

## **Plan Narrative**

*Responses for this Business Plan were developed through a concerted effort of individual and joint WIB committee meetings, New Directions, OSCC and DCS staff meetings, e-mail and phone correspondence. Additional data and advisement was provided from employers and job seekers through the WIB's annual Charter Review of the OSCC.*

### **Job Seekers**

***1. Please describe the local area's overarching initiatives/objectives for providing services to job seekers for FY 2007.***

In 2006 the primary focus of our efforts was to provide better customer service to job seekers through improvements of our internal processes and procedures, through better integration of staff and improved staff professionalism, through better management of all programs to avoid major shifting of resources to meet performance numbers, and to focus more attention on some of our targeted job seekers. A great deal of effort resulted in major successes that have resulted in significant improvements to the services provided to our Job Seekers. The following summarizes by category, many of the activities that took place to address these issues, and we also identify measurable performance outcomes that demonstrate the success of these activities.

#### Full Integration of Staff and Partners:

- Increased communication between senior management at New Directions and DCS has improved to some degree. The DCS Field Manager position has been vacant for the first nine months of this FY but should be filled shortly. This should allow continued improvements in communications and coordination. We have also reorganized staff at the OSCCs to combine similar functions regardless of whether they are DCS or New Direction employees. This has not resulted in any issues regarding supervisor authority or employee discontent, but has simplified processes, helped clarify roles and responsibilities, prevented duplication, and has improved our approach when dealing with economies of scale. It has also effectively presented seamless services to our customers.
- Our implementation of a comprehensive Professional Development program through dedicated work time for training, cross training, all-staff seminars, staff directed training, and access to on line courses (provided by DCS through MindLeaders), has been very successful, is a morale booster, and is helping to create an environment of continuous improvement and lifelong learning. The staff is more aware of customer needs, resources available, and is better prepared to do their jobs.
- Workshop content has been modified as a result of improved feedback from employers that is shared with instructors who are part of the Business Services Team. The Business Services Team is now composed of both New Directions and DCS employees who visit employers together.
- Partner meetings are held quarterly and regular referrals provided. However, a referral measurement process that was implemented still needs refining.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

- The relationship between the LWIB, New Directions, local DCS, and DWDA (fiscal agent) is very cooperative. Our OSCC managers attend the WIB quarterly meeting, which has helped breakdown barriers, and generate a better understanding of the entire system. A very collaborative relationship has been established and we are all focused on how to provide the best service to our customers and not on who steps on whose turf.

### Improve the Job Ready Status of Job Seekers

- We placed more responsibility on the job seeker to re-enforce his/her commitment to being successful in training and job search. We require customers to attend a OSCC Seminar or a Welcome Session to give them an overview of services through the OSCC System. We revamped and consolidated workshops in response to employer input, and offered new workshops and new times, i.e. Tuesday evening computer class. We also, streamlined services for customers, example: Group Intake, Same Day Resume, and initiated a “Job Ready” requirement that includes a mandatory resume or completed application in order to meet with a Job Specialist. We have improved the assessment of Resource Room customers that are not job ready and are referring them to programs or workshops such as GED, Work Readiness, Work Certification, etc.
- Initiated mandatory 12 month follow up process with all customers enrolled in WIA services, and have provided a dedicated staff for this important function.
- Implemented a Job Readiness program in conjunction with the Bay State Works grant that is training 100 unemployed in skills identified by employers that are needed by entry-level employees. Also, we are in the process of implementing a Work Certification Program funded by a DHCD grant with the Towns of Dartmouth, Fairhaven and Wareham. Plans are being developed to provide continued Readiness and Certification programs beyond the current grant timeframes and for customers outside the currently designated communities.

### Balance Resources to Meet All Performance Goals

- Our efforts to get better numbers for our WIA Adults has not been very successful. We increased outreach activities to this population but had only limited success. We did refocus our case managers on the need to re-establish contact with customers prior to completion of training to get them connected with Job Specialists and re-enforce the need to get work – a sometimes difficult accomplishment with many Adult clients.
- Updated and revised all department SOP’s and continue to improve Internal Training Manuals to ensure staff is consistent and following recognized successful procedures. Also implemented improved MOSES documentation processes and began QC review of case files for EAS clients and Vets.
- Implemented process to provide more one on one time between job specialists and self-directed job seekers, and increased the use of on-line and self-directed assessment tools for Resource Room customers.
- Managers are required to consistently review WIA and other performance numbers on a weekly basis and results are discussed at bi-weekly manager meetings.
- The annual WIB charter review has proven to be one invaluable tool in determining the needs of the WDS customer. The review provides the necessary platform for employers

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

and job seekers to supply the continuous valuable feedback and expertise the WDS relies on to develop and evaluate sound strategy.

### Increased Number of Targeted Job Seekers to Support Employer Needs

- Initiated ongoing and improved communications processes between our EAS staff and DTA staff that both increased and improved the quality of referrals.
- In spite of having only one of our two Vet staff positions filled, we have had good success with our Vet program overall, primarily through the training and use of our entire staff that assist with Vet needs. The state system of support to veteran programs has been “under review” this FY, and the anticipated outcomes are process improvements and specialized training for veterans’ staff and managers that oversee veterans’ programs.
- The REA program identified UI claimants in need of intensive services early in the process, and the dedicated case manager function provided direct attention to this clientele resulting in an increase in Entered Employments and a reduction in the average number of weeks collecting unemployment.
- Focused attention on our disabled clients. Co-sponsored with the Bristol WIB, the first “Navigator Series” seminars for employers and stakeholders – 148 attendees. Also added more adaptive equipment by installing a Video Relay service in the CC for our disabled customers, and purchasing new software to assisted the learning disabled in our GED classes.
- Sponsored two major events – the Job First Day and the Youth Career Expo. Both involved multiple employers and community organizations and resulted in both significant entered employments and youth access to summer activities. Over 500 adults and 500 youth attended each event respectively.

### **MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**

- The average UI claim under the REA initiative was reduced from 18 weeks to 10 to 11 weeks.
- Our total level of activity in the OSCCs has been 31,625, an increase of 19%.
- Our workshop attendance has increased by 60%.
- Our number of Resource Room users has increased by 23%.
- Our Entered Employments (Jobs Filled) is 1,773, an increase of 61% over the same period last year.
- Our EAS program referrals have increased and the quality improved and we are 15% ahead of projected target for EAS Entered Employments.
- Over 100 Vets have entered employment an increase of 16% over the same period last year.
- Our Dislocated Worker Entered Employments have exceeded our annual goal with three months still to go.
- Our follow up program focus has produced 453 documented Entered Employments that we would not have been able to document.
- We have had 73 Disabled Entered Employments an increase of 14% over the same period last year.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

Recognizing the high demand for ABE/ESOL services in the region, the WIB convened regional ABE/ESOL providers to assist in the development of a scalable model that supports the educational advancement of individuals with less than 4<sup>th</sup> grade through to college. This Regional Economic Transformation Model (RETM), initially sparked from an effort to respond to the latest DOL WIRED initiative, supplies the framework for systemic changes that produce true economic transformation. (see attached RETM)

In an effort to streamline ABE/ESOL Literacy services, the WIB has also approached funding sources to support a CommCorp initiative called Literacy Works. Funding will essentially support a full time regional literacy entrepreneur that assists in streamlining existing ABE/ESOL services and identifies and facilitates the complimentary supports needed by the existing network.

