment board. The researcher asked each of these participants if there were others in their agency with additional knowledge about WIA and LFDA. No others were identified.

Participants from the SBA included a division leader, a consultant, and an upper administrator each who had been with the agency for three years or less. The division leader was the principal contact for the LFDA and had worked with a now defunct ERMS employment department during the transition from JTPA to WIA. The college liaison was an active LFDA member who contributed to formulating goals for the partnership. The upper administrator had previous higher education workforce development experience in another state and shared that experience as a guide for the partnership. The researcher asked each of these participants if there were others in their agency with additional knowledge about WIA and LFDA. No others were identified.

The three referred participants included a social services administrator, an organizational manager, and a Governor's staff member. The social services



administrator had been in the position for less than three years and was instrumental in setting five statewide goals to improve the welfare of families. These goals were in response to a 2004 legislative bill that would address the needs of children and families using both public and private resources. Two of the five goals were related to education and employment. The organizational manager had been in a leadership position on the ERMS Workforce Investment Board (WIB) for over five years and had vast knowledge of the WIA. The Governor's staff member had been in the position for less than three years and worked on a variety of state employment issues dealing with salaries, benefits, and gender.

### Economic and Employment Challenges

The ERMS is a rural state as the majority of towns have populations less than the commonly referred to urban classification of at least 50,000 inhabitants. The state is typically described as rich in natural resources with a diverse landscape that provides business opportunities in agriculture, tourism, and mining. Ranching is particularly viewed as an historical characteristic of the culture and lifestyle. Tourists enjoy the national parks and monuments and the numerous recreational activities and sports. The abundance of mineral resources is the primary economic engine that drives the state's growth or decline of jobs and earnings.

The participants indicated that ERMS was experiencing an economic boom due to an increased demand for mineral extraction products, especially natural gas and low sulfur coal. This was creating high level dialogue about both short- and long-term economic impacts based on previous booms and busts in the state. There was particular interest in a former legislative amendment during the last boom period (mid 1970s to mid

1980s) that according to the upper administrator for the OA, “threw big money at start-ups, vicious companies and a lot of it [money] was lost.” However, there was a true sense of faith in the state’s leadership that this situation would not be repeated. Participants from both JSA and OA referred to the Governor’s return on investment philosophy in ALL economic matters that utilizes taxpayers’ money as a reason current spending is handled from a results-oriented perspective. To convince city and county leaders throughout the state that there was a new way of thinking, in 2005 as the Governor convened a small taskforce to brand the current boom. The result was the tagline, “*This is Not Your Father’s Boom.*”

Since the last boom, job growth had been virtually nonexistent for nearly two decades. The situation changed and between third quarter 2004 and third quarter 2005 the annual job growth averaged over 3%, with growth in every major industry sector including minerals, service, education, finance, and manufacturing (Bullard, 2006). The state’s unemployment rate was averaging around 3%, which was lower than the 5% national rate. Many of the participants acknowledged that the employment situation was creating a serious workforce shortage further intensified by a housing shortage. All of the participants from the OA indicated that due to the lack of housing, community infrastructure development had become their top priority. Also, due to the lack of labor, recruitment of businesses was a very low priority economic development strategy.

The ERMS was experiencing a crisis stage with the booming economy that was impacting communities, businesses, and job seekers. There were other employment challenges occurring throughout the state with differing degrees of intensity—lack of skilled workers, low wages, declining K-12 school enrollments, and a higher than

national average early baby boomer population of 29.5 % compared to 26.7% (Liu, 2005). Interestingly, when asked who the stakeholders of their agencies were, a common response was state citizens and in particular the K-12 emerging population, unskilled job seekers, single mothers, and retirees. This seemed to indicate that the challenges were being thought of as solutions, with the various workforce groups needing some form of attention regarding potential career and employment opportunities. The Governor's staff member put this in perspective when describing workforce development as "...it is how it answers our needs in our state's economy and uses our greatest resource, our people, to answer our state's economic needs." This suggests that the ERMS citizens should be considered as the first source of labor who receives the necessary education and training for the state's workforce needs.

### Workforce Demographics and Education Legislation

#### *Population Demographics*

According to the 2005 American Community Survey, the median age of the state's population is 39 years, which is three years older than the national average, and the state ranked as the ninth oldest in the nation (U.S. Census Bureau American FactFinder, n.d.). One of the reasons is the higher than average percentage of early baby boomers due to two related and significant factors. The first factor is the high net in-migration of young workers in the mid 1970s to mid 1980s, which was during the last boom (Liu, 2005). This was the last major job growth period. The second factor is significant out-migration of population that started in the late 1980s, especially as half of those who left the state were young adults between the ages of 20 to 29 (Liu). An empirical characteristic of individuals who migrate from rural areas is that they have a

higher level of educational attainment and usually move to a location where they will receive a greater return for their investment in job skills that are marketable in urban locations (Goetz, 1999).

These two population migration trends contribute in varying degrees to the employment challenges occurring. The state was responding with specific education legislation that would increase higher education enrollment in targeted fields, encourage youth to attend state postsecondary schools, and reassign authority of the ABE/GED programs. There were also two family economic projects introduced to raise the standard of living for all citizens and to encourage increases in wages.

#### *Workforce Education Legislation*

The division leader from the SBA discussed three types of workforce education funding legislation that had passed during the last few years and referenced sources that could provide detailed information for these programs. They were an investment in nursing program (Community College Commission, 2005b), teacher shortage loan repayment program (Community College Commission, 2005a), and postsecondary education scholarship endowment programs (Department of Education, 2005).

The first occurred during the 2003 Legislative session and was a program to increase the workforce capacity for both nurses and nurse educators. This program provides loans for individuals who are accepted at the associate's or bachelor's degree levels for nursing and the master's or doctorate level for nursing education. Funding amounts vary per student and are determined through the federal financial aid application process based on needs unmet from other sources; such as federal and/or state grants, scholarships, and employer-based financial assistance. Loan payment forgiveness

eligibility is based on qualified work in the state as either a nurse or nurse educator and the time periods are one year of full-time employment for every academic year of full-time enrollment that an individual received a loan. Nurses were to begin employment within one month of completion of their program and nursing educators were to be concurrently employed at an academic institution while completing their education. Loan recipients subject to cash repayment were those who failed to complete the academic program, obtain employment in the targeted occupation, or pass the appropriate certification or licensure examination.

The second workforce education funding program passed during the 2005 Legislative session and addressed teacher shortages in math, science, and special education. Funding criteria were the same as the nursing program, but individual loans were restricted to \$6,000 per year. Similar to the nursing program, loan payment forgiveness eligibility is based on acquiring certification in one of the three targeted areas and working in a public school with at least 50% instructional time in one of the three specializations. The time periods of employment, as well as the conditions for cash repayment, were the same as the nursing program.

The third education policy was different than the other two. It was an in-state postsecondary education scholarship endowment program for traditional students who graduated from state high schools or were residents and met other qualifying criteria—receiving a certain score on the GED exam or being home schooled. This legislation passed in 2005. The 2006 high school graduates were the first group eligible for this funding, which further requires that applications be submitted prior to an applicant's 21<sup>st</sup>

birthday. Within this scholarship program, there are four types of programs—career, opportunity, performance, and honors—and each has specific requirements.

The SBA participants were pleased that this funding offers a mechanism that encourages youth to attend an in-state postsecondary institution. The college liaison listed three possible outcomes from this scholarship program: (a) increasing the state’s high school graduation rate, (b) increasing college enrollment and completion rates, and (c) keeping graduates in the state with jobs that pay self-sufficient wages. The SBA upper administrator supported these outcomes by stating that success of this scholarship program will depend on coordinating a process that moves students from the K-12 system into postsecondary education and at the same time discerns the needs of the employers. The participant also recognized the higher education and workforce expectations from this highly funded legislation and stated, “...a very significant portion of our population that is our young people are potentially making decisions that will determine how our workforce is populated, how our state is ultimately populated.” However, the challenges of knowing the consequences of this legislation were unclear and the JSA administrator was cautious when acknowledging that this was good legislation by stating:

How much [*sic*] of those students getting that [scholarship money] will go into technical fields, or go into an associate or certificate program? Versus how many will go...right onto a four-year program and then out of the state because we don’t have the jobs. So doing the right thing sometimes in legislation, what makes sense on the surface; more education for our students turns into a better trained workforce, better economy...are we ignoring the science of the economy, trying to do the right thing.

The mixed views on outcomes of the state-funded scholarship endowment program were not surprising, as the process was yet uncharted and the participants were only able to

conceptually discuss the education and workforce impact of efforts to keep more youth in-state through this mechanism.

Another legislative development addressed was an upcoming bill that would commit, for the first time, state dollars to the ABE/GED program and not rely solely on federal funding. Also, included in the bill was transfer of responsibility from JSA to the SBA, which was the third time in less than a decade that this adult education program had been relocated to a different state agency. The program had been with SBA until the late 1990s when it was transferred to the Department of Education for a brief time and then moved to the JSA for four years. The SBA upper administrator referred to ABE/GED program as "...this orphan sort of step-child" and was thankful that there was consideration for this program both returning to SBA and funding from the state. This bill did pass during the 2006 Legislative session and the amount of funding will be determined during the 2007 session.

In less than five years, ERMS has approved four acts that obligate state funds for education purposes. Two of these were to help increase workforce capacity in two occupations, nursing and teaching, by providing loans to qualified individuals. The third act was endowment scholarships for traditional age post-secondary students who meet certain age and education criteria. The intent of the scholarships is to encourage more youth to attend a higher education institution and to keep them in the state after completion of their studies. The fourth act was transferring ABE/GED back to SBA and committing state dollars to this program. These four acts support either specific occupations or targeted populations and provide qualified state citizens financial resources for workforce education opportunities.

### *Other Potential Workforce Groups*

The JSA analyst suggested that both the untapped workforce and senior populations should be considered potential sources to supplement the high demand for workers. Those suggested in the untapped workforce group included stay-at-home mothers and college graduates who may be career students, which are groups other than those individuals who have impairments that may impede their ability to remain employed. This foresight was substantiated by a workforce assessment study that was conducted in the state that found a hidden source of labor was recent college graduates who were unemployed and had no limitations to employment (The Wadley-Donovan Group, 2006). The study also identified stay-at-home mothers who would like to become employed and found that 25% of them saw lack of quality childcare as a barrier to employment.

The JSA division director concurred with the analyst that the senior population or older worker should be encouraged to either remain in the workforce or re-engage after retirement. The analyst recognized that both businesses and government need to develop creative methods that would make the workplace more attractive to the needs of this population. The division manager felt that businesses should consider utilizing communication technology as a tool that would allow older workers to contribute their experiences without necessarily being physically at a job site. The OA supervisor expressed a contrary view to the aging workforce situation and felt that the high cost of health care would prevent this population from retiring until at least 65 years old. There were no other potential workforce groups that would be readily available to move into employment mentioned by any of the other participants.



### *Family Economic Challenges*

The ERMS Governor was first elected to that office in November 2002. The social services administrator shared that in his inaugural address the Governor mentioned that during his door-to-door campaign he was struck by the number of young children left at home while parents were working. Due to this, one of the Governor's priorities was to identify the needs of children and families. Concurrently, a priority of the First Lady's was researching wage disparity in the state. In 2004, two family economic projects that addressed these issues were introduced to the legislators.

The first project was House Bill 33 to study and develop a plan addressing the needs of children and families using both public and private resources. The Bill passed during the 2004 legislative session. The state department managed by the social services administrator was designated as the responsible agency to develop the plan, which was due in final form by October 1, 2005 with an interim report by November 1, 2004. According to the social services administrator, the first step in this process came from the Governor who appointed a statewide 54 member advisory board from the public and private sectors that included educators, judges, elected officials, counselors, social workers, and attorneys. There were also representatives from corrections, public health, and children's services. In addition, JSA, OA, and SBA each had a staff member who served on the advisory board.

Once this board was selected, the members pursued the study by first deciding to establish goals for the children and family plan. The social services administrator described this process as long, interesting debates that resulted in a lofty set of goals and summarized the objectives for the plan as follows:

We want children and families to live in safe, healthy, nurturing communities. We want the state to have an economy that is diversified, where people can earn livable wages and there's no disparity between the genders on wages. We want accessible health care and affordable health insurance, we want quality early childhood development programs and we want an education system that prepares people, young people to succeed in life.

Based on this, the group decided on five goals with each having five to seven measurable data points as the initial indicators in the interim report presented to the Governor. The five goals are:

1. Families living in a stable, safe, supportive, nurturing, healthy environment.
2. A diverse economy that provides a livable income and ensures wage equality.
3. Affordable and accessible health care and insurance.
4. Children born healthy and achieving their highest potential in early development years.
5. Students successfully educated and prepared for life's opportunities.

(Department of Family Services, 2005, p. 7). Public meetings were then conducted in each county and the goals were used as discussion points to learn about challenges being faced by families in their communities. The issues were analyzed and six statewide recommendations with action items were included in the final plan, which the social services administrator presented to the Governor by the deadline of October 1, 2005.

The SBA consultant, who was a member of the advisory team for developing the plan, indicated that goals two and five were important indicators in setting direction for the employment challenges with regard to workforce training. The JSA analyst indicated the house bill was a big initiative by the Governor to help understand some of the workforce and family problems occurring.

The second family economic project addressed two factors contributing to families living in poverty—low wages and job training. The poverty standard used was based on the 2003 federal guidelines of an income equal to or less than \$18,400 for a family of four (Equality State Policy Center, 2003). Nine percent of the state’s citizens were living below this level and many of them were working two or more jobs (Equality State Policy Center). The population most impacted was single mothers who cited low wages, lack of benefits, and gender wage disparity as barriers to earning a livable wage (Department of Family Services, 2005). In response, the Governor’s Office hired a consulting group that studied the economic conditions for women and their families and developed state and local level Self-Sufficiency Standards, which “measures how much income is needed for a family of a certain composition in a given place to adequately meet their basic needs—without public or private assistance” (Pearce, 2005). The Self-Sufficiency Standard report was completed in early 2005 and included guidance at both the “micro” or individual level and “macro” or system level on how to close the gap between current income and self-sufficient wages (Pearce). Strategies recommended for individuals were primarily focused around raising incomes through education and skills training, especially nontraditional employment for women. Systemic labor market demand strategies included raising incomes, along with reducing artificial employment barriers of gender and race.

According to the Governor’s staff member, the Self-Sufficiency Standard for ERMS was presented to the legislature in February 2005 to “inform their work on items related to children, families, workforce development, and health care.” The social services administrator stated that the conversation about the Self-Sufficiency Standard for

ERMS has "...spurred a lot of discussion in the business community about wages", and the participants from JSA, OA, and SBA were viewing this as a tool when considering workforce and economic development efforts. Equally important, the Governor's staff member added, "Something to realize with the standard is that it is bare bone, bottom line, should be the basement. And so, we can only do better."

### *Summary*

ERMS is experiencing a higher than national average percentage of those who are reaching retirement age, a lower than average number of young adults due to out-migration, and a workforce shortage created by an energy boom. These three situations created significant employment challenges, which were starting to be addressed through legislation. This included increasing workforce capacity in targeted occupations, encouraging youth to seek higher education in-state through an endowed scholarship program, allocating state dollars to ABE/GED programs, and introducing strategies that address the needs of children and families. The OA division manager recognized that investment in education has a significant influence on workforce and economic development in ERMS and offered this viewpoint:

In my opinion, the economic vitality of areas, states and nations, will depend in the future as much or more on the quality of the workforce they offer. Therefore if one believes education makes a worker more productive, investment in that education offers perhaps the best economic development opportunity that can be made.

