

DRAFT EMPLOYMENT ZONE STRATEGY

Purpose: To bring workforce stakeholders together regionally to identify and then work to solve economic challenges that slow down California's economic engine, with regionally-selected solutions to regionally-selected problems that build the competitive advantages of shared labor forces.

Background: As a network of workforce organizations and agencies committed to ending unemployment in California, we realize we need to do more than prepare people for jobs – we must find ways to strengthen our economy so that it creates more economic opportunity.

There is considerable interest from all levels in California in strategies that tackle these challenges in regions, rather than in counties, cities, or at the state-level alone. There are excellent examples of regional collaborations that bring all stakeholders to the table to improve California's regional and State economy.

Principles: We must work regionally to regain the income mobility that made America great. In a rapidly changing economy, stronger regional networks and the ability to measure impacts through good data are needed. The changing economy has brought an increased fluidity of labor markets and increased mobility of the workforce, with a willingness to travel for a living wage and career path.

Expected Outcomes:

- Coordinate resources to the benefit of California job seekers
- Promote regional solutions to place job seekers in open positions
- Use of data to solve larger community, regional, and State issues, utilizing increased predictive-analytical data analysis
- Playing to the strengths of all stakeholders in the system
- Implement different incentives from those that currently exist, so as to create space to take risks
- Lower the administrative barriers to regional programs by strategically leveraging and braiding local/regional resources

Proposal: CWA and the CWIB propose a new Employment Zone Initiative designed to support regional stakeholders in tackling regional economic challenges collaboratively – within and across the state's major economic regions. Based on the input of local WIBs and stakeholders to date, we have identified a number of critical components of the Employment Zone effort.

1. Employment Zones will be regional and defined by the location of economic activity, such as labor sheds, commute patterns, clusters, sectors, et al

2. EZ will emphasize collaboration and encourage partnerships with all stakeholders involved. In addition, work to identify and disseminate best practices
3. Participating EZ regions can:
 - Conduct asset mapping to determine the resources available in each zone to create jobs
 - Review pertinent data LMI, demographic, commute patterns, census, etc for each region
 - Identify key industry sectors and opportunities for job growth for each region
 - Develop a strategy and process to document regional initiatives and submit to State
4. CWA/CWIB will:
 - Share with regions technical assistance on a key facilitation technique and tools
 - Commit statewide support for this effort by continuous communication and contact with regional activity
 - Develop set of common metrics for each zone – possibly use the newly created CWIB additional performance measures – key here is that ALL stakeholders are accountable for collectively.
 - Work with state to obtain requisite waivers from DOL to conduct regional work
 - Seek additional State, Federal, Private/philanthropic or other sources of investment/funding to support this work

Next Steps:

1. Develop the draft Employment Zone Initiative with the engagement of the state WIB, local WIBs, WIB members, the community college system, and other key stakeholders
2. Develop a list of partners to bring to the table, and the roles of these partners. Ensure that this document is thoughtful, in-depth.
3. Assist each region to create a common vision, as well as identifying common issues for each region to solve.
4. In the regions, define what success looks like.
5. Find a way to combine common measurements, resources, gaps, and needs
6. Convene regional meetings to facilitate discussion and begin to shape regional strategies
7. Secure support from Governor Brown and commitments for press and public notice about this new activity
8. Conduct outreach to prepare the field for the initiative, including sharing success stories from similar collaborative efforts to date (sector strategies, regional initiatives, and private/public partnerships from across the state)
9. With these plans in hand, work with DOL Region 6, to push for waivers on standard performance measures
10. Determine strategy for documenting initiative and studying opportunity costs
11. Launch initiative

Examples of regional maps for this initiative are currently in development, input is encouraged.