In addition, the WDS has made great strides in advocating for new funding to support local initiatives. In partnership with the Workforce Solutions Group, the advocated new funding for OSCCs, Connecting Activities, Adult Education, and the Workforce Competitiveness Trust Fund that has now made it to the House budget.

### **FY '07 Job Seeker Objectives.**

In 2007 we intend to build on our 2006 successes and also embark on some new initiatives that have been recognized as areas needing improvement or that provide opportunities to make new inroads. The new initiatives include the following:

#### **Increased Outreach.**

It has become apparent through our recent work with the CBO community that we are not reaching a significant group of potential customers, i.e. our legal immigrant population, our citizens who are limited English speakers, as well as others in the community not inclined or willing to visit the OSCC. We therefore need to increase our outreach programs to CBO and FBO organizations, determine how we might collaborate to reach their customer base and also explore opportunities to take our services “on the road” to ensure we address the needs of these populations.

#### **Early Assessment of Customer Needs.**

We are not always recognizing early in the process of interacting with some customers what their needs are and therefore how to recommend they proceed in their job search efforts. This is especially true for some customers that use our Resource Room, and also for employees of companies with mass layoffs that are serviced by the Rapid Response process. We intend to address these issues as follows:

- While accompanying the Rapid Response Teams, begin the Intake Process while companies are still in operation, thus guaranteeing 100% enrollment and enabling early assessment. This will enable us to develop special programs for clients with mutual interests and needs, as well as accurately project ITA needs.
- Develop a team approach to engaging Resource Room job seekers early and provide greater one on one assessment. Developing a plan in conjunction with New Perspectives clinicians for staff to be trained in the Myers Briggs program to better understand their

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

own profiles and thus better assist the clients to identify careers that best meet their skills, interests and abilities. We intend to develop and implement a Pilot program to address these issues during FY '07.

- New data from our recent charter review reveals dramatic disparity between educational attainment of Wareham versus New Bedford job seekers. Where skilled labor ranks higher in New Bedford, professional jobs and experience are more prevalent within the Wareham area. This disparity needs to be more closely analyzed to determine how best to address the need of these groups.
- The WIB, in partnership with the OSCC, will execute a town-by-town outreach campaign to identify and partner with community and faith based organizations willing to offer services that compliment those at the OSCC.

### **Dedicated ABE/ESOL focus, especially to targeted job seeker groups.**

LMI data clearly shows the need for ABE/ESOL training opportunities for adults in our SDA. All of the DOE funded programs in our area have waiting lists and those in the immediate New Bedford area are not of sufficient hours to meet Section 30 approval. We currently conduct a New Directions GED program but this does not meet existing GED needs nor does it address the need for Pre-GED or ESOL programs that are Section 30 approved. In addition, unavailability of public transportation to existing regional programs is a commonly cited barrier. We have Adult and Dislocated Worker clients, especially many of our DTA clients (EAS and ESP) as well as many Dislocated Workers that are laid off after many years with the same organization, that are in need of these programs in order to meet the requirements for training and self-sustaining jobs in our area. We intend to dedicate sufficient funds to establish a minimum 20-hour Section 30 approved program to address this problem.

The WDS will continue to develop and advocate for the local RETM and will continue to pursue the funding to support it.

### **New Collaborations to Address the Re-entry Program.**

We have initiated discussions with the State Department of Corrections, the Bristol County Sheriff's Office, and the local Parole Board to provide expanded programs to help the transition of convicts back into the workforce. We will accelerate these discussions and also attempt to find funding to support an expansion of current programs and new initiatives.

### **Increased Focus on Veteran Services.**

Now that our LVER position has been filled, we will increase our efforts to address the needs of our veterans including collaborations with local Vet organizations and others who provide services to this job seekers group.

### **Program Sustainability**

The WIB will pursue funding to sustain its newly established Work Certified program, a ninety hour, nationally recognized work readiness program that trains participants in 50 business competencies. Designed by employers, the program awards a nationally recognized certificate to graduates. To date, ten local employers have agreed to give hiring preference to Work Certified graduates. These same employers have also agreed to participate on an advisory board.

This page intentionally left blank.

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

<b>JOB SEEKERS ACTION GRID</b>		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outputs (Examples)</b>	<b>Activities (Examples)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase outreach to CBO's, FBO's and other organizations.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Organizations contacted</li> <li>▪ # Organizations interested</li> <li>▪ # Successful collaborations</li> <li>▪ # Grants identified</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Host focus group meetings at the Career Center for FBO/CBO – <b>(7/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Attend FBO/CBO community meetings – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Presentations to outside CBO/FBO groups/constituents – <b>(9/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Marketing Focus to CBO/FBO – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Examine new grant opportunities – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Early Assessment of Customer Needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Intakes from large layoffs</li> <li>▪ # Self-directed Resource Room customers that get hired</li> <li>▪ # Job orders for more professional jobs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CC participation in Rapid Response Team as lay-offs occur - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Continue Resource Room CQI focus to identify skill gaps – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Conduct Meyers Briggs training for staff as funds allow - <b>(7/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Identify the difference in skill sets between New Bedford and Wareham job seekers and increase staff awareness; Wareham CQI – <b>(7/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dedicated ABE/ESOL Focus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Programs established</li> <li>▪ # Successful funding sources for RETM Project.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine transportation opportunities to existing approved programs – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Investigate ways to leverage existing programs and continue to collaborate with NBPS and UMASS or other Partners to leverage resources – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Find funds to establish new programs including possible funding sources for RETM – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ New Collaboration for Re-Entry Program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Jobs for ex-offenders</li> <li>▪ # Training opportunities for ex-offenders</li> <li>▪ # Successful grants to address ex-offenders needs.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Collaborate with Parole Board and the Bristol County Sheriff’s Office (House of Corrections) - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Coordinate with DCS Manager of Re-Entry Programs - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Career Center visits and orientations at re-entry facilities – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increased Focus on Veterans</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Referrals</li> <li>▪ # Jobs for Vets</li> <li>▪ # Job orders from Federal Contractors required to give preference to Vets.</li> <li>▪ # Total job orders.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create special events for Vets at the Career Center – <b>(10/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Increased outreach to Vet Org. for referrals – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Establish a specific Vet Referral process – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Program Sustainability, i.e. Work Cert and Work Readiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Dollars obtained to fund expanded program</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Marketing efforts focused on Work Cert. - <b>(7/1/06 – 2/28/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Increase the number of employers agreeing to participate - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Determine level of funds needed and identify potential sources of funds - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>

## Business Services

### *2. Please describe the local area's overarching initiatives/objectives for providing services to employers for FY 2007.*

The local WDS recognizes the invaluable nature of continuous feedback and input from local businesses and continues to engage businesses in the early stages of many new initiatives. Focus groups, charter reviews, business surveys, and employer breakfasts represent a few methods that have proven crucial in the success of these initiatives.

WIB Members also play an active role in providing crucial input and advisement on business related strategies. Committees for Development and Planning, Marketing and Publicity, Performance Measurement, Finance and the Executive Committee are all chaired by business people that provide the direction and business acumen the WDS requires establishing and nurturing business and job seeker relationships. In addition, the WIB maintains strong links with the Regional Competitiveness Council (RCC), developing and adopting local priorities that support much broader regional initiatives.

The efforts of our Business Services Unit in FY 2006 focused on three major areas: increasing our services to area employers especially small businesses, providing a better match of job seekers that meet employer needs, and increasing the use of the various tax incentives and other training funds available to employers to train incumbent workers.