In addition to investing in education, the JSA administrator suggested that businesses should invest in human capital, the people who are doing the work, and not regard them as a financial expenditure. The JSA analyst also used the term investment when talking about the potential workforce populations and went beyond those who are

may be eligible to receive state education benefits. One particular group mentioned was older workers and the need to create an attractive work environment so they will stay engaged in the workforce longer or come out of retirement to become reengaged with employment opportunities. The JSA division director concurred that businesses should consider the experience of older workers by establishing organizational policies that will keep them working for a longer period of time.

In summary, the state's legislative acts and the participants' collective insights to enhance and approach workforce and economic development were primarily through demographic analysis, in-state education opportunities, and employment for nontraditional groups.

#### Federal Workforce Training and Employment Legislation

##### *WIA and Wagner-Peyser*

In addition to state funded workforce education and training initiatives, the JSA participants discussed two federally funded employment programs, Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) and Wagner-Peyser Act, available through their agency. The purpose of WIA is the coordination of employment and training programs managed at the state and local levels. To aid in that process JSA created One-Stop Centers to serve as the sole operating entity for access to information about workforce investment programs. The Wagner-Peyser Act, which was originally established in 1933 to create a nationwide system of public employment offices, was amended to be a WIA partner at the One-Stop Centers. The participants indicated that these two Acts are closely related to each other and work in tandem to provide job seekers employment and training services.

### *Three Levels of Service*

The JSA analyst first explained that the WIA legislation tiered services into three levels—core, intensive, and training—and provided this overview:

The first level would be core services and that is just some real basic stuff, you know education about what is available to you, maybe some real basic assessment, that type of thing. And then you go into intensive services where you get more in-depth counseling and assessment and all that happy [sic] stuff, maybe a pair of boots, depending on what your needs are. And then the third tier (level) of services is training where it is actually in-classroom training or something very similar to that more on-the-job training, that type of thing.

The JSA division director provided more detail to each of these levels explaining the transition process from one level to another based on an increased need of services in the following progressive manner:

1. Core—A self-directed activity that requires access to the Internet and can be done at a One-Stop Center or at an off-site location such as a home or library.

The job seeker enters basic demographic information into the job network database system, including education background, work and wage history, skills, and current employment status. Other information requested is the job, earnings, and location desired, as well as if seeking part-time or full-time employment. The database system then matches the job seeker's information with job listings provided by businesses, and when a match occurs an automated phone system calls the job seeker to contact the One-Stop Center about the position. If this does not result in finding employment, then the job seeker is encouraged to go to the One-Stop Center for consultation with a staff member as to what changes or improvements are needed to the application,

and advice on resume writing and interview etiquette if needed. If the job seeker is still not successful, the person is offered the next level of service.

2. Intensive—A One-Stop Center case manager conducts an in-depth interview with the job seeker who most likely will be asked to take a basic skills assessment and/or an aptitude interest assessment. This is primarily to determine if the skills or education background of the job seeker match those needed in the positions listed with the One-Stop Center. If it is determined that the training level is needed, the case manager seeks funding approval by submitting an application to a review committee.
3. Training—The review committee approves 80% of the applications for training, which include on-the-job, classroom, or a combination of the two. The reasons for those not approved are that the job seeker has skills for the job market; a good work history, and/or the need to refine his/her approach for getting employed.

The JSA analyst and division director both explained that the funding for these levels is shared between WIA and Wagner-Peyser. Their agency reviewed the objectives of the three levels of services and realized that Wagner-Peyser fulfills core services of matching job openings from employers with qualified clients. Therefore, every person who submits an online registration form using the job network database system is considered a Wagner-Peyser client. The JSA analyst indicated that although Wagner-Peyser is a required WIA partner at the One-Stop Centers, some states were struggling with coordinating these two programs and were duplicating core services. In other words, a job seeker could receive core services twice, as a Wagner-Peyser client and as a WIA

client. This also meant that WIA funds were depleting at a faster rate because they were being used for services that could solely be provided with Wagner-Peyser funding. Due to the ability of JSA to understand the funding stream between WIA and Wagner-Peyser, the U.S. Government Accountability Office asked them for input that would help explain this process to other states. This resulted with the U.S. Department of Labor making a revision to WIA policy and required each state to clarify the approach used to avoid duplication of services.

*ERMS WIA Strategic Plans' Response to Duplication of Services*

WIA legislation required states' designated One-Stop Center agencies to submit a five-year strategic plan outlining how workforce development services will be provided; therefore, JSA was responsible for completing the ERMS plan. These were due to the U.S. Secretary of Labor by July 1, 2000 and a major component was to address the operational challenges with consolidation of employment and training programs. In particular a strategy that would assure coordination, avoid duplication, and improve operational collaboration among WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser, and/or Veterans Programs was needed. The response from ERMS was:

Through the MOUs with each of the partners, WIA Title I, Wagner-Peyser Act and Veterans Programs will be coordinated to ensure program services are not duplicated. Cross-informational training will be provided to all partners in the One-Stop Centers to ensure all staff are [sic] aware of the services and issues pertaining to each program. Streamlined services will be provided to the customers of the One-Stop system. (Office of Workforce Development, 2000, p. 139)

These initial strategic plans were followed by a two-year strategic plan due July 1, 2005 and states were asked to directly address *how* they will consolidate Wagner-Peyser Act funds to avoid duplication of core services. The response from ERMS was:



Wagner/Peyser funds are utilized to provide core services to Adult and Dislocated Workers in ERMS' efforts to consolidate WIA and Wagner-Peyser funding sources and to avoid duplication. Core services in ERMS are not duplicated based on the fact that Wagner/Peyser funds are used to provide core services and Adult and Dislocated Worker funds are used to provide intensive and training services. (Department of Workforce Services, 2005, May, pp. 41-42)

Therefore, ERMS utilizes WIA funding for those clients who need intensive services and training, which are also a subset of the Wagner-Peyser group. The JSA analyst indicated that the state may have 63,000 or more Wagner-Peyser clients per year and from that group 1,500 to 2,000 will receive WIA funded intensive services and training.

#### *WIA Performance Accountability System Guidelines*

The JSA analyst explained that besides funding, a programmatic reason to clarify that Wagner-Peyser was responsible for core services was the guidelines of WIA's performance accountability system. WIA is an outcome-based employment and/or training program, and core services do not require clients to have achieved either of those goals. On the other hand, Wagner-Peyser Act is to provide assistance in seeking employment with the type of basic job search services provided at the core level. An integral part of the performance accountability system is common measures, quantitative data that delineates the clients who received training, found jobs, stayed employed, and increased their earnings (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). To ensure states understood that core-level service clients were not outcome based, which also made them exempt from common measure eligibility, the U.S. Department of Labor prepared and disseminated a training and employment guidance letter, TEGL 28-04. One section of this letter defined those clients who are counted in the common measures, which stated:

“...the core indicators of performance apply to all individuals registered for the Adult and Dislocated Worker programs, except for those individuals who participate exclusively in self-service or informational activities.” WIA participants covered by this exception will not be taken into account in the common measures. (U.S. Department of Labor, p. 5)

The JSA analyst indicated that TEGL 28-04 actually helped align WIA and Wagner-Peyser for both the performance accountability system and funding model.

### *Common Measures Reporting*

The SBA division leader and college liaison both related their frustration from the perspective of being a training provider for WIA and not having access to the information from the common measures reports. The division leader felt that JSA staff had a lot of personal ownership with the data and used confidentiality as the reason they could not share information. The SBA consultant did not fault WIA legislation for asking for documentation, but was curious if the resulting information made it even worthwhile with respect to the time and money involved to do the reporting.

The JSA analyst equally expressed frustration with SBA's reluctance to provide information regarding the number of individuals who received training and then got jobs due to the training. The analyst did admit that JSA was requesting this information for the whole class and not just WIA clients, and indicated that SBA responded that FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) prevents them from disclosing this information. The analyst explained the reason for wanting the whole class was due to some training providers that do not take responsibility to ensure the skills taught for a particular occupation were those needed for the job. The division leader expressed a resolution to this situation would be if:

...all of the agencies involved took a higher ground and said, “we’re going to abide by all of these things, but the higher purpose is that we work together so we can share this information to improve the services we provide to these individuals and to ERMS”, I think that there could be a lot more open sharing of that information to improve processes and to improve services.

There was no other input regarding the sharing of information for WIA common measures from other study participants.

### *ERMS Workforce Development Council*

#### *Establishment and membership*

A requirement of WIA was the establishment of state and local level workforce investment boards with the provision that governors of small population states may designate the entire state as a workforce investment area (Brustein & Knight, 1999). This was the case for ERMS, which created the ERMS Workforce Development Council (Council) directed by a 1998 Governor’s Executive Order. According to the executive order, the duties of the Council are:

1. The Council shall oversee the creation of a strategic plan for the development of ERMS’ workforce which assists individuals to become more economically self-sufficient and improves their and their family’s quality of life;
2. Build a system of public/private partnerships including participation from business, industry, labor, education, communities and parents which will further the progress of meeting the goals established in the workforce development plan;
3. Assess the adequacy of existing workforce development activities and services being provided in the state and make recommendations to the Governor, Legislature, or other governing bodies regarding the need for such services, the

effectiveness of such services and changes which could improve the services provided;

4. Develop a performance measurement system which will provide for a consistent and fair evaluation regarding the effectiveness of workforce development service delivery, programs and activities;
5. Make recommendations with regard to the coordination of workforce development activities and services which eliminate duplication and increase efficiency among providers;
6. Carry out the duties and functions prescribed for the Private Industry Council and the Job Training Coordinating Council by the Job Training Partnership Act.

(Executive Department, 1998, ¶ 7)

WIA stipulations that WIB members include: (a) five elected officials including the Governor and two representatives from each house of the legislature, (b) majority (at least 51%) be business and industry representatives, and (c) those in policymaking positions with their organizations; such as, workforce training and education, economic development, and community based organizations. The specific Council members in category (c) are: (a) superintendent of Public Instruction or designee, (b) director of Community College Commission, (c) director of the Department of Employment, (d) director of the Department of Family Services, (e) representative of local public education, (f) representative of the University system, and (g) representative of a community based organization (Executive Department, 1998). The organizational manager had been appointed to a three-year term as Council chair by the previous Governor and was reappointed to another three-year term by the current Governor. Other

participants who were ex-officio members of the Council were the SBA upper administrator, OA supervisor, and the social services administrator.

The organizational manager stated that the Governor appoints the private sector or business members using two specific criteria, “people from different regions with the state so the whole state is well represented and leaders in key industries in the state like energy, construction, and tourism.” The Governor’s staff member concurred that the Governor appoints business members based on the state’s workforce issues and selection is twofold—one is area of expertise and the second is geographical location. The organizational manager understood that WIA has specific membership requirements and that more than 50% of the Council needs to be business representatives and felt that ERMS had closer to 70%. A JSA staff member who supports the Council was consulted and indicated there were 20 official board members and 10 were business and labor representatives (see Appendix G), which is exactly 50%. From a characterization viewpoint, the participants provided consistent and positive remarks about the leadership and commitment of the business representatives who serve on the Council.

#### *Duties and Council meetings*

One of the initial duties of the Council was making certain that the agency responsible for writing the five year WIA strategic plan met the July 1, 2000 submission deadline. According to the JSA division director, this was completed by the former employment services division since it was prior to the creation of JSA that is currently the responsible agency. The organizational manager discussed that an ongoing duty is to oversee and manage the 15% set-aside WIA discretionary funds, which amount to \$800,000 to 1,000,000 each biennium. This money is used for administration and

delivery of statewide workforce initiatives. In general, the participants described the Council as serving in an advisory or guidance role for JSA. However, the JSA division director added that at one time the Council was too involved with the day-to-day business of the agency, but did agree that this has lessened.

The organizational manager mentioned that, by WIA statute, the Council is to have quarterly meetings held at various locations around the state. The meetings typically are held over two days, beginning at 1:00 pm the first day, adjourning at 5:00 pm for a group dinner, and meet again the next morning from 8:00 to noon. The researcher attended and observed one of the meetings held September 22-23, 2005 at a location in the northeast section of ERMS (see Appendix F). Twenty-five of the 28 official and ex-officio members or designees attended, along with six JSA staff members and nine guests. The agenda included six presentations from JSA staff representatives regarding a senior workforce initiative, youth council program, strategic planning goals, website revision timeline, budget update, and training projects. The OA liaison, there as a designee for the OA supervisor, reported on a statewide housing study; a representative from the Department of Public Instruction presented a career clustering model; and a business member provided a description of a hands-on technical training program being introduced in the state. Other reports were from Council members regarding their four committees—15% set-aside, collaboration, legislative, and data and communications.

The organizational manager explained that the collaboration and data and communications committees were formed based on the Council's desire to be more engaged with providing deliverables that would be useful for businesses. The collaboration committee planned a two-day workforce summit, for which they asked and

received the Governor's endorsement. The first one was held June 3-4, 2004 and according to the organization manager, the purpose was "to heighten awareness of workforce issues in the state and to look at some initial solutions of things like health care, and [workforce] recruiting and training." The organizational manager and the OA liaison both mentioned that the summit used the E-3 concept, which is a U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration web platform that provides information in the areas of employment, education, and economics in relation to workforce issues. They also brought up that during the summit the Council and OA board members had a joint dinner to discuss business and workforce development, and felt that simply getting the two boards together was a positive step. There were 385 people who attended and the next Governor's workforce summit was scheduled for May 16-17, 2006.

The data and communications committee prepared a workforce report that was disseminated in conjunction with the 2004 workforce summit. The report compiled data on trends and projections that influence the state's workforce challenges. These included employment by industry percentages, average annual salary by industry, gender wage gap, aging population, and youth out-migration (Workforce Development Council and Department of Workforce Services, 2004). The organizational manager mentioned that the data and communications committee was working on the report for the 2006 workforce summit.

The Governor's staff member conveyed that the Governor does not tell the Council what needs to get done and "is more interested in them [Council] taking the lead, because they're the experts, than him casting the vision and having them simply follow it without questions." The organizational manager was pleased with the ambition shown by

the Council and characterized the members as, “very strong leaders in their industries and are used to having things happen and see results.” Both the SBA upper administrator and the JSA administrator were encouraged by the Council’s creation of an atmosphere that was breaking down silos among economic development, workforce development, and community colleges.

### *Participants’ Reflections*

WIA was described by the organizational manager as a shift in focus of the employment process to the employer side of the equation as opposed to the employee side and credited this change to the U.S. Assistant Secretary of Labor, Emily DeRocco. The participant stated that this is known as demand-driven workforce training and the SBA division leader added that businesses need to be engaged when developing training programs so their needs are met. The JSA division director indicated that WIA legislation has changed the agency’s focus from the job seeker being their primary customer to recognizing the businesses’ demands for specific workforce skills. The JSA analyst felt that this was not a bad change and that business input about training needs provides programmatic direction for the job seekers.

The OA liaison believed the purpose of WIA as “to help the citizens become more employable, than assisting them in employment.” The SBA consultant concurred from a customer service perspective that the purpose is to be more responsive and more comprehensive in servicing citizens. The SBA was encouraged that WIA was demand driven to “meet business needs, meet the needs of the citizens of the state and also the United States, and then also improve accountability as far as, you know, where do these people go? What happens to them?”



The SBA upper administrator liked the word ‘investment’ in WIA and provided this overview:

The Workforce Investment Act suggests that there really is an investment, which to me is the right focus. Because so much of what we view in higher education sees education as an expense, as a cost. It’s “you have to go to school in order to do this. And then you’re going to get rewarded.” I think the acknowledgement is, there is a partnership here. That’s really an investment in upgrading the level of where we are as a society in terms of the way we value what people do. And so, I think that’s an appropriate focus.

Overall, the participants supported the concept of WIA regarding businesses as the primary customer and training job seekers to meet the demands of the local economy.

