July 7, 2000

Workforce Investment Board Certification in Indiana

Certification of WIB Quality

In order to create and improve a high quality workforce investment system, Indiana needs excellent Workforce Investment Boards. The Workforce Investment Act grants Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) the responsibility to designate One-Stop Operators, and Indiana state law grants them the responsibility to certify or charter One-Stop centers. But, since quality assurance implies measuring quality in the system as a whole, the State Human Resource Investment Council (HRIC), One-Stop operators and service providers should expect Workforce Boards to also demonstrate the value they add to the system. Workforce Investment Board certification in Indiana can help ensure the quality of local Boards statewide.

Initial certification of WIBs by the state has been based upon minimum requirements found in WIA and state law, mostly membership composition. Indiana will now go beyond that minimum and establish a "second tier" certification system focused on Board excellence. Our second tier certification system will provide a tool for benchmarking performance and ensuring the development of a strategic, customer focused Board. If done well, a quality-oriented approach to Board certification will help support the system building and continuous improvement efforts of local workforce development systems.

Because quality assurance is a "two-way street" of communication, articulation, and checks and balances, a well-thought out certification system can facilitate that communication within local systems. It can serve as both a strategic planning and an implementation tool for local Boards, promoting healthy state/local and inter-agency relationships and overall system quality by providing a solid framework to:

1. Establish high state organizational and performance standards which will be used to evaluate the capability of Boards applying for second tier certification.
2. Encourage and promote a structured, continuous improvement methodology in which the Board applies the established standards as a basis for self-assessment and uses the evaluation results to improve products and services.

The certification system will not only focus on Board responsibilities and processes for accomplishing goals, but on measurable outcomes of the Board that relate to community needs and customer satisfaction. This system will provide the local Boards with guidance from the State HRIC on the expectations for the nature and quality of the work of the Boards. The State HRIC will structure WIB certification as an interactive process that focuses on the dynamics of a local area and the overall composition of the local Boards. Essentially, certification is a guarantee of quality. And if certification is taken seriously, it is not just about a one-time designation; it is an ongoing process that serves as an opportunity to continually reexamine and revise the set of standards which constitute quality products and services for Workforce Investment Boards.

Certification Application and Review Process

Boards may apply for second tier certification beginning on July 1, 2000. Indiana's goal is to have every WIB applying for second tier certification by 2002. At this time, second tier WIB certification will be voluntary, although the state anticipates making it mandatory later. When WIBs believe they are ready to be certified, the WIB chair should submit a letter of application along with a business plan overview. The **business plan overview** will contain the following information:

1. **Basic description of the WIB organization**
   - WIB services and products
   - Size of the WIB organization
   - WIB's mission, vision, purpose, culture and values
   - Brief description of region and major issues WIB is addressing
   - Employee and board member base, qualification levels
2. **Customer and market requirements**
   - Key customers of the WIB's products
   - Key partnerships
   - Positioning of the WIB in the region's leadership structures
   - Influence that WIB has on major workforce issues in the region
3. **Supplier and contractor relationships**
   - Relationship with the WIB's contractor network
   - Process used by WIB to charter WorkOne sites and select WorkOne Operators
   - Selection and oversight of youth programs
   - Selection and quality control mechanisms for approving eligible training providers
4. **Competitive situation**
   - WIB's defined service niche in region
   - Competitive position of the WIB among the region's community planning entities
   - Competitive position of the WIB's WorkOne sites compared to other sources of assistance for employers and job seekers
   - Trends in the employment and training industry that impact the WorkOne system
5. **Business directions**
   - Major new initiatives, alliances and strategies
   - New products, services and technologies in development

The Business Overview should address what is most important to your board, key influences on how the board operates, and where the board is headed. *The Business Overview is a statement of what is relevant and important to your board and its performance.* The overview is important because:

- It is the most appropriate starting point for self-assessment and for writing an application. It helps you focus on key business performance requirements and business results;
- It is used by the reviewers in all stages of the application review and during the site visit.

A review team will determine from the overview whether the WIB is ready to develop a full application. The **full application** must describe how each of the criteria cited below has been met. The size limit for full applications is 50 pages.

Local WIBs will apply for certification to the State Workforce Investment Board (which in Indiana is the State Human Resource Investment Council, or HRIC). A team of trained reviewers will evaluate the performance of the local Board in relation to the established criteria, conducting both a review of the written application and a site visit. Scoring will be based upon an absolute scale, with points given for each criterion below. There is a possible total of 1000 points. Results of the review process will be shared with the Board and, if necessary, recommendations will be made regarding needed improvements prior to or in conjunction with certification. HRIC certification when granted will be good for two years from the date of certification; after that, recertification will be required. Recertification will require a higher number of points to be scored to demonstrate continuous improvement.

