

FINAL REPORT



Conducted December 18, 2007

Governor's Workforce Summit

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A. OVERVIEW

The Governor's Workforce Summit was an overwhelming success and was attended by more than 400 business leaders, community leaders, educators, legislators and other state representatives. Exhibit 1 is a map shaded to indicate the areas of the state in which the participants reside. All are committed to dealing with Iowa's pending workforce shortage.

The morning session consisted of presentations about the current status of Iowa and its workforce. Speakers and their topics included:

- Chester J. Culver, Governor of Iowa; who addressed the goals of the Summit and identified the challenges. He discussed the possibility of solutions in areas of education, training, diversity and increased job growth, as well as the need for this group to begin to develop workable solutions that will bring about success for Iowa.
- Elisabeth Buck, Director, Iowa Workforce Development, provided an overview of the current workforce climate in Iowa, and included information about the aging population, Iowa's population growth through immigration, domestic migration issues in Iowa, and information about those who are not actively participating in the labor force.
- Michael Tramontina, Director, Iowa Department of Economic Development, outlined the Grow Iowa Values Fund workforce programs, training opportunities in conjunction with community colleges, and improving community development efforts to attract and retain the brightest talent.
- Judy Jeffrey, Director, Iowa Department of Education, discussed current PreK – 12 initiatives, the model core curriculum, dual credit and concurrent enrollment at the community college level, career clusters and career academies.
- State Senator Bill Dotzler and Representative Roger Thomas concluded the morning by discussing Iowa's need to compete globally for a highly skilled workforce, connect young professionals with Iowa opportunities, and continue improving the opportunities available in Iowa.

During the lunch break, spokespersons from the Iowa communities of Ft. Dodge, Marshalltown and Dubuque Iowa presented information about best practices utilized in their respective areas for worker retention.

The afternoon session divided the attendees into interactive breakout groups designed to address the actual condition of Iowa's workforce and develop potential solutions. Topics for the groups were: Diversity, Current Workforce, Future Workforce, Potential Workforce, and Jobs for our Workforce. The facilitated workshops provided excellent insight into the overall challenges and potential solutions from multiple avenues of support. The five breakout workshop groups worked independently and cohesively to identify the five or six primary issues within their

assigned topic and developed potential solutions the state could potentially use to address the workforce shortage. Issues and solutions were streamlined within the groups to present the top level concerns and solutions for each.

The Summit concluded with a wrap-up and presentation of the ideas and solutions developed during the breakout sessions. The issues and potential solutions identified a number of potential options to address Iowa's pending workforce shortage and training issues.

B. WORKSHOP SUMMARY OUTCOMES

The following provides more detail about each of the issues and solutions identified in each of the five breakout workgroups at the Summit.

1) DIVERSITY WORKFORCE - Enriching Iowa's Workforce through Multiculturalism

Issues:

- Ignorance, fear of immigration – be more welcoming
- Lack of affordable housing and transportation
- Perception by prospective applicants that Iowa does not offer a diverse environment
- Employing persons with disabilities
- Red tape issues for citizenship

Solutions:

- Campaign for a new image in Iowa as diverse/having the quality of life they would want
- Organize a state-endorsed methodology for promoting and recognizing employers through a certification program for exemplary diversity practices – “5-start diversity employer” – If you contract with state, you should be required to go through the program.
- Multiculturalism required training in K-12 and post-secondary
- Foster diversity ambassadors to promote and recruit other minorities
- Connect employers with agencies and services who serve underemployed populations – those with disabilities, immigrants, etc.
- Work with employers to establish diversity networks
- Repeal English-only law

2) CURRENT WORKFORCE - Providing Skills and Opportunities to Underutilized Populations

Issues:

- Lack of access to training for high demand & technical skills
- Financial Concerns –Jobs in Iowa have low pay – rank 41st in nation for wages with limited benefits
- Workforce lacks employment skills – soft skills and job keeping skills
- Programs aren't developed with the needs of underutilized populations.
- State does not have enough training funds and post employment support

