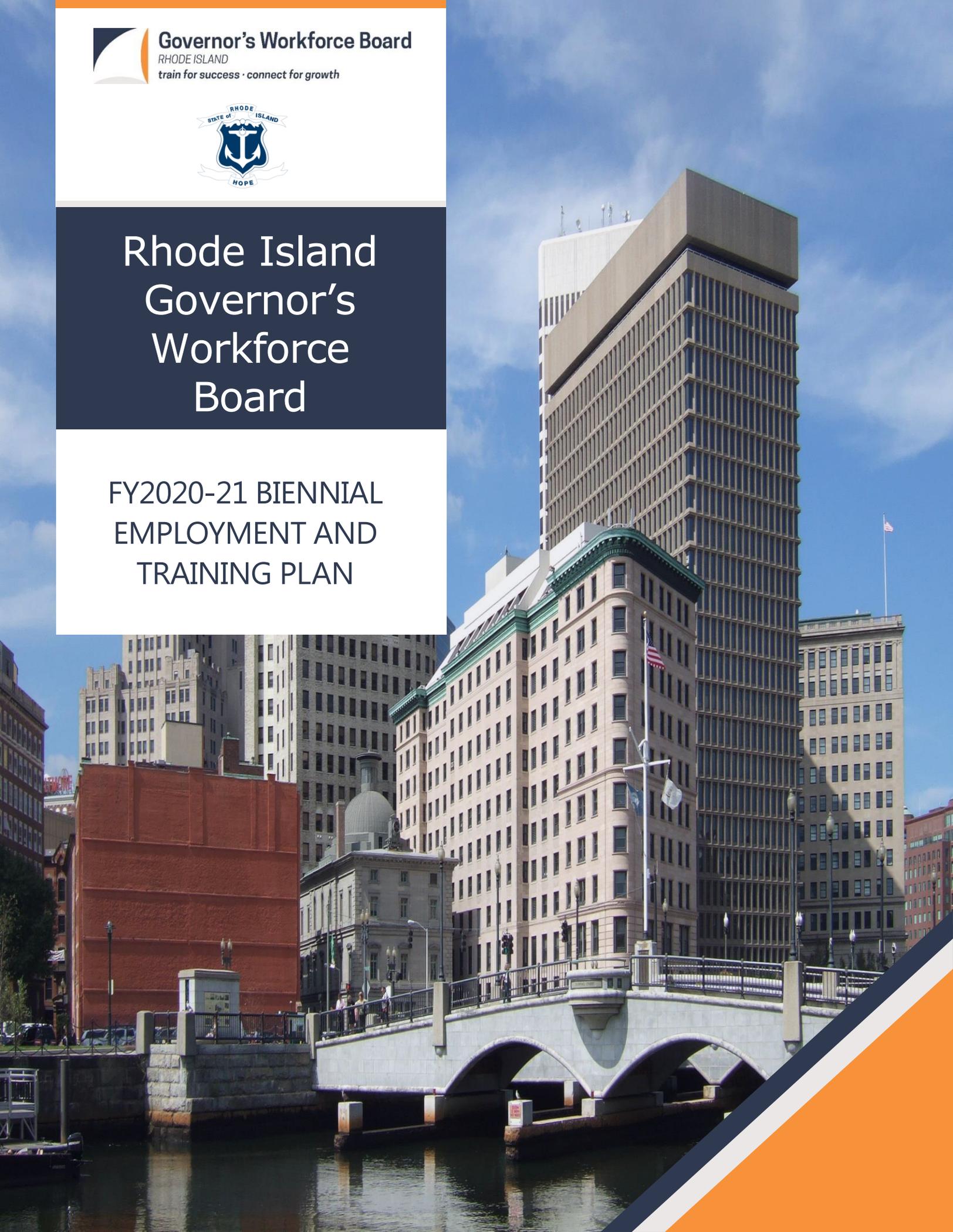




# Rhode Island Governor's Workforce Board

FY2020-21 BIENNIAL  
EMPLOYMENT AND  
TRAINING PLAN



# Shared Responsibility. Universal Opportunity.

Ten years after the start of the Great Recession, Rhode Island's economy has finally returned to firm footing. In 2017, the state officially recovered all of the jobs it had lost as a result of the 2009 downturn.<sup>1</sup> Throughout 2018, the state repeatedly set records for job creation,<sup>2</sup> and the state's economy continues to grow.