#### Matching Supply and Demand: Skill Preparation

The implementation of state workforce education legislation and federal workforce training and employment legislation was creating a paradigm shift from supply of labor to demand of skills. Businesses were seeking a skilled labor force and job seekers were being trained to meet those demands. According to the JSA administrator, implementing a demand-driven system was also introducing a new concept, workforce development, to the state agencies. This was occurring simultaneously with the workforce shortage and a crucial workforce factor affecting businesses described by the JSA analyst as the need to upgrade skills sets of current employees in the extraction industry due to both technology advances in equipment instrumentation and growth of the industry. In addition, businesses were struggling to identify the skills needed for new hires that would meet technical demands for both entry level positions and those requiring some experience. The SBA consultant agreed that the state lacked skilled employees and a solution was to develop a workforce system responsive to the needs of

businesses. Therefore, workforce development strategies were needed to help businesses with the current and impending workforce shortage situation.

#### *Workforce Development and Workforce Development System Defined*

The participants were asked to explain the meaning of workforce development and workforce development system (see Table 6). Eight participants provided definitions for workforce development and eight for workforce development system. There were six participants who defined both workforce development and workforce development system and four who defined either workforce development or workforce development system. The workforce development system definition of the JSA analyst was vague and therefore, not included in the presentation of findings for this section. From this, five participants provided definitions for both expressions.

The eight definitions for workforce development had a shared theme of providing workforce with applicable training that met the needs of businesses. The responses from the two SBA participants included both stakeholder groups as the customers of the training, while the JSA and OA participants viewed businesses as the primary customer. Participants from all three agencies did agree, with varying perspectives, that a key consideration for workforce development was the demand side or employment needs of businesses.

Table 6

*Participants' Definitions of Workforce Development and/or Workforce Development System*

Participant	Workforce Development	Workforce Development System
SBA division leader	Any kind of training or education that improves an individual's skills that can be applied on the job	Linking everything that you can to reach a common goal, which is the best, most highly trained, highly adaptable workforce available...responds to evolving needs
SBA consultant	Assess what is needed by the employers and the employees, and colleges respond by providing the appropriate assistance, support, and training	Tailored to meet the needs in a particular area of the state and it's a systematic approach, comprehensive with a lot of tailoring and variety to it.
JSA analyst	Organized effort of defining needs and developing strategies to meet those needs	Where you train your resources. (vague and omitted in presentation of findings)
JSA division director	Providing a skilled workforce for business	Putting the puzzle together and creating that system, which continually feeds a trained workforce to businesses
JSA administrator	Economic development	Economic development strategies based on human capital talent base in a community
OA liaison	Meeting the needs of employers and how to develop a workforce for future needs	Assess the needs of employers, both current and future, and develops and focuses training funds on meeting those needs
OA supervisor	Capacity to train workers to an ability level that helps the business	(No definition provided)
OA division manager	(No definition provided)	Employers and the school system and the training and the community colleges all work together, so kids have options defined by employers of what is needed in an employee
Governor's staff member	Uses our [state] greatest resource, our people, to answer our state's economic needs	(No definition provided)
Social services administrator	(No definition provided)	Would provide training for jobs that actually exist, that actually allow people to get ahead, to become self-sufficient, be holistic

The seven definitions for workforce development system included operational phrases that suggested processes are developed among those involved in providing a trained workforce for businesses. Some of these were linking, evolving, adaptable, tailored, variety, continually, and putting the puzzle together. These phrases indicate that a workforce development system involves dynamic activities to continuously meet the training needs of businesses.

The definitions provided for both expressions were consistent with workforce development considered the concept and workforce development system the required actions to deliver the concept. A common element was that a system should be responsive to both the current and emergent workforce training needs of businesses. The SBA consultant stated that for their agency determining training needs of businesses often occurred in the following push-pull manner:

Some businesses will call the college and the people that are doing workforce training go to that business one-on-one and assess, listen, talk. And sometimes it happens by a push in that they (colleges) go out and make contact with the business and say, can you spend some time talking to us about what do you see is your future potential for any needs? And then letting them know that some of that [training] already exists or others could be tailored to meet those needs in an economic and convenient way.

The participant introduced three considerations for colleges when developing training programs, which were to: (a) maintain open communication mechanisms with businesses, (b) deliver training that meets the needs of businesses and their workforce, which includes content and method, and (c) introduce businesses to funding opportunities that may support their training endeavors.

### *Workforce Development Taskforce*

The SBA agency convened a workforce development taskforce that included one staff member from each community college in the state. This group met in the summer of 2003 and their primary function was to produce a report outlining a coordinated plan among the colleges to support workforce development and economic development efforts in the state. They mutually agreed upon a definition for workforce development as:

The wide variety of educational programs and services that the colleges provide, within their service areas as well as state-wide, to support the state's economic development efforts, which result in:

- Training and retraining current and future workers to obtain jobs, maintain or advance in their jobs,
- Providing pre-employment training to support existing and new businesses, and
- Providing responsive, proactive educational programs and services to employers through partnership and alliances at the state level and within each college's service area (Community College Commission, 2004, p.4).

They also agreed that deliverable workforce training is:

...the full spectrum of credit and non-credit classes which contribute to the initial preparation or upgrading of skills for [the state's] employees. This may include short-term, intensive courses or semester length courses, single courses, entrepreneurship classes, certificates, associate degrees, customized training and various forms of distance educations (Community College Commission, p.4).

This definition is in agreement with the JSA division director who felt that community colleges needed to be more a demand driven system with trainings structured in convenient packages for businesses (e.g., one, two, three, or four day sessions versus the traditional semester calendar). The SBA division leader acknowledged that one of the keys for community colleges was flexibility, which would "...help develop their ability to respond to business training needs through customized training, responsive training, on business terms whether it be through the Internet, at their worksite, at the jobsite, or through regular college courses."

There were four SBA districts that were frequently identified for introducing workforce programs in response to the current needs of businesses in their college service areas. Table 7 presents the district's geographic location and industry served with a description of training programs.

Table 7

*Four SBA District's Workforce Training Programs*

SBA District	Industry	Description of Training/Education Program
Southeast	Manufacturing	Integrated systems technology for warehousing distribution and inventory control
Southwest	Energy/Oil and Gas	Oil and gas production technology program, including safety
Northeast	Energy/Mining	Industrial electrical education co-op with mining companies
Central	Various	Training and development center offers online courses for environmental, engineering, and safety standards in the mining and oil industries

The SBA consultant indicated that currently one of the bigger issues for their agency was support for new workforce training programs proposed by some of the colleges. One of the first steps in this process was to review data on statewide high demand, high growth occupations, to identify immediate training needs. However, the JSA analyst and division leader both added a word of caution about focusing primarily on the energy industries without considering the need for communities to foster a diverse economy. The SBA consultant agreed that support for programs should include a perspective for both current and future training and education needs.

The workforce development taskforce report provided guidance to help facilitate new workforce program considerations and introduced the following five indicators:

1. Reviewing training packages that are currently used to ensure they are the most effective and appropriate training to meet workforce-training needs,
2. Using key partner expertise to develop new training programs,
3. Collaborating with other colleges and agency partners to select new training or develop a curriculum if there are no programs currently available,
4. Seeking opportunities for the colleges to submit proposals to provide new statewide training, and
5. Working with the statewide program coordinator (SBA division leader) who will assist and coordinate college workforce development training initiatives.

(Community Colleges, 2004, p. 7)

The SBA consultant felt that this would help colleges determine priorities and “reconfirm some of their thinking, come up with some new ideas, some new initiatives.”

In conclusion, the report stated that determining workforce development initiatives was embodied in the relationship among JSA, OA, and SBA (Community College Commission, 2004).

### ERMS Workforce Development Partnership

#### *Three Partnership Agencies*

The three state level agencies that formed the workforce development partnership were the Job Search Agency (JSA Occupation Agency (OA), and Sub-Baccalaureate Agency (SBA).

### *Job Search Agency (JSA)*

The state's newest agency, JSA, was established in 2002 from the restructuring of the former department of employment. All three JSA participants mentioned that the reorganization was a state legislative effort to consolidate employment and workforce programs from three state departments—health, family services, and employment—to one designated agency. The analyst added that the Governor was instrumental in the visioning process of co-locating these programs that existed in bureaucratic silos.

JSA implementation officially started July 1, 2002 and the administrator was a member of the initial planning team admitting that there was some turbulence the first couple of years as they went through various renditions of internal structuring to “find efficiencies” within the agency. An outcome of the structuring process was the formation of four JSA subdivisions with specialized purposes:

1. Business training and outreach—oversees the activities provided through federal and state workforce training and employment programs;
2. Employment services—administers the budget and data collection and reporting of the federally funded training and education programs;
3. Vocational rehabilitation—supports employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
4. Office of the director—manages JSA's internal services.

The JSA participants referred to the business training and outreach subdivision as either the workforce development or human capital development component of their agency. Both the JSA analyst and division director stressed that the primary focus of this division was helping businesses succeed by providing them with a skilled workforce. The



JSA administrator emphasized that the developmental aspect of training job seekers based on the demands of businesses was a new way of thinking about the delivery of services.

A deliverable established by the restructuring legislation was the state workforce development training grants available for current or new businesses to support upgrading skills or creating jobs. Eligible businesses must be registered with the Secretary of State and be a sole proprietorship, partnership, or county hospital (government entities are not eligible). The primary training requirement is that there is a direct relationship between the training and the trainee's occupation and the trainee must be working in the state for the business that has applied for the grant. The SBA division leader indicated that the grants are a key mechanism to meet the training needs of businesses and that JSA has made this an accessible resource for businesses. The OA liaison was encouraged that these funds were result oriented in relation to emphasizing the needs of employers as opposed to training citizens for jobs that do not exist in the state.

The JSA administrator theoretically described the transition of the department of employment to JSA as:

We are not a business necessarily for profit but [and] I like to see that government role is different from the private sector so I don't want to become a business, but like to, what I call, *being the government entity that thinks like a business...*using business intelligence and business logic before making decisions that include understanding your customer, research, business demographics, customer demographics, the will of your stakeholders, the direction of your board...those are all the same things that go into the equations when making business decisions.

The SBA consultant recognized that the transition from department of employment to JSA required an extensive process to change business practices, and they have eliminated layers of bureaucracy making them more responsive to the needs of business. The OA

liaison acknowledged that the department of employment had been more of a compliance agency and JSA is customer oriented by linking the needs of employers with citizens to fill the jobs. Additionally, that businesses view JSA as the, “guide, and the advice and counsel on how to access the funds [workforce development training funds].

*Sub-Baccalaureate Agency (SBA)*

According to an unpublished historical report (Community College Commission, 2006), the Sub-Baccalaureate Agency (SBA) was originally established by the state legislature in 1951 and served strictly as an advisory council to the four two-year colleges, which were governed by the state’s university system. Between 1959 and 1968, three more colleges were established for a total of seven two-year colleges. In 1971, the legislature authorized the Governor to appoint a seven member oversight board, which is responsible for hiring a full-time director. SBA received more authoritative responsibilities in 1985 when the legislature gave the agency operational duties, especially for fiscal allocations and instructional programs of the community colleges.

The by-laws for the SBA (Community College Commission, 2001) state the mission and purpose is to provide coordination, advocacy, and accountability for the community college system on behalf of the state. The SBA consultant explained that commissioners are selected based on two statutory requirements: (a) no less than three and no more than four are from a county where a community college is located, and the others are from different parts of the state and (b) no more than four members shall be of the same political party. The participant added that the role of the commissioners is to serve as the Governor’s representatives to oversee and approve the colleges’ submission of monetary requests, which include a biennium budget and capital construction

priorities, and accountability reports, which include enrollments and community partnerships.

The seven community colleges are dispersed throughout the state and the three SBA participants each volunteered an adjective to describe the individuality of every school, which was autonomous, unique, or diverse. The SBA consultant mentioned that the differences in the geographical landscapes, background, and history of the colleges influenced the cultural flavor and priorities of the institutions. The SBA division leader explained that each college is locally governed by a seven member district board and their own administration that services a designated service delivery area. The SBA consultant stated, “The commission [SBA] itself is not empowered to manage or control or dictate to the presidents of the colleges or the deans, we are meant as a support, a collaborative body ...somebody who helps manage and supports the colleges.” The SBA participants were in agreement that the colleges’ viewed their role as serving their local populations, businesses, and students, and creating their own niche programs, degrees, and certificates. However, the OA liaison expressed dissatisfaction of the college system structure and stated that, “part of the problem [seven independent schools in the college system] is they [seven colleges] report to seven different boards and they have seven different desires of what that school should look like when it grows up.” The OA division manager felt that the colleges may be too independent from one another, but also recognized that this was mostly likely due to the vast differences in the targeted populations and programs among the districts.

The SBA division leader mentioned that from the agency’s perspective, one of their focus areas is providing services to the state’s businesses and workforce. A job

responsibility has been to develop a common course technical guide that identifies all of the workforce development and vocational classes offered by the colleges (Community College Commission, 2008b). The benefit of this is that when a business requests a workforce training class, a college district can easily identify if their curriculum and standards committee has already approved the class, along with the number of assigned credit hours. The colleges can also use the technical guide as a marketing tool by informing businesses of the classes that may be beneficial for their workforce. The SBA division leader pointed out that the colleges need to do some, “promotion and outreach to the communities because there are a lot of services that the colleges can offer that sometimes the citizens don’t know about for workforce development and customized training.”

The JSA division director and the OA supervisor both discussed their frustration with the colleges’ reliance on the traditional semester-based academic calendar of offering workforce training classes. They both would like to see a more aggressive model that offered classes in two to four day intensive sessions, which would be more convenient for businesses, their employees, and potential employees. The JSA division director reiterated that the colleges were the primary outlet for workforce training and that they needed to emphasize their role of meeting the economic development training needs by changing to a demand driven system. The SBA upper administrator suggested that colleges should consider the notion of condensing and compressing workforce classes, especially for incumbent workers who primarily receive skills upgrade training that is paid by their employers. This was described as being a slow process, which

depended on the how receptive a college's administration and board were to developing on-demand workforce training.

There were two streams of educational funding that were mentioned as deterrents for the college's offering workforce training classes. One was the Full-time Equivalent (FTE) funding formula, which is based on the average of two semesters total enrolled credits by all of the students divided by 24 (Community College Commission, 2008a). The result is then used in a complicated formula to calculate the college's portion of the state revenue. College's with greater FTEs receive more funding. Based on this, colleges are hesitant to offer noncredit classes that businesses may request for workforce training. The OA division manager believed that adjustments were needed in the funding formula to allow for noncredit professional development certificates. The second area was students who need financial aid, which was incongruent as the compliance with strict regulations requires them to be enrolled in a degree program. The SBA upper administrator felt that this was prohibitive for those individuals who want to upgrade their skills to get a better job and do not necessarily need to obtain an associate degree.

Although there were differing opinions about the structure of the seven college districts, the OA division manager was surprised by the accessibility of the presidents and the minimal layers of bureaucracy compared to other states where he had lived. The SBA upper administrative provided a pragmatic mission for all seven colleges, which included the goal of being accessible:

I think we all embrace and that's to really make ourselves as accessible and as responsive to the needs that communities have for a skilled workforce, for an educated public, for preparing students of whatever stripe and age for, you know the maximum possibilities in terms of their own personal success. And, you know, some of that's traditional preparation to go onto a four-year school, some of that is really focused and targeted to very specific certificates or associates of

applied science, kinds of programmatic things that really have a target, a very direct and immediate target to an industry. And I think we're successfully moving more directly into those areas.