Solutions:

- Promote public/private partnerships for training connection between education (lifelong education and training) and employers needs
- Work readiness development in high school – soft skills and employability skills, work readiness skills by graduation from high school and college, also for the adult worker
- Statewide tuition assistance and loan forgiveness for those that remain in Iowa
- Individualized & innovative training/education (based on customer needs/desires – voice of the customer) - Accommodations
- Long term commitment of funding (10 years) to ensure program success and long term commitment to workforce solutions with flexible funding streams
- Promote specific on the job training (apprenticeships, internships, mentoring, job shadowing)
- Post program mentoring and transition benefits for underutilized or targeted populations.

3) FUTURE WORKFORCE - Retaining Iowa Students: Middle School – Post Secondary

Issues:

- Career awareness and counseling for students, parents and educators (get business to tell their stories)
- Generational expectations of work
- Salary, wages and benefits in Iowa not competitive with other states in the region
- Transformation of the classroom to connect with the world of work
- Lack of business involvement

Solutions:

- Statewide intermediary learning network
- Eliminate state agency duplication in career assistance
- Iowa goal of affordable education
- Incorporate career ladders K -16
- Business mentoring
- Promote sustainable community development for and through entrepreneurship
- Promote quality of life issues

4) POTENTIAL WORKFORCE - Creating Interest and Connecting Job Seekers with Opportunities

Issues:

- Lack of educational capacity to support necessary skills/high demand jobs
- Revamp educational delivery and career counseling methods
- Helping people find and connect skills and needs to jobs
- Wages – improve to be competitive
- Lack of skill assessment opportunities and transfer ability between job/employers
- Inability to retain college graduates

Solutions:

- Market a one-stop shop website for employers and job seekers
- Increase job shadowing, internships, mentoring opportunities and apprenticeships
- Increase for funding in education to build high growth careers & capacity
- Work harder to give employers greater access to nontraditional employees
- Skills assessment profiles for employers to see beyond a resume and degree
- Promote balanced and flexible workplaces
- Build classroom to employer connection
- Promote benefits of living/working in Iowa (quality of life)
- Incentives to retain, attract (health care, education, loan forgiveness, housing, no income tax, relocation perks)

5) JOBS FOR OUR WORKFORCE - Creating and Maintaining Vital Jobs in an Ever-changing Environment

Issues:

- Exposure to jobs (internships)
- Perception of Iowa
- Low salary (trailing spouse/dual income issues)
- Lack of communication/marketing
- Workers shortage/skills shortage

Solutions:

- Reduce state income tax and property taxes
- Partnership between businesses and educational institutions including job shadowing, vocational training, extension services
- Marketing Iowa is NOT a secret- (quality of life, natural resources, both rural and urban communities)
- Seek untapped market a alternative options, job sharing, person disability, technical occupations, worker authorization system
- Multi-level marketing –multiple audience technology
- Fund higher education
- Single voice job marketing

C. FROM SUMMIT TO LEGISLATION

Many of the thoughts and ideas that were gleaned from the Workforce Summit have already been incorporated into legislative initiatives. A summary of these follows.

Statewide Standard Skills Assessment

The establishment of a statewide standard skills assessment for Iowa's adult workers would assess work readiness of Iowa's adult workers and facilitate their connection with employers. These assessments would assist employers with making proper hiring decisions.

New Iowans Centers

New Iowans Centers offer workforce development services to persons who have recently moved to Iowa and are seeking employment. The centers are designed to support workers, businesses, and communities with information, community service referrals, job placement, translations, language training, and resettlement assistance, as well as technical and legal assistance concerning forms and documentation. Through public-private partnerships, the New Iowan Centers provide one-stop workforce development services for new Iowans.

Offender Re-entry Program

This program would be a partnership between IWD and the Department of Corrections and is an innovative strategy to improve an offender's ability to find and retain productive employment in Iowa. Employment is a key component of increasing the likelihood that the offender will not return to the criminal justice system. A significant number of offenders have employment skill sets that are marketable if they know about available employment opportunities.

