



**FY2016 and FY2017
Biennial Employment and Training Plan
Governor's Workforce Board RI**

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COVER PHOTO

Trainee learns to prepare bridge decking in Building Futures pre-apprenticeship program. Photo courtesy of Building Futures.

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Today's Vision... Tomorrow's Opportunity.

November 15, 2014

On behalf of the Governor's Workforce Board (GWB), we are pleased to submit to the Governor, Senate President, and Speaker of the House the following Biennial Employment & Training Plan for the State of Rhode Island for Fiscal Years 2016 and 2017.

Two years ago, our first-ever Biennial Plan provided an analysis of the workforce needs of RI businesses, a profile of the RI workforce, and an overview of employment and training expenditures and programs in RI. This analysis led to the establishment of four overarching priorities for the state to increase the impact of workforce development services: Employer Partnerships, Work Readiness, Career Pathways, and Workforce System Integration.

The FY2016-2017 Biennial Plan reaffirms these priorities, builds upon the progress of the past two years, responds to political and economic changes, and offers specific recommendations to further address the needs of businesses, workers, and the Rhode Island economy.

This Biennial Plan, like all successful workforce development efforts, is the result of collaboration among many partners. We would like to acknowledge the dozens of public and private sector colleagues who served on the Biennial Plan Advisory Committee, as well as the members of the Governor's Workforce Board, who spent many hours reviewing, discussing, and refining the priorities and recommendations that are included in this Plan.

We would particularly like to thank Governor Lincoln Chafee for his steadfast leadership and advocacy for workforce development, which, along with education and infrastructure, he consistently highlighted as one of the three building blocks of a strong economy.

Finally, we enthusiastically welcome Governor Gina Raimondo and look forward to supporting her agenda to grow jobs and the economy through strategic workforce development initiatives. This Biennial Plan provides a framework for such growth, but it will be Governor Raimondo's vision and leadership that will make this Plan a reality.

The Governor's Workforce Board and our many workforce system partners look forward to pursuing, and achieving, the goals of this Biennial Plan over the next two fiscal years.

Constance A. Howes
Chair

Rick Brooks
Executive Director

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Plan at a Glance

The Biennial Employment and Training Plan is an important tool for the workforce system in Rhode Island, bringing together state agencies, education providers, and businesses in order to identify the key steps that will build the state’s talent pipeline. The recommendations are as follows:

Our Vision

*We will **strengthen public-private partnerships** to improve our ability to connect qualified job seekers to existing job vacancies. We will strengthen and leverage public and private resources and systems to **build effective pathways for workers** to in-demand occupations at all skill and education levels to support RI’s economic competitiveness. We will **make the workforce system more efficient, effective, user-friendly, customer-centric, accountable, and aligned with economic development.***

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

- Identify and support **Private Sector Champions** to ensure the workforce system is informed by, and responsive to, employer workforce needs.
- **Connect Job Seekers with Job Openings** by engaging employer partners more in the workforce system and by raising awareness, participation, and engagement among employer partners.
- Identify additional opportunities for **Incumbent Worker Training**.

WORK READINESS

- **Expand Programming for Youth** including career exploration and work experience.
- Expand resources and services to address literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, and other work readiness skills for **Target Populations with Barriers to Employment**.
- Establish a statewide, employer-recognized **Work Readiness Credential** to be incorporated into workforce education and training programs and the K-12 system.
- Encourage employers to **Expand Internships** for students, out-of-school youth, and adults who are long-term unemployed, underemployed, or face significant barriers to employment.

CAREER PATHWAYS

- Promote funding of **“Dual Enrollment” Academic Programs** that allow students to gain high school and college credits simultaneously.
- Promote the establishment of **Apprenticeship Programs** in a range of occupations.
- Develop **Career Pathways** in sectors that are significant to the state’s economic development.
- Build **Career Pathways coaching** into all levels of education and training programs.
- In order to meet the changing demands of the labor market, **establish a process for identifying High-Wage, High-Demand occupations** that are not supported by existing career pathways.

WORKFORCE SYSTEM INTEGRATION

- Increase the frequency of **cabinet-level meetings on workforce development matters**.
- Conduct a **comprehensive system improvement plan** as charged by the General Assembly.
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system by directing existing inter-agency teams to **align workforce system planning and resources**.
- Market the workforce system as a set of **business services** aimed at solving business challenges.
- **Strengthen and expand partnerships** among agencies that serve key populations (e.g., youth, ex-offenders, non-custodial fathers).

Executive Summary

Two years ago, Rhode Island set out on a course to economic prosperity through enhanced workforce development with the first Biennial Employment and Training Plan. The plan mapped businesses' demands for skilled employees alongside the state's need for a thriving business community and residents' need for education, training, and support services. The Governor's Workforce Board (GWB) and the Biennial Plan Advisory Committee responded to the General Assembly's call to produce a biennial employment and training plan that would provide an analysis of current workforce funding, an analysis of gaps in meeting the needs of workers and employers, and a plan for workforce spending in Rhode Island.¹

This 2016-2017 Biennial Plan seeks to maintain and build upon the momentum created by that first plan. By statute, the Biennial Employment and Training Plan is required to identify "major priorities" for the next two fiscal years. In drafting this plan, the GWB, with the help of a range of strategic partners, conducted an extensive research and analysis process, developing recommendations for the workforce system that take into account not only the current economic climate and industry needs, but also anticipate changes in industry, demographics, and legislation. In the two years covered by this plan Rhode Island, like all other states, will be subject to the regulations of the recently signed federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA). In addition, the GWB will respond to the General Assembly's charge to conduct a "Comprehensive System Improvement Plan" to facilitate the seamless

About the Governor's Workforce Board Rhode Island and the Workforce System

The Governor's Workforce Board (GWB), established by Executive Order on September 22, 2005, integrated the functions of the State Workforce Investment Board (SWIB) and Human Resource Investment Council (HRIC). The GWB is the primary policy-making body on workforce development matters for the State of Rhode Island and has statutory responsibility and authority to plan, coordinate, fund, and evaluate workforce development activities in the State. The GWB consists of 19 members representing business, labor, education, community, and government who serve as members of the SWIB to oversee federal Workforce Investment Act Title I-B funds, and who also have responsibility to oversee the investment of state Job Development Funds.

The public workforce system in Rhode Island is comprised of the Governor's Workforce Board, the two local workforce investment boards, the Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner and its related post-secondary institutions, and the departments of Labor and Training; Education; Human Services; Corrections; Children, Youth and Families; and Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals. The Governor's Workforce Board works closely with eight Industry Partnerships who serve as liaisons to Rhode Island businesses in key sectors. Other workforce system partners include community-based organizations (CBOs), labor unions, private higher education, and private education and training providers. While workforce development has not historically been the core mission of K-12 and higher education, they are also crucial partners in the workforce system.

¹ RIGL §42-102-9 (h)

and coordinated delivery of workforce services in this state.² These important developments in state and federal regulations will affect the ways workforce development initiatives are funded and implemented, demanding an increased focus on efficiency and alignment.

Key Findings

CURRENT & FUTURE WORKFORCE NEEDS

- As of the writing of this document, the unemployment rate in Rhode Island is 7.7%. That's down from 10.5% in 2012 and the lowest it has been since the summer of 2008.
- Job growth from 2012 to 2022 is projected to yield a net increase of 51,420 jobs, based on a Bureau of Labor Statistics model that assumes full employment in 2018 (i.e., an unemployment rate of 5.2%). An additional 115,950 job openings are projected based on anticipated turnover.
- The top five growth sectors are projected to be: Health and Social Assistance; Accommodation and Food Service; Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services; Administrative and Waste Services; and Construction.
- Projected job growth through 2022 indicates that Rhode Island will have an economy in which 64% of all jobs require a high school diploma or less and 36% require at least some college.
- Even with high unemployment, employers report a skills mismatch between what they need and what the Rhode Island workforce provides.

THE RHODE ISLAND WORKFORCE

- Data shows that 59.2% of Rhode Islanders twenty-five or above have at least some post-secondary education or above, while 26.6% of such adults hold a only high school degree. 14.1% of such adults have less than a high school diploma or equivalent.
- Black and Hispanic Rhode Islanders are disproportionately lower-skilled and lower-educated.
- 42,300 RI residents were unemployed in September 2014, of which about 20 percent were collecting unemployment insurance benefits.
- Youth experience much higher unemployment rates (21.1%) than the average population (8.4%).
- 3,175 people were released from Rhode Island prisons in FY2013, and 24,173 were on probation or parole.
- Reductions in public subsidies for child care severely impact parents' ability to find and retain full time employment. Low-income workers receive 79% of all child care subsidies in Rhode Island.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING AND SERVICES

- Rhode Island spent \$63,665,119 in public dollars on a wide range of workforce programs (70.9% federal funds and 29.1% state funds). 14% of all funding for workforce development comes from the Job Development Fund.
- The majority of workforce funds (51.3%) is spent on the transitional workforce—unemployed adults over the age of 18—in a range of job placement, job readiness, and skills training

² §42-102-6(f)

programs. 30.2% is spent on youth, 14.3% on adult education, 2.9% on system development, and 1.3% on incumbent workers.

- There are gaps at every level of the workforce system in meeting the needs of employers and workers. The system is constrained by a number of factors, including a lack of adequate funding at every level and by the federal restrictions on use of funds for specific populations or purposes.
- Of the 83,412 Rhode Islanders who are served by the workforce system, 55,180 (66%) receive employment services such as job search, job matching, and resume development; 9,698 (12%) receive adult basic education; and 17,787 (21%) receive occupational skills training.

Major Priorities and Recommendations

EMPLOYER PARTNERSHIPS

The public workforce system and employers must continue to engage and grow in partnership, with each bringing its respective strengths to bear. These partnerships will ensure that training and education are responsive to, and aligned with, employer needs. To that end, the Governor's Workforce Board recommends the following:

- Identify and support **Private Sector Champions** to promote, challenge, and engage business leaders to ensure the workforce system is informed by, and responsive to, employer workforce needs.
- **Connect Job Seekers with Job Openings** by engaging employer partners more thoroughly in the workforce system and by raising awareness, participation, and engagement among employer partners regarding initiatives that support the training and hiring of individuals with significant barriers to employment.
- Identify additional opportunities for **Incumbent Worker Training** and assist businesses in backfilling openings that are created by upgrading current staff.

WORK READINESS

All youth and adults must have the opportunity to acquire the core literacy, numeracy, and work readiness skills (such as team work, communication, and problem-solving) necessary to succeed in the workplace. In order to provide that opportunity, the Governor's Workforce Board recommends:

- **Expand Programming for Youth** that includes opportunities to explore industries and occupations while gaining valuable work experience.
- Expand resources and improve services to address literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, computer skills, and other work readiness skills for **Target Populations with Barriers to Employment**.
- Establish a statewide, employer-recognized **Work Readiness Credential** to be incorporated into workforce education and training programs and the K-12 system.

- Encourage employers, especially private-sector businesses, to **Expand Internships** for students, out-of-school youth, and adults who are long-term unemployed, underemployed, or face significant barriers to employment.

CAREER PATHWAYS

The public workforce system, in partnership with employers, must provide youth and adults with Career Pathways that encompass a continuum of training, education, work experience, and supportive services that lead to good jobs and careers in high-growth, high-demand, strategically important sectors of the Rhode Island economy.

- Promote funding of **“Dual Enrollment” Academic Programs** that allow students to gain high school and college credits simultaneously, particularly through programs linked to growth sectors of the economy.
- Promote the establishment of new **Apprenticeship Programs** in traditional and non-traditional occupations with links to secondary education, post-secondary education, and the workforce system.
- Develop **Career Pathways** in Rhode Island’s industry sectors—both those represented by GWB Industry Partnerships and others that have been identified by DLT and/or CommerceRI as strategically important to the state’s economic development.
- As a bridge to more advanced workforce development programs, build **Career Pathways coaching** into work readiness programs, pre-employment training programs, adult education, and K-12.
- In order to meet the changing demands of the labor market, **establish a process for identifying High-Wage, High-Demand occupations** that are not supported by existing career pathways.

WORKFORCE SYSTEM INTEGRATION

The workforce system must be fully integrated in order to coordinate planning, funding, and services; evaluate and report the effectiveness and efficiency of services; and align with state economic development strategies.

- Increase the frequency of **cabinet-level meetings on workforce development matters**.
- Conduct a **comprehensive system improvement plan** as charged by the General Assembly.
- Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system by directing existing inter-agency teams to **align workforce system planning and resources**.
- Market the workforce system as a set of **business services** aimed at providing solutions for business and industry challenges.
- **Strengthen and expand partnerships** and collaboration among agencies and organizations that serve the same populations (e.g., youth, ex-offenders, non-custodial fathers).

Introduction

Rhode Island places high value on lifelong learning and skill development in order to add value to both businesses and the lives of individuals. This can be achieved by better aligning programs with industry needs and eliminating barriers to skill development. Rhode Island's workforce system has been working diligently to address these goals through partnerships between business and industry, education and training providers, and state workforce agencies. In addition, workforce development policy and planning efforts have been bolstered by increased collaboration with CommerceRI and the Statewide Planning Commission.

In 2011, the Rhode Island General Assembly directed the Governor's Workforce Board to develop a biennial employment and training plan that would provide an analysis of Rhode Island's workforce funding and gaps in meeting the needs of workers and employers and would develop a plan for workforce spending for the state.

The first Biennial Employment and Training Plan, written in 2012 and covering fiscal years 2014-2015, identified many important action steps to move Rhode Island closer to the goals listed above. Through the identification of four major priorities (Employer Partnerships, Work Readiness, Career Pathways, and the Public Workforce System), the FY2014-15 Biennial Plan focuses on strategies and action steps to maximize limited state and federal funding.

Key strengths of the FY2014-2015 Biennial Plan include its focus on Career Pathways, opportunities for experiential learning, the work readiness credential and other workforce readiness initiatives. Even in entry level occupations, job seekers need access to education and training in order to be competitive. Rhode Island's efforts to increase literacy, numeracy, and soft skills are essential for young and transitional workers. Further, through employer partnerships, workforce development agencies and related service providers have been able to identify and better address industry needs. Beyond these few highlights, the last two years have shown significant progress in each of the four priority areas (see Progress Report, Page 42) and the workforce system is poised to build upon this progress in FY2016-2017.

For this, the second Biennial Plan, the Governor's Workforce Board, with the help of a Biennial Plan Advisory Committee (see Appendix 1), held a briefing with nationally recognized labor market economists; conducted an employer survey; collected data regarding the labor market, current and emerging workforce, and demographics;

Inputs for the FY2016-2017 Biennial Employment and Training Plan include:

- Employer Survey
- Labor Market Information Analysis
- Literature Review
- Best Practices Scan
- Stakeholder Focus Groups
- Labor Market Economist Forum
- FY2014-2015 Biennial Plan Progress Report

conducted focus groups with businesses and service providers, gathered evidence of progress, and developed a set of recommendations to meet the needs of businesses and individuals across the state. Labor market data came primarily from the Department of Labor and Training's Labor Market Information (LMI) Unit, which has just updated the 10-year occupational and industry projections for the state. The LMI Unit was invaluable in their support and analysis throughout the process. Expenditure and program data comes from the FY2013 Unified Workforce Development Expenditure & Program Report (UEP), which incorporates data from all public workforce development agencies.

The Advisory Committee met on six occasions to develop and refine the Biennial Plan. Members of the committee came to the table with expertise across the workforce development system, including:

State and Local Agencies: Commerce RI; Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities, and Hospitals; Department of Children, Youth, and Families; Department of Corrections; Department of Human Services; Department of Labor and Training; Division of Statewide Planning; Governor's Workforce Board; Office of Management and Budget; Rhode Island Department of Education; RI Office of Library and Information Services; RI Senate Policy; Rhode Island Student Loan Authority; Workforce Partnership of Greater RI; Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston

Business: Governor's Workforce Board Industry Partnerships (Building Futures, Defense Industry Partners, Polaris MEP, RI Hospitality Association, RI Marine Trades Association, SENEDIA, Stepping Up, Tech Collective), Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce, Francis Fraser Consulting, RI Society of Human Resources Managers

Higher Education: Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of RI, Community College of Rhode Island, New England Institute of Technology, Rhode Island College, University of Rhode Island

Education Providers: Adult Education Professional Development Center, Exeter Job Corps Academy, OIC of Rhode Island

Non-Profits: Economic Progress Institute, Rhode Island Foundation, RI Institute for Labor Studies and Research, United Way of Rhode Island

Efforts Related to the Biennial Plan

This Biennial Plan builds upon significant work completed by state agencies over the past several years, including:

[*The Governor's Workforce Board Strategic Plan \(2009-2014\)*](#) was the result of year-long planning process in which employers, public agencies, advocates, and other stakeholders used labor market information and an analysis of the workforce system to develop a set of strategic priorities for the system.

[*The Unified Workforce Development Expenditure and Program Report \(UEP\)*](#), mandated by the General Assembly, has provided an in-depth catalogue of all workforce spending in Rhode Island in each of the past two years. The UEP identifies federal and state funding streams, the populations served, and the outcomes resulting from the workforce programs.

The Governor’s Workforce Board’s Industry Partnerships wrote [Skill Gap Studies](#) over the last five years to identify the key workforce needs and trends in their industries (Bioscience, Construction, Defense, Healthcare, Hospitality and Tourism, Information Technology (IT), Manufacturing, and Marine Trades). Drawn from employer surveys and labor market data, each Skill Gap Study provides an in-depth view of the challenges and opportunities faced by Rhode Island’s largest industries.

