

Report Card Fall 2005

I. Improve regional cooperation on workforce issues through enhanced communication. A theme consistent in the Area III SWOT analysis was the lack of Regional Cooperation on Workforce Issues: communications, strengthen transportation network, bilingual education, daycare/eldercare, training of work ethics, training of vocational/technical skills, assessment of skills and effective government cooperation.

Regional Cooperation was the theme for Area III's work throughout PY04. The board began opening committee membership up to members of the community to increase the input of both the public and private sector. New committees have been established to address particular issues identified during a day-long planning retreat held in the spring. As a result, the board is seeing ever-increasing participation by area business members in the area of the board's demand plan, identification and certification of training providers, and procurement of mandated services.

The board has recognized that with limited Federal funding for services and outreach, it can perhaps be most effective in its role as a clearinghouse for workforce-related information. Board members, committees and administrative staff are concentrating on linking individuals and organizations that previously have not worked together, although they have common goals and objectives.

<b>Key Actions</b>	Conduct training for CLEO's, board members and Youth Council	The board has begun a program of breakfast presentations just prior to each regularly scheduled board of directors meeting. Presenters are both internal and external to the local system
	Provide information/workshops for service providers	The board has begun semiannual training sessions for program operators and partners to keep them apprised of administrative, operational and policy direction in Area III topics including an in-depth look at WIA, best practices in customer service, and a look at the federal government's planned common measures.
	Provide information/workshops for employers	The board hosted a workforce summit in May 2005 focused on the state of the current workforce and the looming management crisis if training and re-training needs are not planned for.
	Review, update, distribute information about the WDB	Staff regularly distributes to the wider Area III workforce community email updates on programs, policies and opportunities for collaboration and cooperation
	Utilize print and broadcast media to inform the public about the services available	Board administrative staff, program operators and partners regularly disseminated information on available services; efforts focus on no-cost placements such as calendar and coming events listings. Additionally, the board's programs and services were featured in the Winter issue of Continuum, a publication of the Roanoke Higher Education Center, with a circulation of more than 100,000.

II. Provide opportunities for improving skills for entry-level and incumbent workers. Entry-level employees need basic skills in math, reading, writing, computers and work ethics. Incumbent employees need the same skills, as well as upgraded skills in writing, problem solving, communications and computers.

<b>Key Actions:</b>	Request RFP's to provide training for entry level and incumbent workers addressing basic skills in the areas of math, reading, writing, computers, work ethics, problem solving and communication.	The board provides basic skills services for WIA-eligible participants and also provides free Job Readiness and Work preparedness workshops through the Workforce Centers on a regular basis. The board has leveraged resources by coordinating a network of volunteer instructors, allowing all residents to participate in the training.
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	Demonstrate ways to link K-12, community colleges and other training providers to employer through best practice workshop(s).	The board's Youth Council has outlined a two-pronged approach for fulfilling its mission. The Council is focusing on provision of mandated services to ensure that the greatest number of individuals can benefit from the limited funds available. Further, the Council has moved to establish itself as a conduit for information on job readiness and preparation for youth. The Council is working with a local school system to expand a Career Exploration effort targeting ninth graders. The Council plans to propose similar efforts in the area's remaining school systems. The Council recently expanded its membership to include more youth-related organizations, including Junior Achievement.
	Continue to update and expand our certified trainer provider list and disseminate the information to Area III employers.	The board has established a Training Provider Committee which has restructured the certification process to ensure the information collected is adequate and appropriate for making educated decisions on providers. The Committee is now focusing on more closely aligning certified providers with specific goals of the area's demand plan.
	Develop best practice management information/workshop for employers focused on building work ethic.	In May the board hosted more than 115 area business executives and governmental officials for a Workforce Summit looking at the looming crisis in the availability of a trained workforce. The discussion focused on causes and possible approaches for addressing the issue immediately.
	Coordinate review of assessment tools currently being utilized by Program Contractors with WorkKeys Specialists at Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College.	The board has provided for all program operators new software (CareerScope) capable of assessing both interests and aptitudes on a single test. The board also has worked with the local community college on marketing the Career Readiness Certificate and the corresponding WorkKeys assessments.
	Implement Career Readiness Certificate and utilize results to establish benchmarks for future evaluation.	The WDB has coordinated with Virginia Western Community College and Dabney S. Lancaster Community College to focus appropriate WIA customers (job seekers and employers) into the Career Readiness Certificate Program.
	Measure number of skill training opportunities available, considering both quantity and location.	Under the auspices of the area's regional chamber of commerce the board is working with a cross functional public/private committee to survey available training resources in the area, requirements for use and related costs. When completed the compilation of information will be available both on line and in printed form for use by area businesses, individuals and workforce development organizations.
<p>III. Improve access to employment for workers with challenges.</p> <p>Transportation and accessible/affordable daycare were noted as two of the significant weaknesses in Area III. The Board will focus on transportation and daycare issues needing attention and action. The WDB would also acknowledge that additional barriers are of concern and, if opportunities are presented, current or future programs could be directed to one or more barriers.</p>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	Coordinate a study of commuter travel with the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission to identify issues and propose solutions to overcome the transportation barrier.	In an effort to leverage resources and avoid duplication, the board has identified other organizations in the area that have or will conduct this research. Results from initial research from the Roanoke Valley Alleghany Regional Commission will address many of these questions.