Skills Assessment and Vacancy Survey

This program provides Iowa with the appropriate tools to access the potential workforce shortage and take appropriate actions to deal with the issues on a regional and statewide level. The Assessment is designed to collect vital information on workforce challenges, hard to fill positions and issues surrounding pending retirements.

IowaJobs.org

IowaJobs.org is a statewide, comprehensive system designed to connect Iowa employers with qualified candidates. IWD recently enhanced the system by partnering with the Department of Economic Development's SmartCareerMove.com system and by introducing new technology that enables assists employers with automating their job postings. IWD intends to continue enhancing the IowaJobs.org site.

Life Long Learning Accounts(LiLAs)

LiLAs are employer-matched, portable individual savings accounts used to finance education and training, which work like a 401(k) for skill building and career advancement. With LiLAs, workers can upgrade their skills and knowledge to meet the needs of business and industry while achieving their career goals. Employers can offer the accounts as a benefit to attract quality employees.

D. EDUCATION OUTPUTS OF THE WORKFORCE SUMMIT

Senior Year Plus

Expand opportunities for all students to earn college credit while in high school and make them more equitably available across the state. Make the system easier for parents and students to understand and help ensure maximum transferability of courses.

Model Core Curriculum for All by 2010

Model core curriculum has been developed for high school math, science and literacy. It is now being voluntarily adopted by many Iowa high schools. We would mandate that model core curriculum for the 2010-2011 school years for high school and the 2014-2015 school years for

K-8 curriculum that is still under development. Additional professional development funds will be specifically targeted towards this implementation.

Iowa Science Technology Engineering and Math (STEM) Initiative

Regents' initiative led by UNI that includes expanding Project Lead the Way; setting goals for recruiting more science and math teachers; teacher internships with local companies; improved community college instruction and an *Institute for Math and Science Education* at UNI. The institute would do ongoing study and research on the issue and help draw down federal and grant funds. It would serve as a clearinghouse for state activities and best practices and provide technical assistance for schools. It would also have an Advisory Board appointed by the Governor to make further recommendations on STEM action. Also, fund a statewide intermediary to connect local businesses with schools for teacher and student internships, classroom visits, field trips and other means of connecting curriculum to area careers.