Our efforts involved several activities that resulted in many successes within each of our major objectives.

#### Significantly increases the business community's awareness and use of Career Center services, especially small businesses.

- Established new pre-screening agreements with major employers, and participated in a Business-to-Business Expo that increased our exposure to area businesses.
- Established a referral system with the local Economic Development Council to ensure we are cut in early on new companies entering the area.
- Developed and implemented a master Marketing Plan. Met with The Standard Times Editorial Board and are in the process of developing an agreement that will allow posting information on their web site free of charge. The OSCC has also developed a new slogan – “People, Positions and Possibilities”, and purchased a marketing display platform.
- Re-organized all New Directions and DCS staff that interacts with employers into one unit that also includes the workshop instructors. Have modified our workshops based on feedback from employers. Holding weekly Business Services meetings.
- Established a Business Services CQI to address the processes and procedures used to provide services and attract new businesses to the OSCC. This effort is ongoing.
- Our ability to approach small business was hindered by staffing issues. The one DCS employee who worked on this program left the agency in November 2005 and the position remained vacant until May 2006. However, we have outreached to many new

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

employers who had never used the OSCC before and they are now using our services. This number is currently at 134 and continues to grow. Our focus for most of the year however remained with the “high value” larger employers. While 88% of our employer market is small businesses (less than 20 employees), typically the majority of these are low wage/no benefit jobs. The largest 125 employers who are 2% of the total number of employers provide 42% of the jobs and the majority of these jobs are those that provide better wages, career ladders, and benefits.

- Outreach to employers also included two survey efforts – one related to the Work Readiness program (30+ employers), and the other to an email sampling of 150 employers who use our services. This second survey was developed with the assistance of a senior management degree student from Fisher College. The work readiness survey confirmed data from a similar survey of two years ago that retention, basic skill needs, and technological change are the primary challenges of the future work environment. The second survey is currently in progress and results should be available by June 2006.

### Provide a better match of job seekers that meet business workforce needs.

- The Bay State Works manufacturing grant is providing training to 100 unemployed in a Work Readiness program that addresses employer-identified skills needed by entry-level employees. Employers are giving hiring preference to the graduates of this program and so far, have hired 21 of our 30 graduates.
- Staff attended State LMI workshop for Business Services, and we have developed local LMI data based on our interaction with local businesses. Staff is using this data to council job seekers.
- Provided recruitment assistance to three large area employers opening new facilities in our area – Kohl’s, Price Rite, and Super Shaws.
- All job seekers are now enrolled in the OSCC with full membership that provides more work history data up front and allows for better job matching.
- Held meetings with Wareham Economic Development Council, the Wareham Town Council, and the National Retail Federation – to address the impact of a new shopping center in Wareham. Ongoing discussions continue.
- We are evaluating the possibility of establishing a “skill center” in conjunction with the National Retail Federation that will provide customer service, sales and management skill training for businesses in the retail industry. This is a long-term initiative and lots of due diligence remains to be completed.
- Successfully received a Work Certification Program grant to train 200 low to moderate income job seekers in 50 competencies identified by employers that are lacking in today’s entry level workers. This is a larger and expanded version of the Work Readiness program, and area employers are serving on the grant advisory board. The first class begins on May 8, 2006. Currently this program is only for residents of Dartmouth, Fairhaven, and Wareham.
- Held a Jobs First job fair (October 6, 2005) and used feedback from the 20 + employers to assess level of success. Substantial anecdotal feedback indicated that it was the best Job Fair many employers had ever attended primarily because Job Seekers were well prepared with resumes and professional dress (topics provided by our workshops), and many met the skills needed for the positions offered.

## FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06

- Using feedback from local ABE/ESOL providers, the RETM was expanded to include business focus/engagement.

### Improve the skill level of incumbent workers by increased use of the WTF and other grants.

- The new Marketing Plan stresses getting the word to employers about hiring tax incentives (HIT-G and WOTC) and the economic benefits of using the Workforce Training Funds. Training workshop were held for employers in HIT-G and WOTC tax credit programs. Programs were also marketed to employers during Job Specialist visits. Since the HIT-G program started in late 2004, 21 employers in our SDA have utilized the HIT-G grant program 77 times. This was 12% of the total number of HIT-G grants used Statewide. The use of our employers of the WTF has not been significant and we need to push this program in the future. Senior New Directions and DCS management, as well as several WIB members participate as part of WTF review team.
- Our management of the Bay State Works manufacturing grant has provided employer identified incumbent worker training to well over 900 employees from three area companies in a variety of skills. The program has been a tremendous success as evidenced by the feedback from employers and the request for additional trainings throughout the program.

### **MEASURABLE OUTCOMES**

- **465** businesses were served, basically the same number as last year.
- Based on a sample of businesses served, **47%** were small businesses (20 or fewer employees).
- **134** businesses were New Businesses Served (new is defined as not having received services from the Greater New Bedford Career Center System prior to July 1, 2005.)
- **994** Job Orders were placed, a 5% increase over 2005.
- **544** Job Orders were filled, an 87% increase over 2005.
- **750** (75% of total) Job Orders were in our Targeted Industries

4.43% Construction	27.15% Manufacturing
22.30% Business Information Services	15.24% Retail
4.43% Healthcare & Social Assistance	12.05% Warehousing and Wholesale
- **522** (96% of the total filled) of the Job Orders filled were in our Targeted Industries.

For years, the GNBWIB and the local OSCC has struggled to establish brand recognition within the markets they serve. In an effort to elevate awareness within the community, the GNBWIB and One Stop Career Center started from scratch to redevelop the Marketing Plan (see Attachment). The three-pronged initiative targets 1) simplifying our message 2) raising awareness of the WIB and OSCC in the community 3) executing a low cost public relations strategy. Implementing this plan began earlier this year.

**FY '07 Business Services Objectives**

Our objectives for the 2007 FY will continue to build on success from 2006 and will also address new initiatives as well as suggestions from the annual Charter Review process.

Our overall primary objective is to get a better understanding of what businesses need – both in the way of direct services from the OSCC and especially in understanding the skills needed by our targeted industries so we can develop appropriate training programs, for both new and incumbent workers. All of this needs to be addressed in the context of contributing to economic development.

**Increases the business community's awareness and use of Career Center services, especially small businesses.**

- It is important that we formalize a working partnership with the traditional economic development organizations to clearly demonstrate the value of including workforce development activities as an essential element of economic development. Efforts to date have been less than desired, i.e. our MOA with EDC for referrals have yet to yield any information. This partnership also needs to stress the importance of creating an economic development strategy for the region. The CEO (Mayor of New Bedford) is the key to bringing together the appropriate organizations with a focus on regional development not just New Bedford development. The WIB also plans to further develop ties with Economic Development in an effort to expedite employer relationships. Using site visits and referrals as a vehicle, WIB members representing local real estate companies will help provide the leverage the WIB needs to continue developing these relationships.
- Fully implement the newly developed Marketing Strategy to improve WIB and OSCC awareness especially among the business community. Also, look at other methods for ensuring the employer community is aware of all the services offered by the OSCCs, and specifically how these services can be beneficial to them.
- Place more emphasis overall on the business community as the OSCC primary customer. This strategy will in the long run provide better service to the job seeker community through the identification of more job opportunities.
- Look at other opportunities for Fee-for-Service services such as background and credential checks, pre-employment testing, etc.