The Biennial Plan has been developed parallel to a comprehensive economic development plan, [RhodeMap RI](#), which is discussed beginning on page 11.

In 2012, as a result of some of these collaborative efforts, the Department of Labor and Training secured a \$2.7-million *Workforce Innovation Fund grant* from the US Department of Labor. The grant focused on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the workforce system through an initiative known as [Workforce On-Ramps](#), which aims to better serve Rhode Island’s workforce needs rather than serving only the requirements of funding sources through program silos.

Each of these bodies of work has been invaluable because they address a critical need for collaboration and integration across public agencies, as well as workforce development, economic development, and education. Taken together, these documents and initiatives begin to illuminate both the challenges that face the workforce development system in the future and the progress that it has made since the first Biennial Plan was developed two years ago.

The Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)

President Obama signed the Workforce Investment and Opportunity Act into law on July 22, 2014. In general, the Act takes effect on July 1, 2015. State Unified Plans and Common Performance Accountability provisions take effect July 1, 2016.

This law replaces the Workforce Investment Act of 1998 and becomes the centerpiece of federal guidance for workforce development and a framework for federal support of those activities through several key funding streams. At the time of this plan’s development, many details about implementation were under development by the U.S. Department of Labor. Draft regulations are anticipated by January 18, 2015.

What is known at this time can be discerned from the legislation’s intent. While there will be much required of states and local areas once the regulations are finalized, Rhode Island is well positioned on a number of fronts. For example, Rhode Island has a strategic focus on programs designed to serve the state’s youth and the new law removes the income eligibility requirement which excluded some youth from these benefits in the past. The law also focuses on Sector Strategies, Industry Partnerships and Career Pathways. Rhode Island has established eight partnerships and intends to expand that number in the future.

While there will be much required of states and local areas once the WIOA regulations are finalized, Rhode Island is well positioned on a number of fronts.

Business Services are also highlighted in the law and Rhode Island continues to make strides toward providing services focused on meeting the needs of business and industry. Also, the new law requires that all prisoner reentry programs be provided by the state workforce system; Rhode Island has identified ex-offenders as a target population for several recommendations.

The law also encourages the use of a wide variety of funding sources by workforce boards to expand their influence and reach beyond those of existing federal streams. In addition to braiding in other federal resources, the law encourages the use of leveraged state and local government resources, private-sector investments, foundation grants, and other resources. While it has not achieved its full potential for expanded funding, Rhode Island has begun to leverage both public and private investment in training beyond the traditional federal sources for workforce development.

Comprehensive System Improvement Plan

The Rhode Island General Assembly has charged the Governor’s Workforce Board to complete a Comprehensive System Improvement Plan in 2015 in order to “facilitate the seamless and coordinated delivery of workforce services in this state, consistent with the goals and objectives of the board’s statewide employment and training plan.” The plan will include:

- A list of specific barriers, whether structural, regulatory, or statutory, that adversely affect the seamless and coordinated delivery of workforce development programs and services in the state, as well as recommendations to overcome and eliminate these barriers; and
- Recommendations providing, at a minimum, board comment and review of all state employment and training programs, to ensure such programs are consistent with the board’s statewide employment and training plan, and meet the current and projected workforce demands of this state, including programs that, pursuant to state or federal law or regulation, must remain autonomous.³

The Comprehensive System Improvement Plan will also consider the extent to which structural, statutory, and/or budgetary factors impact the ability of the state to achieve the Biennial Plan recommendations.

³ §42-102-6(f)

Yushin America Uses Partnership to Drive Growth

From their 46,000-square-foot facility in Cranston, RI, Yushin America supplies the United States and Mexico with robots and automation for the plastics industry. Through partnerships with neighboring schools and colleges, Yushin has committed to helping the workforce system create opportunities for young people and spread awareness of the robotics and manufacturing fields.

Yushin believes that innovation drives product design, and innovation comes from great employees. That's why Yushin invests in proper training and guidance for students—the future of manufacturing employment. Dalton Fontaine is an excellent example of this philosophy. Dalton participated in Yushin's Co-Op program when he was a senior in high school. After Dalton graduated, Yushin hired him in a full-time position with assistance from the GWB Incumbent Worker Training Grant. Dalton is currently enrolled in the Engineering Program at CCRI with support from Yushin. They also provide support for students attending the CCRI CNC Apprenticeship Program.



Dalton Fontaine at his CNC workstation at Yushin America

Yushin has also benefited from other workforce development partnerships: netWORKri helps with on-the-job-training funds and sets up job fairs; the RI CNC Apprenticeship and the Summer Youth Program allowed Yushin to provide on-the-job training for four summer youths. Yushin actively participates in the nationwide, annual celebration for Manufacturing Day with an Open House event—a perfect opportunity to promote awareness for modern manufacturing, the use of advanced technology, and the rewarding careers it offers. Yushin can also be found

at the annual RI Block Party, which is a National Robotics Week event co-hosted by the Humanity Centered Robotics Initiative at Brown University and the youth robotics non-profit RI School of the Future.

Yushin America is also working with Davies Vocational High School to help train students in their robot department and machine shop. Yushin's engineering manager is currently working with two students from N. Smithfield High and Davies on their senior projects. Preparing and educating the young workforce is a priority for Yushin and they are very happy with the results their efforts have yielded.

Aligning With Economic Development

The Economic Development Planning Process

Early in 2012, the State of Rhode Island began development of a Regional Plan for Sustainable Development, called RhodeMap RI, to support multi-jurisdictional planning efforts that integrate housing, land use, economic and workforce development, transportation, and infrastructure investments. The goal of the plan is to align economic and workforce development to create jobs in areas close to where people live. In an effort to both ensure private sector input into RhodeMap RI and to identify more short-term actions for economic growth, CommerceRI developed a set of Economic Development Recommendations to be incorporated into the RhodeMap RI Economic Development Plan.

Implications for Workforce Development

RhodeMap RI contains goals, policies, strategies, implementation actions, and performance measures for the State's Economic Development program over the next twenty years. The plan lays out a vision for Rhode Island in 2035, which paints a picture of a "labor force ... that is strong and diverse, has access to excellent educational and life-long learning opportunities, and can adapt to regular changes in the job market."

The first goal of the plan is to "Provide educational and training opportunities to activate a 21st century workforce." The plan offers specific strategies related to people with traditional barriers to employment and people who are typically underrepresented in economic development efforts. These strategies are particularly tied to a place-based strategy, as programs and resources need to be deployed in the communities where the targeted workforce lives.

The first goal of the RhodeMap RI economic development plan is to "Provide educational and training opportunities to activate a 21st century workforce."

Moving forward, closer collaboration between the Governor's Workforce Board, its Industry Partnerships, and Commerce RI can be key in helping to identify and plan for emerging market opportunities. As the Industry Partnerships are generally organized around traditional clusters, and as the lines between those clusters begin to blur (e.g. healthcare and IT), collaboration among them will also be critical. Given their important role at the intersection of workforce and economic development, continuing operational and programmatic support for Industry Partnerships will be important to furthering collaboration.

RhodeMap RI also focuses on improving programs and policies to support small businesses. Though not often addressed in coordination with workforce development, there is opportunity for closer alignment. Given the state's high unemployment, many people are turning to creating their own jobs. However, the

state faces many challenges in increasing the ability of individuals to start their own businesses, and therefore create their own jobs. Though many barriers are unrelated to workforce development (e.g. regulatory reform, capital attraction), some can be addressed by providing technical assistance to help potential entrepreneurs understand the intricacies of starting, permitting, and running a business. The Department of Labor and Training’s Self-Employment Assistance (SEARI) Program is already in place to address the need for assistance and training in this area.

Continuing to Align Planning and Programs

Answers to some of the largest questions facing Rhode Island today require collaboration between workforce and economic development. Some ask, “Why are so many people unemployed when there are so many unfilled jobs reported by the Department of Labor and Training?” Others ask, “How can unemployed workers find a job when there are many more unemployed than there are job vacancies?” Answering these types of systemic questions will require close partnerships between workforce and economic development leaders so that job creation strategies and job training strategies are aligned.

The foundation for those partnerships is certainly already in place. The Governor’s Workforce Board is represented on the CommerceRI Board, and the reverse will also be the case as of February, 2015. Furthermore, legislation passed in 2013 establishes a Governor’s Commerce and Workforce Coordination Cabinet with the goal of integrating and coordinating the activities of various agencies and departments (including transportation, education, labor and training, human services, environmental management, and others) involved in the state’s economy and its workforce, and ensuring consistent implementation of economic development policies and plans. The legislation also establishes an Executive Office of Commerce to be created in January of 2015. The Secretary of Commerce will serve as vice-chair of the Governor’s Commerce and Workforce Cabinet alongside the director of the Department of Labor and Training. The Secretary of Commerce will also be vice-chair of the Governor’s Workforce Board. This reorganization of workforce and economic development agencies has the potential to create a transformative shift in how the two fields function in Rhode Island.

Current and Future Workforce Needs

This section provides an overview of the occupations and industries projected to grow in Rhode Island from 2012-2022 with input from the Industry Partnerships' recent Skills Gap Studies.

Major Industries and Trends

Rhode Island employment is projected to increase by more than 51,000 jobs from 2012 to 2022 as the state's economy continues to recover from a recessionary loss of 39,600 jobs between December 2006



Figure 1 – Projected Employment Growth Rate: 2012-2022 (Source: Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

(RI Peak Employment) and August 2009 (RI Trough Employment)⁴. Projections indicate that Rhode Island will reach pre-recession employment levels by 2018, while employment in 2022 is projected to reach 545,550, an increase of 51,420 (10.4%) jobs from the 2012 employment level. Nationally, employment is projected to increase by 10.8%.

As Figure 2 (below) illustrates, much of the growth in Rhode Island is attributed to the increased demand for the products and services provided by the Health Care & Social Assistance; Accommodation & Food Services; Professional, Scientific & Technical Services; Administrative & Waste Services; Construction; and Manufacturing sectors.

Rhode Island Industry Projections by Major Division 2012 - 2022				
Industry Title	2012 Estimated Employment	2022 Projected Employment	Numeric Change	Percent Change
Total All Industries	494,130	545,550	51,420	10.40%
Health Care and Social Assistance	80,648	94,500	13,852	17.20%
Retail Trade	46,905	50,585	3,680	7.90%
Educational Services	44,178	45,600	1,422	3.20%
Accommodation and Food Services	44,131	49,550	5,419	12.30%
Self Employed & Unpaid Family Workers	42,300	44,325	2,025	4.8%
Manufacturing	39,623	43,685	4,062	10.30%
Government	31,989	31,030	-959	-3.00%
Administrative & Waste Services	24,102	28,600	4,498	18.70%

⁴ Rhode Island Economy: Peak, Trough and Recovery – RI Department of Labor and Training, LMI Unit <http://www.dlt.ri.gov/lmi/publications/recession.htm>

Finance and Insurance	23,310	24,950	1,640	7.00%
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	21,472	26,000	4,528	21.10%
Other Services (except Government)	17,370	18,200	830	4.80%
Wholesale Trade	16,843	17,100	257	1.50%
Construction	16,002	20,250	4,248	26.60%
Management of Companies and Enterprises	10,513	13,200	2,687	25.60%
Transportation and Warehousing	9,780	11,015	1,235	12.60%
Information	9,566	9,365	-201	-2.10%
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	7,618	9,130	1,512	19.90%
Real Estate and Rental and Leasing	5,782	6,420	638	11.00%
Utilities	1,055	1,000	-55	-5.20%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting	716	779	63	8.80%
Mining	188	226	38	20.20%

Figure 2 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

Major Occupations and Trends

Industry projections provide a snapshot of overall trends within major sectors; however, looking at employment only through industry projections provides limited data because each industry has a range of occupations within it, each with differing skill and education requirements, and because some occupations are found in multiple industries. Therefore, using an occupational lens helps the workforce system to pinpoint employer demand, both current and projected.

HEALTH CARE AND SOCIAL ASSISTANCE

The largest numeric gains will continue to occur in the Health Care & Social Assistance sector, as illustrated in Figure 3. This sector is expected to account for 17% of the new job growth in the state during the 2012-2022 projection period. Increasing coverage, medical advances, and an aging population will result in an increase of 13,852 (+17.2%) jobs. Within the Health Care & Social Assistance Sector, Ambulatory Health Care Services which includes Offices of Physicians, Medical Laboratories and Home Health Care Services is expected to show the largest gains (+4,744), followed closely by the Nursing & Residential Care Facilities subsector (+4,251). While Hospitals continue to add employment (+2,470), the growth rate is expected to be slightly below the statewide average. The Social Assistance subsector (+2,387), adding less employment than hospitals, is showing growth at above average rates (19.7%).

Projected Job Growth 2012-2022: Health Care and Social Assistance			
Industry Title	Employment 2012	Employment 2022	Numeric Change
Ambulatory Health Care Services	25,256	30,000	4,744
Hospitals	25,030	27,500	2,470
Nursing and Residential Care Facilities	18,249	22,500	4,251
Social Assistance	12,113	14,500	2,387

Figure 3 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

ACCOMMODATION & FOOD SERVICE

Above average growth (12.3%) in the Accommodation & Food Services sector will generate more than 5,000 new jobs. This sector consists of two subsectors: Accommodation and Food Services & Drinking Places. Food Services & Drinking Places dominate this sector, representing more than 90% of the industry employment. As Figure 4 illustrates, the majority of new jobs (+5,149) is projected to be in Food Services & Drinking Places which is dominated by Restaurants and Other Eating Places.

Projected Job Growth 2012-2022: Accommodation & Food Services			
Industry Title	2012 Employment	2022 Employment	Numeric Change
Accommodation, including Hotels and Motels	4280	4550	270
Food Services and Drinking Places	39,851	45,000	5149

Figure 4 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

Ranking third in both numeric change (+4,528) and percent change (21.9%), the Professional, Scientific and Technical Services sector is projected to grow at twice the average rate. This sector is dominated by businesses offering legal services, accounting and payroll services, computer services and architectural and engineering services to both businesses and individuals.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND WASTE SERVICES

Large numeric gains and an above average growth rate are projected for the Administrative & Waste Services sector, resulting in the addition of nearly 5,000 (+18.7%) new jobs. The largest gains are expected in Administrative & Support Services. This subsector includes establishments that support the day-to-day operations of other organizations. The processes employed in this sector (e.g., general management, personnel administration, clerical activities, cleaning activities) are integral to all sectors of the economy.

CONSTRUCTION

The Construction sector is projected to be the fastest growing sector (26.6 %) during the 2012 -2022 projection period. Prior to the recession, employment in this sector averaged 22,000 jobs. The projected growth of over 4,000 jobs will bring our construction industry close to its pre-recession levels. Career opportunities within the construction sector vary in the required educational levels

The Construction sector is projected to be the fastest growing sector (26.6%) during the 2012-2022 projection period.

of applicants, and all have significant need for new workers, including the multiple building trades' occupations and Architectural, Engineering and Construction management positions. Rhode Island's

construction industry is comprised primarily of contractors in Specialty Trades (64%), Residential Building (14%), Non-Residential Building (10%) and Heavy/Civil Engineering (12%).⁵

MANUFACTURING

Over 4,000 new jobs are expected to be added in our state’s Manufacturing sector during the projection period. Transportation Equipment Manufacturing, which is dominated by Ship & Boat Building, will provide half of the new job gains. Other gains resulting from defense contracts are projected to occur in Computer & Electronic Product Manufacturing. Additional manufacturing industries expected to show significant increases include Chemical Manufacturing, Food Manufacturing and Electrical Equipment & Appliance Manufacturing which are each expected to add over 400 jobs during the projection period, overshadowing continued losses in Textile Mills and Miscellaneous Manufacturing.

OTHER SECTORS

The Retail Trade sector in RI is expected to add approximately 3,600 jobs during the projection period. The largest employment increases are expected in Food & Beverage Stores (+678), Building Materials & Garden Equipment & Supplies Dealers (+647), and General Merchandise Stores (+617).

Above average growth is projected for Management of Companies & Enterprises (25.6 %); Mining (20.2%); Arts, Entertainment, & Recreation (19.9%); and Transportation & Warehousing (12.6%). Other industries projected to experience growth include Real Estate & Rental & Leasing (11.0%); Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (8.8%); Finance & Insurance (7.0%); Other Services (4.8%); Educational Services (3.2%) and Wholesale Trade (1.5%). Only three sectors are expected to experience employment declines: Utilities (-5.2%), Government (-3.0%), and Information (-2.1%).

Job Openings: Growth and Turnover

Job openings result from the need to replace workers who leave an occupation and the need to fill vacancies created by business expansion. During the 2012-2022 projection period, it is estimated that



employers will need to find workers to fill nearly 170,000 job openings. As Figure 5 illustrates, nearly one-third of the job openings are attributed to the economic growth while over two-thirds of the job openings are due to replacement needs resulting from employee turnover.

