



EASTERN WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

BUSINESS SERVICES POLICY

Effective November 15, 2004



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CHARTER

The regional “Business Services Team” is the ‘primary owner of the process’ for delivering exceptional customer service to business customers. The Team is responsible for developing, maintaining and improving the process by which customers are served throughout the Eastern Workforce Investment Area. The Team is responsible to the Eastern Workforce Investment Board’s Executive Committee and its designated staff and is expected to communicate regularly on the process and challenges to successful implementation. The team is empowered to create deployment teams and workgroups as necessary to build appropriate tools, products, services and processes required to improve customer service.

All other areas the Team wishes to address and implement, as identified by business customers, to attain excellent customer satisfaction are within the purview of the Team to decide.

It is expected the Team will:

- Develop training for new staff assigned to serve the business customer (inclusive of partner staff), conduct training, gather employee customer feedback on the training process, and improve the staff training as appropriate.
- Develop an approach to responding to targeted industries as well as individual employers within the industry.
- Develop/Improve services required to meet and exceed customer expectations.
- Develop/Improve material and information required to meet and exceed customer expectations.
- Develop/Improve technology capacity required to meet and exceed customer expectations.
- Regularly analyze external customer data to inform the items above.

This Team is an ongoing team partnership with the support and recognition of Eastern Workforce Investment Board.

Acknowledged this _____ day of _____, 2004:

Chief Local Elected Official

EWIB Chair

FORWARD

The state purpose of the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 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.”

Throughout the Act there are references to the important role of the business community and the strength of a “business driven” workforce system. Business leadership and direction for the system is the underlying component envisioned as the success of WIA. The Act requires a majority of the membership on all State Workforce Investment Boards must be business leaders. Similarly, a majority of members of any local workforce investment board must be representatives of businesses in that area. These requirements recognize businesses are the foundation of economic growth in any state or region. Both the message and promise of WIA is business as the primary customer. A vibrant local economy should focus on expanding and retaining business as well as attracting new business. One of the foundation blocks of economic development is “workforce development”. A trained, highly skilled workforce is critical to the success of business. It is essential that a delivery system be established that facilitates the connection between local businesses and their prospective employees.

The primary method of delivering services under WIA is through a system of One-Stop centers designed to unify the numerous employment and training programs into a single, customer-friendly set of services and the delivery of those services. The One-Stop system has become employer as not just an equal customer to job-seekers, but businesses as the focus of the system. Our ability to help job seekers find suitable employment is significantly diminished without the involvement of the job creators. For this cycle to materialize there must be appropriate services focused on the job creators. While success measurements are primarily associated in the One-Stop centers’ ability to assist employers in the location of qualified workers, shorten vacancy times and train unqualified workers for demand driven occupations the business needs are greater than job matching and training. True success lies in the ability to secure ongoing support and involvement of the business community in the workforce development and training system. This involvement will provide the necessary information for the system to focus limited resources on ensuring they are meeting the skill requirements of local business. This involvement also enables the jobseeker customers to receive the training and additional skills that improves their ability to secure employment locally, while guarantying the business community a workforce with skills necessary to ensure their competitiveness.

GENERAL PROVISION

Eastern Workforce Investment Board (EWIB) is engaged in the business of creating a workforce development system that aligns the business, educational and government sectors toward common objectives leading to job growth, employee productivity and business satisfaction. The focus of EWIB is to respond to the business needs, supporting various partners providing services in the evolving Workforce Development system by direct employee services, technical assistance or contracting for services that benefit the workforce business customers.

To meet the needs of the local business community and the partnership providing services to the business sector, EWIB establishes a policy to facilitate the development of business services identified and needed by the local employer community. The following menu is *not* intended to be the only services available. The menu reiterates the basic core services EWIB believes should be offered to the business community throughout the Workforce Area. An extension of these core services with the business community would align with the state and area economic development efforts. Optional services may be provided as the need is identified through collaboration of the partner members of the regional Business Services group and its local deployment teams and Business Services specialists.

MENU OF SUPPORTIVE BUSINESS SERVICES AT ONE-STOP CENTERS

1. Job Orders, Recruitment, and Referral:

Core Services:

- On-line Internet-based listing of entry level, technical and professional job openings, updated regularly
- Recruitment and accurate screening to fill specific positions
- Easy access to graduates from job training programs
- Screening for alien status

Optional Services:

- Coordination of interview processes and facilities
- Job Fairs
- Development of detailed job descriptions
- Employer checklist for reviewing resumes and/or applications
- Checklist of final interview reminders
- Interview Do's and Don'ts
- Effective Interviewing Tips & Questions

- Hiring Checklist
- Referrals and Follow-up services as needed

2. Assessment and Testing:

Core Services

- Evaluation of applicant skills
- Math and reading literacy assessment
- Typing tests