Additionally, the perceived viewpoint of the commissioners was that they embraced this mission and that the colleges need to continue providing services to a broad spectrum of individuals. The OA supervisor recognized that the colleges are expected to meet both academic and technical education needs, and they are trying their best to accomplish both.

#### *Occupation Agency (OA)*

The Occupation Agency (OA) was created in 1998 through the passage of a legislative bill that consolidated seven state departments and divisions all involved with different aspects related to economic development (Business Council, n.d.). In July of that year, OA assumed responsibilities of 25 programs from these departments and divisions, which were realigned into four divisions: (a) agribusiness, (b) business and industry, (c) investment-ready communities, and (d) travel and tourism. According to the OA supervisor, one of primary charges to the agency was to grow the economy beyond mining, agriculture, and tourism.

OA is governed by a 15 member board of directors (Board) appointed by the Governor and they appoint a chief executive officer to manage the agency (Legislative Services Office, n.d.). At least 12 board members must be residents of ERMS, which was the case at the time of this study and the other three members were all from the same adjacent state. The function of the Board is to review policies, determine priorities, and approve grant applications for community and business development. The OA

participants did not elaborate about the board membership or duties and seemed satisfied that they were all capable business people.

The participants from all three agencies considered OA as the state's economic development branch, which sets the direction for business development priorities. According to the OA participants, the majority of the budget (63%) was for community infrastructure development to build business and industrial parks and public projects for water, sewer, and roads. The OA division manager explained that the 2003 Legislature established a business ready community grant and loan program to encourage physical infrastructure projects during the state's strong economic growth period. The philosophy behind this was that building costs are continually increasing and this is a good investment of the state's surplus budget. The OA supervisor was pleased with this decision and deemed the combination of infrastructure development with workforce development as true economic development.

A major portion of the remaining budget (35%) was for supporting existing businesses with services, such as general counseling and mentoring, writing business plans, assistance in starting a business, business permitting, finding financial resources, human resources consulting, marketing assistance, product development, and intellectual property assistance for patents or royalties (Business Council, 2005). The remaining budget amount (2%) was for recruitment of business, which was reported by the OA participants to be purposely small due to the difficult time that existing businesses were having finding employees due to the workforce shortage occurring in the state.

In 2004, OA contracted a professional consultant firm to conduct a statewide economic development and workforce development study from the perspective of

businesses (The Wadley-Donovan Group, 2005). The state was subdivided into 12 regional areas and employer surveys were sent to 1,494 businesses with 20 or more employees and 313 responded for a 21% return rate. One of the survey constructs was training and educational resources, which asked a series of questions regarding employee classification groups that receive training, institutions that conduct the training, and local training and educational programs that need to be either strengthened or instituted by public training providers. The first question listed three general employee groups—clerical, production, and professional—and asked businesses to indicate all the educational resources they use for training per group. There were three choices, private vendor, college/university, or community colleges, and the respondents used private vendors most often at a rate of 62%, next were community colleges at 25%, and then college/university at 13%. Another question asked the frequency the businesses used area high schools, specific community colleges, university, and private vendors for training, apprenticeship, co-op, or other related programs. The responses were on a continuum of continuously = 5 and never = 1. Private vendors were used most often with an average of 2.5, followed by high schools at 1.9, university at 1.8, and community colleges ranging from 1.2 to 1.4. The median responses were 3.0 for private vendors and all the others receiving a 1.0. There were a number of training and educational programs that the businesses indicated needed to be either strengthened or instituted at their local high schools or community colleges to include basic skills, job preparedness, work ethic, critical thinking, and computer and vocational instruction.

The OA liaison mentioned that before the results of the survey were distributed to the different regions, the results were shared with SBA so they knew the, “colleges didn’t



fare well” and this was impacting businesses. The SBA upper administrator admitted that the study got their attention with the role that community colleges in general were contributing to the need of a trained workforce and that over 50% of the training for businesses was being conducted by private providers. On the other hand, the SBA upper administrator felt that this was the perspective of a very specific employer focused agency, OA that is not focused on employees and added that the two agencies have two different customers:

We’re [SBA] not here to help industry make more profit; we’re really here to help individuals improve themselves through education. They [OA] want to see business success; they’re focused on the corporate picture more, than on individual success...And indeed we [SBA] need to help those companies that have invested here and we need to keep them vital and profitable and do what we can, but that isn’t our primary mission. And so, you know, we [SBA and OA] go back and forth a little about that...it’s a fairly positive tension.

There were no other participants who directly remarked about this study.

#### *Labor Force Development Association (LFDA)*

A November 18, 2002 Governor’s news bulletin announced the establishment of a workforce development partnership among JSA, SBA, and OA that was named Labor Force Development Association (LFDA). The intent of the partnership was outlined as:

1. Improve access to short-term training.
2. Develop the competencies and work-readiness skills that workers need to obtain employment and advance in today’s job market.
3. Respond to employer’s need for qualified employees to successfully operate their businesses.

At the time this news bulletin was issued (three years prior to the interviews for this study), six of the nine participants from the three agencies had been involved with the

initial meetings among the agencies that decided to voluntarily form a workforce development partnership. Although the SBA consultant and upper administrator and the OA division manager were not employed at the respective agencies during the time the partnership was created, they along with the other six offered an explanation of the partnership formation (see Table 8).

Table 8

*Agency Participants' Explanation of LFDA Formation*

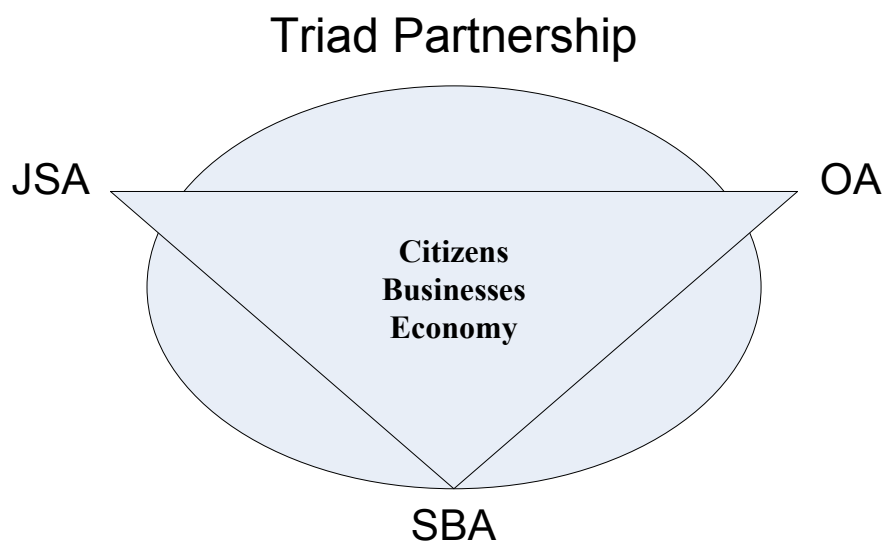
Participant	Explanation given for LFDA formation
SBA division leader	There had been recognition that agencies were working on the same thing, but they were not all running in the same direction.
SBA consultant	Occurred simultaneously with the creation of JSA due to an emphasis on supporting businesses.
SBA upper administrator	Provides more opportunity to interact with each other.
JSA analyst	Be able to jointly work on projects that involve the three agencies.
JSA division director	Provides a mechanism to communicate JSA activities with the other two agencies.
JSA administrator	Came out of the planning process for JSA reorganizing that the three agencies were not working as a unit and planning workforce initiatives together.
OA liaison	Participant acknowledged being the driver in forming to get SBA to work with JSA and OA on workforce training for businesses.
OA division manager	Designed for quick training response for businesses.
OA supervisor	To engage SBA in supporting, with ease, business workforce training needs.

Overall, the two main reasons stated were to create a method for regular communication among the three agencies and to support businesses with their workforce training needs.

*Partnership formation and meetings*

According to the JSA administrator, from 2001-2002 there was a planning committee that worked on the restructuring of the employment agency to the current JSA agency and administrative staff members from SBA and OA were asked to be involved

with this process. During this time, the agency members attending these planning meetings became aware that they had not been effectively communicating their independent workforce development and/or economic development efforts. There was mutual agreement that they meet on a regular basis and conceptualized their relationship as a triad partnership (see Figure 5). The JSA administrator added that “the working relationship between [among] the three was essential for ERMS to move forward in educating its people, creating jobs, and creating economic development in the state.” The SBA division leader believed the agencies needed to be communicating with each other to support the workforce development and growth in the state.



Source: (see Appendix H)

Figure 5

#### *Triad Partnership*

The JSA administrator realized that if a partnership was going to succeed, there was a need for a full-time position to manage joint projects. This eventually resulted with

the three agencies agreeing to contribute monetary and/or capital resources to hire a contract employee through a non-profit managed by OA, named the Economic and Workforce Development, Inc. SBA agreed to provide an office, including equipment and materials support. An MOU was signed in fall 2002 that stipulated the amount and kind of resources provided by each agency (see Appendix H). The researcher inquired many of the participants about the specific contents of the MOU and was not able to get the information. However, as a result of the MOU the SBA division leader was hired.

Concurrently when the MOU was signed, the partnership was renamed Labor Force Development Agency (LFDA) and a mission statement was prepared:

The Labor Force Development Association was formed by the Occupation Agency, the Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, and the Job Search Agency to provide business training solutions and workforce development support throughout ERMS. In doing so, the LFDA will help meet the present and future needs of the state's current emerging workforce.

The SBA consultant stated that LFDA maintains a commitment to have regular monthly meetings with agendas, often expanded to sharing of agency activities related to the mission of the partnership. The JSA analyst provided a scenario of what occurs during the meetings:

If economic development is thinking about bringing a business to ERMS or if they find a business that's in trouble, they [OA] don't have to shoulder that whole burden. They can say hey, you know, we need some people trained or we've got a bunch of people that are about to become displaced workers. And along that same track with the community colleges we can work with them and say, hey, what kind of program do you have? We've got some people with just about the right skill set but not quite and do you have some short-term intervention that you might be able to throw together for us and get those folks back in the workplace. So a lot of different commonalities [*sic*]

The JSA administrator believed that the meetings are positive based on two key outcomes. First, the members are building interpersonal relationships as they are

becoming acquainted with each other and building a supportive network. Second, they are realizing that they shared business customers and that there is a level of expectation they have of each other to meet the workforce training needs of business. The JSA division director thought that the meetings were helping alleviate “disagreements without understanding” that were occurring prior to the partnership. The JSA analyst felt that an ease in communication among the agencies had developed and that knowing who to contact when misunderstandings happened was a step in the right direction.

The researcher observed three LFDA meetings; a regular monthly meeting on October 17, 2005, a special meeting on October 31, 2005, and a regular monthly meeting on November 7, 2005 (see Appendix F). Each meeting was held at 3:00 p.m. and was one hour long. Table 9 presents the meeting type and date, attendees, and topics discussed.

Table 9

*LFDA Meetings Observed: Date, Attendees, and Topics Discussed*

LFDA Meeting Type and Date	Attendees	Topics Discussed
Regular monthly meeting: October 17, 2005	Five members: Three from SBA One from JSA One from OA	Five items: 1. Pre-employment certificates 2. Wadley-Donovan survey 3. High school career clusters model 4. JSA strategic plan 5. Agencies presence required at meetings with businesses to discuss skills needed for their workforce
Special meeting: October 31, 2005	Five members: Two from SBA One from JSA Two from OA	One item: Communication management with new businesses regarding their workforce skills and training needs.
Regular monthly meeting: November 7, 2005	Five members: Two from SBA One from JSA 2 from OA  Two guests from Department of Education	One item: Presentation by Department of Education guests about the career clusters model being developed for high school students.

The first meeting was held at SBA and there were five members who attended, three from the SBA, 1 from JSA, and 1 from OA. There were five topics discussed, the first one was pre-employment certificates and it was determined that there needed to be more communication with businesses about their level of interest in using this program. The next three were informational about an upcoming SBA meeting with the workforce training coordinators from each of the colleges to discuss the results from the Wadley-Donovan survey (2005), a high school career clusters model being developed by the Department of Education, and the JSA strategic plan was presented. The last topic was the need for all three agencies to be present at meetings when businesses discuss the skills they need for their workforce; however, it was soon discovered that SBA had never been informed of these meetings. The decision was made to have a special meeting in two weeks to remediate this situation, which was the second meeting the researcher observed. This was held at OA and there were five members present, 2 from SBA, 1 from JSA, and 2 from OA. The OA members shared that they have little communication with businesses when they decide on a community location and it was determined that the breakdown in communication was occurring at that point. The members stated that they would encourage their local level constituents to communicate with each other. The third meeting observed was the November monthly meeting held at OA and those present were five members, 2 from SBA, 1 from JSA, and 2 from OA, and two guests from Department of Education. The meeting was primarily a presentation from the guests about the career clusters model being developed for high school graduates as a guide to continuing education at a state community college. The researcher followed up about the meeting content and dynamics with the SBA division leader who replied,

The expectation of all three agencies is to keep meeting on a monthly basis to remind us that things are happening that we need to step back and look at from a broad perspective and say, are there things that we're moving into that we should be talking about and working on and suggesting to the colleges.

*Partnership sponsored workforce training*

The OA liaison explained that through the non-profit, LFDA purchased two curriculum programs to launch their workforce training. One of these was the Georgia Quick Start training program to provide customized training for warehousing/distribution and manufacturing. The second program was Development Dimensions International (DDI), which is a leadership supervisory skills program. The community colleges are the provider of these trainings, which they purchase from the non-profit.

Many of the participants mentioned that the Quick Start program is offered by a community college located in the southeast section of the state for a large distribution operation that recently opened in that part of the state. Job seekers who completed the program were given a certificate designating that they meet the warehouse operations qualifications, including work teams and decision making skills. DDI was offered by all of the community colleges and marketed to a variety of businesses. The SBA division leader stated that another program being considered was pre-employment certifications that can assist employers with the current skill level of job seeker.

An internal training that was paid by the OA non-profit was for invited agency staff members who worked at either the state or local level. It was an introduction to a economic development three-day course that was instructed by a representative with the International Economic Development Council. According to the SBA division leader the purpose of this training was for the three agencies to explore the significance of economic development for each agency and the partnership.

### *Definitions of partnership terms*

The 12 participants were asked to define each of four common terms that are used to describe partnerships—cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration. Eleven participants provided a definition for each term and the Governor’s staff member requested not to respond. The replies from the majority of the participants were based on partnerships in general with no tangible examples given.

Before defining the terms the SBA consultant stated, “My response in looking at those four is that they are in order, from my perspective, from rather simple to more complex.” The organizational manager prefaced the definitions by stating, “A key element and thread that runs through all four these [terms] is trust and respect between [among] the partners. That really is vital; otherwise you’re giving lip service to this in my opinion.” Table 10 presents the participants’ definitions with a column for each term in the order that they were requested by the researcher.



Table 10

*Participants' Explanations of Partnership Terms*

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Cooperation</b>	<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Integration</b>
SBA division leader	People working together for a common goal. Try not to get in each other's way, hinder another organization's progress	Each person or organization is providing a certain task or vital piece of information, which is needed for the success of a project or an activity.	Knowing what everyone is doing in terms of resources that they have to offer businesses.	Making sure that there is a process in place that includes common language and terms that are familiar to everyone involved.
SBA consultant	Fairly superficial and practical to get a job done	Agencies openly discuss activities or projects, so there are minimal conflicts.	At a multi-agency perspective, the need to start thinking in terms of what does the partnership mean for the future and anticipate things that could be an obstacle.	The group is working so closely that they no longer have their own identities.
SBA upper administrator	Open to working in a larger organizational structure than just simply representing your own single interest. Everyone contributing to a common enterprise. It generally has a positive connotation, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it is going to be blessed with success.	Pragmatic activity to effectuate multiple parties working together that requires some kind of logistical oversight to connect everybody. A necessary by-product of the process towards real collaboration.	Working together or co-laboring with an equal contribution, investment, and commitment to the outcome, which requires action by the members.	An enterprise that changes organizations and in that process becomes a real test of the commitment by the various parties.
JSA analyst	Sharing of resources toward a common goal	Cooperation [sharing of resources toward a common goal] with planning	The participant refused to define, commenting that "it's just a stupid thing"	The planning behind the coordination does not matter who owns the resources as long as it is still working toward the goal.
JSA division director	No hidden agendas and everyone's outcome is the same	Each member of the partnership consciously makes sure that their piece of the pie fits with the other piece of the pie.	Same as cooperation. [No hidden agendas and everyone's goal is the same.]	Appears to be a seamless process to the customer.

