**Emerging Practice**

**Date: 2/22/17**

**Title: Indiana’s State Level Planning Focus to Establish Collaborative Career Pathway Focus**

**Highlights:**

The VR Agency in Indiana has established its participation with the other WIOA Core Partners at the State level in all areas of meeting the objectives of the state plan. This focus on WIOA implementation translates to services for the business customer as well as the job seeker. The State Core agencies have modeled the collaboration in terms of how they work to support the same approaches with local offices with Local Workforce Development Boards.

**Description:**

In a meeting February 8, 2017, with Kristina Blankenship, she shared the following information:

1. State level planning with WIOA Implementation has been collaborative by design on the state level with multiple work groups that each focus different components of the State’s plan.
2. State agencies work together to support local boards and offices in planning and responding to business needs effectively together. Naturally, there are challenges in each region, usually based on history. As a primary reference for focus, however, the expertise of the VR professionals as positioned to be the disability subject matter experts within the AJC business teams as they engage business customers.
3. Working on local approaches to meet the needs of business sectors collaboratively, but this is currently at a planning stage in some regions. In the regions, the VR staff are attending meetings with other business service staff in the AJC. This helps all of us learn about the expertise that each agency brings to meet the business needs. Within the VR team Indiana is developing business service components readily available, such as disability etiquette or awareness.

**Background on WIOA Implementation:**

There was a deliberate effort from leadership at the Agency level to bring all WIOA mandated core partners to the table to plan for its implementation. The purpose of the meetings was to digest, plan, and strategize on how best to move forward with the new legislation. The effort was driven by the Indiana Department of Workforce Development.

Fourteen workgroups came together to plan for WIOA implementation and these groups met on a regular basis with the purpose of learning about the various partners and programs impacted by the new legislation. These workgroups were key to relationship building among the core partners.

**More information on workgroups:** <http://www.in.gov/dwd/2892.htm>

The Indiana Career Council became a key force in moving the collaborative efforts of WIOA forward. The Indiana Career Council (ICC) was tasked by the General Assembly in 2013 **with aligning education and training activities with the state’s workforce** needs to better prepare Hoosiers to meet the skill demands of Indiana’s regional economies. Members of this council were high-level Agency Heads and leadership.

**More information on ICC**: <http://in.gov/icc/>

Over the last year, ICC has continued to work with a variety of education, business, and community-based organizations to provide demand-driven programs and instruments, create more alignment across systems, and offer worker- and student-centric services. ICC, in collaboration with State Workforce Innovation Council, has continued to support the work of the Department of Workforce Development (DWD), Department of Education (DOE), Commission for Higher Education (CHE), and Indiana Network of Knowledge (INK) to strengthen educational pathways for all Hoosiers and build quality work-and-learn programming alongside career counseling to enhance existing programs of study. This work has been accomplished through specific taskforces that have investigated and recommended actions to meet the objectives set forth in ***Align, Engage, Advance: A Strategic Plan to Transform Indiana’s Workforce.*** Each taskforce and taskforce member provided critical input that has led to progress toward the objectives outlined in the Strategic Plan and the outcomes found in this report. <http://www.in.gov/icc/files/Indiana_Career_Council_Strategic_Plan_-_Align_Engage_Advance_-_FINAL.pdf>

Overall, in 2016, ICC has continued its efforts toward encouraging greater interaction among schools, students **and businesses** in hopes of facilitating career interest, guiding educational pathways, and meeting the workforce needs of Indiana’s employers. See 2016 Annual Report: <http://www.in.gov/icc/files/ICC%20AR%2016.pdf>

To further these efforts, **ICC combined forces with the State Workforce Innovation Council (SWIC)** and has held joint council meetings throughout 2016. The collaboration of ICC and SWIC will lead to a strong talent pipeline for Hoosier employers.

**Present**

**There is continued collaboration through various programs with VR Leadership. At present, there are seven Taskforces that meet on a bi-monthly basis with the WIOA core partners:**

| **Taskforce** | **Frequency** | **State Agency Representative** |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Youth Council (YC) | Bi- monthly | Department of Workforce Development  Department of Correction  Vocational Rehabilitation |
| Work-and-Learn | Bi- monthly | Department of Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation  Department of Education |
| Work Ethic | Monthly | Department of Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation  Department of Education |
| State Transition Workgroup | Bi-monthly | Department of Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation  Department of Education |
| Certificate of Completion | Bi-monthly | Department of Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation  Department of Education |
| Innovative Opportunity Steering Committee (IOSC) | Bi-monthly | Department of Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation  Department of Child Services  ServeIN  Division Family Resources |
| DWD/VR meeting (before IOSC) | Monthly | Department of Workforce Development Vocational Rehabilitation  Division Family Resources |

The result of the continued meetings with the core partners is that stakeholders are educated about other stakeholder groups and complicated government systems are better understood.

**Evaluation and Potential Impact:**

Translating the demonstrated collaborative planning efforts and collective guidance and support to Local Workforce Development Boards is an excellent start. Kristina describes the efforts for local collaborative business engagement as active but in early stages, currently with a focus on cross-training and customer sharing and referral. She serves on the Local Workforce Development Board in the Indianapolis Region, and works with all of the AJC partners in regard to strategies to meet business sector needs together. This effort is being looked at with the interest in replicating in other regions.

**For More Information:**

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