As an incentive, strategic planning funds that are available to all WIBs for PY 00 and PY 01 will only be available for PY 02 to WIBs that apply for 2nd tier certification.

Certification Criteria

The State HRIC will certify local Workforce Investment Boards using seven major categories of high performance: leadership, information and analysis, strategic planning, human resource development and management, process management, business results, and customer focus and satisfaction.

1. Leadership (200 points)

Private sector participation and leadership of the Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) is central to the success of Indiana's workforce investment system. High-level business and community leaders need to drive the definition of priorities and deployment of resources based on their understanding of local needs. How the Board addresses its responsibilities to the public and supports local and regional community development will require board-level and staff-level leadership that is committed to establishing organizational values, meeting performance expectations, and focusing on customers and other system stakeholders. Workforce Board leaders, both volunteer board members and paid staff, will demonstrate commitment to continuous improvement in day-to-day business decisions. The Workforce Board will also serve as a leader in the local community by articulating short- and long-term goals for the workforce investment system, and linking those goals to the broader economic and governmental goals of the community. Workforce leaders will also educate the community about the new workforce investment system and the role of the WorkOne centers in service delivery, ensuring that a wide range of the community understands and uses the local system.

1.1 Organizational Leadership

Describe how your board identifies, acquires and effectively uses key community leaders as board members and staff to the board.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How do WIB board members and staff exhibit leadership in the broader affairs of the community? How are they involved in key community decision-making groups?
- How are public and private sector CEOs involved in WIB work? How many CEO-level members are on the board? How does the WIB engage CEOs who are not board members?
- How does the WIB organize its work effectively? How are board operating policies, committee structures, and staff structures defined? What evidence is there that the WIB has in place a strong chair, strong committees, and an empowered chief executive to carry out the work of the WIB?
- What is the WIB's plan for leadership succession, both at the board and staff levels?
- When vacancies occur on the board, how does theWIB play an active role in recruiting new members and making recommendations to the local elected officials?
- How does the WIB engage the local elected officials in key decisions? What methods are used to communicate with the elected officials? What is the frequency of communication? What evidence is there that the elected officials view the WIB as a major player in the community?
- How do board members and staff educate other community groups about the WIB's work? What do they do to connect with other community leadership groups – Chambers of Commerce, United Way, governmental leadership groups, others?

1.2 Community Leadership

Describe how the WIB behaves as a community leader on workforce issues.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- What has the WIB done to identify and address broader community needs on workforce investment than those covered by the Workforce Investment Act?
- How is the WIB positioned in the community as compared with other organizations in terms of leadership on workforce issues? What other groups are involved in workforce issues, and how does the WIB relate to them?
- How does the WIB initiate issue-management task groups that involve members beyond WIB membership?
- To what extent are WIB board and staff members regularly invited to participate in other community leadership groups?

2. Strategic Planning (200 points)

The area (or region, in the case of multiple WIBs sharing a single planning region) Workforce Investment Board(s) will engage in strategic planning through the development of an integrated community workforce plan that defines outcomes and action steps expected from all workforce development partners in the region, including the expectations for the WorkOne Centers. In addition to this level of regional planning, WIBs will need to develop strategic objectives for their own work, as well as create action plans and related human resource plans to support the Board's organizational direction. Boards will ensure that key community stakeholders and customers are involved in the strategy development process and are involved in assessing whether the Board's goals and outcomes meet the needs of the community. WIBs also will seek to understand the expectations of job seekers, employers, elected officials, board members, and staff members to determine how each set of expectations will be measured and reported back to stakeholders. WIBs will use a business plan framework for its own work and for certification of WorkOne Centers. The WIB's ongoing strategic planning will serve as guidance for its own operational goals and for the goals of the WorkOne Centers.

2.1 Strategy Development for the Board's Work

Describe the WIB's process for developing its strategy for its own work. Summarize your key strategic objectives for the WIB's work.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How does the WIB go about strategic planning? As it prepares plans, how do board leadership, board members, board committees and board staff interact?
- Identify the board's mission and key objectives. How are they grounded in defined local needs rather than only responding to federal/state programmatic requirements?

- How does the board strategically deploy resources it controls?
- How does the board acquire the funding required to support its work?
- What is the balance between the WIB's focus on public funds accountability and the identification/management of key community workforce issues?
- What are customer expectations for the WIB's work?

2.2 Community Strategic Planning

Describe your WIB's process for undertaking community strategic planning and the timetables and results of such planning.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How has your WIB analyzed community needs, available workforce data, employer information, and education/training provider capacity?
- How is your WIB engaging the community in the planning process?
- How is your WIB's community plan development connecting to economic development strategic planning?
- Are there other broad-based community planning processes in place? If so, how does the WIB's planning related to them?