Table 10 cont.

<b>Participant</b>	<b>Cooperation</b>	<b>Coordination</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Integration</b>
JSA administrator	Willingness to understand each of our partners' roles, responsibilities, and activities and share our resources	A strategic planning term that means how we get from A to B once the direction is set.	Strategic direction for coordination of the planning that has taken place to get from A to B and now the customers and resources intersect for a realized accomplishment.	Agencies interchange services and deliver them in partners' locations. Services are seamlessly delivered and lines appear invisible to customers and agencies.
OA liaison	We are not adversaries	Keeping each other informed of what is happening in their agency	We work together, but still clearly independent of each other	Transparent delivery of services to the customer.
OA division manager	Making the effort to understand how another person's tasks corresponds with your job function.	We understand how we fit together to be more efficient in own agency.	Addressing each other's needs, but the cost is shared	Agencies all know where the other is located and are working on the same plan.
OA supervisor	Recognition of a common goal	Recognition that other entities need to be a part of a plan of action	Results from cooperation and coordination. [Recognition of a common goal and those other entities that need to be a part of a plan of action.]	Multiple team members working together to accomplish goals.
Organizational manager	Two groups that come together and have an agreement on a specific goal that is outside of the realm of each one of those particular agencies or groups.	Requires agency or organizational representatives who have like stature and authority for a result to go forward.	Based on trust of sharing resources, both hard [monetary] resources and human resources, to have a project come to completion.	The planning behind the coordination and it does not matter who owns the resources as long as it is still working toward the goal.
Social services administrator	Minimal level of getting along with one another. You meet together and share information.	Agencies would meet and share information, and then make their own decisions within the larger context to avoid duplication or gaps.	Agencies not just sharing information and making decisions in coordinating with one another, but share resources.	Appears to be a seamless process to the customer.

Some of the participants struggled with providing a definition for each term and in those cases, the typical response was that it was similar to a previously defined term. This was the situation for the JSA analyst who defined coordination as cooperation with planning and to aid comprehension the definition that had been given for cooperation was placed in brackets. This was the same for the JSA division director who defined collaboration as cooperation and the OA supervisor who defined collaboration as the result from cooperation and coordination. The JSA also refused to define collaboration stating that, “it’s [collaboration] a stupid thing.”

An examination of the eleven definitions for each partnership term found that they reflected various perspectives; however, there often were core elements common among the majority of them. This analysis resulted in both a definition and a purpose for each type of partnership:

1. Cooperative—an unofficial relationship that entails understanding each other’s role and working together toward a common goal. The purpose is for general communication to share information with one another.
2. Coordinated—a short-term arrangement due to a specific activity that requires programmatic decisions made by each partner. The purpose is to determine required tasks and the process to achieve the outcome.
3. Collaborative—a commitment to a long-term relationship with mutual decision agreed upon by the partners. The purpose is consistent investment of resources that are shared for the partnership’s current and future goals.
4. Integrated—a result in the individual partners no longer having their own identities and a new organization with common language and terms is created.

The purpose is seamless delivery of services and resources are controlled by the partnership.

The SBA upper administrator concluded the response to the definitions by questioning the accuracy of them and offered this summary of the four terms:

Cooperation is you know, you just all agreed to come. Collaboration is when you roll up your sleeves and really get the work done. Coordination is how that sort of gets assembled, how it gets reassembled or whatever. So to me it's the necessary kind of ordering and structuring. And the integration to me is then those are the results that you see organizationally that you've been a part of.

*LFDA partnership type*

There were four participants who offered their viewpoints of the partnership type that LFDA was experiencing. The JSA administrator indicated that LFDA was currently a cooperative partnership with the agencies trying to understand each other's roles, customers, and pressures and felt that the busy workload of the individual agencies was impeding progress to move beyond that point. The SBA upper administrator gave the partnership mixed reviews and described it from being cooperative to integrative depending on the situation and who was involved, but did point out that there was still work to do to determine each other's role. The SBA division leader did not state a specific partnership term type and believed it was at a stage of awareness of programs and services available at the agencies with work needed on including each other with agency level workforce development activities. The JSA division director also did not give a specific term type, but did mention that the partnership was still maturing through role clarification, which according to the definitions may be construed as cooperative. Based on the opinion of these four participants LFDA was generally deemed a cooperative partnership.

### *Future of partnership*

According to the SBA consultant, the MOU had expired June 30, 2005 (three-four months before the interviews for this study) and technically LFDA had formally ended. As of July 1, 2005, SBA had taken full funding responsibility for the position created through the MOU and the staff member had been assigned more SBA related duties. Although members from the three agencies were continuing to meet on a monthly basis, there were mixed opinions about the utility of maintaining that relationship. The SBA participants all believed that meeting together was a good venue to continue identifying linkages among the agencies and the services provided as workforce development activities grow during the strong economic period. The JSA division director and OA division manager and supervisor wanted the partnership to move from the state level to local levels where the training was actually needed. The JSA administrator thought the ideology of the partnership made sense, but felt that the work demands at each agency interfered with the partnership becoming a true priority. This sense of uncertainty about the future of the partnership had not been addressed before the MOU that had expired.

### *Summary of Workforce Legislation and Milestones*

Between 1998 and 2005, there was one federal and three state legislation acts implemented in ERMS related to workforce education, training, and employment. The federal act, Workforce Investment Act of 1998, introduced a demand driven employment system. The first of the three state acts was in 2003 to increase the workforce capacity in nursing and nurse educators through a loan assistance program. A similar act occurred in 2005 to address the shortage of teachers in math, science, and special education. The

third act also implemented in 2005 created a postsecondary education scholarship endowment program for in-state high school graduates.

The Governor and First Lady were instrumental in two family economic projects introduced to the legislature. One was a children and families bill passed in 2004 to address resource assistance needs, which would establish goals and identify barriers to education and employment. The second was a report of the wage income gap submitted for review to the state legislators.

During this same time period there were state milestones occurring that influenced decision making of workforce policies. There was a 1998 Governor's Executive Order that established the duties of a state workforce development council and that same year was the implementation of the Occupational Agency, which assumed economic development responsibilities. In 2002 the Job Search Agency was implemented and the Labor Force Development Association MOU was signed. There were two workforce development and/or economic development studies conducted in 2003 and 2004, one sponsored by SBA and the other by OA. The SBA report outlined the community colleges plan to support workforce training and the OA research study was a business readiness survey. In 2005, the Governor convened a taskforce to inform communities of the workforce shortage situation that was occurring due to the booming energy industry and tagged the situation "*This is not your father's boom.*" A summary of these events is presented in Table 11.

Table 11

*Timeline of Workforce Federal and State Legislation and State Workforce Initiatives*

<b>Year</b>	<b>Workforce Federal/State Legislation Acts, Bills, and Plans</b>	<b>State Workforce Milestones</b>
1998	Federal Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) passed	(a) Governor's Workforce Development Executive Order (b) Occupational Agency assumed economic development responsibilities
2000	WIA five-year strategic plan submitted by July 1, 2000	
2002		(a) Job Search Agency implemented (b) Labor Force Development Agency (LFDA) MOU signed (c) Governor's news bulletin announcing LFDA
2003	State passed nursing and nursing educators workforce capacity scholarship program	SBA workforce development taskforce convened and produced report outlining college plan for supporting workforce training
2004		Statewide economic development and workforce development study conducted
2005	(a) State passed teachers capacity scholarship program for math, science, and special education disciplines (b) State passed state endowment higher education scholarship program for resident high school graduates (c) WIA two year strategic plan submitted by July 1, 2005	Governor's taskforce to educate state about the technical skills workforce shortage situation, which was tagged, <i>"This is not your father's boom"</i>

## CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter contains three sections. The first section is the conclusion that describes the federal and state workforce training and education initiatives involved in the workforce development partnership. The second section suggests implications from the findings of the study. Section three provides recommendations for further research.

### Conclusion

The purpose of this qualitative case study was twofold. The first purpose was to describe what influences the implementation of the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) had on three workforce development partners—employment services, economic development, and community college. The second was to describe the process utilized that created the workforce development partnership.

This single state case study collected data through interviews, documents, observations, and field notes. The three state level agencies that formed the workforce development partnership were Job Search Agency (JSA), Sub-Baccalaureate Agency (SBA), and Occupation Agency (OA). The partnership was identified as the Labor Force Development Association (LFDA).

There were 12 people who participated in this study, 11 state employees and 1 state appointed board council member who represented business. These participants were selected based on their knowledge of WIA policy, state-level workforce development initiatives, and/or workforce development partnership. The findings provided insight about the state's approach to workforce education and training efforts, implementation of



WIA, the concept of workforce development, establishment of state agencies, and formation of the workforce development partnership.

### *Workforce Training and Education*

Workforce training and education were associated with either state demographics or incentive funding legislation for higher education loan and scholarship programs. The state was experiencing a lack of workers in technical fields, service, education, and health, due to a booming mineral extraction industry and a population that was ranked as the ninth oldest in the nation. There were two migration events that contributed to this age of population factor. The first was a high net in-migration of young workers that occurred from the mid 1970s to mid 1980s and the second was a significant out-migration of young adults (ages of 20 to 29) that started in the late 1980s (Liu, 2005). The participants were concerned about the current population trends and identified four stakeholder groups—K-12 emerging population, unskilled job seekers, single mothers, and retirees—these were considered to be a source of labor if given the necessary workforce education and training.

The state legislature had passed two workforce incentive bills, one in 2003 for nurses and nurse educators, and the other in 2005 for math, science, and special education teachers. Their objective was to provide loans for individuals who were accepted in these programs and then they would receive payment forgiveness eligibility based on meeting the criteria of qualified employment in the state. A scholarship incentive bill passed in 2005 was an in-state postsecondary education endowment program for traditional students who graduated from state high schools and were residents. The intent of this legislation is to encourage youth to remain in the state for higher education purpose and

also employment. The SBA participants and JSA administrator offered mixed conceptual viewpoints regarding the goals and outcomes of this program. The most significant was if result of this investment would reduce the young adult out-migration.

#### *WIA Mission and Implementation*

The JSA participants provided the majority of the information regarding WIA's mission and implementation, since their agency was legislatively responsible for the required activities. The JSA division director indicated that WIA legislation changed the focus of employment services from the job seeker being the primary customer to business driven demands for specific workforce skills. Their responses were in five main categories: (a) three levels of services, (b) employment program funding, (c) performance accountability measures, (d) workforce development council and (e) workforce development concept and report.

##### *Three levels of services*

The JSA participants explained that information regarding WIA programs is available at One-Stop Centers, which is in accordance with Barnow and King (2005). Further, agencies responsible for employment services activities are mandated WIA One-Stop Center partners and case studies have found that due to their long history of providing labor exchange services, they are often selected as the primary provider of WIA core services (D'Amico, et al., 2001; Javar & Wandner, 2004; Macro, Almandsmith, & Hague, 2003).

The JSA analyst and division director stipulated three levels of services available to job seekers—core, intensive, and training. Core is the most basic and is a self-directed activity of entering basic demographic information into the job network system, which

searches for job listings that match the skills of the job seeker. Staff members are available to assist with application forms, resume writing, and interview techniques. The next level is intensive services for those unable to obtain a job at the core level and is assigned a case manager for in-depth counseling and assessment. The skills and education background of the job seeker are reviewed to determine if they match the qualifications of available positions. The JSA division director indicated that the majority of job seekers in the intensive level are recommended for training services, an application process requiring approval of a review committee. Approximately 80% of applications are approved and receive either on-the-job (OJT) or classroom instruction. According to Jacobs (2003), businesses prefer OJT programs so trainees learn skills specific to their organization. Reasons for not being approved for training are due to either having a good work history or needing to refine one's approach to getting employment. This overview is similar to Barnow and King's that core services are available on either a self-service or staff-assisted basis, intensive services involve more in-depth information gathering, and training includes some type of classroom environment.

#### *Employment program funding*

The JSA analyst and division director stated that besides WIA, their agency managed other federally funded employment programs including the Wagner-Peyser Act, originally established in 1933 to create a nationwide system of public employment offices now a WIA One-Stop Center partner. JSA staff members reviewed the objectives of the three levels of services and realized that Wagner-Peyser fulfills core services, which meant WIA funding did not need to be used for this level of service. Further, WIA is an outcome-based program and core services do not require clients to achieve goals. The

U.S. Department of Labor (2005) responded to the duplication of WIA and Wagner-Peyser services with a Training Education and Guidance Letter (TEGL) 28-04 informing states that people who receive only self-service or information activities should not be considered WIA clients.

#### *Performance accountability measures*

The sharing of data for the common measures reporting for WIA training clients was an equal point of frustration for SBA and JSA. The SBA division leader and college liaison stated that as a WIA training provider they were required to provide data, but could not have access to the reports and that confidentiality was cited as the reason. The consultant was also contemplating if the information they did receive was worth the time and money required for the data reporting. The JSA analyst acknowledged that SBA was reluctant to provide information regarding individuals who received training; however, the analyst did admit that JSA was requesting this information for the entire class and not individual WIA clients who were in the training. SBA responded that FERPA (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act) prevents them from disclosing this information. The dissatisfaction by community colleges with the performance measures reporting was similar to that found by D'Amico and Salzman (2004a). In other reports there have been some training providers who have decided not to serve WIA clients due to the time required to do the reporting (Welfare Information Network, 2003).

#### *Workforce development council*

WIA mandated that governors establish a workforce investment board (WIB) to help strategize implementation efforts and provide on-going policy oversight for workforce investment activities. A 1998 Governor's Executive Order (Executive

Department, 1998) established the state's workforce development council (Council), which was in compliance with WIB standards. The majority (51%) of the membership is required to be business representatives and the rest are specific public officials. The organizational manager who was the current Council chair and serving the second term in that position, stated that the business membership was close to 70%. However, a membership list indicated that there were exactly 50% business representatives (see Appendix G).

The organizational manager described three Council duties, which were also WIA mandates. The first was conducting quarterly meetings, held at various locations around the state. The researcher attended and observed one in September 2005 and 25 of 28 members attended (see Appendix G). The second duty was making certain that the WIA strategic plans meet their deadline submission dates, which were July 1, 2000 for the five year plan and July 1, 2005 for the follow-up two year plan. The third was overseeing the 15% set-aside WIA discretionary fund that amounted to \$800,000 to 1,000,000 each biennium for the state. WIA stipulates that this money may be used for activities that support workforce initiatives and the Council developed a two-day workforce summit held in June 2004 and were planning a second for May 2006. In addition, they produce a workforce report in conjunction with the summit.

### *Summary*

WIA mission and implementation were primarily determined by WIA legislative mandates. The JSA participants did convey that their interpretation of the funding sources for the three levels of services was correct that Wagner-Peyser was responsible for core and WIA for intensive and training. The frustration with performance accountability

reporting was similar to that found in the literature as the time required may not be worth the effort to train WIA clients. The Council did have some flexibility with their funds and were offering a biannual workforce summit and report.