3. Training:

Core Services

- Soft skills training – training in topics such as communication skills, interpersonal relationships at work (dignity and respectfulness of others, interaction with supervisor/subordinates, etc.), and basic work ethics
- Information about public/private programs for training to fit company needs
- Information about training programs for new and existing workers
- Information about the results of training programs
- Coordination of job training programs
- Information about financial incentives for training

Optional Services

- Workshops and Seminars
- Pooling companies for educational or training resources
- Business seminars and classes offered in partnership with Small Business Development Centers, Economic Development Organizations, Chambers of Commerce and other business organizations

4. Technical Assistance:

Core Services

- Assistance in designing job classifications and descriptions
- Employer handbook development
- ADA and OSHA assessment
- Assistance to employers to mediate layoffs (shared work programs, rapid response services)
- Training on interpreting unemployment insurance rules and regulations

Optional Services

- Training on interpreting employer tax rules and regulations
- Serve as information brokers to provide information on HR issues, labor laws, licensing, permitting and economic development
- Promote Employee Handbooks
- Guidance on Compliance Guidelines
- Exit Interview and Checklist

5. School-to-Work Learning Opportunities

Core Services:

- Work-based learning (the opportunity to arrange internships, mentoring, job shadowing, apprenticeship, on-the-job training and other work experience)

Optional Services:

- School-based learning (help in assisting schools with curriculum development and educational reform issues)

6. Economic Development

Core Services

- Information on Oklahoma's economic development programs
- Linkages with economic development organizations
- Business to business referrals

7. Labor Market Information Services

Core Services

- Statistics on the labor force
- Employment projections by industry and occupation
- Staffing patterns of industry
- Hourly wage rates by occupation
- The availability of workers by specific geographical area
- Information concerning layoff patterns
- Affirmative Action/EEO profiling (demographic information)

TRAINING, SUPPORT AND PROMOTIONAL OUTREACH

EWIB will work within the partnership and the business community to identify a specific set of skills and knowledge needed by the Business Services Specialists. Where

practical, staff of the partners will provide the training. However, if the partners recognize a skills gap that they cannot currently fill, EWIB will coordinate the efforts to acquire the staff or consultant necessary to provide the training.

In order to support the efforts of the local Business Services Specialists, it is the goal of EWIB to provide a web-based data base that will only be accessible by the group partners. The data base will house information about particular companies and their staff, wages, job opportunities, etc. This information will be to improve the quality of services being delivered through the system, by allowing us to understand the individual requirements of each business. Additionally, we will use this data base to create real time labor market information pertinent to our specific area. EWIB intends to utilize this information to help all of our partners align and improve the economic conditions of our communities.

Currently, EWIB provides a variety of products to market the system. Typically these are hand outs for job fairs, large group gatherings, etc. While this serves a purpose in promoting the Workforce Name and Banner, it does little to market and promote what the system can deliver to the business community. EWIB will coordinate the marketing effort to insure the development of a consistent approach in the promotion of products, human resource information and services. In working with the partners to market our products, EWIB will have a plan of action for marketing the Business Services delivered through the One-Stop Centers. EWIB will also implement a customer satisfaction instrument to be utilized in establishing a benchmark and embarking on a process of continuous improvement.

FEE-BASED SERVICES

Providing services required by the business customers may go beyond the resources available to the area partners. EWIB will develop a fee structure to cover the cost of such services to accompany the promotional efforts.

EXAMPLES:

- 1) Should a specific business or cluster of business identify a specific training need for their incumbent workforce a workshop/seminar or series of such can be arranged, promoted and sponsored by EWIB or in collaboration with other entities such as chambers, economic development organizations or educational institutes. Should this necessitate the procurement of a qualified trainer costs may by necessity or by choice be reimbursed through a registration or collection fee process.

2) For example, background checks of the applicants they wish us to refer; EWIB will negotiate a contract with that business to recover the cost of those backgrounds checks. This is an allowable activity described in the Act in section 134 (e). These contracts will implement a clause requiring the business client utilizing the service to list job openings with our Workforce Oklahoma One-Stop system. Should a business ask us to provide a service, not readily available, EWIB may design a protocol to ensure the future implementation of the service where feasible. EWIB will not duplicate any service currently being provided by any of the Workforce Partners. In fact, Business Service Specialists will be instructed to promote the efforts of our partners and referral system to eliminate any inefficiency in the system.

3) The Board recognizes the experience and ability of their staff to perform the functions required of them. Because of the staff's expertise, EWIB will promote providing customized board services and related products to other boards and potential customers on a fee basis. The focus of this effort is not to create a product specifically for sale, but to allow the Board to recover the cost of products that it requires in its daily operation. While this is not a fee service for the business community, it is a fee service aimed specifically at local boards.

CONCLUSION

A closer working relationship with the business community is the critical difference in aligning program and workforce center roles or functions with true system roles and demonstrates unified and visionary leadership in Board responsibility.