Statewide Intermediary

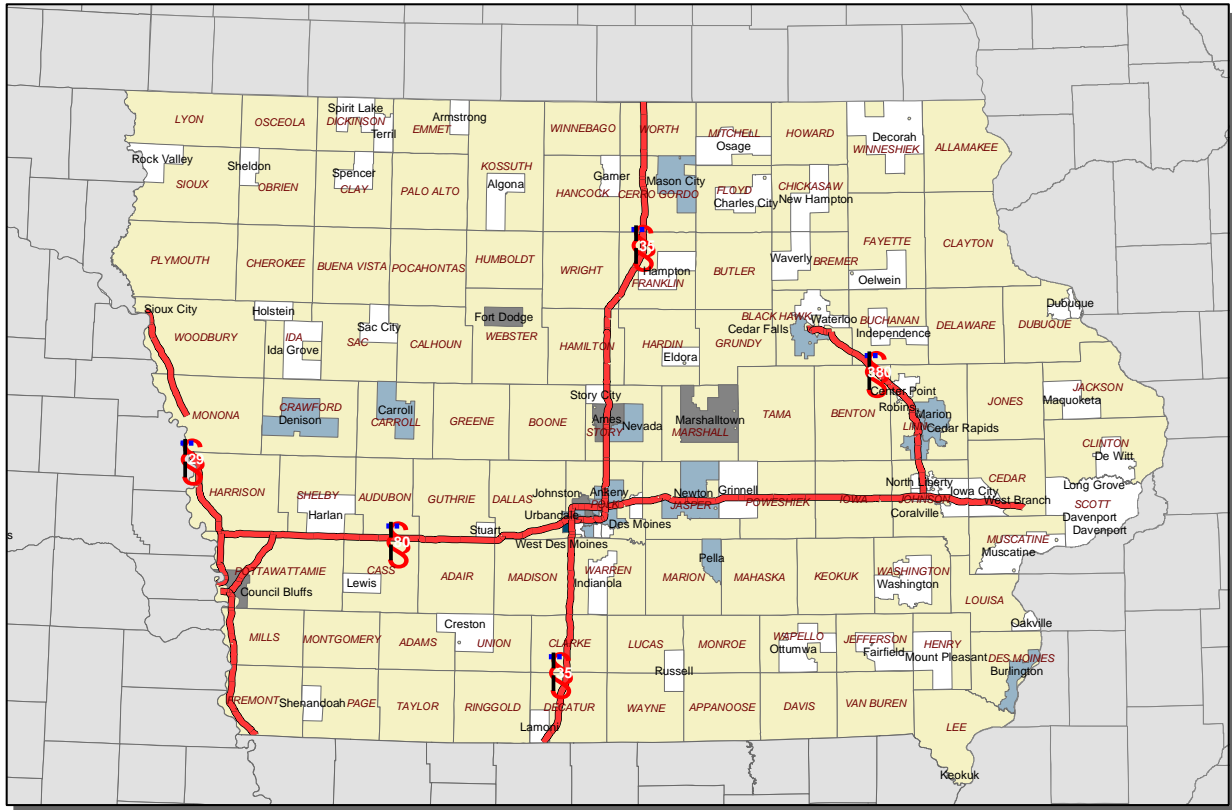
Fund a statewide intermediary to connect local businesses with schools for teacher and student internships, classroom visits, field trips and other means of connecting curriculum to area careers.”

E. CONCLUSION

Iowa's first Governor's Workforce Summit was a success for many reasons: it was well attended by more than 400 individuals interested in the workforce shortage issue; the conference allowed valuable information to be shared with the group; information was available that allows everyone access to the same facts; and best practices and systems were outlined to begin dealing with the issue. Most importantly, the forum allowed for open and direct dialogue on an important issue affecting every corner of the state. The information obtained from the Summit laid the ground work for unique proposals to take on the issue.

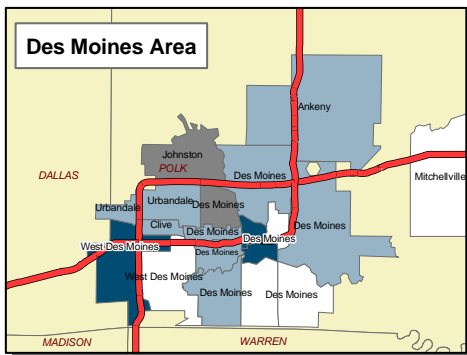
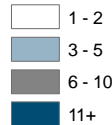
An important follow-up to the Summit will happen in fall 2008. Iowa Workforce Development will be hosting the first Workforce Development Conference on October 1-2, 2008 in Des Moines at the Polk County Convention Complex. The Conference, geared towards business, will further address the workforce issues facing the state, provide information on best practices, address concerns facing businesses everyday and provide important information updates on legal compliance. Watch for additional information on this valuable day and a half conference coming soon.

Iowa Workforce Development Workforce Summit Participants

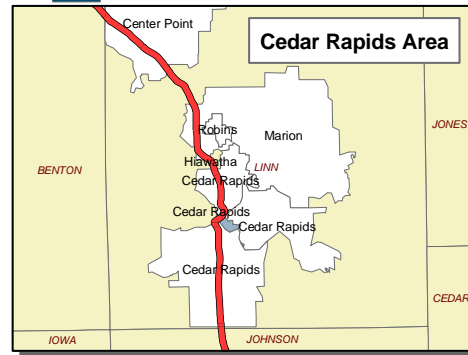


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**Workforce Summit Participants
by Place of Employment (per ZIP Code)**



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