### *Workforce Development Implications*

#### *Concept: Demand for skills*

The implementation of state workforce education legislation and federal workforce training and employment legislation was creating a paradigm shift from supply of labor to demand of skills. According to the JSA administrator, this was also introducing a new concept, workforce development, to the state agencies. Based on participants' responses to explain the meaning of workforce development, there was agreement that the key consideration was the demand side or employment needs of businesses. Jacobs and Hawley (2008) defined workforce development as, "the coordination of public and private sector policies and programs that provides individuals with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood and helps organizations achieve exemplary goals, consistent with the societal context." This definition supports the viewpoint provided by the participants of the relationship between public workforce policies formulated by legislation and business goals. Participants were also asked to explain the meaning of workforce development system and the responses entailed operational processes that involve dynamic activities to continuously meet the training needs of businesses.

#### *SBA taskforce*

The SBA was supporting workforce development efforts by convening a taskforce that included one staff member from each community college. Their charge was to

produce a report outlining a coordinated workforce training plan among the colleges, which included a mutual definition for workforce development as:

The wide variety of educational programs and services that the colleges provide, within their service areas as well as state-wide, to support the state's economic development efforts, which result in:

- Training and retraining current and future workers to obtain jobs, maintain or advance in their jobs,
- Providing pre-employment training to support existing and new businesses, and
- Providing responsive, proactive educational programs and services to employers through partnership and alliances at the state level and within each college's service area (Community College Commission, 2004, p.4).

This agrees with Forde (2002) and Grubb (2001a) both defining workforce development from a community college perspective as providing current and future employees with education and training to upgrade skills.

#### *Workforce training*

The SBA division leader mentioned that from the agency's perspective, one of their focus areas was providing services to the state's businesses and workforce. A job responsibility of the participant has been to develop a common course technical guide that identifies all of the workforce development and vocational classes offered by the colleges (Community College Commission, 2008b). As a result when a business requests a workforce training class, a college district can easily identify if their curriculum and standards committee has already approved the class, along with the number of assigned credit hours. O'Leary, Straits, and Wandner (2004) acknowledge that from a workforce development perspective, community colleges are the most important providers of education and training for the sub-baccalaureate occupations in their area.

The JSA division director and the OA supervisor both discussed their frustration with the colleges' reliance on the traditional semester-based academic calendar of

offering workforce training classes. The SBA upper administrator admitted that the colleges needed to condense and compress workforce classes, especially for incumbent workers who are primarily receiving skills upgrade training paid for by their employers. Grubb (2001b) stresses that students are the customer of the community college, and providing for the local workforce is somewhat driven by demands of students to receive education and training for locally available occupations.

### *Partnership Formation Process*

#### *Agencies structure and priorities*

The three agencies that formed the workforce development partnership were JSA, SBA, and OA, which represent the typical partner agencies: (a) government employment service agencies that administer federal and state programs at the state and local levels, (b) economic development agencies whose general focus is to meet the needs of business creation and sustainability in a local area, and (c) public education agencies that provide workforce training (Eberts & Erickcek, 2002).

JSA, the state's newest agency established in 2002 from restructuring the former department of employment had four subdivisions:

1. Business training and outreach—oversees the activities provided through federal and state workforce training and employment programs;
2. Employment services—administers the budget and data collection and reporting of the federally funded training and education programs;
3. Vocational rehabilitation—supports employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities;
4. Office of the director—manages JSA's internal services.



A deliverable established by the restructuring legislation was the workforce development training fund state grants available for current or new businesses to support upgrading skills or creating jobs. The SBA division leader indicated that the grants are a key mechanism to meet the training needs of businesses and that JSA has made this an accessible resource for businesses. The OA liaison was encouraged that these funds were result oriented in relation to emphasizing the needs of employers as opposed to training citizens for jobs that do not exist in the state.

Although SBA was originally established by the state legislature in 1951, full operational duties were authorized in 1985. The by-laws for the SBA (Community College Commission, 2001) state the mission and purpose are provide coordination, advocacy, and accountability for the community college system on behalf of the state. There are seven community colleges dispersed throughout the state and the SBA consultant mentioned that the differences in the geographical landscapes, background, and history of the colleges influenced the cultural flavor and priorities of the institutions. The SBA division leader explained that each college is locally governed by a seven member district board and their own administration servicing a designated delivery area.

The Occupation Agency (OA) was created in 1998 through the passage of legislation that consolidated seven different state departments and divisions all involved with different aspects related to economic development (Business Council, n.d.). According to the OA supervisor, one of primary charges for the agency was to grow the economy beyond mineral extraction, agriculture, and tourism.

In 2004, OA contracted a professional consultant firm to conduct a statewide economic development and workforce development study from the perspective of

businesses (The Wadley-Donovan Group, 2005). An employer survey was sent to 1,494 businesses with 20 or more employees and there was a 21% return rate. The finding was that private vendors were used most often for workforce training (62%), next were community colleges (25%), and college/university (13%). Before the results of the survey were distributed to the different regions, the results were shared with SBA so they knew the, “colleges didn’t fare well” and this was impacting businesses. The SBA upper administrator admitted that the study got their attention, but felt that this was the perspective of a very specific employer focused agency. This differing perspective is similar to that by Grubb, Badway, Bell, Bragg, and Russman (1997) that community colleges and economic development have two different types of relationships with businesses, those for specific workforce development activities and those for policy-making activities.

#### *Partnership origination*

According to the JSA administrator, a planning committee for the restructuring from the employment agency to the current JSA agency involved administrative staff members from SBA and OA. During this time, the agency members attending planning meetings became aware that they had not been effectively communicating their independent workforce development and/or economic development efforts. Both the JSA administrator and SBA division leader believed that a working relationship with each other to support and move forward statewide workforce development was essential.

The JSA administrator realized that if a partnership was going to succeed, there was a need for a full-time position to manage joint projects, which resulted with the agencies each contributing monetary and/or capital resources to hire a contract employee.

An MOU was signed in fall 2002 that stipulated the amount and kind of resources provided by each agency (see Appendix H). Concurrently when the MOU was signed, the partnership was named Labor Force Development Agency (LFDA) and a mission statement was prepared:

The Labor Force Development Association was formed by the Occupation Agency, the Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, and the Job Search Agency to provide business training solutions and workforce development support throughout ERMS. In doing so, the LFDA will help meet the present and future needs of the state's current emerging workforce.

Buettner, Morrision, and Wasicek (2002) suggested four elements that enhance the development and maintenance of a sound partnership. Creating a partner mission statement is the first element, which states “shared mission and goals can be developed by identifying overlapping interests and activities that the partners have in common and by devising a partner mission that will also meet the priorities of their stakeholders” (p.5).

The SBA consultant stated that LFDA maintains a commitment to have regular monthly meetings with agendas, often expanded to sharing of agency activities related to the mission of the partnership. All three JSA participants acknowledged that the meetings were setting a positive direction for the partnership. The administrator believes that the members have developed a supportive network among each other. Also, that the members realize they share business customers and that each agency has a role to meet the workforce training needs of business. The division director and analyst both thought that communication had improved and that misunderstandings were being rectified instead of prolonged.

### *Workforce training programs*

The partnership purchased two curriculum programs to launch their workforce training, which are offered through the community colleges. One was the Georgia Quick Start training program to provide customized training for warehousing/distribution and manufacturing. Participants mentioned that the Quick Start program is offered by a community college located in the southeast section of the state for a large distribution operation that recently opened in that part of the state. The second program was Development Dimensions International (DDI), a leadership supervisory skills program offered by all of the community colleges and marketed to a variety of businesses. This effort peripherally touches on partnership element three that “participation and involvement in relevant activities can enhance economic opportunities through the various business relationships of partners to know about and understand the problems or need for services” (Buettner, Morrison, & Wasicek, 2002, p.5).

### *Common partnership terms*

The 12 participants were asked to define each of four common terms used to describe partnerships—cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration. Eleven participants provided a definition for each term and one requested to not respond. Before defining the terms the SBA consultant stated, “My response in looking at those four is that they are in order, from my perspective, from rather simple to more complex”. This is supported from the scholarly literature that terms cooperation, coordination, and collaboration could respectively be placed on a continuum moving from low to high in formality (Reilly, 2001). Further, a report by Ragan (2003) featured a continuum used by a human service agency to determine the development of relationships among programs

based on the type of interactions. This continuum has six categories that are ordered from complete separation of programs to unity of programs into a new delivery system. They are:

Communication → Cooperation → Coordination →  
Collaboration → Integration → Consolidation

An examination of the eleven definitions for each partnership term found that they reflected various perspectives; however, there often were core elements common among the majority of them. This analysis resulted in both a definition and a purpose for each type of partnership:

1. Cooperative—an unofficial relationship that entails understanding each other's role and working together toward a common goal. The purpose is for general communication to share information with one another.
2. Coordinated—a short-term arrangement due to a specific activity that requires programmatic decisions made by each partner. The purpose is to determine required tasks and the process to achieve the outcome.
3. Collaborative—a commitment to a long-term relationship with mutual decisions agreed upon by the partners. The purpose is consistent investment of resources that are shared for the partnership's current and future goals.
4. Integrated—a result in the individual partners no longer having their own identities and a new organization with common language and terms is created. The purpose is seamless delivery of services and resources are controlled by the partnership.

Based on the studies by Mattessich et al. (2004), Ragan (2003), and Reilly (2001), general meanings for cooperation, coordination, collaboration, and integration are:

1. Cooperation—informal, unstructured relationships that share information as needed
2. Coordination—formal exchange of information and joint activities to work on a specific project or task with equal partners
3. Collaboration—partners unite and establish a new structure with a common mission to support collective goals and determine an agreed upon authoritative system that includes partners sharing resources
4. Integration—partners restructure missions, services, programs, and resources to provide seamless delivery of services

The definitions and purposes of the partnership terms provided by the participants were compared to the general meanings based on the studies (see Table 12).

Table 12

*Comparison of Partnership Term Definitions among Participants and Studies*

<b>Terms</b>	<b>Definitions</b>	
	Similarities	Dissimilarities
Cooperation	Unofficial, informal Share information (both) General, unstructured	
Coordination	Specific activity, specific project or task Achieve the outcome, to work on	Partners, equal partners Programmatic decision made by each partner, formal exchange of information
Collaboration	Shared resources (both) Partnership's current and future goals, common mission	Long-term relationship, new structure Mutual decisions, authoritative system
Integration	Seamless delivery of services (both) Partners no longer have their own identities and resources controlled by partnership, Partners restructure missions, services, programs, and resources	

The first word or phrase for the partnership term definitions is from the participants and the second is from the studies. Cooperation and integration were similar to each other, and coordination and collaboration had similarities and dissimilarities. There were three instances in the similarities column that the participants and studies used the same terminology—share information, shared resources, and seamless delivery of services—and is indicated with the word both in parentheses. In the dissimilarities column, both coordination and collaboration had two definitions that did not correspond with each

other. The first one for coordination is partner that does not have a descriptor of type so it is not the same as an equal partner. The second for coordination are programmatic decisions made by each partner can indicate that a decision is agency independent or for the partnership, while formal exchange relates to an agreement that information may be interchanged. The first one for collaboration is long-term relationship does not signify type and new structure is a separate management system from each agency. The second for collaboration is mutual decisions is limited to shared conclusions and authoritative system is a managed organization.

There were four participants who provided a description of the partnership and they all generally suggested that LFDA was currently a cooperative partnership. According to Buettner, Morrison, and Wasicek (2002) element two suggests that a partnership should be a collaboration, “evaluation of the perceived effect a partner’s reputation and creditability will have on a partnership’s ability to have an efficient collaboration, in particular with shared resource allocation” (p. 5) Further, element four supports this type of partnership due to “combination of resources may strengthen the ability of the partnership to gain access to a funding opportunity” (Buettner, Morrison, Wasicek, p. 5).

One further note, on July 1, 2005, SBA took full resource responsibilities for the staff position created by the MOU in 2002 and assigned this staff member with SBA related duties. At that time the partnership technically ended; however, the agencies continued their monthly meetings.



### *Limitations*

The analysis of the findings for this study revealed a group that should have been interviewed and/or included was businesses' representatives due to the participants continuously discussing that understanding and meeting the specific workforce training needs of businesses was a statewide goal. Information that would have been valuable to seek was from the business perspective of the agencies. Important issues would be their needs from the agencies; have they discussed these needs and if so, what was the response; the working relationship; and delivery of needed services. This data would have helped provide insights from private industry about the public sector agencies that manage workforce development and economic development efforts. A criteria for the businesses selected would be experience receiving workforce training from either the workforce development partnership or one of the training providers associated with the agencies. The criteria for the business participants would be individuals who were decision makers about training needs and goals, funding, and outcomes of training.

### *Implications for Workforce Development Partnerships*

Between 2003 and 2005, state legislature had passed three acts that required implementation by SBA. Two were workforce education funding programs for the fields of nursing and teaching. Another was a postsecondary education scholarship endowment program for traditional students who graduated from state high schools. There was a fourth one pending in the next legislative session transferring ABE/GED programs from JSA to SBA. At the same time, SBA was responding to WIA implementation pressures of meeting the workforce training needs of businesses. Further, the state was undergoing a

workforce shortage crisis, especially in technical skills and SBA was trying to respond to those needs.

Both JSA and OA expressed frustration with SBA's seemingly lack of response to meeting the training needs of business. On the other hand, SBA community colleges are funded based on an equivalency factor of full-time students and businesses wanted training conducted in compressed time periods. A funding formula favorable to community colleges that meets both the needs of businesses and traditional students is encouraged.

### *Economic Wellbeing*

A priority of the Governor and First Lady was to understand the poverty situation in the state, providing children and families safe and healthy homes, and researching the wage disparity. In 2004 and 2005 there were two family economic projects that addressed these issues, which were introduced to the legislatures. One was to produce a plan with recommendations and action items that outlined the workforce and family problems in the state. The other was a wage Self-Sufficiency Standard report that was presented to the legislature to inform their work on items related to children, families, workforce development, and health care. Although these addressed a workforce development and economic development issue, the two projects were not mentioned by any of the participants involved with the partnership. Attention to these would have been a good project for the partnership, since the Governor was supporting research into these issues. There may have been funding available to create an outcome based program that addressed at least one of the workforce factors of families in need.

### *Marketing and Value of the Partnership*

Other than the participants who were directly involved with the partnership, there was a lack of awareness that it existed. At the time of the study in 2005 there was a web site that had not been updated since 2002. The workforce training that had been supported by the partnership was of a very narrow scope for a limited number of citizens.

The agency participants stated that one of the main reasons for the partnership was to create a method for regular communication among the agencies through monthly meetings. The second reason was to support businesses with their workforce training needs, which was also the response most often provided for workforce development concept. Based on responses from the participants the partnership seemed to exist primarily for the first reason and after three years little workforce training had been accomplished. The partnership had also officially ended in June 2005, but the agencies were still meeting on a regular basis.

Conceptually the partnership was a positive step in uniting the three agencies. However, the expertise of how to establish a partnership and understand the type of partnership that the agencies were willing to develop was never determined. There were also myopic views by some of the agency participants and the partnership was easily swayed to be moving one agency's goal forward, which may or may not have been a partnership goal. This situation got in the way of being able to move the partnership to another level. If the three agencies were to embark on either reestablishing the partnership or creating a new one, factors that should be considered are determining level of commitment and resources, willingness to create a mission with defined strategic goals, and evaluating outcomes.

## Recommendations

The recommendations from this study are twofold. First are functions of the four types of partnerships in relation to three workforce development factors. Second are recommendations for further research.

