FY24-FY25 Biennial Plan

Adopted November 17, 2022

Governor's Workforce Board
RHODE ISLAND

Executive Summary

Every two (2) years, the Governor's Workforce Board develops a strategic statewide employment and training plan pursuant to RIGL § 42-102-6(a). The plan includes goals and objectives for servicing the state's existing and emerging workforce utilizing all state and federal workforce development resources. In developing the plan, the Board is directed to consider the needs of all segments of the state's citizenry, including the workforce needs of the state's employers.

When the last Biennial Plan for FY22-FY23 was developed in 2020, Rhode Island's unemployment rate was 10% due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Since that time, the unemployment rate has dropped to 3%, but there is still significant work to be done to help those who have been negatively economically impacted, and/or are completely disconnected from the labor force. Some populations are especially vulnerable, including, but not limited to, individuals who have differing abilities; individuals who have been justice-involved; individuals without a high school diploma or GED; and individuals with limited English proficiency or digital literacy skills. Additionally, employers are desperate for workforce talent and there are currently approximately two job openings for every one unemployed person. Therefore, it is as important as ever to have a responsive, resilient state workforce development network that can quickly and effectively connect Rhode Islanders to meaningful employment opportunities and support the growth of businesses.

This new plan adheres to the key strategies and directions set in the previous plan; removing items that have been accomplished, and continuing work that has not been fully accomplished or is ongoing. Our hope is that this plan will serve as a roadmap for the furtherance of the Board's work and will benefit all Rhode Islanders.

FY24-FY25 Key Strategies

I. Demand-Driven Investments

Continue to utilize demand-driven, sector-based strategies to develop pipelines of skilled workers that meet employer workforce needs and support the state's economic development priorities.

III. Aligned Policy

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

II. Career Pathways

Advance career pathway strategies to provide education, training, employment and support services for current and future workers, particularly those with barriers to employment and/or economic mobility.

IV. Data and Performance

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

Strategy I. Demand-Driven Investments

Continue to utilize demand-driven, sector-based strategies to develop pipelines of skilled workers that meet employer workforce needs and support the state's economic development priorities.

Supporting Action 1.1 – Facilitate the growth and economic resiliency of local businesses through education, training, and hiring supports.

Supporting Action 1.2 – Continue to invest in demand-driven and sector-based partnerships through the Real Jobs RI program; utilizing workforce intermediaries as aggregators of demand and workforce solutions.

Supporting Action 1.3 – Continue to pursue and align new funding sources to support and bolster sector partnership activities.

Supporting Action 1.4 – Better align employer outreach and the delivery of employer services across partner programs.

Supporting Action 1.5 – Work with sector intermediary partners to promote/encourage competency-based hiring, training, and supported or customized employment to maximize opportunities for untapped talent to succeed in the labor force.

Strategy II. Career Pathways

Advance career pathway strategies to provide education, training, employment and support services for current and future workers, particularly those with barriers to employment and/or economic mobility.

Supporting Action 2.1 – Expand investments in career exploration and work-based learning opportunities that promote and support pathways to family-sustaining employment and high-wage, high-growth careers.

Supporting Action 2.2 – Develop and expand pathways to emerging, growing or high-demand industries that support the State's priorities.

Supporting Action 2.3 – Utilize best practices such as Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs in high school, Integrated Basic Education and Skills Training (I-BEST), earn-while-you-learn models such as apprenticeship, and wrap-around support services.

Supporting Action 2.4 – Promote the continuing education, training and upskilling of incumbent employees to ensuring economic mobility/resiliency.

Supporting Action 2.5 – Bolster community outreach and engagement efforts to ensure that equitable access and inclusion exists across all programs and services.

Strategy III. Aligned Policy

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

Supporting Action 3.1 – Increase collaboration across State and Local agencies with the goal of providing strategic, seamless program and service systems that maximize impact.

Supporting Action 3.2 – Continue to partner with community-based organizations, community leaders, and others to increase the awareness, availability, and accessibility of workforce development services.

Supporting Action 3.3 – Establish a statewide common assessment policy for foundational literacy, numeracy, language and digital skills.

Supporting Action 3.4 – Explore the creation of a uniform definition of 'credentials of value' to reconcile and align existing terms and practices in a way that meets industry needs and promotes economic empowerment.

Supporting Action 3.5 – Explore the creation of a statewide electronic client referral system.

Strategy IV. Data and Performance

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

Supporting Action 4.1 – Utilize labor supply and demand data to proactively identify critical workforce challenges and guide necessary actions/investments.

Supporting Action 4.2 – Continue to develop/refine the data and performance tracking capabilities of the workforce network in a comprehensive way.

Supporting Action 4.3 – Utilize system-wide outcome metrics to portray an accurate depiction of the workforce system and its performance.

Supporting Action 4.4 – Conduct regular program performance review and analysis to identify inefficiencies, gaps, duplication, etc.

Supporting Action 4.5 – Ensure the transparency of all investment and program performance information for stakeholders.