3. Customer Focus and Satisfaction (75 points)

Workforce Investment Boards analyze community needs and obtain feedback on products and services to make decisions about Board goals and priorities. WIBs examine how the organization determines requirements, expectations, and preferences of customers and markets and how the organization builds relationships with customers and determines their satisfaction. The WIB uses techniques such as focus groups and public hearings to attain customer input prior to planning services, products, and how service delivery will be coordinated and managed. It develops a single point of contact for customers and stakeholders. WIBs also require the use of marketing and customer satisfaction data (surveys, etc.) to justify all services and products and to support continuous improvement.

3.1 Customer and Market Knowledge

Describe how the WIB determines customer expectations and requirements for its work.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How does the WIB identify who its customers are? Describe your WIB's market segments.
- How does the WIB determine which products/services meet the needs of its customers?
- How has the WIB improved its products and services based on customer input?

3.2 Customer Satisfaction

Describe how the WIB determines the satisfaction of customers and ensures that effective relationships with customers are developed and grown.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- What are your current levels and trends of satisfaction of customers with services overseen by the WIB (e.g., WorkOne Centers, other program operators, training providers, etc.)?
- How does the WIB ensure that its suppliers (WorkOne Centers, training providers, etc.) measure and address customer satisfaction issues? How does the WIB obtain an independent, non-biased assessment of customer satisfaction with WorkOne Centers and other service providers?

4. Information and Analysis (75 points)

Workforce Investment Boards work with information at several levels. WIBs undertake the research, conversations and analysis required to understand the nature of the local labor market and where the gaps are within local service delivery structures. This includes looking at local demographic data, studying employer needs and behaviors, and examining the perspectives of the workers and families in the community. It also includes information gathering needed for accountability of service providers in meeting community-defined goals, both those providers funded by the Workforce Investment Act and those funded by other public and private sources. Boards also help ensure that both employers and workers can make good choices about employment issues through the quality of information they can obtain. WIBs identify and make recommendations to the state for eligible providers of training services and require WorkOne operators to demonstrate how the use of information and information technologies will support and enhance both customer service and staff effectiveness.

4.1 Internal Use of Information

Describe how the WIB obtains and uses information to support its decision making, priority setting and investments.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How does the WIB obtain information to support its own work? How does it ensure that the information is relevant to its mission and understandable to board members?
- How does the WIB significantly engage local constituencies in the analysis of community workforce information and subsequent strategic planning?
- How does the WIB use the information it receives to support decision-making?
- What information gathering and analysis is done by the WIB staff?

- What information is presented to the board by its staff? How did the board define the information it wanted to see?
- How does the board and/or its staff interact with local service providers in analyzing data and in using the data to make modifications in service strategies?
- Specifically, what regular information does the WIB review in its oversight of the WorkOne Centers? What does WIB staff review? What information is taken to the board? If information is taken to the board on an "exception" basis, how did the board determine the exceptions?

4.2 Ensuring That Customers and Stakeholders Obtain Information

Describe how the WIB ensures that its customers obtain the information they need to make informed decisions and how stakeholders effectively participate in creating and using information for community strategic planning.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- What role does the WIB play in ensuring that the information products provided through WorkOne Centers are of high quality and responsive to customer needs, and that center staff are well-prepared for helping customers use the products?
- How does the WIB create and present information to the public about the quality of services and training within the region?
- How well does the WIB work with regional partners, including other WIBs, to create and present information about the quality of services within the region?
- How does the board review and approve candidates for the Eligible Training Provider list?
- What information does the WIB use in making decisions about selection of youth service providers?

5. Human Resource Focus (150 points)

Workforce Investment Boards will successfully manage a complex agenda by establishing effective board membership and staffing. Obtaining board and staff members who are recognized community decision-makers is essential to building the capacity to influence major community challenges. Staff focused upon the work of the board is crucial for success in managing change. Staff capacity must include excellent analytical and facilitative skills.

5.1 Effective Board Membership

Describe how board membership is recruited, developed and deployed to optimize member effectiveness.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How are members recruited? What does the board do to identify candidates who will contribute significantly to board success in its key issues?
- How does the board work with required nominating bodies to ensure understanding of the desired characteristics of nominees and the importance of the process?
- How does the board work with elected officials to ensure understanding of the desired qualities of appointments and the importance of the process?
- What does the board do to ensure professional development of board members (e.g., orientation, training, conference participation, etc.)?
- What operating rules have been established to ensure effective board functioning and member participation? How are those rules used in practice?
- How does the board obtain input from its members about developmental needs and board member satisfaction? What changes have been implemented in response to this input?