### *Functions of the Four Types of Partnerships*

WIA implementation reorganized public employment and training programs available for job seekers from a supply of labor to a demand-driven system based on the workforce skills needed by businesses. Four reports (Barnow & King, 2003; Buck, 2002; Ganzgless, et al., 2001; O'Shea & King, 2001) on early implementation of WIA indicated that further guidance was needed in partnership formation of workforce development programs. A conceptual framework (see Figure 4) was developed to help define the input, design, and output variables of the workforce agencies and their partnership. This framework identified three output variables based on the workforce development definition from Jacobs and Hawley (2008) and they are: (a) public and private sector policies and programs, (b) job seekers with the opportunity for a sustainable livelihood, and (c) businesses achieve exemplary goals. These three are also factors that may influence (positively or negatively) the function of the four types of partnerships defined under the similarities column in Table 12. Table 13 presents incentives and barriers for the four types of partnerships from the perspective of policies and programs, job seekers, and businesses.

Table 13

*Incentives and Barriers that Influence Three Workforce Development Factors for the Four Partnership Types*

<b>Partnership Type</b>	<b>Influence</b>	<b>Policies and Programs</b>	<b>Job Seekers</b>	<b>Businesses</b>
Cooperation	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not adhere to bureaucratic system</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Less red tape</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer rules and regulations</li> </ul>
	Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of resources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of services</li> </ul>
Coordination	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services offered to customers are aligned with goal</li> <li>• Outcome driven</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Goal oriented training for existing jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Responsive to specific workforce training needs</li> </ul>
	Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reporting to multiple agencies</li> <li>• Determining agency that manages services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No guarantee for continuous delivery of services</li> </ul>
Collaboration	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce duplication of services</li> <li>• Ability to seek funding (grant) opportunities</li> <li>• Capacity to offer more services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility to potential tuition/fee waivers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More funding opportunities for employee training</li> </ul>
	Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lack of clear expectations among partners</li> <li>• Constraint of separate funding streams</li> <li>• Agreements outlining roles of partners not easy to accomplish</li> <li>• Narrowly defining stakeholders</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training is often limited to just the needs identified by businesses that have greatest impact in an area</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mission of partnership may not be aligned to needs of business</li> <li>• Awareness of the available workforce training services and funding</li> </ul>
Integration	Incentives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seamless delivery of services</li> <li>• Cost-effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-located services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-located services</li> </ul>
	Barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mandatory with little or no guidance</li> <li>• Fewer funding streams</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer alternatives for services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fewer funding opportunities for employee training</li> </ul>

The incentives and barriers offered for each type of partnership can serve as a tool for agencies that are exploring a workforce development partnership. Participants from the three agencies studied cited two incentives for creating their partnership. One was the need to improve interpersonal communications and the other was to support training needs of businesses. Each agency had specific incentives related to enhancing services provided to businesses. Employment service agency was influenced by WIA's focus on a demand-driven workforce system. Community college system was exploring alternate delivery mechanisms (versus traditional semester based classes) to provide more responsive workforce training to businesses. Economic development had the majority of their budget (63%) dedicated to providing grants to create business-ready communities with available workforce. The agencies individual and collective incentives to partner suggests a collaborative partnership. However, the partnership was deemed cooperative based on viewpoints offered by four participants. The four policy and program barriers offer some insight of what prevented the state workforce development partnership to reach collaboration:

1. Lack of clear expectations among partners: The MOU created in 2002 was strictly to outline the resource obligation of each agency for the contract employee hired to manage the partnership. The only other expectation was monthly informational meetings about workforce related issues at the agencies.
2. Constraint of separate funding streams: The only shared financial resources were those for the contract position.

3. Agreements outlining roles of partners were not easy to accomplish: MOU had expired in June 2005 with no intent of creating a new one.
4. Narrowly defining stakeholders: A warehousing/distribution and a leadership supervisory skills curriculum programs were the only two training packages available for businesses.

### *Recommendations*

There are three topics suggested for recommended further research. The first is to continue examining the continuum of partnership types and their influence on workforce development systems. A detailed exploration of the incentives and barriers would provide a comprehensive report on typology of partnerships. This would also provide decision making knowledge for development of future partnerships.

The second is to conduct a survey of businesses' perspective of publicly funded workforce training. Those surveyed would be businesses that have used the system to evaluate the process. This would provide an evaluation tool of training outcomes goal from the private sector. The third research topic is an investigation of community college funding models that are oriented to compressed class schedules to meet the workforce training needs of businesses. Traditional, semester-based schedules are not responsive to immediate workforce training demands of businesses and private training providers are considered the providers of choice.

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## APPENDIX A: ACRONYMS

ABE	Adult Basic Education
ASCI	American Customer Satisfaction Index
CBO	Community Based Organization
CETA	Comprehensive Employment and Training Act
CSBG	Community Services Block Grant
CSU	Colorado State University
DOL	Department of Labor
ERMS	Employment Responsive Model State
ES	Employment Services
ESL	English as a Second Language
ETA	Employment and Training Administration
ETP	Eligible Training Provider
FTE	Full-time Equivalent
GED	General Educational Development
HRC	Human Research Committee
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
IEP	Individual Employment Plan
ITA	Individual Training Account
JOBS	Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training

JSA	Job Search Agency
JTPA	Job Training Partnership Act
LFDA	Labor Force Development Association
MDTA	Manpower Development and Training Act
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NFTA-TAA	North American Free Trade Agreement-Transitional Adjustment Assistance
NGA	National Governor's Association
OA	Occupation Agency
OJT	On-the-Job Training
PRWORA	Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act
SBA	Sub-Baccalaureate Agency
TANF	Temporary Assistance for Needy Families
TEGL	Training and Employment Guidance Letter
UI	Unemployment Insurance
WIA	Workforce Investment Act
WIB	Workforce Investment Board

## APPENDIX B: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

### Telephone Script

My name is Vida Wilkinson and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Colorado State University under the direction of Dr. Jerry Gilley who is a professor in the School of Education. I am conducting a qualitative research study that will describe what affect the Workforce Investment Act had on the delivery of workforce education and training services at the state provider level. In particular, I am interested in partnerships that developed among workforce services, economic development, and community college in response to WIA.

I am recruiting individuals who are currently (formerly) in an administrative position at one of these three agencies to participate in an audio-taped interview that will take somewhere between 30 – 120 minutes. The amount of time will depend on your employment history with the agency, your knowledge of the WIA structure, and your ability to influence workforce development policy and partnerships.

Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary with no known risks or benefits. Further, while being interviewed you may terminate the interview at any time. If you do choose to participate, you will be asked to review and sign an informed consent, which relays to you that all communications will be kept confidential and you will only be identified by an assigned pseudonym. I will not produce any documents that identify you.

Do you have any questions for me at this time? (If agree to participate, schedule a day/time/place for the interview)

If you have any further questions for me, please contact me please contact me at (970) 407-1743 or [vidadm@holly.colostate.edu](mailto:vidadm@holly.colostate.edu). You may also contact Dr. Jerry Gilley at (970) 491-2918.

## E-Mail Script

Dear (Recipient):

My name is Vida Wilkinson and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Colorado State University (CSU). To fulfill the dissertation requirement of my degree, I am conducting a qualitative research study that will describe what affect the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) had on the delivery of workforce education and training services at the state provider level. In particular, I am interested in partnerships that developed among workforce services, economic development, and community college in response to WIA.

I am recruiting individuals who are currently (formerly) in an administrative position at one of these three agencies to participate in an audio-taped interview that will take somewhere between 30 – 120 minutes at a time and place of your convenience. The amount of time will depend on your employment history with the agency, your knowledge of the WIA structure, and your ability to influence workforce development policy and partnerships. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary with no known risks or benefits. Further, while being interviewed you may terminate the interview at any time

CSU adheres to strict federal regulations when conducting research involving human subjects. If you do choose to participate, you will be asked to review and sign an informed consent, which relays to you that all communications will be kept confidential and you will only be identified by an assigned pseudonym. I will not produce any documents that identify you.

I am working directly under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. Jerry Gilley who is a professor in the School of Education at CSU. He is also serving as the Principal Investigator for this study and will oversee that all tapes and documents are handled as required by federal regulations.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study. If you have any questions concerning this research study, please contact me at (970) 407-1743 or [vidadm@holly.colostate.edu](mailto:vidadm@holly.colostate.edu). You may also contact Dr. Jerry Gilley at (970) 491-2918.

Sincerely,

Vida D. Wilkinson  
Ph.D. Candidate, School of Education  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado



## Letter Script

[Date]

[Recipients address]

Dear (Recipient):

My name is Vida Wilkinson and I am a doctoral student in the School of Education at Colorado State University (CSU). To fulfill the dissertation requirement of my degree, I am conducting a qualitative research study that will describe what affect the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 (WIA) had on the delivery of workforce education and training services at the state provider level. In particular, I am interested in partnerships that developed among workforce services, economic development, and community college in response to WIA.

I am requesting your participation in this study due to your knowledge of the impact WIA legislation had on (agency name) based on your current (former) administrative position. If you agree to participate, I would ask that you allow me to interview you for a time period somewhere between 30-120 minutes at a time and place of your convenience. The amount of time will depend on your employment history with the agency, your knowledge of the WIA structure, and your ability to influence workforce development policy and partnerships. Your participation in this study is strictly voluntary and there are no known risks or benefits to you personally. Further, during the interview process you may terminate the interview at any time.

CSU adheres to strict federal regulations when conducting research involving human subjects. If you choose to participate, all communications will be kept confidential and you will only be identified by an assigned pseudonym. I will also not produce any documents that will identify you. In order to participate in an interview, you will be asked to review and sign in my presence an informed consent form. This form will indicate that the interview will be audio-taped, which along with the consent forms are required to be stored in a locked cabinet for a minimum of three years. I am working directly under the supervision of my advisor, Dr. Jerry Gilley who is a professor in the School of Education at CSU. He is also serving as the Principal Investigator for this study and will oversee that all tapes and documents are handled appropriately.

Thank you for your consideration to participate in this study. If you have any questions concerning this research study, please contact me at (970) 407-1743 or [vidadm@holly.colostate.edu](mailto:vidadm@holly.colostate.edu). You may also contact Dr. Jerry Gilley at (970) 491-2918.

Sincerely,

Vida D. Wilkinson  
Ph.D. Candidate, School of Education  
Colorado State University  
Fort Collins, Colorado

## APPENDIX C: LETTER OF COOPERATION

August 8, 2005

Human Subjects Review Committee  
Colorado State University  
321 General Services Building  
Fort Collins, CO 80523-2011

To Human Subjects Review Committee Members:

Dr. Jerry W. Gilley has requested permission to collect research data from employees at (name of agency). We are aware that the purpose of this study is to both describe what effect the delivery of workforce investment activities as defined in the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 had on our agency and convey the partnership strategies utilized in forming the Wyoming Workforce Alliance.

We understand that Dr. Gilley's study involves interviews of our agency's staff and possibly those that we may refer due to their being able to provide instrumental information for this study. At the time of the interview we will be asked to sign a consent form, which indicates our understanding that the interviews conducted are confidential and only the research team of Dr. Gilley and Vida Wilkinson will have access to identifiable data. The participation of our staff members and anyone that we refer is strictly voluntary and consent may be withdrawn and participation ceased at any time.

As a representative of (agency name), I am authorized to grant permission to Dr. Jerry Gilley to conduct interviews at our agency.

If you have any questions, please contact me at (phone number).

Sincerely,

[Name of Authorized Representative]  
[Official Title]

## APPENDIX D: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

### Section I – Background Information (interviewee and agency)

1. Describe your employment status (or stakeholder relationship) with [workforce services, economic development, or community college].
  - What is your position?
  - How long have you been associated with the agency?
  - Have you been in other positions with this agency?
  - Other pertinent background information.
2. Describe the stakeholders of your agency.
  - Who are your stakeholders?
  - What services do you provide your stakeholders?

### Section II – WIA of 1998 (both interviewees and organization perspective)

1. What is your understanding of WIA legislation?
  - What is the purpose of the One-Stop Center?
  - What are the goals?
  - How are services provided?
  - What is the role of WIB?
  - What is the role of businesses?
2. What changes in structure or processes occurred at (agency) since WIA implementation?
  - Were there changes in your mission and goals?
  - Were there changes in services provided to your stakeholders?

- Were there changes in organization structure?
- Were there changes in organization leadership (due to WIA)?

### **Section III – Wyoming Workforce Alliance – Partnership-Related Questions**

1. What initiated the establishment of the workforce partnership?
  - WIA implementation?
  - Economic conditions?
  - Labor market conditions?
  
2. As a representative of (workforce services, economic development, community college) describe the partnership role of your agency.
  - What services does your agency provide?
  - How does your agency provide services?
  
3. How would you describe the roles of the other two agencies?
  - What services do they provide?
  - How do they provide the services?
  - Who communicates with the other two agencies?
  
4. Describe how the workforce partnership is managed.
  - What are the mission and goals?
  - Describe the strategic or management plan?
  
5. What services does the partnership provide for your agencies' stakeholders?
  - What type of occupational skills training? (Labor Market data)

- What role does business play in the services you provide?
  - How do they view the partnership?
- 6A. Please define each of the following four terms that are most often used in describing a partnership:
- Cooperation
  - Coordination
  - Collaboration
  - Integration
- 6B. Based on your definitions, what type of partnership describes the Workforce Alliance?
7. What do you envision for the future of the workforce partnership?
- What does your agency regard as the next step for the partnership?
  - How does this involve your agency?
  - How does this involve the other two agencies

#### **Section IV – Workforce Development**

1. The next two questions are about workforce development,
  - How would you define workforce development?
  - How would you define a workforce development system?
  
2. Describe the role of (workforce services, economic development, or community college) in relation to workforce development issues in this state.
  - How much input does your agency have in determining workforce development policy?
  - What is the decision making and communication process for deciding on new workforce development programs?
  - How do new workforce development strategies get implemented?
  - What role does your agency have in the implementation of new workforce development programs?

#### **Section V – Devolution (process of transferring power from federal to state and local levels)**

1. What are your thoughts about the continued devolution of federal policy?
  - Does this have any impact on your agency?
  - How does your agency respond to increased management responsibility?

## APPENDIX E: CONSENT FORM

### **Consent to Participate in a Research Study Colorado State University**

**TITLE OF STUDY:** Delivery of Workforce Investment Act of 1998 One-Stop Center Services: One State's Approach to Establishing a Workforce Development Agency Partnership

**PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** JERRY W. GILLEY, RM. 246 EDUCATION BUILDING (1588); 970-491-2918

**CO-PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:** VIDA D. WILKINSON,

#### **WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO TAKE PART IN THIS RESEARCH?**

You are being invited to take part in this research because you currently are or have been in an administrative decision making position with one of the workforce agency partners or governance of WIA.

#### **WHO IS DOING THE STUDY?**

Vida D. Wilkinson, who is a doctoral candidate at Colorado State University, will be the Co-Investigator and researcher conducting this study. She will be under the guidance and supervision of Jerry W. Gilley, Principal Investigator and professor at Colorado State University.

#### **WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?**

The purpose of this qualitative case study is twofold. The first purpose will be to describe what affect the delivery of workforce investment activities as defined in the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) had on three typical workforce development partners: workforce services, economic development, and community college. The second is to convey the strategies used by the workforce agency partnership based on emergent findings.

#### **WHERE IS THE STUDY GOING TO TAKE PLACE AND HOW LONG WILL IT LAST?**

This study will take place at three state-level workforce agencies and will last no longer than one year.

#### **WHAT WILL I BE ASKED TO DO?**

In a face-to-face, telephone, or e-mail interview setting, you will be asked to respond to a series of open-ended questions that pertain to the following areas: your position at or your relationship to one of the three workforce agencies partners, your understanding of WIA legislation, the role of your agency in relation to workforce development, how and why the partnership was established, and description of the roles of each of the agencies in relation to the partnership. The interview will last between 30 and 120 minutes depending on the experiences you have had and are willing to discuss. I will also set a second meeting time with you to review your interview transcripts and to ask any follow up questions resulting from our initial interview.