Parallel to this momentum in the economy, the state's workforce development network has undergone a dramatic transformation designed to position the state to more adeptly take advantage of economic opportunity. Just a few highlights of these efforts since the issuance of the last Biennial plan include:

- Over **2660 Job Seekers employed** through the nationally recognized industry-driven Real Jobs RI program
- The launch of **Rhode Island's first statewide youth career readiness and work experience program**
- The creation of **over 50 new Apprenticeship training models** in non-trade occupations.

This **biennial plan** acknowledges the tremendous progress that has been made over the past few years, and builds upon those gains. At the same time, the report recognizes that the state must ensure economic prosperity is being shared by all and felt in all corners of the state.<sup>4,5</sup> The progress is real, and there is much more work to be done.

That work cannot be incremental or without urgency. Three major trends are converging that will fundamentally change the state, national, and even global economy: rapid economic globalization, integration of technology, including automation, in all occupations, and dramatic demographic change. For Rhode Island to compete and for Rhode Islanders to prosper, there must be intensified attention to workforce development and a recognition that no one, no matter their income or career level, is immune from the risks of the new economy. All must be ready and willing to adapt, enhance, and/or change their skill set - and the workforce network must be ready and able to assist them in doing so. Ensuring universal access to job training and career resources represents new ground for the workforce system and the ability of the Rhode Island economy to thrive in the coming decades may depend on it.

Established by Executive Order in 2005 and in statute in 2014, the Governor's Workforce Board has spent the last decade overseeing state and federal investments to develop a workforce development system that is a model for the nation. We hope this biennial plan provides a roadmap to taking this work to the next level.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.providencejournal.com/news/20170720/ri-surpasses-pre-recession-jobs-peak>

<sup>2</sup><https://www.providencejournal.com/news/20180517/ri-sets-another-jobs-record-with-499300>

<sup>3</sup><https://www.wpri.com/money/ri-economy-grows-27-tops-in-the-northeast/1164935744>

<sup>4</sup><http://www.economicprogressri.org/index.php/2017/05/19/the-state-of-black-families-in-rhode-island>

<sup>5</sup>[https://www.rwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/lpi/state\\_of\\_working\\_ri\\_latino\\_labor\\_force.pdf](https://www.rwu.edu/sites/default/files/downloads/lpi/state_of_working_ri_latino_labor_force.pdf)

# The Governor's Workforce Board

The Governor's Workforce Board (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 twenty-three (23) members representing business, labor, education, community, and government who oversee federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act funding and policy and who also have responsibility to oversee the investment of state Job Development Funds.

## 2018 BOARD MEMBERS

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Vice President of Operations, North East Region, Sodexo  
School Services

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Vice President of Workforce  
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### **Stephanie Preston**

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Administrator, N.E. Laborers  
Labor-Management  
Cooperation Trust

### **George Nee**

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### **Bahjat Shariff**

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Howley Bread Group, Panera  
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### **Cathy Doyle**

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Year Up Providence

### **Katelyn Pisano**

Training and Development  
Manager, Kenzan

### **Ken Wagner**

Commissioner, RI Department of  
Elementary and Secondary  
Education

In the FY2018-2019 Biennial Plan, the Governor's Workforce Board laid out four key strategies to guide our collective work moving forward. The workforce network has made considerable progress on the action steps included in that plan and these Key Strategies continue to guide our work in this FY2020-2021 plan.

## KEY STRATEGIES



Implement a demand-driven, sector-based strategy, based on Brookings Industry clusters, to meet employer demand and establish a pipeline of skilled workers for future demand.



Advance a career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, that will ensure an opportunity to develop their education and skills to prepare them for a job at various points in their life.



Align policy and leverage existing government structures and resources so that government is "networked" and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the workforce system.



Use data to inform policy-making decisions, guide investments and evaluate performance to measure return on investments.

# PROGRESS ON FY2018-2019 ACTION STEPS (1 of 2)

## **Strategy I. Implement a demand-driven, sector-based strategy, based on Brookings Industry clusters, to meet employer demand and establish a pipeline of skilled workers for future demand.**

1. Continue to invest and support growing industry and sector-driven training - including small to mid-size businesses- through Real Jobs RI and Incumbent Worker Training.
  - Since publication of the FY2018-2019 plan, Real Jobs RI expanded from industry-led partnerships in 11 sectors to 32 partnerships in 16 sectors
2. Expand Real Jobs RI to make strategic connections with K-12 to reach youth and young adult populations.
  - GWB created a specific budget item within the Real Jobs RI appropriation specifically for youth-focused activities
3. Engage and connect with growing industry and employers, developing a workplace connection and aligning training and skills with specific job needs to expand opportunities for work-based learning experiences like summer youth employment and apprenticeship programs.
  - Successful launch of Real Skills for Youth program