The fastest growing occupations in Rhode Island across all sectors are those with both a projected 2022 employment level of 500 or more and

Figure 5 – Job Openings Due to Growth and Replacement (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

⁵ The Economic Impact of Construction Industry on the Economy of Rhode Island in 2013, Dr. Tebaldi 2013 (Bryant University).

a growth rate of at least 15%. They are:

- Combined Food Preparation & Serving Workers
- Nursing Assistants
- Home Health Aides
- Personal Care Aides
- First-Line Supervisors of Food Preparation & Serving Workers
- Cooks, Restaurant
- Carpenters
- Bartenders
- Management Analysts
- Social & Human Service Assistants

As these occupations indicate, Rhode Island continues to be a service-driven economy. As such, many new and replacement jobs do not require a degree (as depicted in Figure 6). Therefore, work readiness continues to be an area of need for Rhode Island’s workforce.

Top Ten Occupations By Total Openings, 2012-2022		
Occupation	Number of Openings	Education Level
Retail Salespersons	6,834	Less than high school
Waiters and Waitresses	5,353	Less than high school
Combined Food Preparation and Serving Workers, Including Fast Food	5,268	Less than high school
Cashiers	5,191	Less than high school
Registered Nurses	4,125	Associate's degree
Nursing Assistants	3,883	Postsecondary non-degree award
Customer Service Representatives	3,274	High school diploma or equivalent
Counter Attendants, Cafeteria, Food Concession, and Coffee Shop	2,313	Less than high school
Office Clerks, General	2,233	High school diploma or equivalent
Janitors and Cleaners, Except Maids and Housekeeping Cleaners	2,159	Less than high school

Figure 6 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

JOB OPENINGS BY EDUCATIONAL REQUIREMENTS

Projected job growth through 2022 indicates that Rhode Island will have an economy in which 64% of all jobs require a high school diploma or less and 36% require at least some college, as seen in Figure 7 below.

Growth in positions that require some college (a postsecondary non-degree award or Associate’s degree) are projected to grow at a slightly greater rate (13.0% and 13.2%, respectively) than at other levels. This is likely accounted for by growth in sectors such as Health Care (where the need for Registered Nurses and

Nursing Assistants is great) and Manufacturing, which increasingly requires some postsecondary technical training and certification.

RI Occupational Growth Projections By Education Level, 2012-2022						
Education	2012	2012 Percentage	2022	2022 Percentage	Net Change	Percent Change
Total	494,130	100.0%	545,550	100.0%	51,420	10.4%
Doctoral or professional degree	18,723	3.8%	20,379	3.7%	1,656	8.8%
Master's degree	9,629	1.9%	10,586	1.9%	957	9.9%
Bachelor's degree	87,835	17.8%	97,587	17.9%	9,752	11.1%
Associate's degree	24,293	4.9%	27,493	5.0%	3,200	13.2%
Postsecondary non-degree award	29,839	6.0%	33,704	6.2%	3,865	13.0%
Some college, no degree	6,230	1.3%	6,619	1.2%	389	6.2%
High school diploma or equivalent	190,318	38.5%	206,604	37.9%	16,286	8.6%
Less than high school	127,263	25.8%	142,578	26.1%	15,315	12.0%

Figure 7 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

Governor's Workforce Board Industry Partnerships

The Governor's Workforce Board engages Industry Partnerships in a number of strategically important sectors of the RI economy to represent and respond to the workforce needs of those industries. It is worth acknowledging that some of the largest sectors in Rhode Island (for example, retail, finance, and education) are not represented by an Industry Partnership, primarily due to the lack of employer organization in these sectors. This creates a challenge and opportunity for the workforce system to connect training programs and job seekers to these sectors.

In recent years, the Governor's Workforce Board has commissioned a number of Skills Gap Studies to be conducted by Industry Partnerships and business experts. The studies present a wealth of information about the workforce needs of Rhode Island's businesses. From the overwhelming need for English language skills among entry-level hospitality workers to the critical shortage of engineers in the Defense industry, these Skill Gap Studies reveal a number of challenges for the Rhode Island public workforce system. Looked at collectively, the studies show that—although many efforts have been made to address businesses' need for a skilled workforce—changes must be made at all levels of the system, from primary to adult basic to higher education and from Work Readiness to on-the-job training to registered apprenticeships.

GWB Industry Partnerships represent businesses in Bioscience, Construction, Defense, Healthcare, Hospitality, Information Technology (IT), Manufacturing, and Marine Trades.

There are several industries that cross important sectors in Rhode Island among the Governor’s Workforce Board Industry Partnerships. These industries draw their employment from a similar set of occupations and skill requirements, making them distinguishable as unique industries, although not categorized as industry “sectors” by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. These Industry Partnerships are indicated with an asterisk (*).

Bioscience* is a cross-sector industry cluster. In Rhode Island, it is largely comprised of the Drug and Pharmaceutical, Medical Device and Equipment, and Research and Development (R&D) sectors. Leaders in the industry are optimistic about growth at the company and state level. The Bureau of Labor Statistics projects faster employment growth in Rhode Island than the nation for biomedical engineers, chemical technicians, electrical engineering technicians, chemists, industrial engineers, and business operations specialists.⁶

The **Construction** sector’s high projected growth rates are promising for Rhode Island’s economy, but present a challenge for businesses as the workforce continues to age. Building Futures’ Skill Gap Study⁷ notes that despite many applicants for entry-level employment as registered apprentices, applicants have not been well qualified for the positions. Candidates lack an awareness of and appreciation for the type of careers and the nature of work available in this sector, and also lack basic work readiness. Further supporting the findings, the Associated Contractors of America’s recent survey of construction employers of the Northeast indicates the significant challenges ahead in gaining the talent needed for the sector’s vitality.⁸

Defense, the highest wage sector in Rhode Island, draws its employees from engineering, information technology, business administration, and manufacturing production. According to SENEDIA, every 100 jobs in the RI defense sector generates an additional 152 indirect and induced jobs. Potential employees must pass intensive security screenings, thus creating an additional barrier to employment that does not exist in other sectors. Many occupations in defense draw on the engineering and sciences fields and are focused on developing innovative solutions. Rhode Island has been awarded a \$1.575-million grant from the U.S. Department of Defense’s (DoD) Office of Economic Adjustment (OEA) to develop a model for expanding the state’s defense manufacturing base. The City of Newport and the Economic Development Administration are partnering to create an incubator facility, in the heart of the Naval Undersea Warfare Center, Naval Station Newport and the Navy War College area, to facilitate innovation in the marketplace.

Health Care is the largest industry in Rhode Island and, as noted above, has a projected increase of 13,852 (+17.2%) jobs between 2012 and 2022. The occupations with the greatest projected growth in Health Care are Registered Nurses (4,125 openings) and Nursing Assistants (3,883 openings). Despite robust numbers, the Health Care industry faces numerous challenges, including the aging workforce and the subsequent need for elder care, both of which are placing a strain on the field.

Hospitality—which includes both Accommodations and Food Services and Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation—will grow by approximately 7,000 jobs between 2012 and 2022. Because hospitality is such a

⁶ “Bioscience: Identifying Employer Needs, Talent Gaps, & Strategies to Grow a Stronger Bio Science Workforce in Rhode Island” Tech Collective, 2013

⁷ Building Futures – Skill Gap Analysis Rhode Island Construction Trades, 2008

⁸ Associated General Contractors of America – Regional Workforce Survey Results, Northeast 2014

large industry in Rhode Island, and because many of its occupations do not require extensive education or training, the Hospitality and Tourism Association has suggested that “Hospitality can become *the* industry in Rhode Island where motivated individuals come to launch their careers and grow.”⁹

There are 13,500 people working in Rhode Island as **Information Technology (IT)*** professionals. Half (51%) work in “core” IT industry sectors: IT services, software, network communications, and hardware manufacturing. The other half (49%) work across other industries. Financial services, corporate headquarters, healthcare, education, and professional services are examples of sectors outside IT that depend on IT professionals in their workforce. Industry employment in Rhode Island’s core IT industry sectors tops at 19,000, a number which includes many people in non-IT occupations.¹⁰

Manufacturing in Rhode Island, as in much of the United States, experienced more than two decades of decline, but it is growing once again. However, the Manufacturing Industry Partners report that RI businesses are struggling to fill a number of jobs, including Assemblers, CNC machine tool operators, Craft workers, Machinists, Marine electricians, Process engineers, Tool Makers, and Welders. At times, job openings in these occupations have not received a single applicant.¹¹

Marine Trades* is a cross-cutting industry with tremendous impact on Rhode Island. According to the Rhode Island Marine Trades Association’s 2014 Skill Gap Study, the sector includes approximately 650 employers providing nearly 7,000 jobs and paying wages and benefits of over \$325 million.¹² Occupations in Marine Trades include engineering, construction, and customer service.

⁹ Rhode Island Hospitality and Tourism Association – Education Foundation Skills Gap Study, 2008

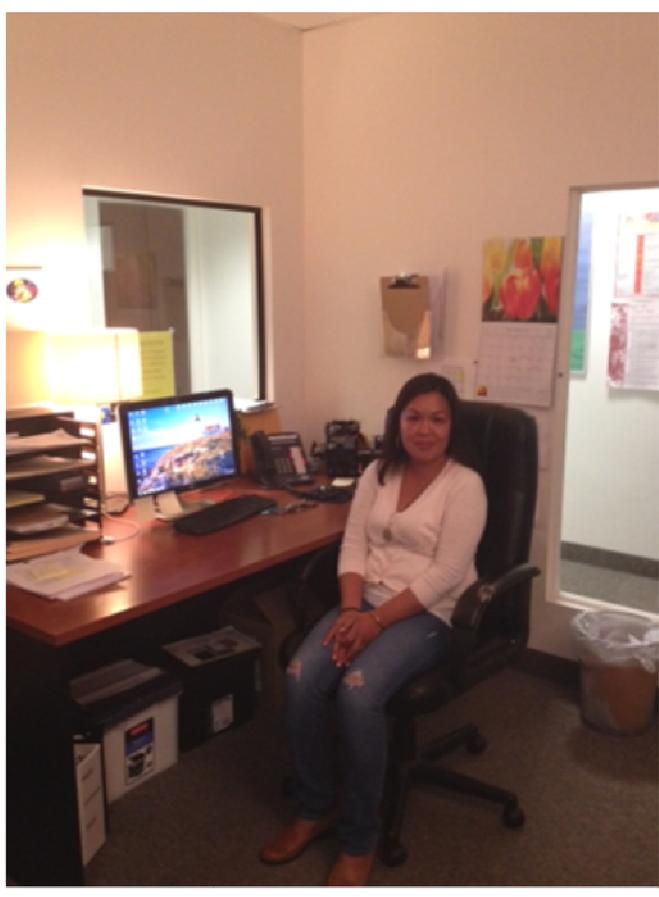
¹⁰ Why IT Works, Tech Collective, 2013

¹¹ The Manufacturing Industry: Producing Rhode Island’s Future, 2013

¹² Economic Impact and Skill Gap Analysis, Marine Trades, 2014

On-Ramps Program Leads to Work Readiness Credentials

Boutsady Sihavong, more commonly known as “Dee,” was referred to On-Ramps at the beginning of March because of her long-term unemployment. Being a single mom with a toddler at home, Dee was desperate to find a program that would help her get back to work.



Boutsady “Dee” Sihavong behind the reception desk at Northeast Behavioral Health.

experience utilizing Work Immersion funds made available by the Governors Workforce Board. Dee completed 200 hours of work experience and training and was subsequently hired full time by the company.

Dee fully credits the On-Ramps program for providing her with the opportunity to develop the skills necessary to succeed at a job and for connecting her with an employer who would give her the chance to prove what she has learned.

On-Ramps provides classroom training on soft skills: team building, applied mathematics, reading for information, problem solving and critical thinking. From day one, Dee was completely engaged, setting goals to complete the program and follow her career plan. Her Counselor noted that Dee needed little hand holding because she was so very driven to succeed. Dee successfully completed the Work Readiness Training and received a “Silver Plus” NCRC (National Career Readiness Certificate), although she scored gold on Math and Reading.

The NCRC is a nationally-recognized, portable, evidence based credential that certifies essential skills needed for workplace success. The NCRC credentials are awarded at different levels based on the customer’s test results. The NCRC gives employers the opportunity to make hiring decisions with substantiated testing results of the applicant’s soft skills.

Dee then used that same drive to work with her Work Experience Counselor to obtain placement at North East Behavioral Health as a Receptionist. This was a subsidized work

The Rhode Island Workforce

Rhode Island Labor Force and Educational Attainment

In 2014, there were 555,134 working age adults (age 16 and up) in the Rhode Island Workforce while 46,708 were unemployed (Figure 8). These numbers represent a positive trend for Rhode Island's workforce, as the state's unemployment rate dropped from 10.3% in 2012 to 8.4% to date in 2014.

Rhode Island Labor Force Statistics				
	2006	2009	2012	2014 8-month average
Total Population	1,063,096	1,053,646	1,050,304	n/a
Civilian Non-Institutional Population 16+	837,533	841,735	844,515	850,708
Labor Force	573,000	566,340	558,716	555,134
Employed	543,973	504,489	501,378	508,426
Unemployed	29,027	61,851	57,338	46,708
Unemployment Rate	5.1%	10.9%	10.3%	8.4%
Not in Labor Force	264,533	275,395	285,799	295,574
Jobs in RI	492,900	459,400	465,400	474,400

Figure 8 (Source: US Bureau of Labor Statistics & US Census Bureau, Population Estimates)

Inclusion: Serving the Underserved

Minorities, youth who are not in school, adults with developmental disabilities, and English Language Learners are under-represented in Rhode Island's labor force and educational attainment numbers. For instance, as Figure 9 illustrates, those who self-identify as Black or African American, Asian, and Hispanic or Latino are more likely to have less than a high school diploma than their white counterparts (25, 20, and 36.5% respectively). Meanwhile, whites and Asians have significantly higher rates of attainment at the Bachelor's Degree level and above. Among those who self-identify as White, Non-Hispanic or Latino, 35.4% have a Bachelor's Degree or above; for those who identify as Asian, this number is 44.2%.

As noted elsewhere, approximately 64% of available jobs between 2012 and 2022 will require high school diploma or less (Figure 7). By contrast, nearly 86% of Rhode Island residents 25 and over have at least a high school diploma if not some postsecondary education (Figure 9). In many cases, this means that residents who do not have a high school diploma or GED must compete with residents who are college-educated for the same jobs. This also highlights the importance of aligning post-secondary education with the skills and credentials needed by workers and businesses in higher-wage industries and occupations.

Educational Attainment in Rhode Island (2013)										
	White, Non-Hispanic or Latino		Black, Includes Hispanic or Latino		Asian		Hispanic or Latino (any race)		All Rhode Islanders	
Population Aged 25+	574,136	100%	38,545	100%	20,563	100%	74,323	100%	719,956	100%
Less than High School Graduate	59,157	10.3%	9,744	25.3%	4,155	20.2%	27,158	36.5%	101,743	14.1%
High School Graduate or Equivalency	154,574	26.9%	10,085	26.2%	3,250	15.8%	20,396	27.4%	191,854	26.6%
Some College / Associate's Degree	157,202	27.4%	11,399	29.6%	4,059	19.7%	17,651	23.7%	193,244	26.8%
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	203,203	35.4%	7,317	19.0%	9,099	44.2%	9,118	12.3%	233,115	32.4%

Figure 9 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

Language, Literacy, and Numeracy Levels: More than 34% of foreign-born Rhode Islanders have less than a high school diploma (Figure 10). Moreover, 35,000 Rhode Islanders speak English either "not well" or "not at all."¹³ According to the

RI Educational Attainment: Native and Foreign-born		
	Native to US	Foreign-born
Less than High School Graduate	10.2%	34.6%
High School Graduate or Equivalency	27.1%	24.3%
Some College/Associate's Degree	28.3%	19.0%
Bachelor's Degree	21.2%	12.8%
Graduate or Professional Degree	13.2%	9.3%
Population Aged 25+	604,408	115,548

Figure 10 (Source: RI Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, September 2014)

National Assessment of Adult Literacy, 8% of Rhode Island's population lacks basic prose literacy, meaning they cannot read or understand written language.¹⁴ As a result, programs that support English Language Learners and provide adult education are over-extended.

Another indicator of literacy and numeracy levels is the number of students matriculating into higher education who need additional math and English preparation before entering credit bearing courses. At CCRI, 66% of entering students¹⁵ require some form of remedial education. Rhode Island College reports 8% and University of Rhode Island reports 1% of entering freshmen taking remedial coursework.

In addition to the groups discussed above, the following populations require particular investment by the workforce system:

Youth: People 16-24 years old are less likely to be part of the workforce than those above 25, and teenage unemployment is more than double that of the 20 plus population for the white, black, and Hispanic populations. In many sectors and occupations, adults are now filling entry-level jobs that previously were

¹³ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-3 year data

¹⁴ <http://nces.ed.gov/naal/estimates/StateEstimates.aspx>

¹⁵ Entering students are defined as first time freshmen enrolling directly from High School

filled by youth. Updates in legislation due to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act will change the way the workforce system serves youth, as it shifts focus to out-of-school youth.

People with Disabilities: These individuals often require intensive preparation and support, including skills training, the use of adaptive technology in the workplace, job coaching, education, and other services. Employment First, an initiative that addresses these needs, was signed into Executive Order in October, 2014. Prior to this signing, BHDDH, ORS, and RIDE adopted Employment First practices and/or policies and made progress in finding work for individuals with disabilities.

Rhode Island Works participants: A majority of TANF participants have either a high school diploma or less. During the 24 months in which they are eligible to receive cash assistance, they require focused attention to improve their skills to compete on the job market once they exit the program. If they do not increase their education and skill levels, they cannot secure jobs that pay a family sustaining wage.