5.2 Effective Board Staff

Describe the staffing for the WIB and how it is positioned to provide the focus needed for excellent WIB performance.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How does the staff of the board maintain a focus on the leadership and policy work of the board, rather than on operational issues of WorkOne Centers and other "front-line" operations?
- How are staff skill needs identified? How is the board involved in defining the staff capacity it desires? How are staff recruited and developed in accord with the desired capacity?
- How does the board define the work it wants accomplished by its staff? What information does it review to monitor these accomplishments?
- How does the board hold its chief executive/director accountable for staff performance?
- How much freedom does staff have to design "how" it goes about its work in delivering the board-defined performance expectations?
- How much board meeting time is spent on board-identified issues and needs vs. staff-identified issues and needs?

6. Process Management (150 points)

Organizing the work of the board to devote appropriate expertise and leadership to priority issues will help ensure successful results. Building effective relationships with local elected officials, other community "movers and shakers", and the board's own staff is paramount for board effectiveness as well. Effective WIBs will need well-defined processes for delivering results in key areas: community issues management, program accountability, broad-based planning, community visibility for needs and results.

6.1 Board Decision-making and Action Processes

Describe the internal and external processes the WIB uses to achieve results.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- What is the board's committee structure? How does it support achieving board-defined goals? How does WIB staff interact with committees?
- How are committees empowered to carry out their specific charges?
- How does the board involve non-WIB members effectively?
- How does the WIB organize its work to ensure results? How does the board manage itself, given the large size required by law?
- How are private sector members active within the board? What roles do they play? What does the board do to ensure that meeting content and language are relevant to private sector members, and not only agency representatives?
- How does the board make decisions? When conflicts arise, how are they managed?
- How does the board ensure that it is focused on community issues and not solely on Workforce Investment Act oversight?
- What is member attendance at board and committee meetings? How does the board define its attendance requirements? How does it deal with members who don't adhere to the requirements?
- How are issues managed between meetings of the board? How do staff and board members interact to get the work done between meetings?
- Specifically, what process is used to maintain an ongoing relationship between the board and the WorkOne Center operators?

6.2 WIB-Local Elected Officials Processes

Describe how the WIB works effectively with the local elected officials.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- What are the relative roles of the local elected officials and the board in your region? Are those clear to all involved? How was the WIB-LEO agreement developed?
- How does the board provide regular feedback to local elected officials?
- Are there staff members of the elected officials who are key to success? If so, what processes are used to keep them engaged in the WIB's work?
- What role does the board play in helping the local elected officials identify potential members for appointment?
- What role does the WIB play in engaging the elected officials in the planning process?
- How does the WIB engage the elected officials in the chartering process for WorkOne Centers? Do the elected officials feel "ownership" of their region's centers?
- What processes are used to ensure that both WIB board and WIB staff have visibility and credibility with the elected officials?

- Have there been any disagreements between the WIB and the elected officials? If so, what process was used to successfully resolve them?

7. Business Results (150 points)

Excellent Workforce Investment Boards will establish and measure their success at achieving results in their work. Boards focus on their own results, and not merely those of WorkOne Centers and contracted service providers. The Board examines its performance and improvement both in terms of customer satisfaction and success in achieving board goals. Boards will establish a local WorkOne chartering process driven by a high performance-based system of performance measures and quality assurance standards and will determine how excellent performance will be encouraged and rewarded and how poor performance will be handled.

7.1 Achieving Board Goals

Describe the results achieved by the board in terms of your own goals.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- What are measurable results achieved by the WIB in its work?
- What outcomes have come from the WIB's work on community issues? How has the community been made aware of these results?
- How has the WIB engaged in effective oversight of public funds – both Workforce Investment Act funds and other funds?
- What is evidence that WorkOne chartering is a meaningful process for the board and center operators?
- What has the board done to define expected outcomes from publicly funded programs and services? What has the board done to measure results against expected outcomes?
- How has the WIB rewarded successful service providers? What action does the WIB take with service providers that don't meet community expectations?

7.2 Meeting Customer Expectations

Describe the satisfaction of customers with the work of the WIB.

Within your response, include answers to the following questions:

- How does the WIB seek feedback from its customers, including various sub-regions and constituency groups?
- How does the WIB build relationships with its key customers?
- What are your current levels and trends of satisfaction of various board customers with the work of the WIB? How does the WIB track this?

- What are your current levels and trends of satisfaction of local elected officials with the work of the WIB? How does the WIB determine this?
- What is the board's strategy for responding to customer-identified issues and improving satisfaction?
- How has the WIB changed strategies in response to customer feedback?