	Coordinate a study of child care resources with the United Way and other providers to identify issues and propose solutions to overcome childcare barriers.	The child care issue – and other supportive services issues – was among those addressed at a two-day gathering of workforce and related services providers. The group also identified other organizations involved in the issue and will work with those to implement changes.
	In PY04, assess and identify barriers, availability of services, and gaps.	The board hosted a two-day summit of workforce and related service providers in the area to examine existing service levels throughout the area. More than 60 individuals representing more than 30 organizations participated in the event which was facilitated by the governor's special advisor for workforce development.
	In PY05 and PY06, utilize the data to address breaking down the barriers and utilizing Area III workforce development resources to close demand gaps.	The board is using the results of the above-mentioned summit to identify of gaps and duplications with the aim of realigning resources as necessary. The next step is to develop and implement a policy among partners and providers to ensure the success of realignment.
<p>IV. Demonstrate the need for and the value of workers in the technical, vocational and trade areas.  An Area III weakness was devaluation of technical/trades/blue collar jobs and lack of knowledge of training opportunities/vocational opportunities. The participants at the SWOT analysis recognized an opportunity to promote and highlight organizations and programs that facilitate training and vocational skills, particularly for those with special needs.</p>		
<b>Key Actions</b>	Utilize local multi-vocational contractors to promote career opportunities via area school board presentations-class room presentations	Board members and administrative staff are working with a local chamber of commerce organization that has developed and is presenting a series of presentations to area guidance counselors focusing on the opportunities available to high school graduates who pursue careers in the trades. Local business persons have been involved in the panel discussions following each presentation. Presentations have been made for two of eight area school systems, with a third scheduled for early 2006.
	Highlight career opportunities during traditional workforce celebration days.	Workforce Month activities included a job fair at the Workforce Centers and a publicity campaign.
	Encourage Workforce Center partners to alert customers to vocational training opportunities that will benefit them.	Workforce Centers are reevaluating their communication efforts to improve the delivery of this type of information. The availability of printed materials and access to online information has been improved.
	In PY04, develop an awareness campaign to demonstrate to Area III students, parents, educators, and community leaders the need for technical, vocational, and trade skills.	Board members and staff are involved in Career and Technical education advisory committees for school systems throughout the area. The Youth Council is working with Covington/Alleghany Schools to enhance a career introductory program for ninth graders. Presentations have been made to guidance counselors throughout the region to focus on the importance of Career and Technical education

V. Take action to meet performance standards.

Understanding current performance and measuring progress are two essential steps to ensure effectiveness and improvement. Since meeting the 17 performance standards is a fundamental WIA requirement, and skill assessment tools are being utilized by WIA Program Contractors to assess clients, the WDB recognizes the need to integrate current program skills assessment with local workforce skills assessment in the attainment of the performance standards.

<b>Key Actions</b>	Meet 17 performance standards and include WDB compliance with federal and state policy and procedures	Performance continued to improve as the long-term effects of poor service by early providers began to move out of the system. The streamlining of providers to one each for each program service will enable staff to better identify both positive and negative impact on performance standards.
	Assure goals are clearly defined in requests for proposals.	Services for PY05 are being provided under the final year of contracts with providers procured in 2003. The board implemented a much more regimented system for procuring services for PY06
	Provide contractors appropriate training.	The board has implemented regular meetings with contractors and provides semiannual training for all service providers and partners. The meetings include regular review of program elements and performance measures. The board also has implemented a semiannual training workshop with required attendance by all program operators and case managers. Additionally, in October all program operators and case managers attended a day-long training session on the proposed common measures, in preparation for implementation at the local level.
	Meet at least 80 percent of Area III's performance standards	The board improved its performance overall and met 82 percent of its standards.