People with criminal records: During FY2013, the Department of Corrections processed a total of 3,588 releases, representing 3,175 individuals. 87% expired their sentences while 10% were paroled.¹⁶ A total of 24,173 people in Rhode Island were on probation and parole as of May 2014.¹⁷ While having a criminal record does not automatically limit employment, in an economy with more workers than jobs, a criminal record presents a significant barrier. Combined with low literacy and skill levels among the prison population, those with criminal records find employment in the formal labor market extremely challenging.

Additional Barriers to Work: While more difficult to document, many Rhode Islanders find transportation and child care present additional barriers to employment, regardless of skill level or occupation.

American Community Survey data indicate that the vast majority of Rhode Islanders use cars as their primary form of transportation; however, given that there are few other forms available, this is not an accurate indicator of transportation needs. Largely anecdotal data supports the need for other alternatives, as RIPTA bus routes are limited statewide and not always located near places of employment. Expanded public transportation would benefit many job seekers.

Just as a lack of reliable transportation options limit residents' options, so does a lack of dependable childcare. The number of children receiving care that is either fully or partially paid for with a child care subsidy from the Rhode Island Department of Human Services has decreased 47% from its peak in 2003. Low-income workers receive 79% of all child care subsidies in Rhode Island, thus facing greater difficulties in finding quality care and making full-time employment difficult to maintain.¹⁸ Furthermore, as businesses increasingly utilize variable or "just-in-time" scheduling to respond to peak workloads, child care is becoming an even greater challenge.

¹⁶ <http://www.doc.ri.gov/administration/planning/docs/FY13%20Annual%20Report.pdf>

¹⁷ <http://www.doc.ri.gov/administration/planning/docs/PP%20Stats%202014/PP%20Statistics%2005-14.pdf>

¹⁸ <http://www.rikidscount.org/matriarch/documents/2014Factbook-noart.pdf>

RHODE ISLAND LABOR MARKET FORUM

In July 2014, the GWB invited three prominent economists to speak to the Advisory Committee about the state of Rhode Island’s economy and the impact it has on the workforce system. Peter Cappelli of the University of Pennsylvania, Paul Harrington of Drexel University, and Neil Mehrotra of Brown University together presented a set of facts and observations that draw into question many commonly accepted workforce development assumptions, not the least of which is the existence of a skill gap.

In short, the common skills gap argument is that there are good jobs available, but people don’t have the skills to do them. Cappelli claims that while most CEOs believe this, most Human Resources offices know it’s not true. The vast majority of jobs require a high school degree or less, and even at higher levels, many people are overqualified for their jobs. However, employers require very specific experience and because of the labor market surplus, they have been able to get it. When they can’t find people with the experience they are looking for, they call it a skill gap instead of what it really is: an experience gap.

The work experience problem is acute for young adults looking to enter the workforce. According to Harrington, one of ways that youth develop their labor market savvy skills is through early labor market attachment, and that isn’t happening. Youth are not getting work experience during high school and college, and employers are responding negatively. This is also a major barrier for workers who were displaced during the recession and have not successfully re-entered the workforce.

Mehrotra notes that the job of the workforce development system becomes complicated when labor supply is greater than demand. Workforce development overall is designed to boost the supply of labor to businesses. If a firm has to hire from a poorly trained workforce, it raises the effective cost of doing business. In essence, the workforce system operates as a wage subsidy for firms. A challenge arises, however, when the workforce system provides the skills training needed but can’t provide the work experience businesses are looking for.

Throughout the planning process, the GWB and Advisory Committee have kept these findings in mind, striving to challenge assumptions that may lead to misdirected recommendations.

Talent Development

There is, without a doubt, a need for education and experiential learning opportunities across the state of Rhode Island. Businesses consistently report, through surveys and Skill Gap Studies, that they struggle to find skilled individuals to fill their open positions. Yet many residents are underemployed, working in low skilled positions that do not make use of individual skills and qualifications.

Especially in an economy with few jobs and many workers, companies can demand demonstrated work experience when looking to fill positions. This practice makes it difficult for residents who are un- or underemployed (especially those who are trained for jobs that no longer exist) to compete for jobs. It also limits the opportunities for young people entering the workforce for the first time, with or without formal education.

In order to meet the needs of high-growth sectors in Rhode Island, residents need opportunities to develop skills in high-demand occupations while simultaneously getting work experience (through apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training) and soft skills training. This is the only way to ensure that both businesses and individuals are getting what they need from the workforce system. Looking at the Industry Partners' Skill Gap Studies and to the Employer Survey results provides a window into Rhode Island's Talent Development needs across sectors.

Skill Gap Studies

From a hiring standpoint, employers in the **Bioscience** sector struggle to find and retain employees with scientific and business skills. They note that interdisciplinary knowledge is important and often struggle to find candidates with appropriate skills at high levels. Hiring chemists, engineers, and research study coordinators is especially difficult. Although pay is higher in Bioscience than almost all private sector wages in RI, there is intense competition with Bioscience companies in Massachusetts and Connecticut, where wages are typically higher. Entry into the Bioscience industry most often requires a college degree, although some employers are receptive to certificate programs. Because of high education requirements and specialized knowledge, Bioscience has a "slower moving workforce pipeline" compared to other industries. As of 2013, the Bioscience sector reported more than 4,600 jobs in Rhode Island with expectations to grow.¹⁹

One of the largest and fastest growing industries in Rhode Island, the **Construction** industry reports needing a significant increase in the number of people entering employment in the registered apprenticeship system to meet the demand for Journeyworkers in the respective building trades occupations, both to address industry growth and the aging workforce. However, there are significant barriers to this achievement, as far more apprentices are hired than are promoted to Journeyworkers. The Skill Gap Analysis notes, "Candidates for apprenticeship are often physically and intellectually able to rise to the challenges of learning a given trade, but on the job, social issues frequently interfere with a new hire's ability to be on time and on task for forty hours per week."

Employers in the **Defense** Industry are investing in professional development, supporting the workforce development pipeline at the college, high school, and even middle school levels. Tightening national defense budgets means collaboration among small-medium sized companies and education partners is essential. The industry in Rhode Island is constrained by the local engineering and technician education pipeline and the lack of manufacturing expertise to support innovation. The industry is also lacking skills in technical writing, experience with shipboard environments and unique defense systems, and customer communication and collaboration. Employers look for candidates with work experience within the sector and certain categories of military service. Competitive candidates must also have the ability to get appropriate security clearances, good judgment (as demonstrated through credit records and background checks), comfort with a high level of personal disclosure, and travel to sensitive parts of the globe. This makes recruiting and hiring difficult, even when skills and credentials are adequate.

¹⁹ Bioscience Skill Gap Study, Tech Collective, 2013

In the **Health Care** industry, the Industry Partners indicate the biggest skill gap is new hires' inability to present professionally and communicate effectively with patients. This is, in part, because very little attention is paid to soft skills in training and education programs other than Adult Basic Education. They also noted generational differences as a problem in training, retention, and staff morale; older, experienced employees are finding it difficult to mentor young, newly hired employees, while younger employees are struggling to capture their predecessor's institutional knowledge. Both age groups possess skills that are important to the field, but evidence shows that they are not easily learning to complement each other. As noted elsewhere, Health Care is the largest sector in Rhode Island, so the need for skilled, entry-level employees is acute. According to the Health Care Industry Partnerships, employers are most likely to hire CNAs, office personnel, medical assistants, housekeeping, laundry aides, physicians, and RNs educated at the BSN level or higher. Conversely, radiology professionals, physical therapists, respiratory therapists, surgical technicians, pharmacy technicians, and RNs educated at the ADN level were the least likely positions to be hired.

Hospitality and Tourism employs a large percentage of Rhode Island residents but struggles against a perception that the industry only offers dead-end jobs rather than viable career options. Employers in this industry have a hard time recruiting, retaining, and building skills of entry level workers, thus making it difficult to develop employees for hard-to-fill management positions. Industry Partners report that there is not a lack of applicants at the entry level, but those applicants do not have the appropriate customer service skills and work ethic for the industry. Once entry-level employees are hired, there are several barriers preventing them from moving up through the ranks, including English language proficiency and other key communication skills. Because the industry does not require extensive education or certifications, businesses have a great deal of flexibility in training their staff to move up through a career pathway; however, retention is difficult and many employees never move beyond the entry level.

The primary reason businesses in **Information Technology** (IT) struggle to fill positions is a lack of candidates who possess comprehensive technical skills as well as equally strong business and soft skills. Customer service and the ability to apply complex technical concepts to a business need are two of the most sought after qualities in IT professionals. This challenge is followed by competition from Massachusetts and candidates who do not possess enough relevant work experience.

IT employers acknowledge that educational institutions have responded to business-driven need for increased soft-skill and communication skills, but they still face difficulties filling higher-skilled positions. The largest gaps exist in project management, programming, web design, software development, business analysis, and database administration. Employers are willing to

IT employers acknowledge that educational institutions have responded to business-driven need for increased soft-skill and communication skills, but they still face difficulties filling higher-skilled positions.

hire and cross-train entry-level employees with appropriate certifications or degrees, but often write job descriptions asking for more work experience or specific software skills than graduates are likely to have.

In **Manufacturing**, Industry leaders have noted a lack of basic skills among job seekers (including basic math and computer skills, communication, analytical skills, and problem solving skills). Moreover, there is a general lack of knowledge about manufacturing careers, skills—and the industry’s relatively high wage levels—among job seekers, students, guidance counselors, policy makers and others. Many occupations require job-specific technical training; however, employers are more likely to hire applicants who have both the formal education and relevant work experience. This makes internships, co-ops, and apprenticeships very important for those seeking employment in manufacturing.

In **Marine Trades**, the problem is not that job seekers lack key skills, but that overall there are not enough job seekers. There is a need in this sector to educate the public about the “nature and extent of Rhode Island’s marine-related businesses and the jobs available within it.” Employers in Marine Trades note that most of their applicants have the skills they need or are able to learn them, but they struggle to attract applicants at all. However, businesses do report a shortage of skilled employees in engine repair, electronics, and fiberglass molding. Furthermore, like many other sectors, they note a critical lack of communication and soft skills.

In Marine Trades, the problem is not that job seekers lack key skills, but that overall there are not enough job seekers.

Employer Survey: Summary of Findings

As part of the 2016-2017 Biennial Employment and Training Plan planning and analysis process, over one thousand businesses in Rhode Island were surveyed to gather insights on education and workforce development assets, challenges, and opportunities. Over a period of two weeks in August, 2014, 463 businesses²⁰ responded to the thirteen question survey.

Questions in this survey focused on the following areas:

- Hiring projections
- Recruitment
- Hiring strategies
- Employment by job level
- Recruitment by job level
- Barriers to Employment

The survey results presented here are intended to identify trends in workforce supply and demand from a business perspective while highlighting the ways employers attract, hire, and train employees. They are not, however, meant to replace or reflect the scientific findings of the Labor Market Information Unit cited elsewhere in the Biennial Plan.

²⁰ Because links to this online survey were sent out by multiple sources and shared via individual emails, it is possible that some businesses are represented in this number more than once.

Several trends appeared across survey results. These observations are summarized below. For complete Survey Results, please see Appendix 2.

Recruitment Strategies (Figure 11): Survey respondents most often fill open positions within their companies by posting ads on external career websites. It is not clear from the data gathered whether businesses are using corporate websites like Monster and CareerBuilder or state specific sites like EmployRI.com. The remaining responses to this question (including those that selected “Other” and wrote in additional methods) tend to favor recruitment strategies that depend upon networking and personal relationship building.

Recruitment Strategies - Methods Of Filling Vacancies	Response Count
Responses to postings on external websites	283
Referrals from current or past employees	202
Internal applicants	175
Responses to postings on company website	145
Internships	85
Referrals from schools and/or training programs	84
Other (please specify)	72
Referrals from a recruitment agency	56
Individuals working for the company through a temp agency	55
Recruiting employees from competitors	35

Figure 11 (Source: Biennial Plan Employer Survey, August 2014)

Difficulties in Hiring: Approximately 51% of respondents reported having some difficulty filling entry-level positions. 55% reported having some difficulty filling middle-skill positions, and 58% reported having serious difficulties filling high-skill positions. The difficulties associated with filling high-skill positions are often due to applicants lacking relevant work experience and job-specific technical skills. The comparatively less severe, and less frequent, difficulties filling entry-level and middle-skill positions are typically attributed to a lack of soft skills such as work ethic, appropriate attire, and communication skills, and/or a lack of job-specific technical skills.

Strategies to Address Hiring Difficulties: Businesses are using multiple avenues to address hiring difficulties, as illustrated in Figure 12. Many companies report an increase in responsibilities and workloads of their existing workforce. Others report increasing their use of internships in order to fill positions. Some have decided to increase partnerships with education and training providers as well as increasing investments in training, while many others report improving wages and benefits to attract skilled job seekers.

Strategies to Address Hiring Difficulties	Response Count
Increasing responsibilities / workloads of existing workforce	180
Improving wages, benefits, and/or other terms of employment	174
Increasing investments in training	165
Increasing partnerships with education and training providers	156
Internships	143

Recruitment agencies	105
Temp-to-hire	98
Other (please specify)	55
Substituting equipment for labor	36
Increasing Human Resources capacity	34

Figure 12 (Source: Biennial Plan Employer Survey, August 2014)

Partnerships for Hiring: Over half (52%) of all respondents have partnered with colleges and universities for training, recruiting, and hiring assistance, as illustrated by Figure 13. They report partnering with other agencies, such as netWORKri, career and technical high schools, and the Governor’s Workforce Board in much smaller numbers (24, 24, and 22%, respectively), while over 25% of respondents report not utilizing any partnerships to boost hiring numbers.

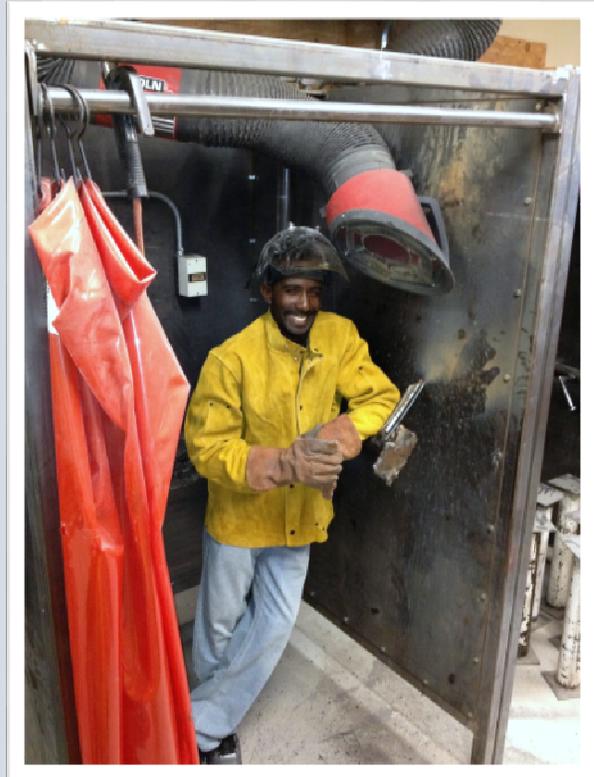
Partnerships for Hiring	Response Count
Colleges or universities	240
None of the Above	117
netWORKri One-Stop Career Centers	113
Career & Technical High Schools	110
Governor’s Workforce Board	101
Community Based Organization	72
Private training providers	59
Adult education providers	41
Other (please specify)	35
Local Workforce Investment Board	29
Youth centers	26
Comprehensive High Schools	17

Figure 13 (Source: Biennial Plan Employer Survey, August 2014)

Building Futures Leads to Apprenticeships, New Skills

After graduating from high school, Andre Gatlin tried college courses but without a clear direction. Unfortunately, he needed to drop out his second year to help his mother take care of his sister's children. With too much time on his hands, he became involved with the wrong crowd and was making bad life decisions when concerned members of his church encouraged him to enroll in the Amos House carpentry program. It was a good decision for him. In fact, it turned out to be the first step toward his future career in construction. He graduated from Amos House and found he was excited by the building process. "Seeing something go from blue prints to a building standing in front of you, knowing you were part of the process, is amazing," Andre said.

With his new carpentry skills, Andre began working side jobs in the residential construction industry but found it hard to pay bills, especially now that he was a father. Searching for something more, he heard about Building Futures and immediately enrolled, hoping commercial construction would be the long-term career opportunity he sought. Building Futures is a very competitive program, but Andre did quite well and soon graduated, applying to enter Carpenters Local 94 apprenticeship program where he would learn his trade on the job as well as in classes sponsored by the union.



Andre Gatlin, Building Futures Apprentice

While waiting for acceptance into the apprenticeship program, Andre was given the opportunity for additional training. Building Futures offers a three week welding class that leads to certification in order to enhance the employability of their graduates. The training, partially supported by a GWB pre-employment training grant, is provided in collaboration with the Iron Workers Local 37. Andre eagerly enrolled. He learned he had a knack for welding and earned his American Welding Society certification about the time he was accepted into the carpenter's apprenticeship program in the summer of 2012. He accepted a job as an apprentice floor layer through Carpenters Local 94, just to get his foot in the door of commercial construction.