Page 1 of 3 Participant's initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**ARE THERE REASONS WHY I SHOULD NOT TAKE PART IN THIS STUDY?**

You would not partake in this study if you have never been employed or somehow connected in an administrative decision making position with one of the workforce agency partners or governance of WIA.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS?**

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. It is not possible to identify all potential risks in research procedures, but the researcher(s) have taken reasonable safeguards to minimize any known and potential, but unknown, risks.

**WILL I BENEFIT FROM TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

There are no direct benefits to you as a participant in this study.

**DO I HAVE TO TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?** Your participation in this research is voluntary. If you decide to participate in the study, you may withdraw your consent and stop participating at any time without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled.

**WHAT WILL IT COST ME TO PARTICIPATE?** The only cost to you to participate in this study will be the time you spend with the researcher as a participant.

**WHO WILL SEE THE INFORMATION THAT I GIVE?**

We will keep private all research records that identify you, to the extent allowed by law.

Your information will be combined with information from other people taking part in the study. When we write about the study to share it with other researchers, we will write about the combined information we have gathered. You will not be identified in these written materials. We may publish the results of this study; however, we will keep you name and other identifying information private.

As a participant in the study, you will only be identified by a pseudonym that will be assigned by the researcher. Pseudonyms will be assigned in sequential order as interviews of workforce agency participants are conducted and will refer to you as administrator with the chronological number (for example, Administrator 1). During the study, the researcher will maintain a list that links your name to your number only to assure that the research record is complete. This list will be destroyed at the end of the study.

We will make every effort to prevent anyone who is not on the research team from knowing that you gave us information, or what that information is. For example, your name will be kept separate from your research records and these two things will be stored in different places under lock and key. You should know, however, that there are some circumstances in which we may have to show your information to other people. For example, the law may require us to show your information to a court

**CAN MY TAKING PART IN THE STUDY END EARLY?**

You would only be removed from the study if you do not meet the participant selection criteria as described under the question of reasons why I should not partake in the study or if you withdraw voluntarily.



**WILL I RECEIVE ANY COMPENSATION FOR TAKING PART IN THIS STUDY?**

Compensation will not be provided for your participation in this study.

**WHAT HAPPENS IF I AM INJURED BECAUSE OF THE RESEARCH?**

The Colorado Governmental Immunity Act determines and may limit Colorado State University's legal responsibility if an injury happens because of this study. Claims against the University must be filed within 180 days of the injury.

**WHAT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?**

Before you decide whether to accept this invitation to take part in the study, please ask any questions that might come to mind now. Later, if you have questions about the study, you can contact the investigator, Vida D. Wilkinson at 970-407-1743 or by e-mail at [Vida.Martin@colostate.edu](mailto:Vida.Martin@colostate.edu). If you have any questions about your rights as a volunteer in this research, contact Celia Walker, Director of Regulatory Compliance, at 970-491-1553. We will give you a copy of this consent form to take with you.

**WHAT ELSE DO I NEED TO KNOW?**

Your signature acknowledges that you have read the information stated and willingly sign this consent form. Your signature also acknowledges that you have received, on the date signed, a copy of this document containing 3 pages.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed name of person agreeing to take part in the study

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of person providing information to participant

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Research Staff

Page 3 of 3 Participant's initials \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX F: OBSERVATION PROTOCOLS

<b>Observation Protocol, September 22, 2005</b> Setting Observed: ERMS Workforce Investment Board Quarterly Meeting, Day 1 Observer and role of observer: Vida D. Wilkinson, non-participant Time: 1:00 pm Place: County Extension Office Number in attendance: 25 members, 8 Job Search Agency Staff, and 9 non-members Length of Observation: 4 ½ hours	
<b>Descriptive Notes:</b> (notes that will describe in chronological order what occurred at the site )  1. Welcome, agenda approved after some rearrangement due to 8 voting members, including chairman were going to be arriving 2 hours late. Each member receives a binder with agenda-referenced tabs.  2. Reports: Workforce Development Training Fund uses (primarily for incumbent workforce and data indicates pay increases after training especially for lower end jobs, Senior MOU support requested, plus encouraging older workers in the workplace, Youth Council summarized their meeting held earlier that day.  3. Short break with agenda change for business tour 4. Update on final outcome of 2 year WIA Unified Plan that was due to DOL by May 31, 2005; Integrated Systems Technology Taskforce Report, Legislative Committee Report, and Job Search Agency budget report with monies primarily targeted at recruiting workers to state. 5. Break with arrival of 8 members 6. Self- introductions of all those at meeting 7. Strategic Planning Session conducted by a consultant due to governor wanting WIB to provide direction on how to manage for the state's growth and workforce shortage. Two of four goals that WIB developed in 2001 were determined to be the focus for the next biennium. One of them deals with closing the gap between supply and demand of the workforce and the other is about employment equity for the state's entire workforce. 8. Meeting adjourned	<b>Reflective Notes:</b> (notes about observer experiences, hunches, insights, themes)  1. Orderly and well organized, even with multiple agenda changes due to late arrivals.  2. Observer notes indicate that there was an emphasis on reporting businesses' perspective of employment services. There was a question about the reason for cancelled trainings, which was explained as conflicts by the businesses. This question was raised by a business representative and most likely was to determine if there was a problem with the quality of the trainings. 3. Business is willing to be flexible 4. Hard to follow along with this part of the meeting, since members were referred to tab sections in their binder. This is an efficient manner of getting through agenda items, but frustrating to non members in attendance. 5. Chairman quickly got meeting to order 6. Friendly atmosphere 7. The members had some lively debate about what goals to choose and the consultant served as a mediator during this process. There was not any mention of next steps in the strategic planning process or how WIB members would deliver the agreed upon goals to the legislative. The assumption is probably the legislative committee would handle this role. 8. No reflections

**Observation Protocol, September 23, 2005**

Setting Observed: ERMS Workforce Investment Board Quarterly Meeting, Day 2

Observer and role of observer: Vida D. Wilkinson, non-participant

Time: 8:00 am

Place: County Extension Office

Number in attendance: 25 members, 6 Job Search Agency Staff, and 9 non-members

Length of Observation: 4 ½ hours

**Descriptive Notes:** (notes that will describe in chronological order what occurred at the site )

1. Meeting called to order. Update from local job search agency about 4 issues being faced in the county, which include: critical skills, youth education transitions, workforce recruitment, and high cost of health care. Also, heard from local community college about new program developed to help with shortage of electricians, economic development about workforce recruiting efforts, and a welding business about lack of skilled workers and the need to have more youth seek 2 year technical careers

2. Tour of local welding business

3. Report on state-wide workforce report that was conducted by a professional economic development consulting firm. 3000 individual interviews were conducted about perceptions of housing, employment and education. Economic development stated that they have changed priorities from recruiting business to building infrastructure. Community college reported that they are working on the challenge of finding where graduates are employed.

4. Job Search Agency Web-site development and branding

5. Department of Education Career Clustering project with Job Search agency to keep youth in the state.

6. Left before meeting was concluded due to conflict.

**Reflective Notes:** (notes about observer experiences, hunches, insights, themes)

1. Stories sent strong messages about the criticality of the workforce shortage and some of the impediments that are faced in just this community. Although efforts are being made to help situation, there is a lot of work that needs to be done.

2. Fascinating to see the large size of this operation and the high level of technology that they use.

3. The uses of the results from the report were viewed with mixed opinions. There was visible tension between a member from economic development who believed the report was a testament by the citizens that the community colleges were not responding properly to the needs of business and a community college member who took exception with this comment. The chairman quieted the community college person, but another member reminded the group that caution needs to be taken when marketing this report due to how data is reported.

4. Very professionally presented, lucky to have two individuals with a great deal of talent.

5. Curious where college was in this effort, were they not aware or not invited?

6. Observer appreciated opportunity to attend.

<b>Observation Protocol, October 17, 2005</b> Setting Observed: ERMS Labor Force Development Association Regular Meeting Observer and role of observer: Vida D. Wilkinson, non-participant Time: 3:00 pm Place: Sub-Baccalaureate Agency Conference Room Number in attendance: 5; 3 from Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, 1 from Job Search Agency, and 1 from Occupation Agency Length of Observation: 1 hour	
<p><b>Descriptive Notes:</b> (notes that will describe in chronological order what occurred at the site )            Per Agenda:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. WorkKeys Skills Assessment Career Readiness Certificate is being evaluated by the Job Search Agency, which needs to make a decision if this is valuable tool for businesses. One regional office has the ability to offer the certificate, but struggling to get business "buy-in". Occupation agency member suggested that it wasn't that businesses weren't interested; they didn't want to manage them. Action item: visit with businesses.</li> <li>2. State-wide workforce survey report will be discussed at the next state-wide Sub-Baccalaureate manager's meeting on workforce development. Occupation Agency member stated that results in report indicate that, "lots of communities are using private trainers and asked why this was occurring.</li> <li>3. Department of Education is working with Job Search Agency on 16 career clusters to provide a transitional linkage from high school to college.</li> <li>4. Job Search Agency strategic plan was reviewed. Discussion was focused on both business and job seeker stakeholders. Working on changing image of agency from one that is for the unemployed to one that is demand driven and working with businesses' skill needs. Job seekers are having success at One-Stop Centers.</li> <li>5. A discussion was introduced about new business development in a community and that all three agencies need to be presenting information about their services to these potential companies. Currently, there is not a consistent state-wide approach of what agencies are informed of the meetings. This is especially true for community colleges and the Sub-Baccalaureate members requested that this situation be resolved. Decision was immediately made to have a meeting in two weeks to work on the details.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Reflective Notes:</b> (notes about observer experiences, hunches, insights, themes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The Occupation Agency member had a defensive tone when talking about the business stakeholders' openness to the WorkKeys certificate program.</li> <li>2. After the comment about the use of private trainers by the Occupation Agency member, the Sub-Baccalaureate members exhibited frustration with the person and not the information. Observer had the definite feeling that this tension between the two agencies was an ongoing situation.</li> <li>3. Informational.</li> <li>4. Job Search Agency member has a clear understanding of the purpose of WIA and One-Stop Centers.</li> <li>5. This was an interesting development that after meeting for 3 years, the agency partners had uncovered a significant hole in their communication processes. This again caused tension between the Occupation Agency and the Sub-Baccalaureate Agency.</li> </ol>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Observation Protocol, October 31, 2005</b></p> <p>Setting Observed: ERMS Labor Force Development Association Special Meeting</p> <p>Observer and role of observer: Vida D. Wilkinson, non-participant</p> <p>Time: 3:00 pm</p> <p>Place: Occupation Agency Conference Room</p> <p>Number in attendance: 5; 2 from Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, 1 from Job Search Agency, and 2 from Occupation Agency</p> <p>Length of Observation: 1 hour</p>	
<p><b>Descriptive Notes:</b> (notes that will describe in chronological order what occurred at the site )</p> <p>Topic: Coordination among three LFDA partners for new businesses that are considering locating to a region in the state.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The process of community business creation was presented by a member from the Occupation Agency. This process begins at the state level and once a community and business determine that they want to meet about the compatibility of location, the local economic development agency is responsible for this interaction. Determination was made that there is not a consistent model of who is included at these meetings and often varies due to the type of relationship among the agencies at the local level.</li> <li>2. The next topic was how to reach out to the local economic development agencies and encourage them to be more inclusive. Determined that this would be difficult due some areas use confidentiality as a reason that not all agencies receive information about business prospects. Some discussion that each community college has different approaches to workforce training.</li> <li>3. In general, businesses want training delivered to: a) meet their workforce needs, b) compressed time (not semester), c) what is the cost, and d) training provided at time convenient for them.</li> <li>4. Action items: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Occupation Agency member will talk to local economic development directors about the criticality of including all agencies and work on strengthening relationships.</li> <li>b. Sub-Baccalaureate Agency member will set this as an agenda item for the next community college workforce development managers meeting.</li> <li>c. Job Search Agency member will ask regional director to discuss this at next regional meeting.</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p><b>Reflective Notes:</b> (notes about observer experiences, hunches, insights, themes)</p> <p>Overall reflections:</p> <p>The meeting had a certain amount of finger pointing until they all realized that the real problem was at the local level. The primary thing that was accomplished at this meeting was that there were members from each agency who were taking an active role in discussing this situation. There was a lot of protection of their own agencies, so there is more work to be done before an agreed upon outcome.</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Observation Protocol, November 7, 2005</b></p> <p>Setting Observed: ERMS Labor Force Development Association Regular Meeting</p> <p>Observer and role of observer: Vida D. Wilkinson, non-participant</p> <p>Time: 3:00 pm</p> <p>Place: Occupation Agency Conference Room</p> <p>Number in attendance: 7; 2 from Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, 1 from Job Search Agency, and 2 from Occupation Agency. Two guests from Department of Education</p> <p>Length of Observation: 1 hour</p>	
<p><b>Descriptive Notes:</b> (notes that will describe in chronological order what occurred at the site )</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Department of Education presented that there are 16 Career Cluster pamphlets that they are developing as part of a special state-wide scholarship foundation requirement, which is for graduates from schools in the state. This is an effort to try to keep youth in the state. location, the local economic development agency is</li> <li>2. Follow-up discussion of special meeting that was held on October 31, 2005. All three agencies want to deliver the message that they are united at the state-level and use this as a model to help establish local partnerships. Also, the partnership should be viewed as a value-added relationship that unites the three agencies. Established goal of showing linkages to each other's agencies through web-sites and brochures.</li> <li>3. Sub-Baccalaureate Agency strategic plan was reviewed. There was not any links to Occupation Agency.</li> </ol>	<p><b>Reflective Notes:</b> (notes about observer experiences, hunches, insights, themes)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Informational.</li> <li>2. After one week, there was such a different attitude being displayed about the importance of working together to help local areas.</li> <li>3. All three agencies need to make a concerted effort to include the other two somewhere in their annual goals to show workforce development linkages are being addressed.</li> </ol>

**APPENDIX G: ERMS WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL MEMBERS**

<b>ERMS Geographical Location</b>	<b>Sector and Status Representation</b>
Central	Labor organization
Southeast	Ex-officio – Department of Education
Southeast	Public Instruction
Northeast	Business
Northwest	Legislative appointee
Southwest	Legislative appointee
Southeast	Ex-officio – Workforce Services
Northeast	Business
Southeast	Business Council
Southeast	Community based organization
Southeast	Governor
Southeast	Labor organization
Southwest	Legislative appointee
Northwest	Business
Southeast	University
Southeast	Ex-officio - Department of Family Services
Northwest	Ex-officio – college president
Southeast	Community based organization
Southwest	Youth Workforce
Southeast	Ex-officio – Department of Employment
Southeast	Ex-officio – Community College
Southeast	Public education
Central	Business
Central	Business
Southeast	Business
Southeast	Business
Southwest	Business
Southeast	Legislative appointee

## APPENDIX H: DOCUMENT SUMMARY OF LFDA POWERPOINT PRESENTATION

Document date: January 2003

Description of document: ERMS Workforce Development PowerPoint Presentation

Document association: Meeting to introduce workforce development partnership to regional agencies

Significance of document: Establishes the date of the LFDA MOU and the visionary model for the partnership

Brief Summary of contents:

- Triad partnership model was introduced in conjunction with the Labor Force Development Association was formed by the Occupation Agency, the Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, and the Job Search Agency in order to provide business training solutions and workforce development support throughout the state
- MOU between the Occupation Agency, Sub-Baccalaureate Agency, and Job Search Agency signed – fall of 2002