**Provide a better match of job seekers that meet business workforce needs.**

- Continue to focus on larger area employers as a priority (because they provide the most vacancies with the highest wages, career ladders, benefits, etc, and the best utilization of our staff resources). But, find a workable methodology to dedicate resources to increasing services to small businesses. This process should include participation from the business members of the WIB.
- Continue to focus more attention on the job matching function especially with developing improvements or replacements to the current software. This will provide employers with better candidates faster and minimize the need for additional business services resources.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

- Closely examine the demographics of the employer community in Wareham and other communities in our SDA and develop specific strategies to address employer needs for these areas.
- Continue to assess the ability of employer customer surveys to provide meaningful feedback and reliable information needed to determine employer needs. Examine other methods for gaining employer feedback and ensure we utilize the feedback to modify existing services or develop new services.
- In an effort to explore improved employer feedback mechanisms, the WIB, in partnership with the OSCC, vendors, and the local Chamber of Commerce, will develop and distribute periodic electronic surveys.

### **Improve the skill level of incumbent workers by increased use of the WTF and other grants.**

- Promote the value of the Work Readiness and Work Certification programs and obtain additional employer buy in. Gather the necessary performance data to validate these programs.
- Develop the capability to provide the Work Certification Program to other communities in our SDA, especially to New Bedford.
- Building on the success of the Bay State Works Manufacturing Grant, collaborate with other employers in our SDA
- Historically, the region's awards for Workforce Training Fund and HIT-G grants have fallen well below the state average. In an effort to reverse this trend and increase the amount of monies coming back into the region, the WIB is developing a WTF/HIT-G strategy in conjunction with our local CommCorp representative.

Care will be taken to ensure the pursuit of small business relationships do not interfere with the region's efforts to meet performance goals. Further study and profiling of small businesses is required before development of a small business strategy can be made. Interviews with OSCC job development staff and local ABE/ESOL providers revealed a similar need to better identify employers willing to hire and train and promote those with ABE/ESOL needs. The WIB will expand conversations in an effort to identify and profile ABE/ESOL-friendly employers. Analysis of data and possible collaboration with local think-tanks and other sources will support any strategy proposed.

This page intentionally left blank.

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

<b>BUSINESS SERVICES ACTION GRID</b>		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outputs (Examples)</b>	<b>Activities (Examples)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase Business Awareness and Use of Career Center Services</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # New pre-screening agreements</li> <li>▪ # New employers using Career Center services</li> <li>▪ # Services to small businesses</li> <li>▪ # Job orders</li> <li>▪ # Contracts established for fee for service</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Formalize working partnerships with Economic Development organizations, i.e. EDC, MOBD, etc. – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Implement marketing strategy to businesses – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Fine-tune the strategy for identifying which businesses to focus available resources. – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Evaluate the market climate for fee for service opportunities including benchmarking how other Career Centers (competitive model) and organizations do it. – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Better Match of Job Seekers that meet employer needs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # WIB members participating in CQI</li> <li>▪ # Services to small businesses</li> <li>▪ # Businesses who respond to surveys</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Invite WIB business members to serve on CQI. - <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Identify needs of small businesses thru surveys and other processes – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Identify potential services to small businesses – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Develop methodology for increasing services to small businesses – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Create a reliable process for validating the MOSES database on business information – <b>1/1/07 – 3/31/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Create and implement an SOP for data entry for Job Seekers and Business Services MOSES screens and then implement a QC process. <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve the Skill Level of Workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Work Readiness participants</li> <li>▪ # WTF grants submitted</li> <li>▪ # WTF grants approved</li> <li>▪ # HIT-G utilized</li> <li>▪ # Work Cert graduates and jobs obtained.</li> <li>▪ # Successful grants for training incumbent workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Examine ability to provide Work Readiness Program beyond current grant - <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Meet requirements of the Work Cert Grant - <b>(7/1/06 – 3/31/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Continual outreach to employers for WTF &amp; HIT-G - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Identify employers who embrace Work Readiness &amp; Work Cert. - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>
--	--	---

## Youth Programs

*3. Please describe the local area's overarching initiatives/objectives for providing services to youth for FY 2007? Please include in the description new program connections, activities, or system reforms, if any, that will be implemented in your local area based on the federal new vision for youth services, the Massachusetts pathways to Success by 21 (P-21) planning initiative, or other youth efforts occurring in your region?*

In response to national and state guidance the GNB Youth Council (YC), in FY'06, took steps to place an increased focus on out-of-school youth. This resulted in an increased amount of resources directed to out-of-school youth services and the adoption of our local P-21 strategic plan. In FY'07 we will continue to implement our P-21 plan and ensure that the majority of our WIA funds are spent on out-of-school youth services. In terms of the implementation of our P-21 plan, we realize that successful implementation depends on two very important strategies; one being the need to secure funding to implement parts of the plan and the other being the development of collaborations in order to implement sections of the plan with other local agencies, collaborations, and affiliations who have identified similar priorities. For instance, the YC Director has held a series of meetings with a local group named The Learning Network. This group worked for 18 months to develop a strategic plan for the Superintendent of the New Bedford School System that addresses many of the issues identified in our P-21 plan. For example, this group is looking to create "Community Resource Centers" within the High School. Our P-21 plan calls for the same action, the creation of "Youth Empowerment Centers", and we know that collaboration brings more resources and attention to our goals

The YC has placed a high priority on the coordination of local and regional services. In response to this priority, we have been working on the development of a series of information sharing and training sessions that will be held over the summer and early fall of 2006. These sessions will be aimed at the coordination of services with the end goal of new program connections and better alignment of local and regional services. Additionally, we will research and implement strategies aimed at leveraging our successful Connecting Activities High School Internship Program resources to serve out-of-school youth via subsidized and unsubsidized employment placements. We have outlined in our P-21 plan the need for out-of-school youth to be re-connected to both educational and employment related services that lead to self-sufficiency. As a group it has been a general theme that older out-of-school youth need to be transitioned into the world of work and the expectation that these youth can receive some sort of short term job readiness training and be referred to private sector employers in unrealistic. A continuum of service that starts off as highly supported and transitions, over time, to a more traditional employment situation is what is necessary for programmatic as well as individual youths' success.

### **Analysis of Business Plan Youth Goals for FY '06**

The first goal of 2006 was to complete and submit our local P-21 strategic plan. As mentioned earlier, this was accomplished and the plan was submitted to the Commonwealth Corporation in the fall of 2005. Action continues in regard to the implementation of this plan.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

The second goal of last years plan was to increase the number of job readiness training and employment opportunities through the Youth Employment System at the OSCC. On a yearly basis, young people access the WIA system through the OSCC. For instance, our in-school youth (ISY) intake session is held at the OSCC in March. This allows youth to be exposed to the OSCC and its services while being enrolled in New Directions for ISY services. Additionally, OSY youth are processed at the OSCC and receive an orientation that includes services available through the OSCC. As mentioned earlier, a the Pathways staff member is housed at the OSCC and is dedicated to youth services available through our WIA funded system as well as community resources and services available through various community based organizations and the secondary and post secondary educational systems.

In 2006, our WIA ISY program provided 145 at-risk youth with summer work experiences with a continuation of mentoring and dropout prevention services throughout the school year. Summer work activities included culinary arts, clerical skills, childcare, landscaping, art, maintenance, masonry, technology and business plan development/entrepreneurship. Additionally, our local WIA youth were able to access and utilize our Connecting Activities staff in order to develop MA Work Based Learning Plans for the evaluation and quantification of skills necessary for success in the workplace. An additional 57 youth received subsidized summer employment through our YouthWorks grant. Worksites included the New Bedford Recreation Department, Salvation Army, West End Day Nursery, various public schools, PAACA and the Department of Health. An additional one hundred and twenty one youth secured subsidized summer placements through participating in the 2006 Youth Expo.