With hard work and dedication, Andre has advanced through two years of his four year apprenticeship, gaining four raises along the way. The welding training also paid off as Andre reached another career goal—he was accepted into the pile drivers' union this summer. Pile drivers are carpenters that weld steel columns for foundations on land and in the water. He is happy to be supporting his growing family as he continues to advance up the career ladder that his apprenticeship has afforded him.

Workforce Development Funding and Services

Workforce development funding in Rhode Island totaled \$63,665,119 in FY2013. Of that, \$45,126,972 (70.9%) were federal funds and \$18,538,147 (29.1%) were state funds. Of the state funds, \$8,742,920 was from the Job Development Fund, which is financed by an assessment on employer contributions into the RI Employment Security Fund, and \$9,795,227 was from General Revenue.

Federal Workforce funds come primarily from the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), Wagner Peyser (One Stop Centers), Trade Adjustment Assistance, and Veterans Employment and Training Service. Perkins funds pay for Career and Technical Education services at the secondary and postsecondary levels. Federal funds that support low-income parents through the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families (TANF) and Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment and Training Program also provide significant training dollars. Training resources are also available for seniors, incarcerated individuals, and those with behavioral and medical disabilities.

Current Federal and State Workforce Spending

Figure 14 shows the complete workforce allocations in Rhode Island in FY 2013. Funds have been categorized by the following participant categories: Youth Workforce (individuals between 16 and 22 years of age), Transitional Workforce (job seekers including the unemployed, under-employed, and never-employed), Incumbent Workforce (those who are currently employed), Adult Education and System Development.

When viewed by the type of customer, 30.2% of all funding is allocated towards youth workforce programming, while 1.3% supports incumbent worker training. Another 14.3% goes to Adult Education. More than half of the funds go to the transitional workforce, which includes a wide range of customers and services, including unemployed workers, TANF recipients, older workers, and the general population that is eligible for all employment services.

RHODE ISLAND WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM FY2013				
	State Funds	Federal Funds	TOTAL	% of Total
Youth Workforce	\$5,060,825	\$14,178,358	\$19,239,183	30.2%
Transitional Workforce	\$4,890,998	\$27,749,787	\$32,640,785	51.3%
Incumbent Workforce	\$840,301	\$0	\$840,301	1.3%
Adult Education	\$5,891,054	\$3,198,827	\$9,089,881	14.3%
System Development	\$1,854,969	\$0	\$1,854,969	3%
Total FY2013 Workforce Investment	\$18,538,147	\$45,126,972	\$63,665,119	100%
State/Federal Share	29.1%	70.9%		
FY2013 Related State Spending				
FY2013 Public Higher Education	\$161,811,130			
FY2013 Public K-12 Education	\$770,516,174			

Figure 14 (Source: UEP FY2013)

Additional Workforce Funding Sources

Additional federal grants and funds: There are several important federal grants that are allocated directly to organizations, including education providers such as Jobs Corps and Youthbuild. Furthermore, CCRI and NEIT have been awarded more than \$10 million in Trade Adjustment Assistance Community College and Career Training (TAACCCT) grants from the U.S. Department of Labor over the past four years to increase their capacity to prepare unemployed workers for in-demand occupations. These grants typically come from competitive applications to the federal government for specific initiatives and represent an important additional investment in workforce development. Other public workforce development funds are included in appropriations to agencies whose core mission is not workforce development, such as transportation and housing.

Leveraged resources: Workforce development spending often leverages other resources, particularly federal and state funding. When strategically aligned with these resources, particularly in economic development, the state has the opportunity to maximize its workforce investment.

Private Employer Investment: While not a focus of this report, it is important to note that private investment in education and training by companies is significant nationally. National estimates indicate that 90% of investment in training comes from the private sector.²¹ Much of the training is at the higher skill level, where employers believe they will receive a return on their investment. Furthermore, higher-skill level jobs tend to require specialized training for a particular job in a particular company.

Labor: Annually, between \$4 million and \$6 million is invested in the training of skilled trades' workers. This funding is provided by employers and unions. Jointly-operated apprenticeship programs are generally articulated with college credit and training occurs both on-the-job and in state of the art union training facilities.

²¹ Kelly S. Mikelson and Demetra Smith Nightingale, 2004. Estimating Public and Private Expenditures on occupational training in the United States. Prepared for U.S. Department of Labor, Employment, and Training Administration

Rhode Island Workforce Development Partners: Public Agencies

The following agencies administer, grant, and make policy pertaining to workforce development funds:

- Department of Labor and Training
- Department of Education
- Department of Human Services
- Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
- Office of Rehabilitative Services
- Department of Corrections
- Department of Children, Youth & Families
- Commerce RI
- Office of Postsecondary Commissioner
- Governor's Workforce Board
- Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston
- Workforce Partnership of Greater RI

Secondary Education: The K-12 system represents a key investment in the future pipeline of workers in Rhode Island. The state’s \$770 million investment in this system provides educational and life preparation for the workforce, and as such represents a key partner in growing and sustaining a qualified workforce.

Higher Education: CCRI and other higher education institutions are a critical piece of the workforce pipeline in Rhode Island, particularly at the higher end of career pathways. They grant occupational degrees and certificates in nursing, information technology, allied health, and other growing occupational areas and offer non-credit programs in a number of subjects. While the state invested over \$161 million in higher education in FY2013, state and federal workforce funds do not play a significant role.

Additional State Investment: Qualifying Rhode Island businesses are eligible for a tax credit of 50% of actual training expenses for new and current employees, up to \$5,000 per employee, over three years, for their investments in retraining or upgrading the skills of their employees. The Department of Revenue reported that in Tax Year 2009 (the latest year for which published information is available), the Jobs Training Tax Credit “cost” the state \$822,087 in foregone revenue that was claimed by 56 taxpayers.

The Department of Labor and Training Division of Workers’ Compensation provides computer skills training and job search services to injured workers who are ready to return to work. These services are funded by Workers’ Compensation insurance premiums.

State law enables unemployed Rhode Islanders to obtain tuition and registration fee waivers on a space-available basis at the three public institutions of higher education.

Philanthropic: In Rhode Island, private foundations and charities play a strong role in investing in non-profits that provide training and education. The Rhode Island Foundation and the United Way of RI in particular have been integral partners in funding workforce development services and seeking innovative strategies to address challenging needs.

Rhode Island Workforce Development Partners: Training and Education Providers

The following entities receive public and private funds to provide workforce development services:

Public Sector

- Elementary and Secondary Schools (including Career & Technical Education)
- netWORKri One-Stop Career Centers
- Department of Corrections
- University of Rhode Island
- Rhode Island College
- Community College of Rhode Island

Community-Based Organizations

- Adult Education Providers
- YouthWORKS411 Centers
- Non-profit skills training providers
- Services for special populations

Other

- Employers
- GWB Industry Partnerships
- Labor-Management Programs
- Apprenticeship Programs
- Private colleges and universities
- Proprietary skills training providers

Constraints on Funding

There are several constraints on workforce development funding that are important to recognize:

Over 70% of the state’s workforce funding stems from federal sources, including WIA, TANF, Wagner Peyser, and Perkins. Each of these funding streams mandates a set of services for RI incumbent workers and job seekers, has different eligibility thresholds and requirements, and places restrictions on how funds can be used. For example, Wagner Peyser mandates employment services and cannot be used for skills training. Workforce Investment Act Title I funds must include certain basic services to customers and cannot be used solely for training.

Creating further complication are the required outcomes for each funding stream, which are not uniform across all sources and have made it difficult to establish programs that incorporate multiple funding streams. Despite these challenges, the state is working towards further integration of funding streams through its Workforce On-Ramps project with funding from the US Department of Labor.

As the GWB considers how to identify funding priorities to better serve Rhode Island businesses and workers, these mandates and constraints will necessarily be taken into consideration. At the same time, there is some flexibility within funding streams. For example, Wagner Peyser funds serve a broad population and do not always have to be locationally based at the career centers. Perkins funds, which must be used for technical skills training, can be utilized in a range of ways for high school students and adults. TANF funds can be used for a wide range of purposes related to supporting TANF recipients towards self-sufficiency through employment.

Workforce Services

The role of the workforce system is to fill the gap between the skills employers are seeking and what workers possess, both now and in the future, in order to maintain the state’s economic competitiveness. The system’s ability to meet employer and worker needs is affected by changing skill-levels needed by employers, the capacity of the public system to adapt, inadequate funding throughout the system, and federal requirements that mandate how and for whom resources can be spent. Rhode Island’s workforce system spans multiple agencies, focuses on a range of populations identified as needing particular services, and works within some of the state’s key industries.

TYPES OF SERVICE AND FUNDING ALLOCATIONS

While there is a range of workforce services available in Rhode Island, there are two broad categories within which most services fall: Employment Services and Skills Training and Education Services.

Employment Services can reach a large number of people with a broad brush of services. Usually customer-driven, employment services can include online job search assistance and pre-employment workshops. These services generally cost very little per person. This category also includes a slightly higher level of services that can include career counseling, assistance with resume writing, and other activities.

Skills Training and Education Services reach a smaller number of participants. They are much more intense in terms of hours, are intended to increase the ability of job seekers and workers to compete in the workplace, and encompass a range of training and education services. These services are typically much more expensive per person and are intended to move participants to a higher level of skills and wages.

SERVICE DELIVERY

Most funds for workforce services provide a blend of employment services, education, workforce readiness and skills training. Information on cost allocation by type of service is not currently available.

FY2013 RI SERVICES DELIVERY BY SERVICE TYPE		
Service Type	Number Served	Percentage of Total
Employment Services	55,180	66%
Adult Education	9,698	12%
Occupational Skills Training	17,787	21%
Other	747	1%
TOTAL	83,412	100%

As illustrated in Figure 15, in FY2013, 83,412 individuals were served by the workforce development system in Rhode Island. Of these, 66% received employment services, 12% received adult education services and 21% received occupational skills training.

Over the past ten years, federal funding has increasingly shifted from skills training to employment services at the One-Stop Career Centers.

Figure 15 (Source: UEP, FY2013)

Funding Breakdown by Category

Figure 16 illustrates how Workforce Funds are spent across agencies. This information is provided in greater detail for Youth, Transitional Workers, Incumbent Workers, Adult Education, and System Development in Figure 17 on the following page.

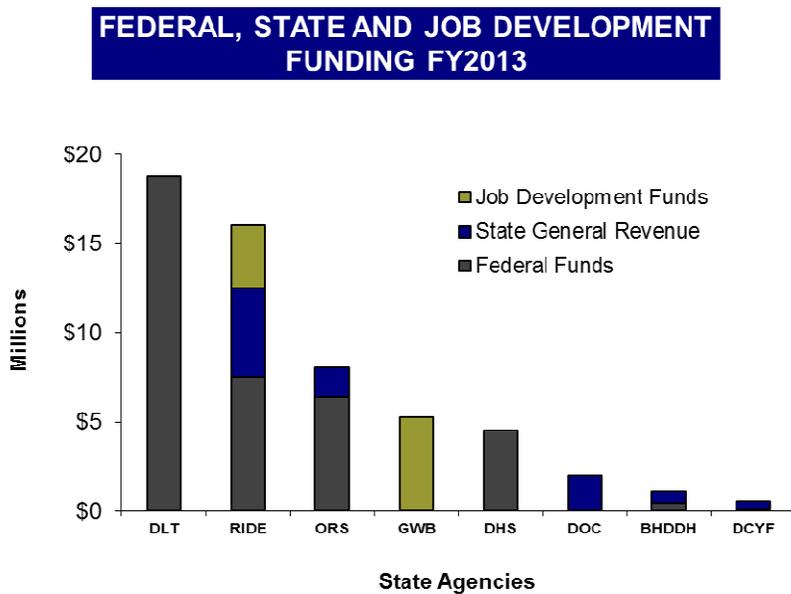


Figure 16 (Source: UEP, FY2013)

RI WORKFORCE FUNDS FY13					
	AGENCY	STATE	FEDERAL	TOTAL	% TOTAL
YOUTH					
Perkins - CTE Secondary	RIDE		\$3,359,131	\$3,359,131	
Categorical Fund - CTE	RIDE	\$3,000,000		\$3,000,000	
WIA Title I Youth	DLT		\$3,342,147	\$3,342,147	
DCYF Youth	DCYF	\$445,000	\$72,244	\$517,244	
Incarcerated Youth	RIDE		\$67,621	\$67,621	
Youth Success	DHS		\$1,037,215	\$1,037,215	
Youth Strategies	GWB	\$1,615,825		\$1,615,825	
Exeter Job Corps	USDOL		\$6,300,000	\$6,300,000	
TOTAL		\$5,060,825	\$14,178,358	\$19,239,183	30.2%
TRANSITIONAL					
One Stop Centers					
Wagner Peyser	DLT		\$2,593,693	\$2,593,693	
Reemployment & Eligibility Assessment	DLT		\$609,778	\$609,778	
WIA Title I Dislocated Workers	DLT		\$3,653,399	\$3,653,399	
Trade	DLT		\$2,589,622	\$2,589,622	
WIA Title I Adults	DLT		\$2,846,423	\$2,846,423	
Jobs for Veterans Services	DLT		\$586,815	\$586,815	
Senior Community Service Employment Program	DLT		\$466,903	\$466,903	
Business Workforce Center Services	DLT		\$1,073,668	\$1,073,668	
Work Opportunity Tax Credit	DLT		\$40,924	\$40,924	
Foreign Labor	DLT		\$57,475	\$57,475	
CTE Adults	RIDE		\$991,023	\$991,023	
TANF Workforce	DHS		\$4,298,874	\$4,298,874	
SNAP Employment and Training	DHS		\$208,837	\$208,837	
Behavioral Health Care Programs	BHDDH	\$617,207	\$424,127	\$1,041,334	
Vocational Rehabilitation Program	ORS	\$1,716,884	\$6,343,605	\$8,060,489	
Incarcerated Adults	DOC/RIDE	\$2,025,344	\$67,621	\$2,092,965	
Innovative Partnerships	GWB	\$170,578		\$170,578	
Jobs Initiatives	GWB	\$356,611		\$356,611	
PACE	CCRI		\$897,000	\$897,000	
Skills Tutor	GWB	\$4,374		\$4,374	
TOTAL		\$4,890,998	\$27,749,787	\$32,640,785	51.3%
INCUMBENT WORKERS					
JDF Incumbent Worker Training	GWB	\$807,251		\$807,251	
Export Training Grant	GWB	\$33,050		\$33,050	
TOTAL		\$840,301		\$840,301	1.32%

ADULT EDUCATION					
JDF Adult Education	GWB	\$3,900,262		\$3,900,262	
WIA Title II	RIDE		\$2,209,166	\$2,209,166	
General Revenue Adult Education	RIDE	\$1,990,792		\$1,990,792	
TANF Project Opportunity	DHS		\$989,661	\$989,661	
TOTAL		\$5,891,054	\$3,198,827	\$9,089,881	14.3%
SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT					
Industry Partnerships	GWB	\$1,764,591		\$1,764,591	
Leveraged Grants	GWB	\$90,378		\$90,378	
TOTAL		\$1,854,969		\$1,854,969	2.9%
TOTAL - ALL FUNDS		\$18,538,147	\$45,126,972	\$63,665,119	100%
<i>*Total funds includes CCRI overlapping funds: \$150,000 Adult Skills Training (CTE Adults), \$48,840 RI Works (TANF Workforce), and \$10,380 for WIA OJTs (WIA Title I)</i>					
<i>**FY14-15 Biennial Employment and Training Plan did not include USDOL Exeter Job Corps Funding</i>					

Figure 17 (Source: UEP, FY2013)

National Best Practices

As resources for workforce development have become constrained, workforce systems across the country are looking toward models and strategies to maximize their resources and leverage services and partnerships in new ways. A review of best practices related to Rhode Island’s education and training priorities may generate fresh ideas for Rhode Island’s workforce system and serve as resources for workforce stakeholders as they begin to implement the recommendations found in the Biennial Plan. Many of the programs and initiatives described here can be applied to more than one priority area; however, examples have been organized by the priority they are most directly aligned with.

