

(A) Goals for the Workforce

This must include goals for preparing an educated and skill workforce, including preparing youth and individuals with barriers to employment and other populations.

In the spring of 2015, the Idaho Workforce Development Council, the entity that serves as Idaho's State Board for the purpose of WIOA compliance, engaged in a strategic planning session in which it reviewed its goals, strategies, and priorities for Idaho's workforce development system. The Council revised its strategic plan to align with current priorities, needs, and economic conditions (*Workforce Development Council Documents, Appendix 2*).

The Council arrived at three broad goals for the State's workforce system, which are outlined below. Under each of these goals, the Council identified several strategies that relate more specifically to the populations, services, policies, and priorities within the workforce development system. The strategies cited under each goal below are a priority subset of the Council's strategic plan that directly relate to the foundational analysis within this Combined State Plan and clarify how the Council's goals relate to individuals with barriers to employment.

1. Promote policies that align workforce, education, economic development, and entrepreneurship to meet industry and employer's workforce needs.

- Leverage public and private resources (in order to provide greater levels of service to those with barriers to employment and in rural communities)

2. Facilitate development of an Idaho workforce that is highly skilled and committed to continuous learning.

- Provide access to low-skilled and at-risk youth and adults, dislocated workers and others with barriers to employment to a full range of information and supports to prepare for work that leads to economic self-sufficiency.
- Enhance opportunities for lifelong learning by expanding delivery options such as: 1) stackable credentials, 2) compressed scheduling, 3) on-line and distance learning, 4) modularized curriculum and 5) other alternative learning modalities
- Encourage the use of workplace flexibility options such as job sharing, job restructuring, part-time worker pools, flex-time and telecommuting to increase employment opportunities and retain quality workers
- Promote employment practices and workplace environments that encourage a culture of diversity and inclusiveness

3. Support a comprehensive education and workforce delivery system.

- Maintain a quality One-Stop Career System that connects employers and workers and facilitates access to workforce services, education services and information.
- Enhance coordination among workforce system partners and streamline services by eliminating duplication and ineffective or unnecessary practices.

- Provide access to information, financial aid and other supportive services that allow all workers to obtain education and training leading to employment.
- Coordinate a system of work supports for low-income workers to help them stay employed and move toward economic self-sufficiency (e.g. food stamps, child care, and housing) and provide safety nets to those who are in transition in the workforce

The economic and activities analysis conducted in Section (II) of this plan identified four priority focus areas that are of special concern for the purposes of improving Idaho’s workforce system under WIOA. These four focus areas, listed below, inform the strategies used to meet the goals listed above. These four focus areas will also guide the structure of this State Plan, and serve as a continuing theme that unites our goals, strategies, and operational elements.

- **Serving Rural Communities** - In our activities analysis, nearly every core and partner program identified service to rural areas as a significant challenge. Idaho is a largely rural state, so this is a significant challenge for our workforce system.
- **Attracting, Training, and Retaining Quality Staff** - In our activities analysis, many programs identified staffing issues as a barrier. This was primarily true for those programs which provide direct services such as counseling and instruction.
- **Career Pathways** - Our economic analysis revealed that many of Idaho’s in-demand and high-growth occupations are in industries such as government, retail, construction, and health care. However, these industries do not necessarily align with the Target Sector industries identified by our state, which include advanced manufacturing, technology, energy, and health care. This suggests a need for clear pathways that help move people from current in-demand occupations to occupations within the Target Sectors.
- **Connecting Youth** - Our workforce analysis revealed that youth ages 16-24 who are in the workforce have a significantly higher chance of being unemployed than other age groups. Idaho must develop strategies to address the unique training and education needs of youth.

Specific high-level strategies for addressing each of these four areas are discussed in Section (II)(c) - State Strategy.

(B) Goals for Employers

This must include goals for meeting the skilled workforce needs of employers.

The goals identified in Section (A) “Goals for the Workforce,” support both the workforce and employers by promoting programs that provide relevant, high quality services to participants, including those with barriers to employment, and result in a workforce whose skills are aligned to meet the needs of employers and industry. These goals also acknowledge the need for alignment among Idaho’s workforce and education systems to promote a seamless system that is accessible and promotes a “no wrong door” approach.

Governor C.L. “Butch” Otter reorganized the state workforce investment board in late 2017 in response to the need to better align the workforce and education system. These changes are fully described in Section III(a)1 - State Board Functions. In addition to appointing a board (Idaho Workforce Development Council) that meets the expectations of WIOA, Governor Otter has specifically charged the Council with improving the effectiveness, quality and coordination of programs and services designed to maintain a highly skilled workforce and help provide for the most efficient use of federal, state and local workforce development resources. Two additional initiatives warrant discussion under Idaho’s goals for employers:

- In November 2016, Idaho was notified of an award under the ApprenticeshipUSA program. In addition to a \$700,000 base grant, Idaho was one of a handful of states to also be awarded an industry intermediary cap-breaker grant. Implementation of the ApprenticeshipUSA grant allowed Idaho to create regional apprenticeship teams that include business specialists from the Idaho Department of Labor, apprenticeship coordinators from Idaho’s community and technical colleges and four intermediaries to accelerate growth in healthcare, technology and manufacturing. Idaho has met its goals under the ApprenticeshipUSA program and recently learned that additional funding has been awarded to continue this effort.
- In November 2017, Idaho was notified by the National Governors Association that we had been selected to participate in the Work-Based Learning Policy Academy. The purpose of the Policy Academy is to support states and territories to scale high-quality work-based learning connecting youth and young adults (16-29) with middle-skills STEM careers. The industry focus on advanced manufacturing, health care, energy and information technology aligns perfectly with Idaho’s sector strategies.

Idaho is well along the path of increasing the quality, responsiveness and adaptiveness of services to employers to ensure that the workforce development system is aligned to the need of employers.