Unsubsidized employment placements came from the 2005 Youth Career Expo held in April. This event resulted in the placement of forty-three youth in unsubsidized placements. Placement sites included Domino's Pizza, JC Penny, and The Bristol County Sheriff's Office. These youth's wages were paid by the employer, and upon completion of the summer used as our YouthWorks required employer match. Feedback from employers who participated in the 2005 Youth Career Expo was incorporated into the workshop curriculum for youth at the OSCC. Youth received feedback from employers in the weekly workshops to help better prepare them for the workplace. The youth department now offers four job readiness workshops for youth: resume preparation, interviewing, employer expectations and dress for success

The OSCC hosted its first employer driven youth program in July. Summer of Success was facilitated by Domino's Pizza and consisted of six weeks of three-hour workshops on success in careers. Successful local business people spoke to fourteen youth age 14-15 and told their stories of how they found success. All fourteen youth received a stipend for perfect attendance. The Summer of Success program will be operated in the summer of 2006.

Nine New Directions out-of-school youth participated in a marketing project to improve marketing strategies for recruitment of out-of-school programs. Youth developed and began implementation of a marketing plan. The marketing plan includes signs on city buses as well as information and graphics to be used in brochures and flyers. All nine youth received stipends for participating in the project.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

New Directions youth staff began cross training in intake and eligibility for out-of-school youth to help facilitate the process necessary to deem a youth 100% eligible for WIA Title 1 Services. Historically a cumbersome process, we believe that greater efficiency will be realized via additional eligibility knowledge transferred to front line staff.

A youth voice component was added to the RFP process in which all proposers were required to make a presentation to youth on salient program elements. Youth evaluated the program, based on a written evaluation form developed by our youth marketing group. Feedback from the youth panel was impressive and integrated into our RFP reader training.

Our third goal was for the OSCC to serve as the primary resource for youth seeking educational and employment related services. This goal is again a priority for FY'07 and will continue to be the focus of our work for some time. Examples of action in regard to this goal are the annual Youth Expo, Summer of Success, and our weekly youth workshops. Additionally, our Pathways Coordinator continues to be housed at the OSCC and ensures a youth focused staff person at the OSCC on a consistent basis. Outreach includes advertising time purchased on Fun 107, the local radio station, as well as outreach via local organizations and citywide events such as Cool Nights.

### **FY '07 Three Areas of Focus**

**1. Continue with implementation of the P-21 Strategic Plan. This includes securing new funds as well as creating strategic partnerships. These partnerships will allow us to move forward in regard to sections of our plan that may not require new funds for implementation.**

The Greater New Bedford Youth Council's P-21 Committee submitted a final P-21 strategic plan to the Commonwealth Corporation in the early fall of 2005. This plan outlined local priorities as they relate to dropout prevention and the reintegration of older, out-of-school youth into employment and educational services. Since this time we have identified local partnerships that can move sections of the plan forward without the need for new funding. In doing so we have, and will continue, to make progress on specific objectives laid out in the plan as well as make a continuous push for local coordination of services and resources. Additionally, we have addressed goals such as youth voice and an increase in priority for out-of-school youth. We continue to earmark 65% of WIA funding for OSY services and are presently investigating ways to utilize our highly successful Connecting Activities High School Internship Program resources in the reintegration of disconnected out-of-school youth to employment related experiences.

Additional P-21 strategies include local collaboration around the state Community Safety Initiative. The Greater New Bedford Youth Council has been an active member of the local planning team and is proposing to utilize this opportunity to better integrate the WIA system with community resources aimed at the reintegration of gang members. Additionally, WIA resources will be leveraged as prevention strategies aimed at decreasing the number of youth who enter gangs. Though the funding available for this initiative is only for one year, we feel that the services and relationships built through this initiative will be sustainable.

In addition to the above, we will continue to identify funding opportunities and sources from which we can secure funding necessary to implement sections of our P-21 plan. The Greater New Bedford Youth Council's Operations Committee is presently working toward the implementation of an employment model, the Dual Customer Model, in which out-of-school youth, through employer specific training and structured on-site employer supports, can find high levels of success in employment. This success will result in employer savings associated with lower turnover and higher productivity rates. Once quantified, these cost savings will be presented to employers with the understanding that a portion will be redirected to support the program.

**2. Increase opportunities to utilize the OSCC as the primary resource for youth seeking employment and educational services.**

This is a consistent and important goal of the Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board and Youth Council. We continuously look for ways to improve our services available to youth through our OSCC. At present, we have a staff member who is dedicated to youth services and housed at the OSCC. This position is funded through a grant from the Department of Education and allows us to create strategic linkages within our workforce and educational systems. These linkages allow our system to be integrated with other non-WIA funded or WIB managed services thus creating a true menu of services available to young people seeking educational and/or employment related supports.

**3. Develop new and innovative youth service models, while tailoring existing services and resources, to improve relationships with youth friendly employers.**

As mentioned earlier, the greater New Bedford Youth Council's Operations Committee has begun the process of developing a "Dual Customer Youth Employment Model". This Committee is made up of members from the City of New Bedford Housing Authority, the Southeastern Massachusetts Labor Council, YouthBuild USA, the Greater New Bedford One-Stop Career Center, New Directions Youth Services Department, the Commonwealth Corporation and a private sector company, (First Citizens Federal Credit Union). It is the belief of this group that the Dual Customer model can adequately address the needs of an employer while proving youth with the supports and services they need to be successful in employment. The assumption of this model is that once the program is at capacity, it will provide services to the employer that will result in significant cost savings, which can then be redirected to support the program. This sustainability plan requires the program to quantify employer savings via the average cost to recruit, hire, and train an employee as compared to the increased retention rates of program versus non-program employees.

In addition to the above, in FY'07 OSCC and New Directions Youth services will be tailored to meet the needs of employers. This strategy will allow us to engage employers in a more meaningful way than in past years. The overall intent of this goal is to begin to market youth services and resources as business services that can improve employer specific data such as retention and productivity while helping employers to realize cost savings associated with training and management of young employees. The Greater New Bedford Youth Council is on

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

the verge of changing the historical outlook of employers as it relates to youth services and youth in general. If our services can be tailor to meet the needs of employers and marketed as such, we can begin to transition employers from the belief that working with youth services is more of a community service versus a strategic and beneficial business option.

### **Common Measures- Youth**

- Challenges for implementing common measures include the following:
  - Literacy and numeracy measure for out-of-school youth is to be determined through TABE testing (state mandated measurement tool). WIA Youth programs have struggled to show progress in increasing skill levels by using this tool.
  - Eliminating exclusionary exits for youth who leave the program while attending school will affect our selection process for in-school youth.
  - P-21 and other state initiatives target the most difficult youth to serve. Most targeted youth have low basic skill levels and are not able to complete GED or diploma programs within one year.
- Strategies for leading WIA Youth to post-secondary education, advanced training or employment:

We are currently sub-contracting vendors to provide youth access to post-secondary ed., advanced training and employment opportunities. Relationships with Bristol Community College and UMASS Dartmouth have been established and maintained. All youth interested in post-secondary education are referred to the Educational Opportunity Center for assistance with applications and financial aid.