Best Practice	Priority Area	Description
Business Resource Network (Ohio)	Employer Partnerships	A collaboration of chambers, workforce and economic development organizations, education providers, and government agencies committed to providing business services with as little red tape as possible. www.TheBRN.net
German Skills Initiative (D.C.)	Employer Partnerships	A program established by the German Embassy to identify best practices in workforce development. Businesses and schools partner to provide training, while companies fund the training as an investment in their staff. http://www.germany.info/skillsinitiative
Inspired Oklahoma Initiative	Employer Partnerships	Aimed at generating retention, expansion, and recruitment in targeted industries, Inspired Oklahoma takes an ecosystem approach (defined as the balancing of wealth generation, growth, potential, and competitive advantage) to workforce and economic development to support industry needs. http://okcommerce.gov/assets/files/ecosystems/Inspired_Bifold-PresentPDF.pdf
Toyota Advanced Manufacturing Technician Program	Employer Partnerships	Toyota has partnered with seven community colleges across the country to offer a two-year degree in Computer Integrated Manufacturing and paid work experience. Participants earn up to \$30,000 over two years while simultaneously completing an Associate’s Degree. http://bluegrass.kctcs.edu/en/about/our_campuses/georgetown/amt.aspx
Workforce Boards of Metropolitan Chicago (WBMC)	Employer Partnerships	WBMC offers industry summits to bring together business associations, chambers of commerce, and education providers to identify key workforce development action items. http://www.workforceboardsmetrochicago.org/
The Leader in Me	Work Readiness	This program, which builds upon the foundation of <i>The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People</i> , develops leadership and soft skills in children at the elementary school level, addressing a key need for work readiness to begin at an early age. http://www.theleaderinme.org/

TRACK: Tech Ready Apprentices for Careers in Kentucky	Work Readiness	This pre-apprenticeship program provides opportunities for high school students and creates a pipeline of talent for participating industries. http://education.ky.gov/cte/cter/pages/track.aspx
WorkIndiana - Adult Education and Workforce Development	Work Readiness	This Adult Education program helps participants acquire a high school equivalency, go to college, and enter entry-level occupational certification programs. The program includes support services and occupational training opportunities. http://www.in.gov/dwd/adulted_workin.htm
Alliance for Quality Career Pathways	Career Pathways	A CLASP initiative, the Alliance developed a framework of criteria and indicators for quality career pathways systems. http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/aqcp-framework-version-1-0
Apprenticeship Carolina	Career Pathways	This program encourages apprenticeships as an approach to workforce development by offering a \$1000 tax credit per apprentice and providing job matching services at no charge to employers. http://www.apprenticeshipcarolina.com/
Minnesota FastTRAC	Career Pathways	An Adult Career Pathways program, FastTRAC helps educationally underprepared adults succeed in well-paying careers by integrating basic skills education and career-specific training. http://mn.gov/deed/programs-services/minnesota-fast-trac/
Virginia Peninsula Career Pathways	Career Pathways	A partnership between 14 manufacturers, public schools, labor unions, and community partners, this program offers training that leads to industry recognized credentials in a number of key industries and incorporates Registered Apprenticeships in some of its pathways. http://www.virginiapeninsulacareerpathways.com/
Gulf Coast Workforce Solutions	Workforce System Integration	A local WIB divided into two divisions: resident services and employer services. Resident services oversees one-stop centers while employer services provides one-on-one, business driven solutions focused on increasing business impact in the region. http://wrksolutions.com/index.html
Kentucky Workforce Investment Board (KWIB)	Workforce System Integration	KWIB's strategic plan, WORKSmart Kentucky, received national attention for streamlining and simplifying programming, and for providing consistency and improved service to job seekers and businesses. Several initiatives laid out in the strategic plan address work readiness and soft skills training. www.kwib.ky.gov
WorkForce Central - Washington	Workforce System Integration	WorkForce Central raises at least \$10 for every \$1 of federal funding it receives through grants, a fee-for-service menu, and partnerships with other organizations. http://www.workforce-central.org/

Figure 18

Braided Funding Makes Inter-Agency Partnerships Thrive

Changing systems and processes that support workforce programming are neither easy nor speedy. One of the thorniest challenges is to “braid” funding from multiple state and federal sources—each has its own eligibility guidelines, restrictions on uses of funding, and reporting requirements—and this has often gotten in the way of inter-agency collaboration.

In the past two years, Rhode Island took on the challenge of un-siloing workforce funding so that it could be more agile and responsive to the training needs of Rhode Islanders. Through the state’s On-Ramps to Career Pathways program, funded by a grant from the United States Department of Labor, several state agencies came together to “braid” funding for a pilot work readiness training through which Rhode Islanders are earning a nationally recognized work readiness certificate and gain access to work experiences. The Governor’s Workforce Board, Department of Labor and Training, Department of Human Services, the Department of Education, Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston, and Workforce Partnership of Greater Rhode Island all contributed funds to the pilot; the Rhode Island Foundation and the United Way of Rhode Island are also supporting the effort with critical flexible funding that is enabling the state to experiment with braided funding.

The pilot provides training at two of the state’s three NetWORKri centers as well as on-site at community partners, and serves participants from all the partner organizations. On-Ramps has enabled Rhode Island to respond to the complexity of federal requirements, which is often a challenging process, and enabled the workforce system to experiment and learn how to use funding more efficiently and effectively, both for the pilot and in the future.

The state has received permission to move forward with a request to the federal government to “pool” funding across the state agencies, which would allow the state to bring funding together and utilize an outcomes-based approach—which many of the partners think is smart because it focuses on outcomes. This approach will help agencies be smart stewards of the funds while also maximizing their ability to achieve better outcomes for Rhode Islanders. The state is currently in the approval process—if granted, the waiver would represent the first pooled funding structure in the country, and will set a precedent for other states.



Pamela Perez started out as an adult education student at the Genesis Center and then became an On-Ramps participant, where she had a work experience that led to permanent employment at Tunstall, Inc. Braided funding made it possible for Pamela to participate in the On-Ramps program.

Progress Report

Since the first Biennial Plan was completed two years ago, the Governor’s Workforce Board, its partners, and agencies throughout the workforce system have been working diligently to complete the action steps set out in the plan. The following list of accomplishments is organized first by major priority and then by the action steps laid out in the FY2014-2015 Biennial Plan.

Employer Partnerships	<p>Action Step 1. Market the EmployRI website, and solicit feedback to improve usability and increase participation by employers and job seekers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EmployRI was marketed through billboards, bus panels, and other outreach efforts (including RI Resource Hub and Adult Lifelong Learning (ALL) Access Learning Lounge through Providence Public Library). • Improvements were made to EmployRI, making it easier to register, post a resume or job, and match job seekers to available jobs. • Employer focus groups were conducted regarding usability and satisfaction. These groups included several employers from the GWB’s Employer Advisory Committee. • Job seekers and One-Stop staff were surveyed regarding usability and satisfaction with EmployRI. • The DLT used focus group, survey results, and the 2013 Job Match Bill recommendation to undertake improvements to the system that improve functionality for matching skills required by employers, to compare training programs, and to find training based on skills checklist, as well as updating the Eligible Training Provider List (ETPL).
	<p>Action Step 2. Analyze the requirements of current job vacancies and the skills of job seekers in order to accelerate hiring, identify skills gaps and prioritize skills training.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EmployRI analyzes the skills of individual job seekers for job matching and will provide an aggregate skills gap report in the winter of 2015. • LMI analyzes requirements of job vacancies and skills of job seekers on the aggregate level (labor supply and demand report). • Industry Partnerships wrote or updated Skills Gap studies to identify sector specific gaps and training needs. • Unemployment Insurance claimants are now required to post their resumes on EmployRI.
	<p>Action Step 3. Exempt the Job Development Fund (JDF) from the State’s 10% cost recovery in order to increase available funds to address employer workforce needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The FY2015 budget, passed by the General Assembly and signed into law by the Governor, exempts the JDF from the 10% indirect cost recovery.

	<p>Action Step 4. Leverage employer support for internships, on-the-job training, summer youth employment, and other experiential learning opportunities through the use of grants, tax credits and/or other incentives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 1,000 RI businesses per year were engaged in public-private efforts to promote workforce development. • A new RI Work Immersion Program was created to provide partial wage reimbursements to RI employers providing internships to unemployed adults, college student, and recent college graduates in RI. • Unified Workforce Development Expenditure & Program Report (UEP) has begun to track and report employer partnerships. • Innovative partnership grants and industry partner grants were established, requiring employer partner-driven training.
	<p>Action Step 5. Enlist a team of private sector champions to promote, challenge, and engage business leaders to participate actively in the workforce system to ensure that workforce development efforts are informed by, and responsive to, employer workforce needs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWB formed Employer Advisory Committee which has met several times per year to discuss critical workforce issues. • GWB Industry Partners are more closely aligned with the DLT Business Workforce Center.
Work Readiness	<p>Action Step 1. Expand resources for target populations with low skills and additional employment barriers (e.g., veterans, ex-offenders, out-of-school and at-risk youth, TANF recipients, long-term unemployed, homeless, and disabled individuals).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Ramps work readiness program was launched, including a pilot of the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), to assist people with low literacy and the long-term unemployed or never employed. • RI received a National Emergency Grant for dislocated workers; local WIBs worked toward a contextualized model for work based learning (including digital literacy). • Broadband RI has implemented new digital literacy efforts to expand work readiness skills. • The Employment First Initiative was launched to provide increased job placements for adults with developmental disabilities. • Adult Basic Education services have been improved; as a result, the level of academic achievement has been climbing steadily, and more students are making gains on post-tests. • The ALL Access Learning Lounge (Providence Public Library) provides ABE and workforce services to underserved populations. • RI Family Literacy Initiative (RIFLI) provides services 3 days per week at One-Stops. • Child care support for individuals in training programs was enacted into law, which allows eligible individuals to access child care assistance while training. • Numerous grants and programs across RI’s workforce system were expanded to include and/or require work readiness programs.

	<p>Action Step 2. Expand access to career pathways through contextualized adult education, work-readiness, career exploration, internships, case management and job placement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWB established Innovative Partnership grants to support business-education partnerships that increase the employability of unemployed and under-employed workers through work readiness, occupational skills training, and experiential learning aligned with career pathways. • RIDE established contextualized adult education contracts. • Career maps were created to support career exploration. • The RI Work Immersion program was established to expand opportunities for college students and unemployed adults to obtain paid internships leading to jobs and careers. • CCRI PACE provided training to trade-eligible dislocated workers, returning military veterans, and Rhode Island’s unemployed with a USDOL TAACCCT grant. <p>Action Step 3. Establish a statewide, employer-recognized work-readiness credential to be incorporated into workforce education and training programs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On-Ramps work readiness program launched National Career Readiness Certificates as a pilot; a work experience credential was created to align with NCRC to assist the long-term unemployed and those with low-literacy levels. • Northstar Digital Literacy Assessment program was piloted at public libraries. <p>Action Step 4. Expand subsidized summer youth employment opportunities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer youth programs were expanded through increased investment of JDF funds by the GWB in the summer of 2013 and 2014, as well as by allocation of unexpended TANF funds by DHS in summer of 2013.
Career Pathways	<p>Action Step 1. Promote dual enrollment academic programs (i.e., secondary / post-secondary) linked to growth sectors of the economy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dual Enrollment programs were expanded at CCRI to include several high school technical programs. <p>Action Step 2. Expand the use of Career and Technical High School facilities to train adults and out-of-school youth for career pathways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A team was formed to address this step; they are still in the planning stage. • CTE facilities were leveraged for adult programming in culinary arts and boat building (including programs at Providence CTE, Woonsocket CTE, Davies CTE, and the MET school). <p>Action Step 3. Promote a statewide internship campaign to identify and develop talent for employers, and provide work experience and connections to employers for high school students, college students, recent graduates, out-of-school youth and unemployed adults.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge.jobs, a statewide web portal to facilitate internships between students and Rhode Island businesses, conducted a statewide campaign to increase awareness and participation of businesses in internship programs with funding from the RI Foundation. • The Work Immersion program was implemented to target college students, recent college grads, and unemployed adults. • Work Immersion and Back to Work RI were established to increase opportunities for college students and unemployed adults to obtain work experience.

	<p>Action Step 4. Expand the use of on-the-job training, pre-employment occupational skills training and targeted hiring subsidies to prepare the workforce for career pathways.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-trade apprenticeship programs were approved for CNC Machinists, construction managers, cost estimators, and marine trades.• Workforce Solutions of Providence-Cranston administered an On-the-Job Training program for TANF recipients with funding from the Department of Human Services.• DLT and the local WIBs have initiated an effort to improve the alignment of the Eligible Training Provider List with in-demand jobs and career pathways, as well as to increase accountability for outcomes.• GWB Jobs Initiatives, Work Immersion, and Innovative Partnerships have increased support for pre-employment training, experiential learning, and hiring subsidies.
	<p>Action Step 5. Establish seamless career pathways linking K-12 to higher education, and higher education to employers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• CCRI established a manufacturing boot camp for youth, veterans, and the unemployed.• Industry Partnerships in eight key sectors have conducted skills gap studies, created on-line, career pathways tools for in-demand occupations, and provided career coaching to job seekers.• The Career Pathways Advisory Group was established by the General Assembly to help guide and implement statewide career pathways development under the leadership of the GWB and in alignment with the Workforce On-Ramps program.• Several USDOL grants (TAACCCT, NEG, and H-1B) were obtained to expand career pathways capacity in manufacturing, shipbuilding, and information technology.• Articulation agreements were developed and expanded between institutions of higher education.• The Hospitality sector has developed articulation agreements with culinary arts and lodging programs (to offer college credit and scholarships).• The Shipbuilding, Marine Trades/Advanced Manufacturing Institute (SAMI) was established at NEIT with funding from a USDOL TAACCCT grant.• The IYRS marine tech program established an articulation agreement with Roger Williams.• Legislation was passed allowing 16 and 17-year-olds to participate in pre-apprenticeships in manufacturing settings.

Workforce System Integration	<p>Action Step 1. Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the public workforce system by directing existing inter-agency teams to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop uniform performance measures and accountability structures to track progress on achievement of Biennial Plan priorities. • Examine and upgrade current data and reporting systems. • Identify opportunities to align and/or reallocate existing state and federal funds to address Biennial Plan priorities. • RI Office of Management and Budget performance management office was created to refine and capture data across state agencies. • New legislation was passed that requires the GWB to develop a comprehensive system improvement plan in 2015. • Data collection processes were improved across agencies. • Improved methodology for performance measures have been established. • Network RI One-Stop centers have expanded their integration efforts and services. • The On-Ramps program was piloted using a “braided funding” model among partner state agencies. • Legislation passed to allow data sharing across Longitudinal Data System that measures K-12 to Higher Education. • SWIO and Local WIB plans were developed to align with the first Biennial Employment & Training Plan.
	<p>Action Step 2: Appoint a representative of the Governor’s Workforce Board to the board of the Economic Development Corporation, and appoint a representative of the Economic Development Corporation to the Governor’s Workforce Board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GWB Board Chair or member was added by statute to CommerceRI Board, Board of Education, and Career & Tech Board of Trustees. The Secretary of Commerce is to become Vice Chair of GWB. • As of February, 2015, local WIB Chairs will serve on the GWB. • As of February, 2015, the Secretary of Commerce will serve on the GWB. • In 2015, a GWB employer representative will serve on the new Career and Technical Education Board of Trustees. • RhodeMap RI and the state economic development plan included workforce development data, strategy, and leadership.
	<p>Action Step 3. Expand interagency participation and resource support for netWORKri Career One-Stop Centers.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Industry partners have increased their presence in One Stops to provide industry specific coaching.
	<p>Action Step 4. Increase the frequency of cabinet-level meetings on workforce development matters.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No progress to date.

Recommendations

The findings in this report make clear that gaps in education, skills, and resources exist throughout the workforce system that affect employers, workers, and the economy. As such, innovative strategies, collaborative partnerships, and additional resources are needed in virtually every part of the workforce development system. Each partner, including both public and private stakeholders, has a critical role to play in continuing to build a competitive workforce that supports businesses and enables workers to become increasingly economically stable.

By statute, the Biennial Employment and Training Plan is required to identify “major priorities” for the next two fiscal years, along with a funding plan necessary to address these priorities. In 2012, the Governor’s Workforce Board identified four major priorities for workforce development: Employer Partnerships, Work Readiness, Career Pathways, and Workforce System Integration, and the Board continues to focus on these areas. The following recommendations should be considered action steps to execute the Biennial Employment and Training Plan. Each recommendation indicates the extent to which resources currently exist to accomplish the steps and identifies the approach that will be necessary where designated funding is not currently available, based on the following key:

- § Requires additional public and/or private funds
- * Can be accomplished with existing resources
- ▲ Requires reallocation of existing resources
- ⊕ Requires leveraging of private sector resources

Employer Partnerships

The public workforce system and employers must continue to engage and grow in partnership, with each bringing its respective strengths to bear. These partnerships will ensure that training and education are responsive to, and aligned with, employer needs. To that end, the Governor’s Workforce Board recommends the following:

PRIVATE SECTOR CHAMPIONS

Identify and support Private Sector Champions to promote, challenge, and engage business leaders to ensure the workforce system is informed by, and responsive to, employer workforce needs. Leverage Champions to garner employer support for apprenticeships, internships, externships, on-the-job training, summer youth employment, and other experiential learning opportunities, particularly for job seekers with barriers to employment, through the use of grants, tax credits, and/or other incentives. Champions will conduct outreach and share information regarding best practices and workforce initiatives such as the adoption of internships, the use of stackable credentials—beginning with a standardized, employer-recognized work readiness credential and moving into industry-specific credentials—and the expansion of incumbent worker training. Champions will also provide guidance as the state continues to create

programming to align education and training to business needs, learning from and adapting nationally recognized best practices.

In order to support Private Sector Champions, the GWB recommends the following:

- develop a primer on experiential and work-based learning opportunities and programs for champions to share with other businesses;
- create opportunities for businesses to provide feedback to the system in real time; and
- train workforce staff to develop effective partnerships with businesses.

Furthermore, business leaders who have successfully partnered with the workforce system should be enlisted to participate on workforce system boards and advisory committees and to promote workforce development efforts such as internships and on-the-job training and to serve as advisors to high schools, colleges, community-based organizations, and workforce boards.

