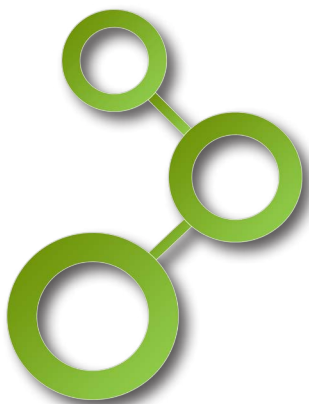


Strategic Plan 2013+

A comprehensive guide for developing the High Country's Workforce



Mission

The High Country Workforce Development *system* helps employers meet their workforce needs, helps individuals build careers, strengthens the local economy, and meets the challenges of global competition.



Our Values

Innovation | Productivity | Accountability | Results



Improve the regional One Stop system



Improve our outreach and service to employers



Engage the region's youth



Provide workforce intelligence



Market, communicate, and advocate for workforce issues

Improve the Regional One-Stop Service Delivery System

Goal:

Deliver world-class services to job seekers and employers, through our career centers and through enhanced technology.

The One-Stop service delivery system, currently known as JobLink Career Centers and soon to be renamed as NC Works Centers, has tremendous potential for improvement. Centers have suffered from misaligned and duplicative services and have been overwhelmed by the significant increase in the need for delivery of Unemployment Insurance Services. There have also been great examples of innovative services and efforts, however our system is in need of a cohesive approach to marketing and service delivery to both employers and jobseekers.

The merger of the former Employment Security Commission and the former Division of Workforce Development has created the new Division of Workforce Solutions. Realignment of services will be implemented at the state level as well as the local workforce areas. This merger involves every aspect of our service delivery system including the following:

- Staff roles and responsibilities;
- Management and oversight of the career centers;
- Location and number of career centers;
- Processes and customer flow within the career centers;
- Major technology upgrade (customer portal and internal tools);
- New brand, outreach strategies, and marketing materials.

Improve Service and Outreach to Employers

Goal:

Provide world-class services to employers by supplying them with a talented workforce.

Employers constitute our most critical customer group, yet employer satisfaction with our services in 2012 was under 30% (statewide as reported in a 2011 study commissioned by the Joint Legislative Committee). Improved understanding of how to better serve employers with development of effective feedback mechanisms is a high priority and will contribute to the system's continuous improvement. We must work to enhance our current services, as well as develop new services based on the needs of employers.

Board members, staff, and partners should work closely with the regional economic developers, chambers of commerce, and others to maintain a current understanding of employer needs and industry trends. Our service delivery should model private industry practices, as we regularly develop new and innovative ways to serve our regional employers.

Engage the Region's Youth

Goal:

Maximize opportunities for the emerging workforce to obtain academic and skill competencies required by employers.

During our regional planning meetings, every group expressed true concern for our young people. From the 2000-2010 census many of our counties lost population in the 18-30 year-old age group. Without young workers to fill roles, our businesses will suffer. Yet many of our young citizens do not see opportunities in our community and many don't see value in continuing their education beyond high school. We must work to connect our young people to opportunities for education and employment within our region.

Board members, staff, and partners should be engaged with the primary and secondary schools across the region. By seeking ways to align our efforts, participate in promising initiatives, and strengthen relationships our school system and workforce development system can have a greater impact.

Provide Workforce Intelligence

Goal:

Provide accurate, timely, and useful labor market information to inform board goals, assist economic development efforts, and enlighten jobseekers.

The access to quality data is more important than ever. Our economy continues to change rapidly and without an understanding of these changes, our economic and workforce development efforts will remain a step behind. In order to give our labor force a fighting chance in the increasingly competitive global economy, we must be proactive and that means having good information.

Data should drive our decisions about how we invest public workforce resources, advise jobseekers, and align the education system. The workforce system in our area has access to several advanced databases which can be leveraged into regular reports, in-depth analysis, and ongoing monitoring of workforce and economic trends.

Marketing, Communication, and Advocacy

Goal:

Increase the recognition of the High Country Workforce Development Board, the career centers, and the regional workforce system.

Telling the story of the workforce system's impact is critical to our future. Each year our system makes a difference in the lives of thousands of people throughout our region and makes a positive return on the investment of public resources. The workforce development system must tell a clear and compelling story. We must develop and maintain a strong image with our customers and our partners. We must also advocate for workforce issues and inform policy makers about the need for continued public investment in workforce development.