

DRAFT February 2009

Central/Western Maine Workforce Investment Board

Business Assistance Work Plan

PY 2008-PY 2009 [July 1, 2008-June 31, 2010]

GENERAL GOALS

- To assure that Business Services Teams and CareerCenters in Area III can respond effectively and efficiently to both current economic conditions and policies/procedures detailing the application of workforce development funding resulting from the American Recovery & Reinvestment Act of 2009.
- To achieve within the CareerCenter system a cohesive system coherent uses of available resources in developing and sustaining relationships between CareerCenters, public sector partners, and private sector businesses to support training, recruitment, and placement services in the best interests of job development and placement.
- To respond as business consultants to recommendations, goals, and objectives essential to business development in Central/Western Maine and the guidance developed by the Central/Western Maine Workforce Investment Board for CareerCenters as detailed in the State and Local Area *Two-Year Plan Modification*.

GENERAL BA PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The following policies will guide operations for PY 2008-2010.

- **Business Assistance Teams**. Area III's Business Assistance Program will involve the participation of all staff with the guidance and direction of four Business Assistance Teams focused in the Lewiston*, E. Wilton**, Augusta, and Skowhegan CareerCenters; Business Teams are composed of CareerCenter Managers, a liaison to the Bureau of Employment Services, the Director of Business Services in Area III, and specific staff members whom Managers assign to each Team. Once each Quarter, the Regional Managers Team will meet with all four Business Assistance Teams to monitor performance objectives, review Quarterly reports, and affirm or alter Team objectives. The Liaison to the NSAI project will normally attend these meetings.
- **Representatives Participating in Quarterly Managers & Business Assistance Teams**. A representative from the Center for Workforce Research & Information [CWRI] will be invited to attend all Business Assistance Team meetings on a regular basis. A representative from the Rapid Response program is also invited to attend Business Assistance Team meetings as circumstances warrant.
- **Records/Summaries of Business Assistance Team meetings**. Summaries of all Business Assistance Team meetings will be provided to the Executive Director of the LWIB, the Director of Business Services, the CWRI, the Rapid Response Representative(s), and key members of the Bureau of Employment Services.
- **Goals for Staff members' Performance** either as members of Business Assistance Teams or in providing services to employers will be evaluated at least annually.
- **Business Assistance & CareerCenter Staff Meetings**. Business services will be a major agenda item for Staff Meetings held at least twice a month at each full-service CareerCenter in Area III; a summary of Staff Meetings will be sent to the Executive Director on a regular basis.
 - * The Lewiston CareerCenter Team will include representation from the So. Paris Satellite CareerCenter.
 - ** The E. Wilton CareerCenter Team will include representation from the Rumford Satellite CareerCenter.
- **Resources Supporting Business Services**. Through its Incentive Funding for PY 2008, the Board will respond whenever possible to timely, appropriate, focused, and documented requests to support Business Services program elements in Area III that reflect the objectives outlined in the Goals & Benchmarks for PY 08 and PY 09 detailed below.

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM for PY2008—PY2009

- **Benchmark 1:** Ensure that all Staff are familiar with Business Assistance Services, how they are offered and delivered, their essential integration with economic development, community and intermediary organizations as well as education/training providers, and the priorities for services to businesses as detailed in this Work Plan and the State and Local Area *Two-Year Plan Modification*.

Actions:

1. CareerCenter Staff meetings at full-service Centers will be held on a regular basis (but at least twice a month) and a major focus of such meetings will be on Staff services to businesses/employers. Meeting summaries will provide detail regarding specific clusters/sectors/individual businesses. A summary/record/minutes of Staff meetings will be prepared and sent to the Executive Director of the LWIB on a timely basis.
2. At least once a quarter, Staff meetings will include information detailing relationships effecting workforce development from a specific local economic organization, intermediary workforce development partner, human resources professional, or education/training provider.
3. At least three times during the year, each full-service CareerCenter will develop and deliver a “Business After Hours” event/forum which will be supported by designated business sponsor(s).
4. Updated and current information regarding specific training and placement opportunities focused (when possible) on initiatives created by the Recovery and reinvestment (R & R) Act of 2009 and/or specific cluster/sector opportunities as detailed in this Work Plan or the *Two-Year Plan Modification* will be part of Staff meetings.
5. Whenever possible, Workshops offered in Area III Centers need to include members of the business community as featured speakers, co-presenters, participants, or observer. Example: HR professionals reviewing résumés, employers participating in “mock interviews,” a Healthcare professional focused on sector opportunities.

- Benchmark 2:** Ensure that emphasis in Business Services is given to identified clusters/sectors that are identified as most effective for economic growth, job development, and identifiable job placement and advancement as well as offering an appropriate wage scale and benefits.

Actions:

1. Business Services will be focused on identified clusters as defined in the R & R Act of 2009, the *Two-Year Modification Plan*, and on-going research by the Center for Workforce Research & Information [CWRI]. Current Clusters include: Medical/Health Services, Construction, Energy Reclamation, New Energy Development [“Green Jobs”], Niche Manufacturing [such as Composites], Transportation, Distribution & Logistics [TDL], Education, Information Technology, Marine Trades, Boatbuilding, Service Centers, and (in some local areas) Pulp & Paper and Wood Products. Priority of services is given to employers in these sectors/clusters.
2. Sector/cluster specific events will be offered to both the general public and job seekers on a regular basis at least once a quarter by each full-service CareerCenter. These events can take many forms: (1) focused “Job Fairs” for a specific cluster/sector or a particular employer in an appropriate, identified cluster/sector, (2) events focused on a particular cohort/population [Veterans, Non-Traditional Occupations, Seasoned Workers, Out-of-School Youth, for examples]

Benchmark 3: Ensure that Teams and staff are aware of Local Workforce Investment Board [LWIB] activities and recommendations concerning CareerCenter service alignment and delivery.

Actions:

1. Business Teams may be asked to present at a Steering Committee or LWIB meeting or may request a report from the LWIB and/or Steering Committee at their meetings.
2. Include as appropriate/relevant at each CareerCenter Staff Meeting information and updates on key training and workforce development initiatives of the State of Maine and the LWIB on such programs as the **WorkReady™** Credential and Board initiatives in progress to involve the LWIB more closely in services to business/employers.

Benchmark 4: Ensure that all Staff and CareerCenter partners have a clear understanding of the North Star Alliance Initiative [NSAI], its implications for cluster-specific performance [Marine Trades, Boatbuilding, Composite products & services, and the functions of the LWIB's Pillar Liaison to the business clusters identified within the NSAI grant.

Actions:

1. The NSAI Liaison will prepare a monthly summary of NSAI activities to be distributed to Area III CareerCenter partners.
2. The NSAI Liaison will be available for referral and consultation regarding training options in the NSAI identified sectors.

Benchmark 5: Promote equality of women and men in wage/benefit compensation regardless of cluster/sector.

Actions:

1. Review current NTO reports as circulated at Staff meetings on a regular basis.
2. Review and improve Local Area performance of Area III Performance Levels as prescribed for Females Entering Employment and Females Entering Employment in NTO for Adult and Dislocated Workers..

Benchmark 6: Use of Request & Reporting Formats

Actions:

1. The Format to Request Incentive Funding is attached below. Please send this form to the Executive Director to request Business Assistance funding.
2. Area III Quarterly Reporting Format is attached below. Each Team will prepare Reports by the 20th of the month following the end of each Quarter using the Format provided and send them to the Executive Director of the LWIB, who will compile an Area Quarterly report