## **Strategy II. Advance a career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, that will ensure an opportunity to develop their education and skills to prepare them for a job at various points in their life.**

1. Support implementation of the PrepareRI Action Plan
  - Successful launch of PrepareRI Internship program, Real Skills for Youth partnerships, and continued rollout of PrepareRI initiative.
2. Ensure adult education programs support target populations (ESL, etc.) and are contextualized so adults increase education AND are connected to post secondary/industry credential and/or job.
  - Since publication of the FY2018-2019 plan, the GWB launched the Real Pathways RI program focused on education and employment needs of target populations.
  - FY2019 Adult Education RFP focused on interconnectivity of education, post-secondary, and industry credential outcomes
3. Conduct analysis of summer youth employment and other work-based learning programs to determine strategies for a more demand-driven approach, aligned with growing industry that enables youth and young adults to develop skills and advance a career pathway.
  - Incubated Skills for RI's Future as the statewide intermediary to connect employers, schools, and students, and released state-wide work-based learning guidance and standards

# PROGRESS ON FY2018-2019 ACTION STEPS (2 of 2)

## **Strategy III. Align policy and leverage existing government structures and resources so that government is “networked” and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the workforce system.**

1. Establish a statewide common work-readiness assessment policy for adult basic education, work readiness, English proficiency, skills gap, and others.
  - Common assessment agreed upon by core WIOA programs with planned roll out by FY2020
2. Conduct LEAN process with state agencies and better coordinate communication and data between various stakeholders to enhance the client experience, establish common standards around client intake, and service referrals.
  - Common intake and referral development process underway
3. Implement a coordinated marketing campaign to communicate to the public that Rhode Island is hiring.
  - Launch of the Skills for RI’s Future program
  - Development of [www.WorkforceRI.com](http://www.WorkforceRI.com) – employer navigator website to connect employers to the range of workforce programs.

## **Strategy IV. Use data to inform policy-making decisions, guide investments and evaluate performance to measure return on investments.**

1. Begin to transform the Unified Expenditure Program Report (UEP) and program performance into online dashboards for the public to access.
  - Beginning with the FY2015 version, all UEPs are now publicly available web-based dashboards.
2. Begin to integrate state workforce outcomes for non-GWB programs (Adult Education, DHS, etc.) into regular Strategic Investment Committee meetings for performance review and analysis to determine gaps, duplication, etc.
  - The Strategic Investment Committee has increased their knowledge base in GWB and WIOA require performance metrics and as begun expanding the scope of that review to include other partner programs.
3. Establish a unified definition of what the state should consider a workforce development program and develop common performance measures for the state.
  - Definition of a ‘workforce development program’ established for purposes of the UEP
  - Common performance measure development underway

# FY2020-2021 A CONTINUUM OF WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMMING

The FY2020-2021 Biennial Plan continues to implement the four key strategies outlined in the FY2018-2019 plan, while focusing on building a continuum of workforce development programs that assist Rhode Islanders up to and throughout their career. By focusing on demand-driven programming and employer partnerships, work-based learning and work experience opportunities, apprenticeship development, and incumbent worker training, the plan continues the build-out of a responsive workforce development network that is prepared to connect Rhode Islanders to their first career or their next one.



# FY2020-2021 KEY STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS (1 of 4)

**Strategy I. Implement a demand-driven, sector-based strategy, based on Brookings Industry clusters, to meet employer demand and establish a pipeline of skilled workers for future demand.**

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## **ACTION STEP 1.1**

Sustain state investments in the demand-driven Real Jobs RI program, maintaining its statewide reach and focus on growing industries.

## **ACTION STEP 1.2**

More widely promote the availability and enrollment requirements of Real Jobs RI training activities.

## **ACTION STEP 1.3**

Provide continued oversight of the Real Jobs RI program to ensure that a focus on job quality and acuity of employer demand remain the highest priority.

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## **Promising Practice – Pipeline to Manufacturing Careers in Ship Building (Real Jobs RI)**



In response to the increased workforce demand created by newly awarded contracts to General Dynamics Electric Boat to produce and repair submarines for the U.S. Navy, The Pipeline to Manufacturing Career in Ship Building partnership has developed a multifaceted strategy to build and sustain a talent pipeline. New workforce training programs in Maritime Trades were created in partnership with the New England Institute of Technology, the Westerly Education Center and the Community College of Rhode Island, and an innovative post-employment training model was tested and implemented by Electric Boat, resulting in a **97% training program success rate and more than 1280 job placements** since the program began.