Rationale: Individual companies and industry sectors that are actively involved with the workforce system can galvanize the business community by helping to promote workforce development initiatives. Businesses have credibility among other businesses and can speak directly to workforce challenges; to be effective, the system needs their involvement and endorsement. GWB Industry Partnerships provide a model for partnership and should be encouraged to serve as Champions.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: * ▲ +

Stakeholders: GWB, DLT, WPGRI, WSPC, Higher Education, BHDDH, RISLA, RIDE, Commerce RI, Business & Industry Partnerships²²

Consequences of No Action: Without active Private Sector Champions, fewer new businesses will engage with the workforce system; as a result, the state will have more difficulty meeting the needs of business across sectors and fewer potential partners in job creation. Furthermore, businesses may be concerned that they do not have a voice in workforce development.

Benefits to Customers: Private Sector Champions create a direct link between businesses and the workforce system, and help to ensure that workforce education and training programs prepare workers with skills that businesses are seeking.

CONNECT JOB SEEKERS WITH JOB OPENINGS

Facilitate the job search process by engaging employer partners more thoroughly in the workforce system. Raise awareness, participation, and engagement among employer partners across the workforce system regarding initiatives that support the training and hiring of individuals with significant barriers to employment (e.g., long-term unemployed, English Language Learners, ex-offenders, individuals with

²² For a list of Stakeholder Acronyms, please refer to page 60.

disabilities, and inner-city youth). Follow up on previous efforts to market EmployRI, improve its usability, and increase participation by employers and job seekers.

Rationale: The workforce system and its employer partners need to improve their capacity to better connect job seekers with real and projected job openings by raising awareness of services, programs, and job seekers that will address their need for talent. EmployRI is a key intermediary between businesses and residents, especially those who are most in need of workforce system support. All unemployment claimants are required to post a resume to EmployRI, while participants in pre-employment training programs are encouraged to do the same. Businesses who embrace EmployRI as a tool in recruitment will have access to thousands of searchable resumes and a pool of applicants who are actively pursuing opportunities to develop their skills and abilities.

Implementation Timeline: On-going

Funding: ▲+

Stakeholders: DLT, DHS, GWB, RIDE, DOC, ORS, OLIS, DCYF, BHDDH, Higher Education, CommerceRI, WPGRI, WSPC, Job Corps, CBOs, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Reductions to the state’s unemployment rate are slowed as Rhode Island job seekers are unable to avail themselves of the full range of workforce tools and resources that are available to them. Significant time and resources were invested in EmployRI over the last two fiscal years; this progress would be lost without continued outreach to employer partners.

Benefits to Customers: Businesses have a larger pool of qualified applicants to choose from while simultaneously getting Human Resources-style support from EmployRI and the workforce development staff. Meanwhile, job seekers have a better chance of getting noticed by employers.

INCUMBENT WORKER TRAINING

Identify additional opportunities for incumbent worker training (both on-the-job and through education partners); assist businesses in backfilling openings that are created by upgrading current staff.

Rationale: In response to the Employer Survey, many businesses reported having difficulty filling mid- and high-level positions, noting that some positions remain unfilled for months at a time. One strategy for addressing this difficulty is to train incumbent workers (who already have valuable institutional knowledge) to advance in their careers. Companies can fill higher level positions with employees in whom they have already invested time and money, while the resulting openings in entry-level positions can be backfilled through various pre-employment programs.

Implementation Timing: Immediate and On-going

Funding: \$▲+

Stakeholders: GWB, Training Providers, Higher Education, DLT, WPGRI, WSPC, CommerceRI, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Rhode Islanders who may have otherwise found rewarding employment continue to be underemployed while businesses continue to have difficulty filling mid- and high-level positions. As a result, productivity is lost as existing employees do more of the work without proper training or support.

Benefits to Customers: Businesses maximize human capital by investing in current staff, improving morale, and reducing turnover. Individuals benefit by gaining valuable skills, job stability, and economic mobility.

Work Readiness

All youth and adults must have the opportunity to acquire the core literacy, numeracy, and work readiness skills (such as team work, communication, and problem-solving) necessary to succeed in the workplace. In order to provide that opportunity, the Governor’s Workforce Board recommends:

YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Expand programming for youth that includes opportunities to explore industries and occupations while gaining valuable work experience. Identify strategies to engage out-of-school youth and to help them become successful in the workforce—a main focus of WIOA and a critical need. Programs for both in-school and out-of-school youth may include:

- subsidized and substantive summer or year-round employment opportunities that increase youth participation in career exploration, job search, and occupational skills development;
- pre-apprenticeship training through CTE and high school programs to prepare individuals for entry into apprenticeship programs;
- work readiness and health & safety training;
- expand existing peer mentoring programs to provide workshops and career exploration activities targeted to out-of-school, inner-city, minority, and other underserved youth.

Rationale: The youth unemployment rate is nearly 13% higher than those over 20 years of age²³. This indicates that programming and funding are critical to enable youth to obtain valuable work readiness training, employer-recognized credentials, and paid work experience. Nationally, the workforce development community is moving toward a “cradle to career” approach that places emphasis on early intervention, while here in Rhode Island, economic development has identified K-12 education as a key area for workforce improvements in its recently released RhodeMap RI. Significant support for paid work experience for youth has come from JDF and TANF funds; however, funding levels may not be sustainable, and new sources of funding will be needed to maintain and expand this important effort.

Implementation Timing: Planning – immediate; Implementation – Summer 2015, Duration – On-going

Funding: \$ ▲ +

Stakeholders: WPGRI, WSPC, GWB, YouthWORKS411, DLT, DHS, BHDDH, RIDE, DOC, DCYF, Job Corps, Business & Industry Partnerships

²³ Rhode Island Department of Labor and Training, Labor Market Information Unit, October 2014

Consequences of No Action: Without access to paid work experience and exposure to high-growth, high-wage occupations, eligible youth will be less prepared for entry level positions and will lack information about career and education choices. The career development and progression of such youth is delayed, potentially for several years.

Benefits to Customers: More young adults with work readiness skills and experience translates to a larger pool of applicants from which businesses can recruit. Exposing residents to key industries and career pathways at an early age may also have a positive impact on education attainment and economic development in Rhode Island.

INCLUSIVE WORK READINESS RESOURCES

Expand resources and improve services to address literacy, numeracy, English language proficiency, computer skills, and other work readiness skills for target populations with barriers to employment (e.g., English Language Learners, veterans, incarcerated, those with criminal records, out-of school and at-risk youth, individuals without high school credentials, TANF recipients, long-term unemployed, homeless, and disabled individuals).

Rationale: Over 83,000 working age Rhode Islanders do not have a high school diploma and 35,000 Rhode Islanders lack some level of English proficiency²⁴. The target populations noted above are over-represented in these numbers and are far more likely to be low-skilled and/or unemployed, thus requiring additional services and supports to succeed in the workforce. Furthermore, Biennial Plan Focus Group participants expressed concerns regarding the level of support and integration available to programs serving populations with greater barriers to employment.

Implementation Timeline: On-going

Funding: \$ ▲ +

Stakeholders: RIDE, DHS, DLT, GWB, DOC, ORS, DCYF, BHDDH, OLIS, WPGRI, WSPC, CBOs, YouthWORKS411, Job Corps, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Without support from the system, individuals with barriers to employment will continue to struggle toward economic stability. Other possible unintended consequences may include increased reliance on social services and public assistance, and additional strain on the judicial and corrections systems. Rhode Island educational attainment will lag if it does not address basic academic readiness issues such as literacy and numeracy, as well as other foundational “soft skills” such as communication, problem-solving, and teamwork.

Benefits to Customers: Increased educational attainment, lower unemployment, and a larger applicant pool for businesses. For individuals who get back to work (or to work for the first time) the benefits stretch beyond a paycheck and benefits and into intangibles like pride in one’s work and a sense of stability.

²⁴ US Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 1-3 year data.

WORK READINESS CREDENTIAL

Establish a statewide, employer-recognized work-readiness credential to be incorporated into workforce education, training programs, and the K-12 system. Identify resources and partners to raise awareness and support among RI businesses for the value of a standardized work readiness credential.

Pre-employment programs should assess work-readiness of participants and provide training and/or referrals, as appropriate, for Adult Basic Education, English Language Proficiency, Literacy (including digital literacy) and numeracy, communication skills, interpersonal skills, critical thinking skills, and work ethic/conduct.

Rationale: In surveys, focus groups, and Skill Gap Studies, employers consistently cite applicants’ lack of work readiness skills as an impediment to hiring. The Governor’s Workforce Board, DLT, DHS, RIDE and other partners have invested significant time and energy in developing and piloting a work readiness curriculum aligned with the National Career Readiness Certificate (NCRC), which is widely-recognized by businesses throughout the U.S. as a reliable indicator of work readiness. Furthermore, the NCRC is recognized as the foundation in many career pathways—the first in a series of stackable credentials. While not currently “stacked” in Rhode Island, the potential is there to build this into other workforce development programs and career pathways. Additionally, having a widely-accepted work-readiness standard such as the NCRC available, along with a critical mass of potential employees who have attained the standard, represents a significant economic development tool.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: *+

Stakeholders: DLT, GWB, DHS, RIDE, WPGRI, WSPC, BHDDH, CBOs, YouthWORKS411, Job Corps, DOC, ORS, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Businesses will continue to cite work readiness as a barrier to meeting their staffing needs, as well as frustration at the state’s perceived inaction in meeting a well-known workforce need. Job seekers will not have a standard, widely recognized method to demonstrate their skills in job applications.

Benefits to Customers: A commonly accepted work readiness credential will ease the hiring process for businesses while simultaneously accelerating the job search for those who have the credential. Rhode Island’s low-skilled and entry-level workforce will be poised to move up through established career pathways after earning the first stackable credential.

INTERNSHIPS

Encourage employers, especially private-sector businesses, to expand paid internships for students, out-of-school youth, and adults who are long-term unemployed, underemployed, or face significant barriers to employment. Provide guidance to establish and implement effective internship programs.

Rationale: National best practices indicate that experiential learning is a key part of workforce development. Low-skilled adults are least able to access career pathways due to limited education, work readiness, and work experience as well as limited access to social services and career advice. Internships can connect these individuals to businesses directly, provide them with valuable work experience, and allow businesses to “audition” potential full-time employees without the full investment of traditional hiring. RI has built a foundation upon which to expand internships, including bRidge.jobs, Work Immersion, and Workforce On-Ramps.

Implementation Timeline: Immediate

Funding: * ▲ +

Stakeholders: GWB, DLT, RIDE, DHS, Higher Education, RISLA, AICU-RI, DOC, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Businesses miss an opportunity to attract, educate, and assess potential employees in a low-risk situation. Youth and out of work adults miss an opportunity to gain valuable work experience.

Benefits to Customers: Internships create a pipeline of experienced and work ready applicants with industry specific knowledge and interest. For job seekers, internships provide paid training and important opportunities to make connections with business owners and hiring managers.

Career Pathways

The public workforce system, in partnership with employers, must provide youth and adults with Career Pathways that encompass a continuum of training, education, work experience, and supportive services that lead to good jobs and careers in high-growth, high-demand, strategically important sectors of the Rhode Island economy.

DUAL ENROLLMENT

Promote funding of “dual enrollment” academic programs that allow students to gain high school and college credits simultaneously, particularly through programs linked to growth sectors of the economy. Programs that focus on STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math) education, in particular, can help usher young people onto career pathways associated with high-demand, high-wage occupations.

Rationale: Rhode Island has limited opportunities for dual enrollment that enable high school students to gain technical skills and post-secondary credits upon graduation. Dual enrollment programs in nursing, culinary arts, and hospitality are already creating seamless entrance onto career pathways.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: \$ ▲ +

Stakeholders: RIDE, Higher Education, AICU-RI, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Education attainment continues to be a time intensive and expensive process for individuals. High school graduates have few opportunities for early entry onto career pathways.

Benefits to Customers: Students who take advantage of dual enrollment programs can complete high school with significant college credits, thus decreasing the time to degree and reducing the cost of higher education.

APPRENTICESHIPS

Promote the establishment of new apprenticeship programs in traditional and non-traditional occupations with links to secondary education, post-secondary education, and the workforce system.

Rationale: Although commonly associated with construction trades, manufacturing, and occupations organized by labor unions, apprenticeship programs now serve a number of industries and match job seekers with industry-driven training opportunities to develop skills while earning a pay check. Registered Apprenticeships are approved by the state and maintain a high level of education and training standards for both the apprentice and the employer. Registered apprentices receive a portable, nationally-recognized certificate that can be linked to career pathways. Registered Apprenticeship programs have recently received renewed national attention and funding from the US Department of Labor. Non-registered apprenticeships and other forms of on-the-job training also provide important opportunities for career advancement.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: \$ ▲ +

Stakeholders: DLT, GWB, RIDE, OPC, DOC, DCYF, WPGRI, WSPC, Job Corps, State Apprenticeship Council, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Without apprenticeship programs, employers will have fewer strategies to fill skilled jobs, and many will continue to depend on workers obtaining their training and experience elsewhere. Meanwhile, workers will have difficulty obtaining the training and experience necessary to obtain skilled jobs and will miss out on a unique “learn and earn” job training model that is appealing to many job seekers.

Benefits to Customers: Individuals have an alternative to advance their education without incurring large student loan debt. They receive paid training, work experience, earn a paycheck, and nationally

recognized credentials. Businesses have the opportunity to develop loyal, skilled workers whose training and experience is customized to the needs of the business.

SEAMLESS CAREER PATHWAYS

Develop career pathways in Rhode Island’s industry sectors—both those represented by GWB Industry Partnerships and others that have been identified by DLT and/or CommerceRI as strategically important to the state’s economic development. Effective career pathways require partnerships and participation across the workforce education and training system: businesses and Industry Partnerships must drive the need for career pathways while education and training providers collaborate with industry to design the curriculum and with workforce staff to provide wrap-around supports such as career coaching. To facilitate the development and implementation of career pathways, the following tactics must be employed:

- Establish clear links between the K-12 system, post-secondary education, career and technical education, and adult basic education. At all levels of the education system, make sure that training programs are linked to employers.
- Expand adult education programming that is contextualized to specific industries or occupations.
- Expand the use of on-the-job training, pre-employment occupational skills training, and targeted hiring subsidies to prepare the workforce for career pathways.
- Coordinate articulation agreements between education partners throughout the workforce system.
- Create and circulate an asset map of training programs and articulation agreements to increase awareness among career coaches and other service providers.
- Coordinate the correctional system with the careers pathway system in order to efficiently transition the formerly incarcerated and ex-offenders into the state’s workforce system.

Rationale: The State of RI has endorsed Career Pathways as an effective strategy for workforce development; furthermore, Career Pathways are widely accepted as a best practice to address sector-specific workforce demands. There is no other strategy that fully encompasses all parts of the workforce system in terms of talent development. Clear career pathways (developed closely with industry and education) that have smooth transitions and accelerated skill attainment opportunities for individuals represent a more efficient and responsive method to meet the fast changing occupation and job demands of the modern economy.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: \$ ▲ +

Stakeholders: DLT, RIDE, DHS, WPGRI, WSPC, GWB, DOC, ORS, Higher Education, AICU-RI, YouthWORKS411, Job Corps, Career Pathways Advisory Committee, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Without guidance about the education and training required for advancement in high-demand occupations, systems and toward growing occupations, individuals will not be able to make informed decisions about the programs available or how to successfully enter and

advance in growing sectors, while industries and businesses with specialized needs will continue to struggle finding skilled workers.

Benefits to Customers: Seamless career pathways create a talent pipeline of individuals moving from one skill level to the next. Businesses know that residents are being prepared according to their needs, while education and training providers can streamline curriculum development and enhance recruitment.

CAREER EXPLORATION AND COACHING

As a bridge to more advanced workforce development programs, build Career Pathways coaching into work readiness programs, pre-employment training programs, adult education, and K-12. Educate career coaches, case managers, and guidance counselors on how to navigate existing pathways, the importance of stackable credentials, and the benefits of a pathway with clear entry and exit points so that they can do the same for individuals, thus moving more people into pathways that lead to growing occupations and industries.

Rationale: Career coaching is a key element in successful career pathways according to the Department of Labor’s Career Pathways Toolkit²⁵. netWORKr staff already provides career coaching; this will align coaching with industry needs and provide a clear guide to options for job seekers, Industry Partnerships, community organizations, and K-12 programs interested in getting involved in career pathways.

Implementation Timing: Immediate and On-going

Funding: *

Stakeholders: DLT, RIDE, DOC, ORS, DHS, WPGRI, WSPC, BHDDH, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Creating career pathways and establishing articulation agreements among education providers is time and resource intensive; if job seekers and students are not encouraged to explore and eventually enter these pathways, then resources are wasted and the full potential of the career pathways model is not realized.

Benefits to Customers: Career pathways participation leads to a pipeline of skilled individuals with industry recognized credentials and empowers individuals to actively pursue high-demand occupations.

INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT FOR HIGH WAGE JOBS

In order to meet the changing demands of the labor market, establish a process for identifying high-wage, high-demand occupations that are not currently supported by existing career pathways. Provide additional support and funding to develop or expand instructional programs that increase capacity to prepare workers for high-wage jobs.

Rationale: Career Pathways have the greatest impact when they lead to high-wage, high-demand occupations. By providing support for instructional programs aligned to specific growth industries, Rhode

²⁵ www.workforceinfodb.org/PDF/CareerPathwaysToolkit2011.pdf

Island increases the breadth and depth of its career pathways offerings and its ability to support economic development.

Implementation Timing: Immediate and on-going

Funding: \$ ▲

Stakeholders: OPC, DLT, RIDE, Industry Partnerships, CommerceRI

Consequences of No Action: Existing career pathways may not fully address areas of growth and other labor market trends; training and education programs run the risk of becoming outdated. Economic development opportunities to grow high-wage jobs in RI may be missed.