New Directions youth department provides training scholarships for youth who have completed their GED or diploma and meet the criteria for training. During FY 06, a waiver to WIA legislation provided WIA Title 1 Youth access to adult training accounts with WIA Title 1 Youth funds. A local process has been developed for out-of-school youth to access adult training accounts significantly diversifying training options available for youth.

New Directions and the OSCC have established and maintained relationships with employers who hire youth. Seventeen employers were recruited to participate in the Youth Career Expo 06', and employer feedback was incorporated into job readiness workshops for youth. New Directions also hosted the first employer driven youth program at the OSCC. MY TURN out-of-school program employs an employment broker specialist to assist in placing out-of-school youth in jobs.

- Specific Occupational or Technical Skill Credentials Out-Of-School Youth Programs will emphasize:

Occupational training certificates available through training scholarships include: certified nurse assistant, medical assistant, CDL, and medical office. Henkels & McCoy provides customer service and retail training in preparation for the National Retail Certification Exam. Youth Build provides work experience in carpentry.

## FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06

The local SDA does not use youth council approved credentials for WIA Title 1 Youth. All credentials recorded for WIA programs are currently State and nationally recognized credentials.

***Note: Additional certification information cannot be provided until vendor selection process has been completed.***

- How are we working with providers to ensure training services are aligned and yield a positive gain?

Twenty percent (20%) funding of vendor contracts is currently withheld for performance.

Recommendations will be made to the executive committee of the youth council to hold sub-recipients accountable for diploma and GED attainment as well as employment and post-secondary outcomes for youth who have met their educational attainment.

- Literacy and numeracy measure

The state mandates that the TABE test be used to measure literacy and numeracy gains. Youth contracts currently requires that all sub-recipients TABE test youth after a minimum of 60 hours of classroom training, again at a minimum of 120 classroom hours and again before the end of the contract year. Gift certificates were granted to youth who increase TABE scores during FY 06.

- Framework services & youth services providers

New Directions youth department as the framework services provider is responsible for enrolling and exiting youth in WIA Title 1 Youth programs. During FY 07, WIA programs will be held to WIA Title 1 Youth performance measures and youth will be exited according to those guidelines. New Directions youth services manager has attended training in Common Measures and is familiar with new procedures for exiting and follow-up under common measures. New Directions youth staff will continue to attend training and become familiarized with all new processes associated with Common Measures in preparation for full implementation of Common Measures in FY 08'.

- Youth RFP's

Priority is given to proposals that offer educational attainment and state and nationally recognized certificates. Evidence of past performance is required when submitting proposals for WIA Title 1 Youth funding.

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

<b>YOUTH ACTION GRID</b>		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outputs (Examples)</b>	<b>Activities (Examples)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GNB youth will access an increased number of job readiness training and employment opportunities through the Youth Employment System at the Career Center</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Additional summer employment opportunities will be available to youth who utilize Career Center. <b>(7/1/06-8/18/06)</b></li> <li>Out-of-school youth will have access to additional training opportunities by utilizing adult Individual Training Accounts. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li>New Directions will have an increase in employer related services for youth at the Career Center. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Youth Career Expo will provide youth with access to summer employment and programs - <b>(7/1/06-8/18/06)</b></li> <li>Implementation of Youth Works summer job program will services at-risk youth outside of WIA programs - <b>(7/10/06-8/16/06)</b></li> <li>Youth Department staff and sub-contracting vendors will implement process for youth to utilize adult training accounts with WIA funds - <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li>New Directions youth staff will collaborate with Domino's pizza to implement Summer of Success 06' program at the Career Center <b>(7/1/06-8/30/06)</b></li> <li>New Directions youth staff will incorporate employer feedback into job readiness workshop curriculum - <b>(9/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>GNB Career Center will serve as the primary resource for youth seeking educational and employment related services.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li># of youth who attend Career Center activities including workshops and job fairs. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li># of youth who receive Career Center services. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li># of youth who obtain employment as a result of a career center service. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li># of employers who hire youth through the Career Center. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>New Directions will implement marketing plan developed by youth - <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li>New Directions will increase referral base through collaboration with community agencies - <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> <li>New Directions staff will participate in the implementation of the P-21 strategic plan - <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li> </ul>

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New Directions and Career Center staff will strengthen relationships with employers who hire youth. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li><li>• Emphasis will be made on incorporating input from youth in program, process and youth activity development. <b>(7/1/06-6/30/07)</b></li></ul>
--	--	---

## Training Funds and Resources

### *4. Please describe how the local area will allocate training funds and resources in FY '07 to assure skill enhancement across the broadest adult and dislocated worker customer base?*

There are several major training challenges in our SDA that continue to affect our ability to provide appropriate training services for our jobseeker customers.

- We struggle to expand the selection of training programs that clients are able to attend which provide the specific skills local employers require.
- Nearly 30% of our client base that is undereducated and/or non-English speaking that makes them unqualified for many of our Section 30 approved programs. There are no Section 30 approved ABE/ESOL programs within our immediate area accessible with public transportation.
- Transportation continues to be a major hurdle for many clients and the number of vendors accessible by available transportation continues to provide limited choices.

The following activities address our efforts to accomplish the three major objectives of our FY 2006 Plan.

#### Improve customer selection of training to support training related placement.

- Our attempts to increase the number and variety of shorter credentialed training choices did not produce many increases this year. While we initiated discussions with both UMASS-Dartmouth and the local New Bedford Vocational Technical High School, little impact on identifying new, shorter term, credentialed training programs has resulted. We are optimistic that UMASS may have a marine trades related program available next FY which will address one of our targeted industries, and we are also hopeful that we may be able to identify some other trades related programs available through the high school. To date in FY 2006, we have utilized 25 different vendors and issued 156 ITA's at an average cost of approximately \$3400. However, the majority (78%) of these ITA's were concentrated in only three industries, transportation (CDL) at 30%, Computer Training at 28%, and Health Services at 20%.
- We focused considerable attention on improving the knowledge of staff to help customers make informed decisions about training program selection. This included increased team meetings with case managers for better initial assessment of customer choices and also greater emphasis on the use of local LMI data.
- We were very successful in implementing employer selected training for incumbent workers as well as with two programs that provide employer identified training for and certification of unemployed entry-level employees. The Bay State Works Manufacturing grant is providing training to over 900 incumbent workers at three large manufacturing companies and is also providing a Work Readiness program for 100 unemployed. To date we have trained 42 Work Readiness customers and 26 have entered employment. In addition, a Work Certified program, the first in the state and funded by a grant from DHCD, is providing a 90-hour intensive program in 50 different competencies that offers a credential recognized and supported by area employers. Our first class begins May 8, 2006. This program is only for customers living in the three communities of Dartmouth,

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

Fairhaven and Wareham and we hope to leverage it in the future to include all communities in our SDA.

### Increased employment opportunities for customers by improved vendor (and Partner) relations.

- Our relationship with vendors has improved through meetings, vendor reps addressing staff, and staff visits to vendor locations. These activities addressed the need for greater participation of the vendors in the post training job placement process, and the need to identify additional training programs and modifications of existing programs to meet individual client requirements. Some improvements were realized. However, the annual charter review process identified some areas of concern by vendors that calls for more frequent communication and a better understanding by all parties of the constraints of various programs. We also need to establish a WIB/vendor/New Directions working group to address ways to improve the relationship for the good of our job seeking customers.
- Partner relationships were good throughout the year and quarterly meetings were held. We implemented a referral measurement process that has only been marginally effective. Producing the required data has been problematic for some partner organizations. We need to better define and refine the manner in which we measure our success in this area. There was significant turnover in the partner representatives occupying the OSCC that required indoctrination training and a period of OJT to ensure they were up to speed on policies and procedures. This process has been relatively smooth and the focus has been to ensure customer needs were being met.