## **FY2020-2021 KEY STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS (2 of 4)**

**Strategy II. Advance a career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, that will ensure an opportunity to develop their education and skills to prepare them for a job at various points in their life**

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### **ACTION STEP 2.1**

Increase state investments in the community-based Real Pathways RI program, enhancing its statewide reach and focus on populations with barriers to employment.

### **ACTION STEP 2.2**

Provide continued oversight of the Real Pathways RI program to ensure that a focus on job quality and meeting the diverse and specific needs of subpopulations with barriers to employment remain the highest priorities.

### **ACTION STEP 2.3**

Continue to develop and expand the use of integrated education and occupation skills training models such as apprenticeships and the Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training Program (I-BEST).

### **ACTION STEP 2.4**

Increase state investments in the PrepareRI initiative, with a particular focus on underserved populations; increasing the total number of youth and employer participants.

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## FY2020-2021 KEY STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS (2 of 4)

**Strategy II (CONTINUED). Advance a career pathway strategy to provide employment, education, training and support services for individuals, particularly those with barriers to employment, that will ensure an opportunity to develop their education and skills to prepare them for a job at various points in their life**

### **Promising Practice – Prepare RI Internship Program**



The PrepareRI Internship Program places Rhode Island high school juniors in paid summer internships with the state's top employers in a range of industries. For students, the internships offer professional skills training, on-the-job experience, and connections to adult mentors. For employers, the internships help diversify their workforce and build a strong pipeline of young, skilled workers. Summer 2018 was the pilot year for PrepareRI Internship Program, when 162 students were placed in high-quality internships; the program will double for Summer 2019.

### **Promising Practice – Apprenticeship Development Grants**



The Non-Trade Apprenticeship Development program provides development funds to organizations throughout the state to create new and innovative apprenticeship models outside of the traditional trades .For example, a growing Rhode Island composite tool- making company applied for and received a FY2017 Apprenticeship Development Grant which resulted in a successful composite toolmaking apprenticeship registered with the State Apprenticeship Council. Numerous individuals have been hired through the newly developed apprenticeship program.

# FY2020-2021 KEY STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS (3 of 4)

## **Strategy III. Align policy and leverage existing government structures and resources so that government is “networked” and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and effectiveness throughout the workforce system.**

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### **ACTION STEP 3.1**

Develop a uniform definition of ‘credentials of value’ that align with industry demands and promote economic opportunity

### **ACTION STEP 3.2**

Develop and implement a uniform standard of high quality career counseling to be adopted throughout the workforce network

### **ACTION STEP 3.3**

Increase and improve the level of service provided to non-English speakers across the workforce network.

### **ACTION STEP 3.4**

Increase the presence and awareness of the workforce system through a strategic and cross-platform marketing campaign

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## **Promising Practice – WorkforceRI.com**



In response to concerns from the business community that workforce development tools in Rhode Island can sometimes be hard to navigate, the Governor’s Workforce Board, in partnership with the Rhode Island Foundation, launched WorkforceRI.com which puts the range of workforce development grants, incentives, and in one simple, digital location. WorkforceRI.com includes an intuitive navigation tool that can connect a business to precisely the right solutions for its needs by answering just a few easy questions.

# FY2020-2021 KEY STRATEGIES & ACTION STEPS (4 of 4)

## Strategy IV. Use data to inform policy-making decisions, guide investments and evaluate performance to measure return on investments.

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### ACTION STEP 4.1

Continue to build up the data and performance tracking capabilities of the workforce network in a comprehensive and uniform way.

### ACTION STEP 4.2

Develop and publicize public-facing tools such as the 'P20W' performance dashboard to help stakeholders quickly and easily access information about the public workforce development network.

### ACTION STEP 4.3

Continue to integrate state workforce outcomes for non-GWB programs (Adult Education, DHS, etc.) into regular Strategic Investment Committee meetings for performance review and analysis to determine gaps, duplication, etc.

### ACTION STEP 4.3

Continue the development of common performance measures

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## Promising Practice – P20W Dashboard

Utilizing resources provided by the National Skills Coalition and the USDOL Workforce Data Quality Initiative, the GWB has partnered with an in-state vendor to develop a more robust and interactive web-based performance dashboard that will enable users to view outcomes and de-identified participant information across a range of workforce development programs. Overtime, the data integration will grow to include information across the Pre-K - postsecondary – workforce spectrum (P-20-W).







# Governor's Workforce Board

RHODE ISLAND

*train for success · connect for growth*

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The Governor's Workforce Board is comprised of 23 volunteer Board Members, a majority of which are business representatives, and has four Committees:

Executive Committee | Strategic Investments Committee | Career Pathways Committee |

Adult Education and Employment Committee