Benefits to Customers: Industries benefit from having education programs aligned to their needs; businesses have a growing pool of qualified candidates to pull from.

Workforce System Integration

The workforce system must be fully integrated in order to coordinate planning, funding, and services; evaluate and report the effectiveness and efficiency of services; and align with state economic development strategies.

CABINET-LEVEL ENGAGEMENT

Increase the frequency of cabinet-level meetings on workforce development matters.

Rationale: Cabinet-level directors, under the leadership of the Governor, are uniquely positioned to drive the heightened collaboration among state agencies that is needed to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of workforce development funding and services. Biennial Plan Focus Group participants indicated a need for workforce leadership to be more active and responsive to workforce needs.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: *

Stakeholders: GWB, all branches of the public workforce system, Governor

Consequences of No Action: The workforce system needs strong leadership committed to collaboration; without it, individual programs and agencies will continue to offer services in silos instead of as an integrated system.

Benefits to Customers: A more responsive, streamlined workforce system able to provide business solutions and support without unnecessary red tape and duplication of efforts.

COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Conduct a comprehensive system improvement plan as charged by the General Assembly. The plan will include:

- A list of specific barriers, whether structural, regulatory, or statutory, that adversely affect the seamless and coordinated delivery of workforce development programs and services in the state, as well as recommendations to overcome and eliminate these barriers; and
- Recommendations providing, at a minimum, board comment and review of all state employment and training programs, to ensure such programs are consistent with the board’s statewide employment and training plan, and meet the current and projected workforce demands of this state, including programs that, pursuant to state or federal law or regulation, must remain autonomous.²⁶

Rationale: The Governor’s Workforce Board is charged in statute with developing a comprehensive system improvement plan by November, 2015. This recommendation allows for greater awareness, preparation, and alignment across the Biennial Plan and the Improvement Plan. Moreover, streamlined services have been called for in response to the Biennial Plan employer survey and focus groups. The Comprehensive System Improvement Plan has the potential to be a significant and needed input into the public workforce system’s transition to and planning for the implementation of WIOA.

Implementation Timing: Begin planning process – Spring 2015, Complete planning process – Fall 2015

Funding: ▲

Stakeholders: GWB, all branches of the workforce system

Consequences of No Action: An opportunity to create a more unified and responsive workforce system will be lost while a legislative priority will not be met.

Benefits to Customers: A more streamlined and better integrated system will provide responsive support to business and individuals throughout the state. As workforce agencies become better aligned, the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system will increase, as will the participation and support of RI businesses, workers, elected officials, and workforce system partners.

ALIGNMENT OF PLANNING AND REPORTING

Improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the workforce system by directing existing inter-agency teams to:

- Develop uniform performance measures and accountability structures to track progress on achievement of Biennial Plan Priorities;
- Identify opportunities to align and or reallocate existing state and federal funds to address Biennial Plan Priorities;
- Align WIOA State Plan and Biennial Plan

²⁶ §42-102-6(f)

Rationale: The Biennial Plan collects and analyzes the broad spectrum of workforce funding, services, and outcomes in the state. As noted in the report, each federal funding stream has service and reporting requirements which differ. Agencies have separate and incompatible data systems, and outcomes are reported differently or incompletely. Moving forward, the system will require more accountability of leads and stakeholders in terms of tracking and reporting to ensure that the system is not continually in planning mode and instead is strategically moving forward. Note: Common reporting measures and alignment of resources may, at times, be constrained by agency-specific objectives and requirements.

Implementation Timing: on-going

Funding: * ▲

Stakeholders: GWB, all workforce system partners, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Lack of clear performance measures and data gathering methods leads to greater inefficiency and future non-compliance with WIOA guidelines.

Benefits to Customers: Customers will no longer have to provide the same information to multiple agencies and will be able to access services more easily. Having clear measures of success and indicators of what isn't working will make it easier to address and correct issues and inefficiencies.

BUSINESS SERVICES

Market the workforce system as a set of business services aimed at providing solutions for business and industry challenges similar to that provided by a human resources department (e.g., recruiting, hiring, professional development). Marketing can be done through word of mouth and other informal channels such as social media, as well as through traditional marketing strategies.

Rationale: One-Stop Career Centers are known for providing support to individual job seekers, but they cannot provide support for job seekers without also partnering with business. Small businesses need help hiring and training staff. The workforce system has access to resources and job seekers that these small companies need. By positioning itself as a business service center, the workforce system will be able to respond to real-world needs and economic growth in real time.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: * ▲

Stakeholders: DLT, all workforce system partners, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Businesses will not think of the workforce system as a set of resources and services that they need and will continue to look elsewhere for support.

Benefits to Customers: Responsive, need-driven support for small businesses.

INTEGRATED PARTNERSHIPS

Strengthen and expand partnerships and collaboration among agencies and organizations that serve the same populations (e.g., youth, ex-offenders, non-custodial fathers) to understand populations, services, and eligibility and identify areas of overlap and expertise to best manage resources. Continue to pursue opportunities to employ and expand braided funding and promote federal funding; encourage participation by federally funded agencies.

Rationale: Information and resource sharing among agencies that serve the same populations will create more robust services, streamline processes, and eliminate redundancy while increasing awareness of opportunities and needs throughout the workforce system. According to focus group participants, lack of collaboration is one of the greatest barriers to efficiency and sometimes to success.

Implementation Timing: On-going

Funding: *

Stakeholders: DLT, DCYF, DHS, DOC, RIDE, BHDDH, WPGRI, WSPC, YouthWORKS411, Workforce Cabinet, GWB, Business & Industry Partnerships

Consequences of No Action: Resources will be wasted and communities underserved if inter-agency partnerships are not supported.

Benefits to Customers: Individuals represented in target populations will have more opportunities for training and education, greater access to public support, and more exposure to businesses looking to hire.

Stakeholder Acronym Guide

AICU-RI: Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of RI

BHDDH: Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals

CCRI: Community College of Rhode Island

DCYF: Department of Children, Youth, and Families

DOC: Department of Corrections

DHS: Department of Human Services

DLT: Department of Labor and Training

GWB: Governor’s Workforce Board

NEIT: New England Institute of Technology

OLIS: Office of Library and Information Services

OMB: Office of Management and Budget

OPC: Office of the Postsecondary Commissioner

ORS: Office of Rehabilitation Services

RIDE: Rhode Island Department of Education

RISLA: Rhode Island Student Loan Authority

WPGRI: Workforce Partnership of Greater RI

WSPC: Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston

Moving Forward

The GWB and Biennial Plan Advisory Committee members are committed to establishing a process to achieve, track, and report progress on each of the Biennial Plan recommendations, as follows:

- A lead agency will be identified for each Biennial Plan recommendation.
- The lead agency will be responsible for convening stakeholders to identify new and/or existing activities in support of the recommendation, and to develop timelines and key performance indicators for achieving, tracking, and reporting progress and obstacles for each Biennial Plan recommendation.
- GWB staff will develop a template for all lead agencies and stakeholders to use for tracking and reporting progress on each Biennial Plan recommendation.
- Lead agency personnel will work closely with GWB staff and Board members to ensure that the GWB is informed of progress and barriers to achieving Biennial Plan recommendations.
- The Biennial Plan Advisory Committee will continue to meet periodically to monitor progress and provide further guidance to the Governor’s Workforce Board regarding Biennial Plan recommendations.

Conclusion

As this plan demonstrates, there is much to be proud of in the workforce development system. While challenges remain, the plan highlights the positive experience of many that have benefited from the workforce and education programs available in the state. The increased focus of state agencies, education programs, and the private sector will lead to a more comprehensive approach to workforce development.

Rhode Island's economy is growing, and there are many promising trends emerging as the workforce landscape changes. Despite sometimes limited resources, we are ever moving in the right direction. State agencies are increasingly collaborative, new initiatives have helped many Rhode Islanders find new and better jobs, and industry leaders are investing in partnerships with high schools, colleges, and state agencies every day to help build the talent pipeline needed to make Rhode Island competitive.

The priorities and recommendations highlighted in this plan are a course of action for Rhode Island businesses, residents, and service providers to follow.

Appendix 1: Advisory Committee Members

FY16-17 Biennial Employment and Training Plan Advisory Committee	
Name	Agency
Adam Leonard	Association of Independent Colleges and Universities of RI
Andrew Cortes	Building Futures
Paul Harden	CommerceRI
Robin Smith	Community College of Rhode Island
Peter Woodbury	Community College of Rhode Island
Rick McAuliffe	Defense Industry Partner
Abby Swinton	Office of Management and Budget
Michelle Brophy	Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
James Dealy	Department of Behavioral Healthcare, Developmental Disabilities and Hospitals
Mike Burk	Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Lori DiPina	Department of Children, Youth, and Families
Ken Findlay	Department of Corrections
Carmen Ferguson	Department of Human Services
Deborah Anthes	Department of Human Services
David Tremblay	Department of Labor and Training
Sue Chomka	Department of Labor and Training
Sarah Griffen	Department of Labor and Training
Lisa D'Agostino	Department of Labor and Training
Bernie Trembl	Department of Labor and Training
Donna Murray	Department of Labor and Training
Kate Greenwell	Department of Labor and Training
Scott Greco	Department of Labor and Training
Mavis McGetrick	Department of Labor and Training
Lisa Dutilly	Department of Labor and Training
Linda Soderberg	Exeter Job Corps Academy
Shirley Francis-Fraser	Francis Fraser Consulting
Rick Brooks	Governor's Workforce Board
Hillary Feeny	Governor's Workforce Board
Sherri Carello	Governor's Workforce Board
Amelia Roberts	Governor's Workforce Board
Mike van Leesten	OIC of Rhode Island
Ruth Gobeille	Polaris MEP
Jennifer Giroux	Rhode Island College
Sharon Lee	Rhode Island Department of Education
Phillip Less	Rhode Island Department of Education
Vanessa Cooley	Rhode Island Department of Education
Kim Chouinard	Rhode Island Department of Education
Jessica David	Rhode Island Foundation
Adrian van Alphen	Rhode Island Student Loan Authority
Jill Holloway	RI Adult Education Professional Development Center
Heather Singleton	RI Hospitality Association

Bob Delaney	RI Institute for Labor Studies and Research
Wendy Mackie	RI Marine Trades Association
Karen Mellor	RI Office of Library and Information Services
Robert Kalaskowski	RI Senate Policy
Molly Donohue Magee	SENEDIA
Jared Rhodes	Division of Statewide Planning
Sandra Olivio Peterson	Stepping Up
Laura Carbone	Stepping Up
Kathie Shields	Tech Collective
Chris Selwyn	Tech Collective
Linda Katz	Economic Progress Institute
Jennifer Rossi-Stephens	United Way of Rhode Island
Alexis Stern	United Way of Rhode Island
Kim Washor	University of Rhode Island
Nancy Olson	Workforce Partnership of Greater RI
Steve Kitchin	Workforce Partnership of Greater RI
Carlos Ribeiro	Workforce Partnership of Greater RI
Diane Vendetti	Workforce Partnership of Greater RI
Jim Glover	Workforce Solutions of Providence/Cranston
Janet Raymond	Greater Providence Chamber of Commerce

Appendix 2: Employer Survey Results

Q1: Which industry best represents your business		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Accommodation and Food Services	6.7%	31
Administrative and Support	0.9%	4
Construction	4.8%	22
Educational Services	4.8%	22
Finance and Insurance	8.4%	39
Health Care and Social Assistance	16.0%	74
Manufacturing	16.2%	75
Other Services (Except Government)	1.9%	9
Professional, Scientific, and Technical Services	16.4%	76
Retail Trade	2.6%	12
Other (please specify)	21.4%	99
	<i>answered question</i>	463
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q2: How many people does your company currently employ in Rhode Island?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1 to 4	15.1%	70
5 to 9	9.7%	45
10 to 19	13.2%	61
20 to 49	16.0%	74
50 to 99	12.3%	57
100 to 249	15.1%	70
250+	18.6%	86
	<i>answered question</i>	463
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q3: Indicate the top THREE ways that your company fills its vacancies		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Internal applicants	38.0%	175
Responses to postings on company website	31.5%	145
Responses to postings on external websites	61.4%	283
Referrals from a recruitment agency	12.1%	56

Individuals working for the company through a temp agency	11.9%	55
Recruiting employees from competitors	7.6%	35
Internships	18.4%	85
Referrals from schools and/or training programs	18.2%	84
Referrals from current or past employees	43.8%	202
Other (please specify)	15.6%	72
<i>answered question</i>		461
<i>skipped question</i>		2

Q4: How difficult is it for your company to fill your vacancies?				
Answer Options	Not at all	Somewhat	Very	Response Count
Entry-level positions	224	177	56	457
Middle-skill positions	74	250	127	451
High-skill positions	45	145	259	449
<i>answered question</i>				463
<i>skipped question</i>				0

Q5: What are the most significant barriers for your company to fill ENTRY-LEVEL positions? Select all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of basic skills (reading, writing, math)	26.6%	123
Lack of soft skills (work ethic, appearance, communication, etc.)	55.1%	255
Lack of job-specific technical skills	41.7%	193
Lack of credentials or degrees	11.4%	53
Limited English Proficiency	16.6%	77
Lack of relevant work experience	37.1%	172
Unrealistic expectations of job seeker	31.5%	146
Unrealistic expectations of company	3.0%	14
Other (please specify)	17.1%	79
<i>answered question</i>		463
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q6: What are the most significant barriers for your company to fill MIDDLE-SKILL positions? Select all that apply.		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of basic skills (reading, writing, math)	8.9%	41
Lack of soft skills (work ethic, appearance, communication, etc.)	28.5%	132
Lack of job-specific technical skills	59.0%	273

Lack of credentials or degrees	24.2%	112
Lack of relevant work experience	57.7%	267
Limited English Proficiency	4.1%	19
Unrealistic expectations of job seeker	30.2%	140
Unrealistic expectations of company	3.5%	16
Other (please specify)	14.0%	65
<i>answered question</i>		463
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q7: What are the most significant barriers for your company to fill HIGH-SKILL positions? Select all that apply.

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Lack of basic skills (reading, writing, math)	3.7%	17
Lack of soft skills (work ethic, appearance, communication, etc.)	13.6%	63
Lack of job-specific technical skills	45.6%	211
Lack of credentials or degrees	29.2%	135
Lack of relevant work experience	54.2%	251
Limited English Proficiency	1.9%	9
Unrealistic expectations of job seeker	34.3%	159
Unrealistic expectations of company	6.3%	29
Other (please specify)	20.5%	95
<i>answered question</i>		463
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q8: What strategies does your company use to address difficulties in hiring?

Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Increasing investments in training	35.6%	165
Increasing partnerships with education and training providers	33.7%	156
Improving wages, benefits, and/or other terms of employment	37.6%	174
Temp-to-hire	21.2%	98
Recruitment agencies	22.7%	105
Internships	30.9%	143
Increasing Human Resources capacity	7.3%	34
Substituting equipment for labor	7.8%	36
Increasing responsibilities and/or workloads of existing workforce	38.9%	180
Other (please specify)	11.9%	55
<i>answered question</i>		463
<i>skipped question</i>		0

Q9: Has your company partnered with any of the following agencies to assist you in training, recruiting, and/or hiring employees?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
netWORKri One-Stop Career Centers	24.4%	113
Private training providers	12.7%	59
Colleges or universities	51.8%	240
Youth centers	5.6%	26
Community Based Organization	15.6%	72
Adult education providers	8.9%	41
Career & Technical High Schools	23.8%	110
Comprehensive High Schools	3.7%	17
Local Workforce Investment Board	6.3%	29
Governor's Workforce Board	21.8%	101
None of the Above	25.3%	117
Other (please specify)	7.6%	35
	<i>answered question</i>	463
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q10: How many employees do you expect to hire in Rhode Island (through growth or replacement) within the next 12 months?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
1 to 5	40.8%	189
6 to 10	13.0%	60
11 to 20	10.2%	47
21 to 39	8.2%	38
41 to 100	10.2%	47
100+	3.9%	18
We do not expect to hire	12.7%	59
We expect to lay off workers	1.1%	5
	<i>answered question</i>	463
	<i>skipped question</i>	0

Q11: What are the THREE most important things the State of Rhode Island should do to address the workforce needs of Rhode Island?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
Expand partnerships between businesses and education & training providers	38.1%	175
Increase the work-readiness (basic and soft skills) of Rhode Island workers	38.8%	178
Strengthen educational programs that prepare students for jobs and careers in high-demand occupations and industries	47.3%	217

Increase training grants to businesses	32.0%	147
Expand opportunities and support for internships and apprenticeships	26.6%	122
Increase hiring subsidies and tax credits to businesses that hire unemployed workers	24.0%	110
Increase the capacity to match job seekers to job vacancies	17.2%	79
Increase the capacity to train job seekers for job vacancies	10.9%	50
Increase investments in training and education programs for populations that have above-average rates of poverty and unemployment	12.9%	59
Other (please specify)	17.6%	81
<i>answered question</i>		459
<i>skipped question</i>		4

Q12: How did you hear about this survey?		
Answer Options	Response Percent	Response Count
GWB	40.2%	186
CommerceRI	8.4%	39
Other (please specify)	51.4%	238
<i>answered question</i>		463
<i>skipped question</i>		0