### Clients will complete GED/Remediation classes with additional work readiness skills.

- The Work Readiness program contains a component that includes workshops that make them “job ready”. The OSCC also ensures they understand all of the services available at the OSCC, for example, the same day resume and application program, interviewing skills, and how to work a job fair.
- The number of GED completions has increased slightly and the individuals are now exiting this program with increased job readiness skills and awareness of the local labor market.
- We are inviting GED/Remediation customers from our vendor programs to the CC for one day resume and other workshops to make them job ready upon completion of GED.

### Resources

- We continue to be under-funded and the historical trend of exhausting all of our ITA money in the spring each year remains the same. We have reallocated funds on several occasions during the year to increase the originally budgeted ITA funding and actually increased the total amount available for ITA's by over 50%.
- The staffing resources available to address our responsibilities were again hampered this year by long periods of vacancies in several DCS positions. We have been without a Field Manager the entire FY, without a LVER for all but three weeks of the year, and without a JSIII and a JSII for 6 months and 5 months respectively. In some cases, DCS attempted to fill positions quickly but were hampered by some complicated internal

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

personnel issues. Beginning in May 2006, all of the vacant positions except for the Field Manager will be filled.

### **FY '07 Training Funds and Resources Objectives**

Our biggest training and resource challenge in FY 2007 is the significant reduction in WIA funding levels (Average of 17%) that will negatively impact all programs, primarily intensive services that include training programs. This reduced funding will affect both staff and ITA training money. New Directions will also have a considerable increase in operating costs as a result of the city's intention to charge rent for spaces previously provided at little to no cost. In an effort to recoup funding cuts, the WIB will pursue grants specific to offsetting operating costs.

Our training related efforts will continue to pursue objectives initiated in FY 2006 and focus primarily on the following issues.

#### **Increase client choices for training especially in skills identified by employers in our targeted industries.**

- Identify skills needed by employers through employer visits, surveys, professional studies, partnership with the EDC, etc, Work with all potential vendors to develop training programs that will provide these skills.
- Continue discussions with New Bedford Vocational Technical High School to encourage them to participate as a vendor for our programs. This will provide some shorter term, credentialed programs especially in the trades.
- Revisit the Marine Trades industry to resurrect a previous effort to develop training programs under the Workforce Training Fund for incumbent workers, and also look for ways to leverage this for the unemployed.
- Continue with the due diligence for developing a Retail Skills Center in Wareham in conjunction with the to be built retail mall .
- Develop the ability to offer the Work Certified program to customers throughout the SDA and not just to those in the three communities currently supported by the grant.
- Actively search for alternative training opportunities offered and funded by other programs.

#### **Develop a Section 30 approved ABE/ESOL program in New Bedford.**

Develop an ABE/ESOL program that meets Section 30 approval in order to address the significant need for this training among our customer base, especially those in and around the City of New Bedford that is accessible by public transportation.

#### **Continue to examine WIB, New Directions and Career Center relationships with Vendors and Partners.**

- Develop a process for ensuring vendors are fully aware of how the OSCC assigns students, the pre-selection preparation, and our ability to address client barriers. Also, make the vendors more accountable for involvement in the post training job search process through modification of the vendor contracts.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

- Develop a process with partners' that ensures a clear understanding of each other's programs, documenting referrals, and also focuses attention on some accountable measures of partner performance. Per request from vendors, this annual process has been altered to now meet twice in a year.

**FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

<b>TRAINING FUNDS/RESOURCES ACTION GRID</b>		
<b>Outcomes</b>	<b>Outputs (Examples)</b>	<b>Activities (Examples)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase Client Training Choices</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # New training courses</li> <li>▪ # New vendors</li> <li>▪ # Opportunities offered by and funded by other organizations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify job seeker skill gaps and barriers based on employer input. - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Increase outreach to potential vendors. – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ Assist vendors with Training Pro – <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Pilot program with Greater New Bedford Vocational High School – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Increase Educational Attainment for Lower Learners/Non-English Speaking Customers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Programs established</li> <li>▪ # Participants enrolled</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Develop Sect. 30 approved pre GED and ESOL Program in New Bedford – <b>as funds allow.</b></li> <li>▪ Outreach to CBO/FBO to reach client base - <b>(7/1/06 – 6/30/07)</b></li> <li>▪ Develop partnerships to leverage resources – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve Relationship With Vendors/Partners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ # Successful referrals</li> <li>▪ # Job placements in training related positions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Change the vendor contract to increase vendor responsibility in job placement – <b>(7/1/06 – 9/30/06)</b></li> <li>▪ More efficient Partner meetings to ensure better understanding of programs. – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ WIB initiate quarterly vendor meetings vice annual. – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> <li>▪ WIB develop performance measurement criteria for partnerships – <b>(10/1/06 – 12/31/06)</b></li> </ul>

This page intentionally left blank.

## CQI Initiatives

### *5. What specific continuous improvement initiatives are planned by all local partners in FY 07 to strengthen the operation of the One-Stop Career Centers?*

The process of continuously examining the quality of our programs and processes has been very successful and has resulted in several changes that have produced improved services to our clients, and better skills development and job satisfaction for our employees. Additionally, we received a performance award for achieving all performance goals set in 2005.

The WIB has taken advantage of numerous opportunities to support and advise on quality initiatives. In addition to generous feedback and guidance from the various committees, board members have participated in strategic planning sessions, marketing plan development, the annual charter review, the annual WIB assessment, business plan input, and endorsing Baldrige as a preferred framework for continued excellence.

Below summarizes the activities that have occurred as a result of CQI team efforts in FY 2006.

#### WIB Assessment

During FY 06, the Workforce Investment Board implemented an internal assessment to examine the strengths of the organization and the opportunities for improvement. The assessment was comprised of three parts. The first involved a presentation by the Staff of their efforts including a Q&A. The second involved a dialogue and discussion with the Executive Committee (EC) of GNBWIB. General topics of vision, mission, focus, performance, etc. were discussed. The final component was a survey of the members on current and future efforts of the GNBWIB.

Conducted by the Performance Measurement Committee via presentations, interviews and surveys, the committee made the following recommendations:

- Implement a newsletter with concise and targeted results or updates.
- Turnover of staff needs to be addressed.
- Executive Committee and staff need to come to consensus on member requirements and performance standards.
- Continue to improve upon member orientation.
- Executive Committee and staff need to come to consensus on fund raising activities.
- Find ways to use members in outreach to legislators, businesses, and other groups.

The Performance Measurement Committee has charged the Executive Committee with developing a mechanism to respond to these recommendations, which the Executive Committee has accepted and will be concentrating on during the start of the FY07 year.

#### Business Services CQI

- We consolidated all Business Services functions into one department, integrated and provided cross training with New Directions and DCS staff, and increased our focus on small business contacts resulting in an increase in the use of our services by small businesses.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

- Business Services staff are now trained to glean critical employment information from employers, relay this info to Job Developers and Case Managers, resulting in improved training selections and better job matching of employer needs and job seeker skill sets.
- Increased emphasis on getting needs assessment information from employers through feedback discussions at seminars and through a recently developed customer satisfaction survey for employers.
- New weekly Business Services staff meetings are now being held and frequently include other staff. These have improved internal coordination and communication, contributed to cross training, and ensuring job seeker training and workshop programs are based on employer-identified needs.

### Individual Performance Reporting CQI

- New job descriptions for OSCC employees have been developed and are being reviewed for accuracy. The next step is implementation of the new Performance Evaluation system, “Performance Impact Workplace”, that will take place over the next few months beginning with training of managers and supervisors.
- Employees are evaluated on an annual basis.

### Resource Room CQI

- Significant progress has been made in revising the procedures and processes for use of the RR. Most significant is that job seekers now need to be Job Ready to meet with Job Specialists. Job Ready is defined as having a strong focus on a career path and having an updated resume and skills to be successful in their search. Those individuals who do not meet this criterion are encouraged to take advantage of our various workshops, such as resume in a day, how to work a job fair, and computer skills training that will help them attain a job ready status. This process has resulted in a more efficient use of the job developer resources as well as increased customer responsibility and self-sufficiency.
- Provide guidance to self-directed jobseekers by scheduling Job Developers to assist in the RR. This has reduced the number of customers needing intensive, one-on-one job development in half.
- Job Developers now do a ‘Work Readiness mini intake’ that satisfies our I-9 requirement and captures adult numbers for our OSCC system.

### Employee Morale CQI

- New career ladder positions as well as professional development opportunities have been created to allow existing staff to take on new and challenging duties. These have been created on a pilot basis to determine our ability to manage the process and now they need to be institutionalized.
- A decision was recently made by Mayor Lang, the new Mayor of New Bedford / Chief Elected Official, to have New Directions, lead operator of the Career Centers in New Bedford and Wareham, pursue 501(c)(3) status. New Directions is now in the process of developing the materials to apply for 501(c)(3) status and will be submitting these documents within the first quarter. It is anticipated that the IRS will take at least 6 months to process this request.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

- An employee survey still needs to be developed and administered. The last employee survey was completed in the fall of 2003.
- Employees have the opportunity to participate in weekly professional development activities that are intended to improve their job performance and enhance their personal growth.

### Customer Satisfaction Tools CQI

- Modifications were made to standardize the job seeker customer satisfaction tool but after several months of use we have determined the information is not very useful, and does not provide any more information than that already provided by the State's system. We have stopped its use and are implementing a process to determine just exactly what information we need to collect and how best to collect it. It must accurately measure the quality of service to our varied customer base: those new to CC services, training participants, and seasoned job seekers who are exiting the system.

### Follow-up Services to Clients CQI

- Implemented a 12-month case manager follow up requirement for clients that entered employment or disappeared from our radar, and also assigned a full time follow-up specialist. They contact job seekers to determine current status and ensure additional services are provided if needed. This process has significantly contributed to our entered employment performance numbers.
- Prerequisites have been established for several workshops as a way of increasing customer responsibility.
- Made process changes that resulted in capacity building and increased one-on-one support for those who need it. Additional computer classes have also been added to the Tuesday evening schedule to accommodate some clients.

### Wareham Staffing CQI

- The new retail mall in Wareham has been delayed by the permitting process so we have extended the current OSCC lease with the Town for one year which will give us time to assess the impact of new businesses in the area and modify our staffing if needed.
- Met with the National Retail Federation to discuss possible development of a Retail Skills Center, that might include all OSCC services. Visited a similar center in Providence and discussed the development process. Considerable due diligence remains to determine if this is a viable option.

## **FY 2007 CQI Initiatives**

We have tried to institutionalize the CQI concept for all of our programs and procedures. Continuously reviewing our efforts, measuring them, determining strengths and weaknesses, and then addressing the shortcomings as an ongoing process and we have been very successful. Stronger efforts will be made to adopt the Baldrige framework throughout our organization as we need to improve on this to both ensure we are faithful to the CQI process and to be able to justify the activities that result from it.

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

The Greater New Bedford Workforce Investment Board and the Greater New Bedford and Wareham One Stop Career Centers have endorsed the Baldrige National Quality Program, Criteria for Performance for performance measurement and improvement through the FY 05 Business Plan and the FY 05 and FY 06 Charter Review. The Performance Measurement Committee and the Executive Committee have also endorsed the use of this criteria through a motion to apply for the initial level of recognition by the state affiliate, Mass Excellence.

Comprised of six criteria; Leadership, Strategic Planning, Customer and Market Focus, Measurement, Analysis and Knowledge Management, Human Resources and Process Management, Baldrige is a tool that helps the organization assess the system in a holistic manner. The WDS has utilized these criteria in an assessment of the WIB Executive Board as well as in review of the WIB staff, identifying strengths and opportunities for improvements in both segments. Additionally, the criteria has been utilized in conducting the Charter Review with the five segments of Staff, Job Seekers, Employers, Vendors and Partners.

Staff from the WIB has undergone examiner training to better understand how the criteria is applied as well as participated in an applicant review and site visit to understand implementation. Additionally, leadership from both the WIB and the lead operator, New Directions, have attended training for the process of writing and submitting an application to Mass Excellence during FY 2007.

The below CQI projects are planned for FY 2007.

### **Business Services CQI**

This CQI is ongoing and there are several issues that need to be addressed: better ways to serve the business community based on identification of their needs (both basic workforce needs and especially workforce skill needs to help us design appropriate training programs) keeping in mind the Federal Performance Standards we must live by; development of a good working model to attract new business; development of a good working model for determining level of service based on a business profile that supports our customer needs taking into consideration availability of staff resources; defining Wareham and other SDA community's business needs; and development of a working model to address providing employer identified services to an increased number of small businesses. An invitation through the WIB will be extended to have at least one representative from both a large and a small business participate as members of this CQI team.

### **Vendor and Partner Support and Performance CQI**

A new CQI to examine all aspects of both Vendor relationships and performance and also Partner relationships and performance will be initiated. The WIB staff will chair this CQI Team and it will include members from both vendor and partner groups as well new Directions and OSCC staff. Members of the WIB Performance Measurement Committee will serve as consultants.

### **Career Center and New Directions Staffing and Workforce System Professional Development CQI**

## **FY 2007 Local Annual Workforce Development Business Plan - Rev 6.8.06**

A complete staffing needs analysis based on current and projected funding levels is needed to address what appears to be a significant future reduction of the overall levels of financial support to WIA, and also the projected increases in New Directions operating expenses. In addition, our professional development program needs to begin addressing the process of staff certification. Should funding become available, the WIB will sponsor one member of the workforce system to attend the Leadership Southcoast Program managed by UMASS-Dartmouth and this CQI Team will develop recommended criteria for choosing a selectee.

### **Employee Morale CQI**

This CQI Team will continue to examine issues of interest to employees and make recommendations on issues that affect them. They will be tasked to analyze the results of a new employee survey and then develop a plan to address the issues raised by the results.

### **Wareham Staffing CQI**

The ability of the Wareham CC to provide the level of needed services seems to be more than adequate at this time but may be significantly impacted by growth in both new businesses and increased population, and this CQI will develop a plan to address this potential growth. In addition, the possibility of a new mall that might support a Retail Skill Center needs to be explored fully.

### **Customer Satisfaction Tools CQI**

This CQI has embarked on a new process to develop a meaningful tool to measure job seeker customer satisfaction. This will involve significant input from staff and will be designed to provide data that supports decisions in process improvements.